



ITHACA

UUU Connections

2021 / 2022 Issue No. 6

February 1-28, 2022

Getting to Know Our Team Leaders



Walt Peck, Healthy Congregations Team

The Healthy Congregations Team (HCT) is one of the newest and, perhaps, least well-known of our Teams. Consisting of four appointed members, the HCT works to create and preserve harmonious relationships amongst the people of our community. We are available to serve as a listening, confidential ear for those experiencing conflict with others from within our Society and to work toward a satisfactory resolution. As one example of our efforts, we conducted Listening Circles last spring in response to Reverend Margaret's resignation. Please let us know if we can be helpful for you.



Sara Catterall, Building and Grounds Team

The Buildings and Grounds team is "responsible for the care, preservation, and protection of all real property of the Society." We strive to create and maintain an attractive, secure, and hospitable environment for our congregation. Working together to achieve that goal can build fellowship and help us to "unite as a caring community." New members are always welcome, and not required to attend meetings! We always need help with gardening, cleaning, organizing, repairs, light carpentry, and other one-time tasks -- contact Sara Catterall if you'd like to join the central planning team, or our list of occasional helpers, and watch for announcements of congregational work days.



Angela Zhang, Engagement and Outreach Team

Angela Zhang has been the leader of the Engagement & Outreach Team since the team regrouped in early 2021. The E&O team is taking on the challenge of engaging the membership and strengthening our community during the pandemic crisis. Angela is calling on all members' support by keeping our commitment to be interested and concerned with each others' lives. We can do this by actively seeking information about the FUSIT events and news, asking for help if in need, and reaching out to help others if possible.

Angela has been an active member of FUSIT for 10 years. She is a web designer working for an educational software company. She is interested in gardening and using her watercolor skills to record the growth of her garden over the changing seasons.



Matt Hare, Stewardship Committee

Each of us, when we become members, agrees to support our beloved Society. This can occur in many ways. The Stewardship team organizes the annual pledge drive to encourage your financial support. Our annual gifts are vital for our programs, staff, and historic church. We work with the Finance Committee and Board to establish a pledge goal in line with our vision and mission. Each year we come up with a theme, an engagement strategy, and organize events to encourage and celebrate our community's generosity.

Stewardship needs you! Stewardship is formally a committee, but we feel like a team. We mostly meet during the pledge season, January - May, and were previously known for beer and pizza meetings before we all started wearing masks or meeting as talking heads. We have started meeting again this year but our ranks have dropped by half. We invite you to contact Matt Hare if you can help engage our congregation and inspire deepened connections. mph75@cornell.edu

In-Person Services Continue in February!

Register in advance in Mid-Week Announce for in-person February Sunday services at 10:30 am.

Maximum 30 pods of participants. No RE classes. Services will also be live streamed.

Masks and social distancing are required. Temperatures taken.

Madonna Stallman, Nancy Dolge, Rita Barber, Kathy Hopkins, Walt Peck, Nancy Miller, Care Team

The Care Team provides support for those in our congregation who are going through challenging times. Meals, rides to appointments or church, friendly phone calls and visits for those isolated, ill or needing support and more. We are currently have a shared leadership. Madonna Stallmann is our contact person. Nancy Dolge and Rita Barber coordinate Memorial Service Receptions. Kathy Hopkins organizes rides to appointments. We can provide resource lists for those needing health care, mental health care, and eldercare. From young people to families with young children to elders, we are here to support you. We seek to promote a culture of Care in our congregation and can always use more hands and hearts available to do our work. The Care Team works with **Rev. Janet Shortall**, our Pastoral Care Minister while we have no settled minister.

Religious Exploration News

For information about Religious Exploration, please contact Emily Richards at dre@uuitbaca.org.

Greetings from the DRE

Here we are. We are still here. With our doors, our arms, and our hearts wide open. Inviting you in. Inviting all of you in. Inviting you to do the same; to open your doors, and your arms, and your hearts.

This month we will look at the many ways that we as individuals, as a community, and as a people of faith, can continue Widening the Circle. And for me that often evokes this idea of Preemptive Radical Inclusion, something the originator, CB Beal, describes as “an adaptive set of perspectives and practices that people use to increase justice and equity in their lives and organizations.”

