



ITHACA

UU Connections

2022/2023 Issue No.7

March 1-31, 2023

Our Spiritual Journey

Spring is my favorite season. It doesn't hurt that my birthday happens to fall on the Vernal Equinox, the first day of spring, so the start of spring has always been a celebration in my life.

It's more than that though. There is a feeling in the air, a kind of vibration, when the moisture that has been locked in the ground for the long months of winter is finally released by the thaw and you can smell the scent of the earth, rich with potential new life. The wind softens its bite and blows in rain clouds instead of snow.

Spring is a time of vulnerability. A time when the flowers and other plants begin to poke up through the dirt, seeking the sun and life. A time when a late cold snap or unexpected snow can easily kill delicate sprouts and blossoms.

Growth can feel like this sometimes, like we are reaching out in the hopes that we will flourish and bloom, not knowing if we will be met by gentle rain and warm sunshine, or if we will be met by frost, ice, or even floods. It can make us feel vulnerable, to brave the unknown in the hopes of something new.

Faith communities and people from cultures all around the world celebrate this time of year, the spring, as a time of renewal. A time of restoration. A time of new beginnings. But in that time of growth there is a kind of exposure, of defenselessness, that we also acknowledge as we gently nurture and care for this new life. We handle the eggs carefully, for fear that they may crack. We tend the soil and water the sprouts so that they can grow tall and strong.

As we continue to come back together as a community, as we enter this time of renewal and restoration, there is a vulnerability here as well. A necessity that we be open and sensitive to one another's needs. A need to nurture and care for one another, to tend to our spirits as gently as we would the newborn bunny, or the crocus who has pushed its way up through the snow.

Being vulnerable with one another is how we create true, deep, and meaningful connections. As we offer one another our hands in friendship, our hearts in love, I remind us all to be gentle with these gifts that we receive. For only through tending to one another, as we would tend to any new growth, can we help this community grow.

Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life

**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.

Mark Your Calendar!

*Sunday, **March 12***

Daylight Saving Time Begins -

Remember to Set your Clocks

One Hour Ahead.

Religious Exploration News

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

Greetings from the DRE

The Religious Exploration has begun to burst into bloom these last few months, with the opening of our Nursery, and increase of the number of children and youth attending on Sunday mornings, as well as events each month.

It is such a joy to get to connect with our children and youth, to be inspired each week by their energy and enthusiasm. And, it means that we are in a place of needing to expand our program offerings to better meet the needs of our young people. Ideally we will shift from our current all-ages classroom into three classrooms, plus the nursery.

Please consider committing to one Sunday a month to spend upstairs volunteering with our RE program. Activities, books, and materials are all provided. Volunteers get to experience the spiritual nourishment that comes from forming relationships with and making a difference in the lives of our young people.

There is nothing more rewarding than being a meaningful part of a young person's life.

Emily Richards, Director of Religious Exploration

RE Plans for March

Spring is upon us and so are new and continuing activities for parents, children, and youth at FUSIT!

Religious Exploration will continue to be offered three Sundays a month, please see the below schedule for details. In addition we are so thrilled to have our Nursery open every Sunday from 10am-12pm for all children ages 4 and under.

In addition we are continuing to offer our Music for Little People series each Thursday, Free Family Play Time on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, plus a Youth Game Night, and an All Ages Game Night.

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

March 5th: RE Sunday - *Vulnerability*, Arch Room immediately following a Time for Wonder

March 12th: RE Sunday - *Vulnerability*, Arch Room immediately following a Time for Wonder

March 19th: Multigenerational Sunday

March 26th: RE Sunday - *Vulnerability*, 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](#)

March Religious Exploration Events

Youth Game Night, Friday, **March 17th**, 6 pm-8 pm, First Congregational Church of Ithaca, Youth in grades 7-12

Youth in grades 7-12 are welcome to join us for an evening of games and St Patrick's Day fun. Bring a snack to share, green is encouraged!

All Ages Game Night, Friday, **March 31st**, 6 pm-8 pm, FUSIT Annex

Do you love games? We will have games of all types for players of all ages. Bring your favorite to share or play a new one. Snacks to share are always welcome.

