



ITHACA

UUU Connections

2022/2023 Issue No.6

February 1-28, 2023

Message from Associate Director of Congregational Life

February's theme is love, a part of the human psyche and soul closest to my heart. Still, it would be insufficient for me to speak about love in a way that isolates it from all the other spiritual qualities that reflect the grace and compassion we must use to light our path and the path of others.

Love demands that we be of sound comfort to those who struggle, those who worry, and those who feel alone. Love asks us to be kind, patient, and selfless. Love insists we are watchful over ourselves so that our egos and pride do not get in the way of seeing love through up until our last breath - sharing it and spreading it generously.

Love encompasses all that is tender and right, moral and wise - it compels us to see through the darkness, to hear through the silence, and to outstretch our hands to those around us, those in need, those who feel alone, just to let them know we are there.

There are beautiful quotes about love - one thing we do not have to doubt we share with others, no matter where they live, their experiences, race, faith, or professional practice. Read the beautiful words below and feel their grounding pull:

"If we agree in love, there is no disagreement that can do us any injury, but if we do not, no other agreement can do any good." Hosea Ballou, Universalist minister

"Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." Mother Theresa

"Love is the only force that can transform an enemy into a friend." Martin Luther King

"None of us has faith unless he loves for his {brothers and sisters} what he loves for himself." Sabih Al- Bukhari, Islam

Let us look at love as a perfect, universal power source, flowing, electrifying, and connecting us from one end of the planet to the other - we can light up the world as a whole.

With love, we must look past our differences, insecurities, dislikes, and initial reactions that steer us toward prejudice and stereotyping. We must not doubt what we can accomplish with love - the spirits we can lift, the hearts we can help strengthen, the bridges of hope we can cross. When we love and grow in our understanding of its most profound meaning, we will not ignore those in front of us whose cries might be quiet or whose personalities might not easily connect with that of our own.

We must let love excite and energize us no matter what. Let it inspire us, give us courage, and continue to build community within these walls and beyond.

Rev. Peaches Gillette

**In-Person Sunday Services
10:30 am in the Sanctuary**

*Services will also be
live-streamed on our YouTube channel.*

Masks and social distancing encouraged.

**Religious Exploration classes for children
(see page 2 for details)**

Expanding Community

For many this pandemic has brought increased feelings of isolation and being cut off from others that continue to linger. 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.

Religious Exploration News

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

Greetings from the DRE

I don't know about you, but for me February often feels like the longest month. The excitement from the holidays has finally dwindled away to nothing but spring is not yet right around the corner. Even though it has the least amount of days, February seems to drag on.

And yet right in the middle of it we get Valentine's Day. A time for celebrating Love in all of its forms. From bouquets of flowers brightening up the monotonous grey of winter, to adorable cards exchanged in classrooms, to hearts strung up everywhere we look, this is the time that we choose Love. It is a time to snuggle up with those we love, and extend love out into the world.

And what better theme for the month than simply, Love. Love is at the heart of who we are as Unitarian Universalists. It informs every decision that we make. It binds us together in the promises that we make that first and foremost, we will offer love.

Whoever you are, whoever you love, wherever you are on your own life's journey, we will meet you with love.

Emily Richards, Director of Religious Exploration

RE Plans for February

Thank you so much to everyone who helped with the StUuffy Sleepover. After our weekend together we are filled with a joyful exhaustion. We hope that you and your stuffies had as much fun as we did.

Religious Exploration programming will continue on Sunday mornings using our Soul Matters themes as a foundation to explore our faith and spirituality. This month our theme is Love and the children and youth have chosen three ways to share their love with the wider community, one for each RE Sunday. We can't wait to share with you what we create together.

Look below for more details on the numerous fun events going on this month, including a Movie Night, Cookies and Crafts event, Kids Yoga, and more!

Everyone with kids ages birth through 12th grade should register their kids at the link below. This helps us with planning, and also helps to keep kids safe when they are participating in programming at church.

[2022-2023 RE Registration](#)

Upcoming Sunday Morning Religious Exploration Schedule

February 5th: RE Sunday - Love

Arch Room immediately following a Time for Wonder

February 12th: RE Sunday - Love

Arch Room immediately following a Time for Wonder

February 19th: Multigenerational Sunday - A Welcoming Love

February 26th: RE Sunday - Love

Arch Room immediately following a Time for Wonder

RE Volunteers Needed!

