



ITHACA

UUU Connections

2022/2023 Issue No.8

April 1-30, 2023

Our Spiritual Journey

Vulnerable: An Opening to the Spirit

I stand beneath the sky and absorb the vibrations and energy that are part of the vast, shimmering, cosmic curtain that veils the heavens. This is when I feel God - I submit.

I kneel beneath the stars and the perfectness of the universe. I open myself to all things - there is wonder, humility, and wisdom in all things.

Our meaning and purpose are embedded in the fact that we are willing to take things into ourselves, into our hearts and souls, opening ourselves to the divine and the sacred. We do this when we absorb the wholeness of our children, when we feel sorrow, when we forgive and ask to be forgiven, when we laugh, cry, and look out onto the suffering and feel their pain.

That we love makes us vulnerable to all things.

Suppose we close ourselves to heartache and refuse to be tender and spiritually permeable; we then close ourselves to the beauty and healing powers of our principles. We block ourselves from the light we can bring into the world and the light that can be brought to us.

If we are too spiritually guarded, too afraid to feel all there is, we consequently and sadly, no longer see the purpose and divinity of our vulnerability, and we will no longer see it in others, which allows us to open our hearts to them, welcoming them into our communities.

I allow my spirit to be touched repeatedly, to be vulnerable. I do not resist. I can bear much because my love is made strong by my faith, and my faith is infinite.

Within the spirit lies all compassion, all hope, all joy, all peace - these virtues are hinged on our understanding the use of our vulnerability.

We must do our best to fully open our spiritual selves and embrace the sacredness of our vulnerability.

Rev. Peaches Gillette, Associate Director of Congregational Life

Our Mission

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

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@uuthaca.org.

Greetings from the DRE

Spring has sprung and it is such a wonderful time to be a part of this community. Just as the world around us is slowly transitioning back to one of green leaves and colorful flowers, we have also been transitioning back into a flourishing spiritual community after a long period of dormancy. And our religious exploration program is no exception.

As we turn our thoughts to the path of resistance this month I encourage you to think about how resistance has both hindered and assisted you as you have moved through this world. Consider the times when you were met with resistance that caused extra challenges in your life, but also the way that you have shown resistance and created growth and expansion.

Our Religious Exploration program is going through its own period of growth and expansion, one that we hope you will be a part of. As our young people put down roots in this faith tradition and begin to reach upward and outward with their ideas, questions, connections, and creativity we invite you to be a part of that which nourishes them. Becoming involved with our Religious Exploration programming may be just the sunshine that you need to revitalize yourself and create a deeper connection to this community.

Emily Richards, Director of Religious Exploration

RE Plans for April

This spring we have new and continuing activities for parents, children, and youth at FUSIT!

Religious Exploration will continue to be offered four Sundays this month, please see the below schedule for details. In addition we are so thrilled to have our Nursery open every Sunday from 10 am-12 pm for all children ages 4 and under. We are also 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 Spring Celebration as well, offering another Movie Night with drop off available because it was such a big hit in February.

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

April 2th: RE Sunday - Resistance, Arch Room immediately following a Time for Wonder

April 9th: RE Sunday - Resistance, Arch Room immediately following a Time for Wonder

April 16th: RE Sunday - Resistance, Arch Room immediately following a Time for Wonder

April 23th: RE Sunday - Resistance, Arch Room immediately following a Time for Wonder

April 30th: Multigenerational Sunday - Blessings of the Earth. Please join us for a fun and interactive Sunday morning service for all ages.

RE Volunteers Needed!

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

April Religious Exploration Events

Spring Celebration

Saturday, **April 8th**, 12 pm-2 pm, FUSIT Parlor

Please join us for a celebration of the spring holidays including Easter, Passover, Ramadan, Ostara, Earth Day and more. There will be egg dyeing, crafts, games, snacks, and an opportunity for pictures with the Easter Bunny.