Music for Very Little People, Thursdays from 12:30 -1:15 pm, **March 9th-30th**, First Unitarian Society of Ithaca
Free and open to the public four Thursdays in March. Emily Richards will offer weekly baby music classes for children 0-2 years of age with parents. We will meet upstairs in the Arch Room. Sing, play, dance, explore instruments, and connect through music.

Family Play Time, Tuesday, **March 7th** and **March 21st**, 12 pm-2 pm, FUSIT Arch Room

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

Belonging Here

Rev. Dr. David Breeden

*When it feels like lament
is the only sound and need
the only way of being,
here is that one warm
room where you know
you belong, you know
is waiting, open, ready.
Here is that place you
remember where you
are remembered in this
too cold world. This place
calls now, softly: Come
into the circle where you
know that you belong.*

(RE News, continued from page 2)

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.

OWL for grades 10-12 begins on **March 5th** and will meet from 1 pm-2:15 pm each Sunday at the First Congregational Church of Ithaca (FCCI).

[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@uuithaca.org if you are interested in supporting our Religious Exploration programming.

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.



March Worship Services

The theme for March is The Path of Vulnerability 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, March 5 **"Vulnerability and Generosity"**

Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life and Religious Exploration

Generosity can sometimes feel out of reach when we are in a place of vulnerability. How can we provide for others when we are ourselves in need? How can we both give and receive at the same time? Where do we pledge our resources, and how are we made richer, when we allow generosity to become a spiritual practice?

Sunday, March 12 **"An Invitation to Deeper Connection"**

Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life and Religious Exploration

Do you find yourself wishing for deeper connection with the people around you? Have you ever wondered about small group ministry and whether it is the missing piece in finding increased spiritual wholeness? Please join us for this reimagining of what community and connection can mean.

Sunday, March 19 **"Vulnerability - a Path to the Sacred"**

Rev. Peaches Gillette, Associate Director of Congregational Life

We look at vulnerability as an opening to something harmful, as if it is a way of exposing ourselves to attack.

Although this is one of the definitions of the word, it is also defined as a willingness – a willingness to open ourselves emotionally.

Vulnerability is a willingness to open ourselves spiritually and accept those things that may help guide us into a deeper, spiritual way of being within ourselves and the world around us.

Sunday, March 26 **"Removing the armor: practicing vulnerability in hardened times"**

Speaker, FUSIT member Magdalen Lindeberg
Special music by FUSIT Choir

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

Religious Exploration Assistant
Madeline Natale
reasst@uuithaca.org

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

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

Music Director
Stephanie Ortolano
music@uuithaca.org

Choir Director
Jayne Demakos
choir@uuithaca.org

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

Congregational Administrator
Michelle Waffner
office@uuithaca.org

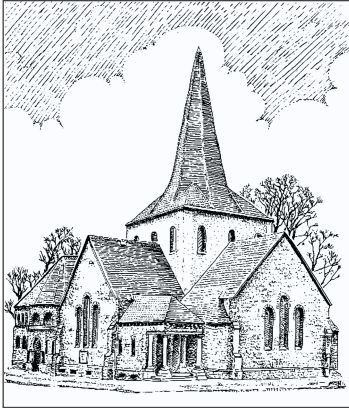
Administrative Assistant
Loretta Heimbuch
adminasst@uuithaca.org

Sexton
Rachel Seymour
sexton@uuithaca.org

Bookkeeper
Lauren Ponzoni
office@uuithaca.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 March is Vulnerability

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 Vulnerability shows up in your life.

March 1-4 : What has life taught you about leaps of faith and leaping into the unknown?

March 5-11: Are you tired of pretending that you are strong?

March 12-18 What is your favorite failure? i.e., which of your failures ended up leading to unexpected success or to a gift?

March 19-25: Are you good at asking for help? Has vulnerability gotten easier or harder as you've grown older?

March 26 - 28: How do you mask your vulnerability? What led to that form of protection? Are you sure it's not doing more harm than good?

Side With Love for March

We will be collecting toothpaste, hand soap, tissues, shampoo, conditioner and other toiletries for Village at Ithaca every Sunday morning during March.

Wanting to officially join FUSIT?

If you are interested in officially "signing the book" to join FUSIT, contact Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life, dre@uuithaca.org. The process is simple - signing the book witnessed by Emily, Rev. Peaches Gillette, or a Board member. Once an Engagement & Outreach Coordinator is hired, a newcomers' series of informational classes will be offered.