Preemptive Radical Inclusion invites us to imagine, and put into action, the ways that we can make our communities more welcoming to everyone. And reminds us that if we want to widen our circle, that when we say all are welcome, and actually mean it, that means adjusting our spaces, our environments, our practices, and even ourselves, so that before someone walks in the door and enters into this community that we are ready to welcome them. That we do the work of figuring out both how to create a place where people feel accepted, and identifying what things are giving the opposite message. That this place is not for everyone.

Let us choose to open that circle wide. Let us choose to create a place where all really are welcome. And let us do it now, before they arrive.

Emily Richards, Director of Religious Exploration

RE Plans for February



Ice Skating

J.M. McDonald Sports Complex in Cortland

Saturday, February 12th from 3 pm- 4:15 pm

Please join us for an afternoon of ice skating during the open skate at the J.M. McDonald Center in Cortland. Please sign up [here](#) by Monday, **February 7th** and we will take care of your admission and skate rental. All are welcome.

Weekly RE Live Storytime

Please join me each Thursday in February at 5:30 pm as we read the book *The Dragon of Ynys* by Minerva Cerridwen. *The Dragon of Ynys* has been described as an inclusive fairy tale for all ages.

Youth Movie Night for ages 12 and up will be held on Friday, **February 25th** at 7 pm. Movie TBA.

Volunteers Needed for RE Programming

RE volunteers are needed to help lead youth and children's activities as well as to help with events. Please consider this opportunity as a way to reconnect with our community, give back, and make a profound difference in the lives of our young people and families.

[RE Volunteer Sign Up](#)

Expanding Community

For many this pandemic has brought increased feelings of isolation and being cut off from others. We always welcome new members to our community and faith and hope to provide a safe space of connection and learning for all during this time of physical distancing. Please continue to invite any and all people that you know that you believe could find meaning by exploring what the FUSIT community and Unitarian Universalist faith can offer.

The Religious Exploration is Seeking Team Members and Volunteers

The RE program is hopeful that we will be able to offer in-person gatherings in our building beginning in February. That means we need volunteers to lead and assist with these weekly activities.

The RE Team needs new enthusiastic members to help guide our programming. If you have been looking for a way to make a huge impact on this community please consider the RE Team.

Volunteers to be mentors to our children and young people, as well as leading adult programming for parents is needed. Commitment can be as little as a single one hour program up to weekly regular meetings for youth.

Into the Circle

by Rev. Dr. David Breeden

We gather into this circle.

*We gather into this circle of care
to dream,*

to envision,

to embody and achieve

the compassion we dream,

the justice we envision,

the dignity of each

in an ever-growing

circle of love and justice.

Joys and Sorrows

We are happy to wish Barbara Shew a very happy 93rd birthday. Barbara is a "forever young" role model for many in our community and we wish her many blessings!

Joys and Sorrows are now shared during Sunday Service. Please send notices to the team at joysandsorrows@uuitbaca.org. When considering what is shared in Joys and Sorrows, please note, these services are live streamed and available to the public on our YouTube Channel.

February Book Discussion Group

The next Book Discussion Group meeting is scheduled for Friday, **February 4**, at 12:30 pm via Zoom. The book is *House on the Lagoon* by Rosario Ferre.

For further information contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at streidmull@gmail.com.

Social Justice Council Upcoming Meetings

The Social Justice Council will meet on **February 14, March 14, April 11, May 9, and June 13**. Meetings are held from 5-6:30 pm on Zoom.

The Social Justice Council exists to inform the congregation about important social and humanitarian needs and issues and to provide avenues for constructive service and action.

SJC selects each month's Sharing Sundays recipient and gets reports or proposals from SJC Action Teams. For more information, contact Jackie Jablonski at jackiejab@me.com.

Budget Requests Sought for 2022/2023

Committee and event chairpersons are encouraged to submit their committee's 2022/2023 budget requests to Treasurer Walt Peck at wgp8@aol.com by Friday, **February 28th**.