April Movie Night

Friday, **April 28th**, 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](#)

Planting Heart

Rosario Murillo

*I'm going to plant a heart in the earth water it with love,
I'm going to praise it with the push of muscle and care for it in
the sound of all dimensions.*

*I'm going to leave a heart in the earth
so it may grow and flower a heart that throbs with longing that adores
everything green,
that will be strength and nourishment for birds,
that will be the sap of plants and mountains.*

(RE News, continued from page 2)

Music for Little People Ages 3-5

Thursdays from 12:30 pm-1:15 pm

April 6th, 20th, and 27th - no class

April 13th, First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Free and open to the public three Thursdays in April. 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.

Family Play Time

Tuesday, **April 4th and April 18th**

12 pm-2 pm

FUSIT Arch Room

Come in out of the weather any time between noon and 2:00pm on the first and third Tuesday of the month and connect with other families during this open, unstructured playtime for all ages.

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.



April Worship Services

The theme for April is *The Path of Resistance 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, April 2

“Resistance, Social Justice and Faith”

Rev. Peaches Gillette, Associate Director of Congregational Life

Peaches is an educator, essayist, poet and spiritual leader. She is interested in building communities that model how to engage in peace talks and civility, utilizing her training in negotiations to respectfully, and effectively discuss conflicting ideologies.

Special music by VOICES Multicultural Choir

Sunday, April 9

“Wrestling with Resurrection”

Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life and Religious Exploration

As Unitarian Universalists, how do we find connection and meaning in the symbology of resurrection as a path to resistance? What lessons can we learn, and how can we bring those lessons to life to act as a catalyst for transformation within ourselves and our communities?

Special music by Stephanie Ortolano

Sunday, April 16

“The Time Is Now, “We are Who The World Has Been Waiting For” Alliance Of Families For Justice”

Phoebe Brown, speaker

Alliance of Families for Justice supports, empowers and mobilizes families with incarcerated loved ones and justice-involved individuals so that they can marshal their collective power and catalyze systemic change.

Special music by Roberta Crawford

Sunday, April 23

“Breaking Through Resistance”

Rev. Elisa Sciscioli Keeler, founder of *Freeing Your Voice* and a teacher of the *Hidden Treasure Program* at *Light on the Hill Retreat Center*.

Why do we resist what we most long for? With awareness, insight and practice, we learn to move through resistance with grace.

Special music by Rev. Elisa Sciscioli Keeler

Sunday, April 30

“Blessings of the Earth”

Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life and Religious Exploration

The continuation of life on earth is a miracle and a blessing, a cause for celebration. Please join us for this fun and engaging all-ages service in which we will honor the earth and the interconnected web of which we are all a part.

Special music by FUSIT Choir

Director of Congregational Life and Religious Exploration

Emily Richards

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Religious Exploration Assistant

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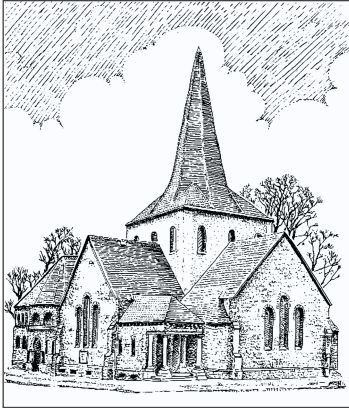
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Visit our Website and get
your newsletter:
www.uuithaca.org

Possible Ponderings

The theme for April is the Path of Resistance

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 Resistance shows up in your life.

April 1-8 : How did your parents' acts of resistance shape you? Has your resistance to change grown or eased as you've gotten older?

April 9-15: Have you been following the path of least resistance for so long that you no longer notice?

April 16-22: Is it possible that the form of resistance you need to take right now is rest?

April 23-29: What problematic emotion is hardest for you to resist? Jealousy? Pessimism? Spite? Judgmentalism? Wanting to be right? Wanting to always win? What is one thing you might do to get better at that?

April 30: Are you resisting looking at a truth in your life right now?

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.

The Benefits of Singing Together

"When you sing in a group, whether it's a large choir or a smaller group, the act of collective singing causes your body to release endorphins. This hormone can help promote positive feelings". Do you know that a scientific study showed that 30 minutes of singing increases your immune system function....no side effects and full of pleasure and meaning. (<https://www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-singing>)

Come sing with the FUSIT choir. We are warm, friendly and joyful and dedicated to bringing the FUSIT community the best and most moving and relevant choir music possible.