Please sign up by putting your name anywhere you see an empty yellow square. [RE Volunteer Sign-Up](#)

February Religious Exploration Events

Love Month Crafts and Cookies

Sunday, **February 12th**, 12 pm-2 pm, FUSIT Annex

Join us for a celebration of Love month as we make love themed crafts and decorate cookies together just in time for Valentine's Day celebrations. This event is free and open to the public.

Movie Night

Friday, **February 24th**, 5:30 pm-8 pm, Arch Room

Drop your kids off, or stay and join us, for a movie night, complete with dinner and snacks! [Movie Night Registration](#)

Music for Little People

Thursdays from 12:30 pm-1:15 pm, **February 2nd-23rd**, First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Free and open to the public each Thursday in February. Emily Richards will offer weekly baby music classes for children 3-5 years of age with parents. We will meet upstairs in the Arch Room. Sing, play, dance, explore instruments, and connect through music.

Baby Snugglers Wanted

Do you love to snuggle babies? Does playing with toddlers and other tiny people bring you joy? If so contact Madeline and find out how you can snuggle babies and help provide safe loving care for our little ones, and a much needed break for our parents.

Reasst@uuithaca.org

Sacred Unknowing

Rev. Amy Carol Webb

We come into the presence of what we do know,
Perhaps the only thing we can ever know:
That Love is now and forever
The only answer to everything...

(RE News, continued from page 2)

Free Kids Yoga

Wednesday, **February 8th**

5:15 pm-6:15 pm, FUSIT Arch Room

Join us for a free yoga class especially designed for kids. Ages 5-10 welcome. Caregivers are invited to drop your child off and pick them back up, or stay and join in the fun.

Family Play Time

Tuesday, **February 7th**

12 pm-2 pm, FUSIT Arch Room

Come in out of the cold and connect with other families during this open, unstructured playtime.

Our Whole Lives (OWL)

The First Unitarian Society of Ithaca (FUSIT) and the First Congregational Church of Ithaca (FCCI) are excited to offer the Our Whole Lives comprehensive sexuality education program during the school year 2022-2023. Congratulations to our 8th and 9th graders who are finishing up their program at the beginning of this month.

And we are thrilled to offer OWL to our **10-12th graders** beginning in March! For additional details, such as dates, times, and location, please click the registration link below.

[OWL Grades 10-12 Registration](#)

Children's Chorus of Ithaca

The First Unitarian Society of Ithaca is graciously hosting rehearsals for the Children's Chorus of Ithaca (CCI). Participation is free for all FUSIT families. You can find more information about the Children's Chorus of Ithaca on the Affiliated Choruses of Ithaca (ACI) website.

[Children's Chorus of Ithaca](#)

RE-Turn to RE

The Religious Exploration Team at FUSIT is thrilled to be able to offer regular in-person RE once again and we need your help. We need volunteers! We need every member of this community to show our families and young people that they are a priority. Please contact Emily Richards at dre@uuiithaca.org if you are interested in supporting our Religious Exploration programming.



February Worship Services

The theme for February is *The Path of Love and the Celebrations Team is looking forward to speakers whose voices can help us to explore this theme as individuals and as a community:*

Sunday, February 5

"Love is Love"

Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life and Religious Exploration

Love is love, no matter where that love falls on the rainbow. As we navigate a world together where members of the LGBTQ+ community continue to face discrimination and oppression, how are we lifting up these important messages of love? As an LGBTQ+ Welcoming Congregation, how are we living up to our promises of support and inclusion? *Special music by ITE Chamber Group*

Sunday, February 12

"Reclaiming Reverence Through Love"

Rev. Peaches Gillette, Associate Director of Congregational Life and Ancillary Pastoral Care

As the world continues to move away from a deep understanding of the value of being humble, selfless and working to serve others, reverence has become the forgotten virtue of faith communities.