Red Cross Blood Drives

There will be two blood drives this month on **March 16 and 30**, held from 11:30 am-6:00 pm in the church parlor. Walk-ins are welcome or make an appointment at redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

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

The McCormicks have welcomed in the newest member of their family. Baby Ren is doing great and big brother Stonie is in love with his little brother.

Joys and Sorrows are now shared during Sunday Service. Please send notices to the team at joysandsorrows@uuithaca.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 March - The Path of Vulnerability

The Soul Matters theme for March is *The Path of Vulnerability*. 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/SoulMattersMar2023>

Welcome New Members

On behalf of everyone at FUSIT, we would like to welcome new members Gayle and Nick Garin and Richard Russell who recently signed the membership book.

Worship Design

On Thursday, **March 9th**, 6:00 pm, in the Arch Room, please join us for a group brainstorming session of worship elements and themes for this spring.

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 know at: office@uuithaca.org.

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.

Anti-Racism Ministry Team

The March ARMT meeting will take place on **March 22** at 7:00 pm. Please note that the ARMT Common Read will not be meeting again until the Fall, after the General Assembly meets in June to determine the Common Read for the coming year.

The Reimagining Public Safety Initiative in Ithaca

Sunday, **March 5**, at Noon in the Annex

With the goal of keeping the congregation informed about local race-related issues, the Antiracism Team is offering this after-service discussion of police-community relations. Marty Hiller will do a presentation on Ithaca's Reimagining Public Safety Initiative, in the context of antiracism and our UU principles. They will discuss the recent history of police relations in Ithaca, the City's plan for restructuring the Department, and the issues surrounding implementation. Information will be provided on how interested participants can learn more and get involved in supporting this initiative.

Art in the Parlor

It's happeninga new Art in the Parlor Team has formed and we are envisioning what is next to hang on our beautiful parlor walls. We hope to plan a year's worth of changing art "exhibits" and invite you to send us your suggestions and ideas.

Since we are a new team and are just getting to know each other's work, we are going to start by hanging a show of our artwork together. Please look for our work in the middle of February. Currently Paul Drewery has his lovely photography work on display,

Here's a profile of who we are and what we create.

Donna Faivre-Roberts creates soulful to whimsical figurative sculptures using wood gathered along Cayuga lake and adding faces she sculpts from clay. Donna also enjoys exploring new techniques such as mamigami, eco printing, rust dying and gelli printing on paper as well as fabric.

Therese O'Connor has been experimenting with fabric, art quilts, and mixed media art for many years, but recently has increased her experiments with fabric painting and dying. She has exhibited in several local shows and has won two awards.

Barbara Shew first took art classes in Florida, after retiring in 1986 from a 20 year career as a librarian at Ithaca High School. Her first representational paintings were in oil, but since then prefers pastel.

Helen Ann Yunis has worn many hats throughout her career and recently has been reconnecting with her inner artist as an apprentice to Alice Muhlback. Last year she showed her work, which was influenced in part by the suicide of her former partner of several decades and father of their daughter, Maria. Part of what is shown in the parlor centers around hope.

New Intercom System

We have installed a new intercom system on the Parish House door. To gain entry during business hours, just press the intercom button and you will be buzzed in. Please note, Michelle does have a number of tasks outside the building/her office so you are welcome to make an appointment to ensure that the office will be open.

Emergency Pastoral Care

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

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca Library

Our self-serve library is located on the Second Floor, Admin Building (Parish House), top of the stairs, or take the elevator to the second floor.

Categories:

- (1) UU Faith and History
- (2) Biographies
- (3) Death and Grieving
- (4) Environmental Issues
- (5) Governance
- (6) Health and Wellness
- (7) Meditation
- (8) Poetry
- (9) Religious Philosophy
- (10) Science and Nature
- (11) Spirituality
- (12) Women's Studies
- (13) World Religions
- (14) Social Justice

Come in and browse or search the online catalog from home:

<https://www.librarycat.org/lib/FusitLibrary>

Locate your book by category/author/title, fill out a circulation ticket, then return the book within a month.

Knowledge is power!