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 Beverly Hammons and Preston Wilson on the death of Beverly's only sister, Joyce Hammons, who died recently of natural causes at her home in Missouri.

Our condolences go out to the family and friends of Marion P. Moulton McPheeters, 98, who passed away in Ithaca on March 4.

Our condolences go out to Joan, Steve and August Doria upon the sudden death of their sister in law and aunt, Natalee Pyatt, who was 62. The Doria family is also keeping their other sister in law, Clare Butterworth, in their hearts, after her recent diagnosis of lung cancer.

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 April - The Path of Resistance

The Soul Matters theme for April is *The Path of Resistance*. 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/SoulMattersApr2023>

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.

Archived Sermon Transcripts

Written transcripts of last summer's services (and select other sermons) are now available [on the website](#).

If you missed these sermons or would like to revisit them, please check out the link above! We will be adding sermons to the page periodically.

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.

*** Side with Love: April**

In April we'll be collecting pantry items for St. John's Community Services of Ithaca. Through the shelter at St. John's, they provide emergency housing to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. They also provide food pantry and emergency food services to those in need. We're asking for the following items to be donated during the Sunday services in April:

- * peanut butter
- * granola bars
- * jelly
- * cereal
- * fruit snacks
- * dried pasta
- * snack-sized chips/nuts
- * pasta sauce
- * bottled Gatorade

The **Shared Plate on the last Sunday in April** will also benefit the efforts of St. John's in providing critical services to those needing housing and food services in our community.

Social Justice Leadership Team

The Ministry Visioning Team (MVT) announces the formation of the Social Justice Leadership Team to coordinate Social Justice (SJ) work at FUSIT. Matt Franke-Singer and Mary Clabby were recruited by the MVT to join Rev Peaches Gillette and JoAnn Kowalski (members of MVT) to form this Team. The Social Justice Council came to MVT for help last fall. When the previous SJC leader, Jackie Jablonski, stepped down, the team was left without anyone able to take on the additional responsibilities of the team leader role. MVT met with SJC in November to ask them their ideas of how they imagined re-organization. SJC asked MVT to come up with a plan. A congregational conversation in January generated lots of good ideas for activities, plus a suggestion for a team rather than a single leader.

For this spring the SJ Leadership Team was tasked with:

- 1). Support and communicate information about the projects and opportunities for SJ work already being done at FUSIT.
- 2). Identify one or two congregation wide projects each year.
- 3). Encourage and support those who want to initiate a project or activities on a particular SJ issue.
- 4). Collecting and distributing a list of local organizations doing Social Justice work and ways to support them. Plus the team will continue to re-imagine SJ work at FUSIT looking at issues such as charity versus long term relational involvement, looking at partnering with other community organizations outside FUSIT, looking at where the need is greatest in our community, and looking at our issue of privilege as we continue SJ work and embark on new efforts.

Thanks to all who have showed up with your ideas, your presence and your energy! If you wish to participate in social justice activities or offer suggestions and ideas, contact the new Social Justice Leadership Team at sjlt@uuithaca.org.

Anti-Racism Ministry Team

The April ARMT meeting will take place on **April 26** at 7:00 pm. The ARMT meets on the 4th Wednesday of every month. Contact [joAnn kowalski](mailto:joann.kowalski@gmail.com): jmkowalskiro@gmail.com.

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.

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!



Social Justice and a Side of Salad -

Sunday, April 2, after service

Hello FUSIT Congregation! Please join us on Sunday, **April 2**, after service for a Social Justice Salad Celebration!

Come mingle, eat different salads and get to know the many social justice-oriented activities that are happening or are being organized at FUSIT. We ask that you come get to know others who are interested in social justice activities and perhaps find a way to get involved!

All are welcome! We expect to have representatives from a wide range of topics including Babies First, efforts to engage youth to Reentry programs, sign ups for ongoing antiracism work as directed by our recent 8th Principle and many more. We hope to see you all!

If you'd like to have a table and haven't already been invited, please contact the Social Justice Leadership Team at sjlt@uuithaca.org.