Reverence asks us to walk under a steadily held banner, not one simply highlighting our politics, but one that underscores our commitment to creating a loving community that acknowledges and respects the dignity of all. It asks us to abandon our egos, and sacrifice parts of our individualism for the betterment of the whole. *Special music by Elisa Keeler*

Sunday, February 19

"A Welcoming Love"

Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life and Religious Exploration

Come and join us for a fun and interactive multi-generational service that explores how we can extend love to ourselves, one another, and the world around us. What does it mean to be a truly inclusive community? How do we embrace the joy and chaos and messiness that results when we say everyone is welcome, and truly mean it? *Special music TBA*

Sunday, February 26

"Universal Love"

Kenneth Clark

Kenneth I. Clarke, Sr., D.Min. is currently the director of Tompkins County Office of Human Rights. He previously served as Director of Cornell United Religious Work for 16 years where he was responsible for administration, facilitation and coordination of 30 religious and spiritual groups. *Special music by FUSIT Choir*

Director of Congregational Life and Religious Exploration
Emily Richards
dre@uuiithaca.org

Religious Exploration Assistant
Madeline Natale
reasst@uuiithaca.org

Associate Director of Congregational Life and Ancillary Pastoral Care,
Rev. Peaches Gillette
assocdcl@uuiithaca.org

Pastoral Care,
Rev. Janet Shortall
janet.mshortall@gmail.com
607-227-5074

Music Director
Stephanie Ortolano
music@uuiithaca.org

Choir Director
Jayne Demakos
choir@uuiithaca.org

President, Board of Trustees
Don Barber
sunnybrk@gmail.com

Congregational Administrator
Michelle Waffner
office@uuiithaca.org

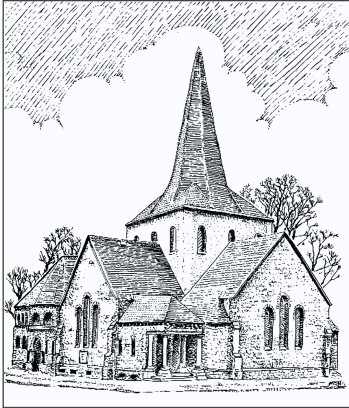
Administrative Assistant
Loretta Heimbuch
adminasst@uuiithaca.org

Sexton
Rachel Seymour
sexton@uuiithaca.org

Bookkeeper
Lauren Ponzoni
office@uuiithaca.org

**First Unitarian is a
UUA-recognized
LGBTQ+ Welcoming
Congregation**

The First Unitarian Society of Ithaca
306 North Aurora Street
P.O. Box 6
Ithaca, NY 14851-0006



Visit our Website and get
your newsletter:
www.uuithaca.org

Possible Ponderings

The theme for February is The Path of Love.

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

February 1-4 : What did love mean to you as a child?

February 5-11: How has love changed as you've gotten older? Is it softer? Quieter? Larger? Tougher? Smaller? More central? More painful?

February 12-18 Some say the opposite of love is not hate but indifference. Others say it's opposite is fear. What do you think?

February 19-25: Are you using your busyness to shield you from your heartbreak? Is it time to let someone know that your heart is broken?

February 26 - 28: Are you sacrificing too much in the name of love?

Help Needed on February 7th to Provide Lunches for the Homeless Shelter

As a member of Area Congregations Together (ACT), FUSIT finds four volunteers to provide fifteen lunches apiece to the Ithaca homeless shelter on the first Tuesday of each month.

Three more volunteers are needed for **February 7th**. Can you be one of those volunteers? You would buy supplies, make the lunches within 24 hours of delivery, and deliver them between 9:30 and 11:30 am to SJCS Day Center at 618 W. State Street. Deliveries are made through a window on State Street.

Each lunch should include a sandwich, a piece of soft fruit, and a cookie or other small dessert. Social Justice Council can reimburse your expenses, at your request. To volunteer and/or ask questions, please contact Jackie Jablonski at jackiejab@me.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/ithacauus and

Twitter, @IthacaUUs.

Joys and Sorrows

Our condolences go out to Jan Morgan and the family and friends of long-time member Jim Skaley, who died peacefully at home on December 24. A celebration of life has been planned for March 25 at 2 pm in the sanctuary.

Jyoti Kessler who has graced our congregation with her loving presence and inspiring words and music from the pulpit, has been diagnosed with cancer. As a yoga teacher and spiritual leader she has had a profound impact throughout our community and beyond. She enjoys receiving cards. Her address is 305 Taylor Place Ithaca.

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.

Joys and Sorrows reflect what has happened during the past month. For the most up-to-date information, please check the Weekly Announce.

Soul Matters Material for February - The Path of Love

The Soul Matters theme for February is The Path of Love. 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/SoulMattersFeb2023>

Side With Love for February

Our February Side With Love collection will go to Planned Parenthood (check Weekly Announce for items to be collected). They will also receive our Shared Plate Offering on **February 19th**.

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!