In case of pastoral need, call Madonna Stallman 607-216-5083. She will direct pastoral needs for weddings, memorial services and emergency pastoral care to Rev. Janet Shortall.

February Worship Services

The theme for February is "Widening the Circle" and the Celebrations Team is looking forward to speakers whose voices can help us to widen our circle as individuals and as a community:

February 6, "Why I am an Ubuntu Witch/ Metric on the Margins"

Speaker Sarah Wolff

Sarah Wolff is an Ithaca native who teaches Academic English and English Literature at TC3 and works as a Program Educator for the Village at Ithaca.

February 13, "Reflections on the 8th Principle"

Speaker Paula Cole Jones

Paula Cole Jones is the founder of ADORE (A Dialogue on Race & Ethnicity), a former president of DRUUMM (Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries) and an independent consultant specializing in multicultural competencies and institutional change.

February 20, "Immigrants, refugees, Haudenosaunee - How do we widen our circles in a community and world with so many small, often closed off circles?"

Speaker Barb Blom

Barb Blom is minister of the United Ministry of Aurora and founding director of the Interfaith Center for Action and Healing. She is also an alumna and lecturer in religion at Wells College.

February 27, "Creation"

Speaker Perry Ground

Perry Ground, educator and storyteller from the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation, uses traditional storytelling to promote understanding and appreciation of the history, culture, and beliefs of the Haudenosaunee. He currently holds the Minett Professorship at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Sign ups are required in order to attend Sunday service. And everyone is invited to stream the services on our YouTube channel!

Soul Matters Material for February - Widening the Circle

The Soul Matters theme for February is Widening the Circle. This month's packet includes a few short readings, spiritual exercises, and discussion questions for you to consider. The material can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/SoulMattersFeb2022>

Join the
FUSIT
(internal)

Facebook Page:

[https://
www.facebook.com/
groups/
171869686459/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/171869686459/)

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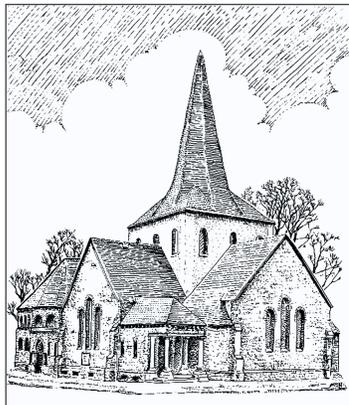
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8th Principle Workshop with one of its authors, Paula Cole Jones.

Plan to join us on Sunday afternoon, **February 13**, for a zoom workshop with Paula Cole Jones, one of the authors of the 8th Principle. Paula will share with us about the rationale for the proposed 8th principle and be available for discussion. Details to follow in Mid-Week Announcements.

The First Unitarian Society of Ithaca
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Visit our Website and get
your newsletter:
www.uuithaca.org

Possible Ponderings

The theme for February is Widening the Circle.

Possible Ponderings is an offering of ways you might consider engaging more deeply with the theme or reflecting on the ways the idea of Widening the Circle shows up in your life.

February 1-5: Are you a circle maker, a circle joiner or a circle avoider? Is your circle of friends keeping you small?

February 6-12: How has your definition of racism widened or shifted since you were younger? How has your answer to “are you a racist?” changed over the years?

February 13-19: Could shrinking your circle of aspirations set you free?

February 20-26 What has life taught you about widening circles to include your “enemies”?

February 27-28: Covid shrank our circles of connections. Is there any way in which that was a blessing to you?

Women's Circle - Monday, February 28

Women's Circle will meet via Zoom on Monday evening, **February 28**, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. We are now generally meeting on the 4th Monday of the month. All who identify as women are welcome. This is a drop-in group, so no need to sign up; just come. Anyone is welcome to bring a poem or a reading. For information or questions contact Nancy Miller at ananda7733@gmail.com or 607 539 7733.

Zoom link Meeting ID: 819 4014 1421
Passcode: 874536

Men's Group - Monday, February 28

The Men's Group will meet once a month on the 4th Monday of the month. The February meeting is scheduled for **February 28** at 7:00 pm in the Parlor. All who identify as male are invited to join us. For further information please contact Carsten Hess at carsten@hess.net or Kevin Moss at kevinm607@hotmail.com.