The event will include lunch that is entirely plant-based (vegan) and will be provided by the Demonstrating Our Values Through Eating (DOVE) Action Team of the Social Justice Council.

Congregational Administrator Hours

In April, 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

What we can tell you about plans for next year

The Board of Trustees with its Ministry Partners, the Operations Administration Team (OAT) and the Ministry Visioning Team (MVT) have been doing our new Partnership Governance model for over 7 months now. Plus Congregational Life Team of Emily Richards and Rev Peaches Gillette and Rev Janet Shortall doing Pastoral Care have been doing ministry work. As we have lived this new model we are finding what works well (a lot of it!) and where the holes are – we knew there would be some. Folded into this complex process has been the tasks involved in reconstituting FUSIT after COVID. It has been a challenging year of very hard work AND we are making progress. This model is working; FUSIT is flourishing.

Two things have been really clear. First is that we still do not have enough money for a full time minister next year. Secondly, it has taken a while to see how the Board, MVT, OAT and the three ministry staff are functioning together in our new model. Full evaluation will be completed in the next couple of months. The Board, OAT, and MVT will be evaluating themselves, the Board will be evaluating the governance structure as a whole, and OAT will be evaluating the senior staff.

What we can say is that FUSIT will have some similar iteration of structure and staff as last year. The statement that we gave to Stewardship for the Pledge campaign is this:

We have tried a new format for governance and ministry this past year and have discovered amazing skills here within our congregation and local community. Going forward, we are continuing to refine the roles within ministry and governance to ensure everyone is working in areas of passion and strength, the workloads are equitable, and we are staying within our budget.

This is where we are. The Board is extremely grateful for your trust and support this year and hope it will continue.

*Gratefully,
Nancy Miller for the Board*

April Board of Trustees Meeting

The April meeting will be held **April 19** 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.

First Unitarian is a UUA-recognized LGBTQ+ Welcoming Congregation

Women's Circle, Monday, April 24

Women's Circle will meet via Zoom on Monday evening, **April 24**, 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 April Meeting

The Men's Group will gather for discussion and pizza on **April 24**, 2023 at 5:30 in the Arch Room. All who identify as men are welcome to join. Contact Jens Wennberg: jens207@gmail.com

Appreciations

-Thank you to Sara Catterall for fixing a number of broken tiles on the Annex floor.

-Thank you to Melanie Kozlowski for knitting hats for Babies First.

-from Matt Hare "As chair of Stewardship I get to wear the purple hat and have a public role encouraging our pledging generosity. I'm just the visible part of a dedicated Stewardship team, and this year we had extra folks help stuff and lick envelopes. Thank you. My special thanks goes to Michelle Waffner, our office manager, who is so organized she often had important Stewardship things done before I even thought to ask for them!"

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@uuitbaca.org.

New SGM Forming

A new small group is starting soon and can accept more members. The group will meet primarily on zoom, and meetings will be on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 7 pm. Since it will continue from its beginning at least through June 2023 and possibly through the summer, this short-term group is a good 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.

FUSIT Library

Did you know... the FUSIT Library (located upstairs in the Parish House) has over 800 books available to check out. Visit our [online catalog](#) or stop in and browse the shelves.



LGBTQ+ Group Wednesday, April 19 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, nurturing environment. For more information, please contact Kevin Moss, kevinm607@hotmail.com.

Congregational Conversation - Welcoming Congregation Renewal Program Sunday, April 23rd, 12 pm-1:15 pm, Parlor

FUSIT is a Welcoming Congregation, recognized by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). The Five Practices of Welcome Renewal are five benchmarks that every congregation needs to integrate into congregational life in order to renew their Welcoming Congregation status and to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, genderqueer, non-binary, and the like feel fully welcomed, centered, and embraced in our Unitarian Universalist congregation. Please join us for a Congregational Conversation about the process of renewing our Welcoming Congregation status and plans to move forward with this during the next church year.