Our Mission

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

Blanket Making Workshop for The Advocacy Center

Sunday, **February 26th**

12 pm-2 pm, in the Annex



The Advocacy Center of Tompkins County offers free, confidential support for people who have experienced sexual, domestic, or relationship abuse. FUSIT continues to support the Advocacy Center in the important work that they are doing. This month we are offering an opportunity for people to come together and make small fleece blankets for individuals who find themselves in need of the Advocacy Center's services. We are looking for donations of pieces of fleece that are at least 50 x 36 inches, as well as volunteers to sew or tie these pieces into small blankets. No sewing experience is required.

Congregational Conversation: The Future of Social Justice at FUSIT

Sunday, **February 19th**

12 pm-1:30 pm, in the Parlor

Please join us as we continue our discussion about Social Justice at FUSIT.

We are so appreciative to everyone who showed up last month to help us begin our conversation about reimagining the ways that we support important social justice initiatives in our community. Continue the conversation and help us shape future programs and partnerships, find out how you can get more involved, and share your ideas and enthusiasm.

For more information contact the Ministry Visioning Team (mvt@uuitbaca.org). Bring your ideas, your passions for this work, and bring your leadership skills. This meeting will be held in person, check the Weekly Announce for the room location.

The Buddha says, "Your actions are your only true belongings."

Ministry Visioning Team Report

The Ministry Visioning Team met again on January 6th and 17th. While many issues were covered at these sessions, including specific goals for the year, the position description for the Engagement and Outreach Coordinator, and the future organization of the Social Justice Council, the group discussed and supported restarting Matters of our Lives as part of Sunday services.

Matters of our Lives (MOL) can be offered by any member of the congregation, and are intended to be short (300 words or less) descriptions of efforts significant to the presenter, the congregation, and the wider community. Each MOL presenter should describe how others can get involved in the particular effort. If you are interested in providing a future MOL, please contact the Celebrations Team through Magdalen Lindeberg (ml16@cornell.edu).

Office Closure

The office will be closed (and Michelle will not be working) on **February 20**.

FUSIT Listserv

The new FUSIT listserv is now operational. If you would like to join, please fill out [this form](#) and you will be added to the list. If you have any questions, let Michelle in the office know (office@uuitbaca.org).

Message From the Board of Trustees

A Community In Sync

Valerie Graves

Each church year, the Board engages the congregation in Open Questions as a way to reveal the topics of interest and concern within our community. The latest open question was: "What would make FUSIT more relevant to your life or the lives of those in your community?" The answers to this Open Question have been amazingly in line with the current direction of the Ministry and the Board showing how in sync we are as a community in our interests, and values.

Gathering as a community is a central focus of many of the open responses the Board received. Our Sunday services now include "Matters of our Lives" as a way to learn more about each other and build community. Religious exploration for the children is now up and running during the Sunday services, encouraging and allowing families to return to the church. There have been meals, social events, concerts, and holiday celebrations, fulfilling the wide-held desire for social activities.

Social justice and community outreach were also prominent on the minds of congregants answering the open question, and those values are also integrated into the activities of the church. There have been shared plates and efforts to gather items of need in our "side with love collection" - most recently, the Advocacy Center has been highlighted with its free confidential support for victims of abuse. There have been opportunities to make lunches for the homeless shelter, and Babies First continues to support families. The UU common read of Justice on Earth, edited by Manish Mishra-Marzetti and Jennifer Nordstrom, was discussed, and small group ministry groups continue to do outreach and service in our community. There are many opportunities for social justice work within FUSIT, beyond what is listed here.

Gathering together, learning, and acting to benefit the community were all priorities revealed by the Fall Open Question. When the events and activities of the church are explored, it is clear that the congregation, the Ministry, and the Board are in sync on many priorities and there are many opportunities for learning, engagement, and action within FUSIT.

February Board of Trustees Meeting

The February meeting will be held **February 15** at 6:30 pm. The board meeting is a hybrid format, taking place in the church parlor and through Zoom. All FUSIT members are invited to attend this meeting. Ten minutes are set aside at the beginning of the meeting for congregation feedback. Email office@uuithaca.org or check the Weekly Announce email for the Zoom link.

Pub Theology

Tuesday, **February 28**, 6:30 pm at Liquid State Brewing

Join us at Liquid State Brewing for an evening of good fellowship and conversation at our favorite local brewery (owned by FUSIT members!). We will gather at 6:30 pm and reflect together on our monthly theme of Love. Non-beer and non-alcoholic drink options available! 21 and over please. Bring your friends! Hope to see you there! Pub Theology takes place on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 620 West Green Street, Ithaca.