Congregational Administrator Hours

In March, 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.***

Message From the Board of Trustees

Who are we?

A statement of FUSIT's purpose.

These last 2+ years at FUSIT have been a time of so much questioning, searching, and transition. Our FUSIT community was shocked by the loss of our new, but already beloved minister, the loss by Covid of the face-to-face time together that we crave, and then the realization that a new settled minister would not happen. And so we took matters into our own hands, to plot a new course. These last months, many FUSIT members have been engaged in the development of our Shared Governance model, including our new MVT (Ministry Visioning Team), and OAT (Organization Administration Team), also Governance, Transitions, and other committees and teams, including, of course, the Board. And, for all of us, the Open Questions let us share what each of us wants our FUSIT community to be. In this time, everything we are about at FUSIT has been investigated, reviewed, and often rewritten to reflect who we are today, how we will engage for ourselves, and for our community.

But, during this process, so many times, in so many discussions, one overarching question that would guide our efforts has lingered: Who are we?

Who are we at FUSIT? Are we (our) UU Eight Principles? Are we those statements in the FUSIT Bylaws, our Covenant, our Mission Statement? Are we the sum of the purpose statements of our teams and committees? Many of us saw a need for a clear, succinct statement to define ourselves and why our FUSIT community exists. We wanted a statement that we can look to when we need guidance; a statement that's the 20 second sound bite for the newcomer at the welcome table; a statement for the greater outside community to understand us.

For these reasons, this Statement of FUSIT's Purpose has been proposed, debated, and agreed upon by the Board of Trustees:

FUSIT's purpose is to create and maintain a welcoming spiritual home for diverse, free-thinking people to unite in community, to provide fellowship, to broaden perspectives and understanding, and to live into our UU Principles by serving the interconnected web of life in justice, compassion, and love.

We hope and believe that you agree.

Dick Kurtz for the Board

March Board of Trustees Meeting

The March meeting will be held **March 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.

Creating An LGBTQ+ Welcoming Community

Wednesday, **March 8th**, 6:30 pm-8 pm, FUSIT Parlor

FUSIT is a Welcoming Congregation, recognized by the Unitarian Universalist Association. What does that mean to you? All members of the LGBTQ+ community, and allies, are welcome to join us for a conversation about the current issues facing the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community, as well as ways that our ministry can be welcoming, inclusive, and provide support for all identities and orientations.

UUA General Assembly

June 21 - 25, 2023

Join fellow UU's, **June 21 - 25, 2023** online or in-person in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. General Assembly 2023 will be a multiplatform event, with registration options for in-person and/or virtual participation.

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.

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@uuthaca.org.

Appreciations

-Thank you to Gayle Garin for restocking all the pew cards in the sanctuary! We appreciate the help.

-From Don Barber, "When I was thinking about my dear friend Jim Skaley at this time of his passing, I remembered how committed he was to protect FUSIT's finances while he was Treasurer and even after. Both of his successors Jennifer Streid-Mullen and Walt Peck have demonstrated that same commitment, freely giving countless hours to our community, and deep, thoughtful engagement in FUSIT affairs. I deeply appreciate Jim, Jennifer, and Walt for their service as FUSIT's Treasurers."

-Thank you so much to everyone who sent in a friend to participate in our 3rd Annual StUuffy Sleepover. With special thanks to Stephanie Ortolano, Cecelia Ortolano, Beth Mudge, Madonna Stallman, Rachel Seymour, and Madeline Natale for helping to make the magic happen.

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@uuthaca.org.

Shared Plate Collection

We will share our **March 26** Sunday service collecton with the Second Wind Cottages in Ithaca.



LGBTQ+ Group
Wednesday, March 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, March 27

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

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

Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee is preparing for our pledge campaign in March, starting with a chance to dance your pledge card down the aisle during the **March 5** Sunday service. During that service we would like multiple congregants to share brief testimonials about how FUSIT has been meaningful in your life. It can be your 'origin' story with FUSIT or something more recent.

If you would like to share, please contact Matt Hare at stewardship@uuthaca.org.

StewardSoup Lunch

Join the congregational StewardSoup Lunch **March 12** in the Annex to celebrate the many ways congregants support our **Connect * Inspire * Engage** mission, including giving time, talent and treasure. 12 noon Sunday with soup and activities available for all diets and all ages. If you want to help, please contact Matt Hare at stewardship@uuthaca.org.