Social Media Connections

You can find out about events happening in our congregation, see pictures of past events and connect with other UUs. Like and follow us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/FUSofI/> Instagram www.instagram.com/ithacaus and Twitter, @IthacaUUs.

The UUA 8th Principle: Sunday February 13, and Discussion at FUSIT

The proposed UUA 8th Principle reads: "We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

The Black Lives of UU (BLUU) Organizing Collective encourages all Unitarian Universalists to advocate for the formal adoption of an 8th principle, articulating a commitment to the dismantling of white supremacy, within the stated principles of our faith. So far, over 130 UU congregations have adopted the 8th Principle. This winter and spring, FUSIT will discuss the 8th Principle and consider voting to adopt it for our congregation.

Where did this proposal come from?

Paula Cole Jones developed the idea of the existence of 2 different paradigms in UU circles: the UU 7 Principles and Beloved Community (deep multiculturalism). After working with congregations on these issues for over 15 years, she realized that a person can believe they are being a "good UU" and following the 7 Principles without thinking about or dealing with racism and other oppressions at the systemic level. Evidence: most UU congregations are primarily European-American in membership, culture (especially music), and leadership, even when located near diverse communities. She realized that an 8th Principle was needed to correct this, and worked with Bruce Pollack-Johnson to put together an initial draft in 2013.

UUs and the UUA have done very good work in fighting racism, such as during the Civil Rights Movement and in the 1990's (passing a resolution in 1997 at GA, after a precursor resolution in 1992, to become an Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppression Multi-Cultural Organization), but the funding and support started to wane in the 2000's – our accountability mechanism failed us. UU's also have a mixed record historically in other areas of racial justice: e.g., we had people on both sides of Abolitionism (including people like Jefferson who was a slaveholder), and Unitarians were proponents of Eugenics (leading to some of the racial extremes of Nazism and Apartheid in South Africa).

For people identified as white, it is too easy to ignore these issues, which is exactly what keeps the system of racism in our society alive and in fact worsening right now. We need to de-center whiteness and other dominant cultures in UUism.

The 8th Principle came from a feeling that we need something to renew our commitment to this work, to hold ourselves accountable, and to fulfill the potential of our existing principles.

FUSIT will have Paula Cole Jones in the pulpit on Sunday, **February 13**. Paula Cole Jones is the founder of ADORE (A Dialogue on Race & Ethnicity), a former president of DRUUMM (Diverse and Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries) and an independent consultant specializing in multicultural competencies and institutional change. There will be a three hour workshop on zoom with Paula Cole Jones on the afternoon of Feb. 13, where she will tell us about the 8th principle and its rationale, and we can discuss it with her directly. Watch for details in the mid-Week Announce. In the meantime, if you have any questions or comments, reach out to Jennifer Streid-Mullen, streidmull@gmail.com

From the Board: Culture of Appreciation and Beloved Community

I want to say more about rekindling a culture of appreciation here in our church community. Especially now during these COVID and unsettled times, especially now when issues such as a minister for next year and what the future will bring for our church are not yet clear.

Part of what creates our Beloved Community is the care we take of each other and the appreciation we express to those who do the work to create and maintain it. I'd like to invite us to embrace this as a spiritual practice. An every day lived spiritual practice. We all need to be cared for; we all need to hear gratitude and praise for the work we do. Especially now.

For me, developing an attitude of care and appreciation encompasses getting out of myself. So it follows that another part of creating Beloved Community is each of us giving up some of our identity as an individual ("I") and replacing it with a new concept of shared community ("We").

We, as your Board, have committed ourselves to the "We". Please join us in that commitment. Commitment is how we as so many different people with different ideas, faiths, and beliefs make our unique community. The most powerful commitment is the commitment to hang in, no matter what, when the struggles are hard. The last two years have been especially hard at FUSIT. I hope the next one will be easier but we have no guarantees.

Again I invite you to make this a spiritual practice – "to offer comfort and sincere appreciation to each and every person especially now when folks might be feeling isolated, disengaged, tired and depressed or worried" as Therese wrote last month. Say thanks to staff and volunteers. Say thanks to those who bring a light to our community.