Save The Date! FUSIT is Returning to Unirondack! September, 1st-4th 2023 (Labor Day Weekend)



A huge thank you to the newly formed Unirondack Team for coming together and bringing this event back after a three year hiatus. Registration will be opened to the community some time in **April**.

Three to five more volunteers are needed to assist with the many details that are required to make this fun-filled long weekend of community and connection a success. Please contact either Sue Mann or Michelle Hochstetter if you would like to be involved. susan.m.mann@gmail.com or mhochstetter@gmail.com.

To those new to FUSIT and Unirondack, it is a marvelous inter-generational camp in the Adirondacks. We cook meals together, swim in the lake, laze, sing songs and tell tall stories over campfires, play capture the flag and gaga and run all over camp and so much more. The friendships and bonds formed are amazing, and truly serve to build community.

Congregational Administrator Hours

In February, the office will be open **Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 am - 4 pm** and Michelle will be working remotely on **Wednesdays from 9 am - 4 pm**. This schedule does change occasionally so feel free to make an appointment with office@uuithaca.org if you have church business.

*The deadline for submissions to the Wednesday Weekly Announce email and Sunday's Order of Service is **Monday at noon**.*

New SGM Forming

A new small group is waiting to form. The group will meet primarily on zoom, and meetings will be on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 7 pm. The group needs just one or two people to begin! Since it will continue from its beginning through June 2023, this short-term group is a way to try out SGM. SGM fosters the development of significant connections within FUSIT whether you are new to FUSIT or have been a member or friend for years. Group members meet to talk about topics important to their lives, (including Soul Matters topics), and also perform a service project of their choice each year to benefit FUSIT or the greater Ithaca community. Contact Marsha Kardon at 272-6582 or 607-592-2520 or mfkardon@gmail.com if you'd like to join this group or have questions about the group or SGM in general.

Thanks to Your Generosity

At our Sage Chapel Christmas Eve service, \$2,874 was collected for Babies First in the Shared Offering. Thanks so much for your generosity for this important loan program of baby equipment to families in Tompkins County!

Social Justice Council Looking for Leadership

SJC is now looking for someone to take over the role of leader for this critical part of FUSIT's mission. 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 the Ministry Visioning Team at mvt@uuithaca.org.

Appreciations

Appreciation of the board of trustees who, over the past three years, have put governance policies in place so that being a board member or part of a team is an easier task going forward.

Thank you to Jackie Jablonski for organizing the volunteers to make lunches for the homeless shelter each month!

In an effort to nurture a culture of appreciation at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca, we would like to add "Appreciations". Who here at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca have you noticed doing something above and beyond, who has been a quiet unsung hero, or who is doing an exceptional job! It can be a member or staff or friend to our community. Let's sing praises to the many people who help make our community the wonderful place it is. Send your submissions to joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org.

Emergency Pastoral Care

In case of pastoral need, call Kathy Hopkins 607-592-3025. She will direct pastoral needs for weddings, memorial services and emergency.



LGBTQ+ Group
Wednesday, February 15
from 6:30-8 pm

This Small Group is especially for FUSIT's LGBTQ+ community. Meetings typically follow the same general format and structure as other Small Group Ministries at FUSIT. Gatherings take place on the third Wednesday of each month, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. **All who identify on the LGBTQ+ continuum are welcome.**

Come enjoy this opportunity for fellowship and community within our larger FUSIT community, in a safe, confidential and nurturing environment. For more information, please contact Kevin Moss, kevinm607@hotmail.com.

Women's Circle, Monday, February 27

Women's Circle will meet via Zoom on Monday evening, **February 27**, 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 February Meeting

The Men's Group will gather for discussion and pizza on **February 27**, 2023 at 5:30 in the Arch Room. All who identify as men are welcome to join. Contact Jens Wennberg: jens207@gmail.com



In-person Living the Pledge Event, February 4th

Attention **Living the Pledge** (LTP) workshop alumni! Please join us on Saturday, **February 4th**, from 12:30-3:00 pm in the Annex at the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca (FUSIT), for an event to hear about and discuss the ways racism affects our community, and ongoing efforts to combat it at any level. FUSIT is located at 306 North Aurora Street in downtown Ithaca. Parking on the street on weekends is free.