Pub Theology

Tuesday, **March 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 Vulnerability. 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.

Ministry Visioning Team Report

The MVT met again on February 10 to discuss several pertinent issues. The first of these was the future of the Social Justice Council (SJC). As background, Mary Clabby spoke about her past involvement with the work of the Charleston UU church and their collaboration with the local chapter of DART (thedartcenter.org). After discussion, we are proposing the creation of a Social Justice Steering Team, which would consist of three to four individuals and would:

- Help to create and maintain an organizational structure that supports all of our social justice teams and projects in moving forward with their work
- Work together to identify a couple of congregation-wide projects per year
- Collect and distribute a list of local organizations and ways to support them
- Assist with communicating opportunities for social justice work to the FUSIT community

This new model was discussed at a congregation-wide meeting on February 19th.

We next discussed the process that's begun to fill the Engagement and Outreach position. Until that person is in place, it is challenging to find volunteers to sit at the Welcoming Table before and after services.

On February 16 there was a session between MVT and OAT. All agree that open communications between these two teams is essential for the future health of FUSIT.

Unirondack

As you have heard Unirondack is happening this year - **September 1-4!** We have a strong and willing committee of 12 people already at work. We will be tabling after services on **March 12 and March 26.** Come see our slide show. Past Unirondackers will be on hand to answer any questions you may have.

And please send pictures from past Unirondack gatherings to Michele Hochstetter at mhochstetter@gmail.com or Sue Mann at susan.m.mann@gmail.com!

FUSIT Choir Every Thursday

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@uuithaca.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.

● **March 5**, 9:00 am in the Annex, coffee at 8:45

Grant Farred is a Professor at the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell. He has written on a range of subjects including race, politics, sports, and the formation of intellectuals. His most recent book is about Ukraine: *The Zelensky Method* (Westphalia Press 2022).

Professor Farred will review the current situation in Ukraine, and argue that the primary responsibility for liberating Ukraine from Putin must begin with the Russian people, such as those Russian soldiers who form the "Free Russia Legion", a group of Russian fighters supporting the Ukrainian forces. The Free Russia Legion is a combat group composed of Russians so opposed to President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine that they have been willing to take up arms against their own country. Their goal is to repel the Russian invasion of Ukraine and ultimately depose the Putin regime.

● **March 19**, 9:00 am in the Annex, coffee at 8:45

Anthroposophy: "A Brief Introduction, with Thoughts on the Meaning of Life and Death."

Anthroposophy (wisdom of the human being) was developed by Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian philosopher and scientist who lived from 1861 to 1925. His philosophy teaches that "through inner development and training a person can gain knowledge of the spiritual world." Its lasting outgrowths include Biodynamic farming, Waldorf education (we have a Waldorf school here in Ithaca), and Curative Education centers like Camphill communities and schools, which offer support and acceptance to adults and children with various disabilities and special needs. Steiner's philosophy also inspires philanthropy (see "RSF Social Finance"), architecture and art, counseling, biography work, and various healing arts such as music, speech, and drama.

Our speaker, Inez Vermaas, was introduced to anthroposophy at age 14, and it has been central to her life ever since. She studied biodynamic farming both in the Netherlands and at Emerson College in England. After visiting a Camphill community in the north of England, she continued working in Camphill communities for the next 30 years, including 16 years in South Africa and 4 in Copake in the Hudson River valley. Moving to Ithaca in 2013, she and her current partner Tom started a bed & breakfast overlooking Treman State Park. She enjoys the "hundreds of guests who enrich our lives." Inez' talk will be followed by some time for lively discussion!

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.