2023 Ware Lecture: Imani Perry UUA General Assembly - June 21 - 25

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) President, in consultation with the General Assembly Planning Committee, invites a distinguished guest each year to address the General Assembly as the Ware Lecturer. This year Imani Perry, scholar of law, literary and cultural studies, and an author of creative non-fiction will present this lecture. She is the Hughes-Rogers professor of African American Studies at Princeton University and this summer will join the faculty at Harvard University as a Radcliffe Professor. She is the author of seven books, most recently *South to America: A Journey Below the Mason-Dixon to Understand the Soul of a Nation* which received the 2022 National Book Award for Non-fiction and was an instant New York Times bestseller and Indie bestseller. More information at www.uua.org. See GA registration link on page 10.



Pub Theology

Tuesday, **April 25**, 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 *The Path of Resistance*. 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!
The Annual Meeting will be
Wednesday, May 24th

Help Needed 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.

We are currently seeking four volunteers for **April 4th**. 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. Remember you can be reimbursed, in full or in part, for your expenses. Just let Jackie know. To volunteer and/or ask questions, contact Jackie Jablonski at jackiejab@me.com.

Do You Want to Give a Sermon?

FUSIT's Summer Services will be **June 18th though September 3rd** at 9:30 am. Church members and other people from the community will lead the services. So if you would like to give a sermon this summer, please contact us.

We will also need people to help run the services setting up the equipment, being ushers, helping with snacks and cleaning up. If you are interested, contact Jens Wennberg (Jens207@gmail.com) or Preston Wilson (presbev1@gmail.com).

Thanks to Your Generosity

Thanks to the generosity of those who contributed to the shared plate, the following organizations received these amounts:
 —On January 22, we collected \$450.69 for the Advocacy Center in Ithaca
 —On February 26, we collected \$538.25 for Planned Parenthood

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.

- **April 2**, 9:00 am in the Annex, coffee at 8:45
Neurobiology of Meditation, presenter Deana Bodnar

During the past several decades there has been a considerable amount of research on the effects of meditation on the brain. This talk will give provide a practical understanding of how various meditation practices can change neural circuits in the brain and lead to associated changes in emotions and behaviors in one's daily life. First, we will review some basic principles of how neural circuits are formed and can be changed along with general structure and function of different areas of the brain. Then we will examine the neural circuits involved in different types of meditation such as mindfulness and compassion meditations and how these change with continued practice.

Deana Bodnar has a Ph.D. in Neurobiology from UC Berkeley and was a research associate in the Section of Neurobiology and Behavior at Cornell University for 11 years. She then made a change in career and became a Licensed Master of Social Worker and has worked in social services for the past 17 years. Deana routinely reads research literature on neuroscience of various meditation practices as well as mindfulness-based interventions used in mental health and substance use disorder treatment. She has been a student and practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism at Namgyal Monastery for over 20 years.

- **April 16**, 9:00 am in the Annex, coffee at 8:45
The Breadth of Grieving, Rev. Peaches Gillette

When we sit as attentive listeners for friends, family, members of faith communities, particularly, aging communities, our listening must encompass our hearts.

This Adult Education gathering will give us an opportunity to explore a broader range of what it means to grieve and mourn and learn to identify those feelings in those around us.

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.

Important Reminder for Committee/Team Leaders

The deadline for Committee/Team annual reports is May 1, 2023.

Please be as brief as possible, limiting your report to no more than 300-500 words, highlighting important facts with bullets, including photos or graphics (please send these as jpegs).

Please send your annual reports to Loretta at adminasst@uuithaca.org by **May 1st**, since it takes several weeks to compile this report to be presented at the FUSIT Annual Meeting on Wednesday, **May 24th**.

It's almost here! Registration for Unirondack opens Sunday, April 2, 11:45 am

A cheer went up in the sanctuary when we announced FUSIT is returning to Unirondack this year. And so...get ready...registration opens Sunday, **April 2**, at 11:45 am.

For those at church that day, we will have laptops for you to register right after the service.

For those at home, look for the link in an email to come on the listserv and Weekly Announcement.

Hearing about Unirondack for the first time? Awesome! Every Labor Day weekend (interrupted only for pandemics!) FUSIT goes to Unirondack, 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.