Hosted by the **Living the Pledge** team, the event will feature good food, a presentation by LtP alum, Ruth Yarrow, and an opportunity for small group discussion. Please RSVP to arthurwoll@gmail.com.

Parking

FUSIT does not have a parking lot, but there is free parking on Aurora, Buffalo and other nearby streets on Sundays. Also, the Town Hall parking lot (on the corner of Buffalo and Aurora directly across from the church) is available for Sunday morning parking.

From the Care Team

The Care Team acts on behalf of the congregation, and by the congregation, to provide pastoral care, and support for members and friends of the congregation who are going through challenging times.



The Care Team goal is to provide various kinds of short term or infrequent support. When volunteers are available we will provide meals, food shopping, rides to appointments, rides to church, friendly phone calls, cards and visits for those that are isolated, ill or needing support. For those who need referrals for health care, mental health or eldercare, we have lists of resources and members with some experiences with these Community resources.

If you or any member or close friend of FUSIT need some assistance, please contact Kathy Hopkins at 607-592-3025 or Kathy1122@gmail.com.

As a congregation, we covenant to promote and affirm compassion and acceptance of one another. We seek to create and sustain a community of caring, in which we come together to do the work of kindness. To this end, we ask for your help in providing care and support to each other in times of illness, bereavement, and other life challenges.

This can happen! We have so much good, collective help when we work together. Whether you have time for an occasional task or long-term commitment, please contact Kathy to volunteer!

Nancy Dolge, ndolge@gmail.com and Rita Barber, barber.rita@gmail.com, co-chair a team of volunteers who coordinate Memorial Service Receptions for FUSIT members. Contact them to bake or help with staffing receptions when available.

Contact: Kathy Hopkins at 607-582-3025 or Kathy1122@gmail.com.

FUSIT Choir

Our choir meets every Thursday from 7-8:30 pm in the Annex. All are welcome! For more information, contact Choir Director Jayne Demakos (choir@uuihaca.org).

Adult Religious Exploration

The Adult Religious Education (ARE) Team offers pre-service presentations held on the first and third Sundays of each month of the church year in the Annex, unless indicated otherwise in the Order of the Service, the Weekly Announce, and/or the monthly newsletter. Coffee and treats are served starting from 8:45 am, with the presentation (including discussion and Q&A) running from 9:00-10:15 am. The Annex can be accessed through the garden entrance to the church on Aurora St.

February 5, 9:00 am in the Annex, coffee at 8:45 ***The Camino to Santiago: A Pilgrimage or a Long Hike?***

In the fall of 2015, Kathy and Richard Sholtys decided to walk the traditional Camino Frances, a 1000 year old pilgrimage from southern France to the western coast of Spain. From the beginning, they had different motivations and ways of trekking through varied terrain from the unpredictable Pyrenees Mountains to the arid, parched meseta. The six week self-guided walk offered them lessons they didn't expect, connections they never anticipated, and a feeling about the spiritual sense of life that can't always be explained. Since then, they have both walked additional Caminos in Portugal, France and Spain again, and met up with people from all walks of life. They will share with you some details of their caminos and also how it continues to impact their life to this day.

February 19, 9:00 am in the Annex coffee at 8:45 ***Seeking Truth in Today's Complex-and Often Manipulated-Media World***

FUSIT member Cyndy Scheibe is a Dana Professor in Psychology at Ithaca College teaching child development and media literacy for more than 35 years. She is also the founder and co-director of Project Look Sharp, a media literacy initiative working with teachers and librarians around the world. In addition, she coordinates the media literacy minor at the College.

Cyndy will discuss how we can navigate the news, the internet, advertising, and political messages without feeling like our heads are going to explode. Are there some sources we can trust, and others that we should stay away from? With social media algorithms, deep fakes, and AI Chatbots, can we ever tell what's real and what's not? And how do our own experiences, attitudes, and biases influence what media messages we believe and what we choose to share? We'll explore these questions, and how the media literacy skills of inquiry and reflection can help.

The Religious Exploration is Seeking Team Members and Volunteers

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.

Nametags

Our tradition is to wear nametags for Sunday services. If you need a nametag (or need a new nametag), please fill out a nametag request form at the Welcome Table on Sunday. Indicate your preferred pronouns (she/her, he/him, they/them). We'll get it ready for you to pick up at the Welcome Table the following week.