Application for Pedersen Memorial GA Scholarship

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

Each year, no more than up to \$2,000 will be granted to applicants showing financial need. Application Deadline: **April 1st**. Email or print to office@uuihaca.org. The guidelines for this scholarship are as follows:

- An active member of FUSIT or registered participant in FUSIT RE program.
- Each family can apply for support for up to 2 people's (youth and/or adult) early registration fees.
- Applications for other support will be seen as indication of level of commitment of individual and will not be assumed to replace a FUSIT grant (in other words, if they receive a work assignment that covers registration, they may still use the FUSIT money to defer travel/housing costs).
- No family will receive a grant 2 years in a row, and preference will be given to those who have not received FUSIT funding in the past.
- All applicants who are granted funding must attend General Assembly as delegates on behalf of the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca. See the guidelines for delegates here: <https://www.uua.org/ga/congregations/delegates>

Please use the below link to apply:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdtqCkL_zkA93Mj0aIZotB4sxSPbJOEGroEh-SyOWPNHBrxFw/viewform?usp=sf_link



Beacon on Aurora - An Evening with Pat Byrne

Sunday, **March 5**, 2023

Beacon on Aurora is a new concert series held monthly on a Sunday evening at First Unitarian Society. Our March musician is Pat Byrne.

Following his 2021 *Into The Light* album, Byrne delivered strong new works in 2022. His unmistakable voice and cinematic lyrics continue to touch our universal humanity. Supported by legendary musicians from Emmylou Harris's band he presents another gem with "Only a Man". Recorded at The Next Waltz with Bruce Robison and band, "Until it Isn't" is a gorgeous rendition wistfully recalling lost love.

Byrne's December 2022 release, "Feels Like Living", makes palpable the working musician's struggle and uncertainty, underpinned by a nostalgic arrangement of strings and harmonium. *Into the Light*, recorded at the Sound Emporium studio in Nashville, takes the listener on an emotional journey with lyrics both touching and agonizing – heightened by Byrne's dynamic vocal style.

6:30 pm doors open, 7 pm show

\$20 suggested donation at the door
Cash preferred

Message from the Stewardship Team

Connect • Inspire • Engage • Pledge!

Have you felt it? Our UU congregation is positively electric with reconnection, engaging programs, inspiring sermons, new faces and impactful community engagement. The Stewardship team wants to capture this energy and tie it to our mission because we impact lives when we **Connect • Inspire • Engage and Pledge!**

You may wonder how somebody can get excited about a pledge campaign, but I look forward to this annual moment when we can live into our faith by supporting the good work we do, the excellent and dedicated staff we cherish, and the triad of ministers who each nurture our souls in their own way. Our pledges go straight to the operating fund that feeds all this, managed carefully by our treasurer, Walt Peck, and the Finance Committee.

At the **March 5** Sunday service we will launch the pledge campaign in style. In addition to Emily's sermon, multiple voices from our congregation will share short personal reflections about how FUSIT has been important in them. Those exemplify the impacts, and there are many others, that we are supporting. You are invited to come dance your pledge card down the aisle that day, but of course there are other ways to deliver your pledge as well. All that is explained in the letter you received in your mailbox or will receive imminently.

To further our reconnection and resurgence, you are invited to come break bread together at a StewardSoup Lunch on **March 12** at 12 noon in the Annex. Let's celebrate us – all the giving of our talent and time in addition to treasure. We hope to see all of you there, including families (there will be children-friendly soup). Please reach out to the Care Team if you want to attend but need help to do so.

Matt Hare & the Stewardship Team

Amelia Habicht, Jeanette Knapp, Jack Roscoe, Wendy Schaerer, Margaret Nichols

2023 Annual FUNdraiser

COMMUNITY-WIDE ONLINE AUCTION

Coming Soon!



April 28, 29, 30

9 am-9 pm daily

Goal: \$8,000



The auction will be open to all those in Ithaca and its surrounding areas. At least 50% of our bid items will be donations of gift certificates and baskets from local merchants, thus offering ample outreach opportunities.

Preparations are underway:

- * Our Board has been notified.
- * The Bidding Owl website has been updated.
- * A list of community contacts has been created.
- * A list of community vendors has been created.
- * An auction team has come forward.
- * Outreach materials have been developed.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. During the month of March, we will be contacting additional local vendors, to see if they'd like to join our 50+ vendor-partners of last year. We need you to recommend your favorite shops/restaurants/services to, hopefully, join in the effort.

2. It would be so appreciated if you could lend a hand with soliciting or advertising.

Contact: Marie Benedetti at marieben@tweny.rr.com.

And with everyone generously offering wonderful items up for bid, spreading the word, and actively participating, we're guaranteed a successful fundraiser!