Join us in creating a Culture of Appreciation and the Beloved Community we aspire to be.

*Love and Courage to us all,
Nancy Miller*

*Did you know
you can text in your donations
to the offering plate on Sundays?*

*Simply text 607-260-6616 with the
amount + offering (eg: \$5 offering)
to donate by phone.*

It's super easy!

**First Unitarian is a UUA-recognized
(LGBTQ) Welcoming Congregation**

Antiracism Ministry Team

The Antiracism Ministry Team (ARMT) continues with several ongoing efforts to raise awareness and engage the congregation on issues of race and racism.

Our Living the Pledge to End Racism workshop is currently running with its fourth cohort of participants, and a new configuration of leaders. These 6-week, 12-hour Pledge Workshops are for everyone! We hope to get a large majority of the congregation to share this experience. Many have found it rich, rewarding and challenging. Besides learning about and engaging with race-related content, it's a deep interaction with your fellow congregants. For more information or to get on the list for the next workshop (sometime in the spring), call or email Michelle in the office.

The Antiracism Team is excited to be launching the first of our events concerning the proposed 8th Principle in February. See more information elsewhere in this newsletter, and stay tuned for more on this throughout the winter and spring.

Our film and lecture series on race and racism continues monthly on second Tuesday evenings. So far this church year, we have screened *Dawnland* about the effects of Indigenous children's forced assimilation in boarding schools, *All In* about voting rights with Stacy Abrams, and *Civil War, or Who Do We think We Are?* concerning the varying attitudes of Americans about the U.S. Civil War and its legacy. Our next feature will be airing on Zoom on **February 8**. Watch your midweek announcements for the title. Have film or video lecture suggestions? Let us know.

The ARMT welcomes questions, dialogue, and/or newcomers to the Team at any time. We're currently meeting about monthly, on a somewhat irregular schedule. For information or to find out the next date and time of our next meeting, contact Beth Howard, beth4howard@gmail.com.



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY MULTIPLATFORM / PORTLAND • 2022

UUA General Assembly, Portland, Oregon June 22-26, 2022

“Meet the Moment: Reimagining Radical Faith Community”

Join UUs from around the world for General Assembly in Portland, Oregon. This year's annual meeting of the UUA will be multiplatform (in person and online). In addition to business sessions, the General Assembly (GA) program offers workshops, lectures, and worship and witness opportunities during the five days of GA. Registration options for in-person and/or virtual participation are open. For more information contact generalassembly@uua.org.

Pedersen Memorial GA Scholarship

This scholarship was developed using funds donated to FUSIT in memory of Mark Pedersen. Mark loved attending General Assembly and wanted more members of FUSIT to attend GA as delegates. In his memory this scholarship was created to help defray the costs for registration and/or travel to General Assembly for those with financial need.

Application deadline is **March 1st**. Email office@uuithaca.org for further information and to request an application.

Our Mission

Our mission is to create connection, find inspiration and engage the world. Connect. Inspire. Engage.

Update from the FUSIT Board of Trustees

The FUSIT Board of Trustees will be providing a brief "Sense of the Board Meeting" report and sharing it through the weekly newsletter the week after a Board of Trustees meeting. The full meeting minutes will continue to be made available, but this brief meeting summary is intended to keep the congregation tuned in to the activities and priorities of the Board.

Here is the "Sense of the Meeting" from the special January 12 meeting, held both in-person and via Zoom starting at 6:30 pm.

Open Questions: The Winter Open Question topic will center on mission. The Board will craft language for this question and vote on final wording at the January 19 regular monthly meeting as part of the congregational outreach plan discussion.

Ministerial Matters: Board members shared thoughts and questions about ministerial options and questions in preparation for a meeting with Keith Kron on Saturday, January 15.

Leadership Opportunities: The UUA is offering a workshop on restorative justice practices -- contact the Board for details.

The next regular Board meeting will be on January 19, 2022, from 6:30-8:15 pm. It will be a hybrid meeting held both in-person and via Zoom and information regarding this meeting will appear in the March 2022 newsletter.