2023 Dates: Friday September 1 to Monday September 4.

Questions? Email Sue Mann (susan.m.mann@gmail.com) or Michele Hochstetter (mhochstetter@gmail.com).

How to Access the Annex by Elevator

To access the Annex by elevator for Adult RE and other FUSIT events, please use the door at 208 E. Buffalo St. Take the elevator to the second floor.



Connect • Inspire • Engage • Pledge!

Pledge Season Is NOW

Thank you to the many members and friends who have already made a pledge of support for the church year ahead. Our 2023-24 pledge campaign is off to a great start. As we go to press, 50 households have already pledged \$105,591. That puts us well on our way toward our ambitious \$350,000 goal. Thank you!

If you have not made your pledge yet, please do so now. It takes all of us together to support our beloved community. In this spirit, it is less important for you to deliberate about how much to give (be generous within your means), and more important for you to pledge something, now. Our capacity to live our 'Connect, Inspire, Engage' mission in 2023-24 depends on how much we pledge this spring. The board is already at work on the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, a budget formed around pledge campaign results.

Your pledge is not only essential financially, it is a vote of confidence in all we are doing and hope to do to build a stronger, kinder, loving community. Make your pledge today. Unearth and mail that pledge card, or pledge online at <http://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/>, or email or call Michelle at office@uuithaca.org or (607)-273-7521.

Thank you!

With hope and love,

Matthew Hare & the Stewardship Team

Beacon on Aurora - An Evening with Julian Taylor



Sunday, April 23, 7:00 pm

In April, our monthly concert series will feature the music of Julian Taylor. Toronto-based singer-songwriter Julian Taylor has been part of the musical fabric and landscape in Canada for over two decades. Taylor enjoyed a breakthrough year in 2020, when his second solo acoustic album, *The Ridge*, earned a million plays on Spotify, praise from press worldwide, and airplay from America to Australia to the U.K. Loaded with soulful Americana and country twang, the album was produced by Taylor himself and Saam Hashemi.

*Doors open at 6:30 pm. Show begins at 7:00 pm.
\$20 suggested donation. Cash preferred.*

Spiritual Yoga Series

**Sunday, April 16th & Sunday, April 30th
12:15 pm-1:15 pm, Arch Room**

This Kundalini Fusion Series is guided by Madeline Natale. You can expect Asana (pose), Mantra, Meditation, and Pranayama (breath). Each class will aim to move energy that we have stored in our bodies and create a deeper sense of awareness. This class is accessible to all bodies. Bring a yoga mat and a blanket for your comfort. Chairs will be provided for anyone who needs one. Email reasst@uuithaca.org if you have any questions.



2023 Annual FUNdraiser

COMMUNITY-WIDE ONLINE AUCTION

April 28, 29, 30

Opens April 28 at 9 am - Closes April 30 at 9 pm

Goal: \$8,000

Throughout the month of March, over 65 vendors in our community have given generously to our fundraiser. Up for bid will be theatre tickets, airport travel vouchers, restaurant gift cards, baskets of goodies, museum memberships, fine wines, "staycations," and much, much more!

Now it's time for FUSIT members and friends to add their own treasures and services to the pile. So let's think about Spring cleaning out all the wonderful items and services that we are eager to share with others. Your donations, having a \$20 minimum value, will be accepted over the next few weeks, **April 1-21**. You will be submitting a donation form and photo for each item. Donation instructions are given on the welcome page of our Bidding Owl auction website which you can simply access by searching: **fusit bidding owl**.

Examples of hot auction items are:

pottery, jewelry, coffee-table books, antiques, beautiful plants, dinner parties, and wall décor.

Contact Marie Benedetti with questions, concerns, or for instructions: marieben@twcny.rr.com.

So mark your calendars, let your donations come rolling in, and enjoy the fun of participating in our 2023 community-wide online auction!

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. In-person registration includes access to events scheduled to take place in Pittsburgh, as well as everything available to virtual registrants.

Full virtual registration includes access to the GA app, as well as all on-demand programming, live webinars, and live-streamed events.

In-person registration rates will increase on May 1.

[Register Here.](#)