



ITHACA

# UUU Connections

2023/2024 Issue No. 2

October 1-31, 2023

## Our Spiritual Journey

*"We can learn from the past but we cannot change it; our power lies in giving our best to what lies in front of us right now." - Rev. Colleen McDonald*

As a parent I often worry. I worry about the little things like, did my kids eat enough healthy food today? Or, is the fact that my kids still don't know how to tie their shoes a reflection on my parenting? I worry about the big things too like, are my children safe when I'm not with them? And, what would happen to them if I died suddenly?

Along with those worries come the concerns about the lessons that I am teaching my children, both intentionally and unintentionally. Am I giving them the tools that they need to be happy and healthy, to strive and flourish in their lives? Am I doing and saying things that are harmful? Am I creating trauma even though what I am trying to give is love and support?

Heritage is everything that came before, that which shapes us and our society. But heritage is also a gift that we give to the next generation. We can learn lessons from the past, important lessons about what it means to be human, about our values and beliefs. But we can't change the past. We can only use that knowledge to help us and guide us in the now. Because part of heritage, maybe the most important part, is what we are giving for the future.

I know that I am not perfect. And that imperfection is reflected in all aspects of my life, including my parenting. There are times that I make mistakes. Times that I do not show up for my kids with my best self. Times that I cause harm. But that doesn't mean that I am going to stop doing the best that I can with what is in front of me right now. I'm still going to tell my kids every day how much I love them. I'm going to apologize when I mess up. Because the heritage that I am most concerned about is the one that I am leaving behind, for them.

What do we want our heritage, as UUs, to be? What gifts do we want to start creating, right now, for those who come next? Because heritage isn't an untouchable past or an unknowable future, it is the here and now. It is every action that we take, or don't take. It is every word spoken, or unspoken. It is the very essence of who we choose to be today.

What gifts of heritage will you offer?

*Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life and Religious Exploration*

### Our Mission

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

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

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

**Masking is optional.**

**Nursery childcare is open and Religious Exploration classes for children have begun.**

*See page 2 for details.*

### Moving Forward

At the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca we lift up the expertise and guidance of the scientific community. As such we encourage community members to stay up to date with vaccinations, be proactive by wearing high-quality masks when indoors, and consider personal risk when gathering with others.

# Religious Exploration News

For information about Religious Exploration, please contact Emily Richards at [dre@uuithaca.org](mailto:dre@uuithaca.org).

## Greetings from the DRE

Fall has officially arrived and we are excited to begin our first full month of regular religious exploration programming including twice monthly Classroom Sundays, as well as Creative Sundays, and Multigenerational Sundays. October's theme of *The Gift of Heritage* invites us to lean into a shift from a specific list of Sources to a general wider exploration of inspirations.

## Classroom Sundays

**Elementary:** Our young people in the elementary grades will be exploring the many gifts of this faith through our Soul Matters Curriculum this year. Grades PreK-1st and 2nd-5th will gather in their own classrooms to engage in activities around our theme of Heritage this month.

**Middle School and High School:** Our youth will be exploring our neighboring faiths this year through the Crossing Paths curriculum. To start off the year they will begin with our own faith, Unitarian Universalism, and will visit our neighbors at the UU Binghamton Congregation on **October 22nd**. If you have a young person who plans on attending please fill out our [Permission Form](#).

If you are interested in driving youth and attending some of these trips to learn more about the diversity of faith traditions in our communities please email Emily Richards at [dre@uuithaca.org](mailto:dre@uuithaca.org).

## RE Registration

If you haven't already done so, please register your children below for the 2023-2024 Religious Exploration program! This information helps us to plan the upcoming year.

[First Unitarian Society of Ithaca RE Registration Form 2023-2024](#)

## RE Volunteer Opportunities

We have so much appreciation for all of the community members who have volunteered to enrich our community through participating in our Religious Exploration programming. Volunteering for the RE program is a gift of welcome that we all have to give and I hope you will consider joining our amazing team of volunteers. This important programming can only happen with the support of the entire community.

We are still in need of one volunteer to join our PreK-2nd classroom and one volunteer to join our 3rd-5th grade classroom this spring, as well as multiple opportunities to lead or help out with our Creative Sundays.

[FUSIT 2023-2024 RE Volunteer Sign Up](#)

Please join our FUSIT Parents Facebook Group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/fusitparents>

*Emily Richards, Director of Religious Exploration*

## Religious Exploration Schedule for October

**October 1st** - Multigenerational Service

**October 8th** - Creative Sunday with Mary Clabby - Dress for mess!

**October 15th** - Classroom Sunday

**October 22nd** - Classroom Sunday - Youth Field Trip to Binghamton UU

**October 29th** - Creative Sunday - Halloween Party

**Nursery.** The Nursery will be open every Sunday from 10am-12pm for young children between the ages of 0 and 4.

Volunteers are needed to help fill in for the Nursery. You can volunteer as little as once or twice a year, or as much as once a month! Please contact our Childcare Coordinator, Melissa Heslop at [childcare@uuithaca.org](mailto:childcare@uuithaca.org) to get your name on the list!

The nursery is looking for donations of good condition toys, games, and activities such as Little People sets, building toys, and board/sensory books.

## Religious Exploration Events for October

**October Movie Night, Friday, October 27th**, 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](#)

### *A House Called Tomorrow*

*Alberto Ríos*

You are not fifteen, or twelve, or  
seventeen—  
You are a hundred wild centuries...  
bringing with you  
In every breath and in every step  
Everyone who has come before you,  
All the yous that you have been...  
Look back only for as long as you  
must,  
Then go forward into the history  
you will make.  
Be good, then better. Write books.  
Cure disease...  
And those who came before you?  
When you hear thunder,  
Hear it as their applause.

(RE News continued from page 2)

### Music for Little People

First and Third Thursday from 12:30 pm-1:15  
**October 5th and 19th**, Arch Room

Share in the joy of music in this bi-weekly class which is free and open to the public. Children 0-5 and their caregivers are welcome to meet us in the Arch Room the first and third Thursday in October. Sing, play, dance, explore instruments, and connect through music.

Led by *Emily Richards*

### MUUSIC for You and Me

**October 1st**, 12:15 pm-1:00 pm  
Arch Room

Explore our UU values through the joy and connection that music can bring in this monthly class for parents, caregivers, and young people of all ages.

Led by *Emily Richards*

### Trick or Treat at FUSIT

Stop by the Parish House porch on Halloween for a special treat!

### Seeking Board Game and Card Game Donations

We are working to create a space where people can gather to play games with one another. Board or card games that you would like to donate that are complete and in good condition are welcome and appreciated.



## October Worship Services

The theme for October is "The Gift of Heritage" 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, October 1 "Kindling the Flame"

*Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life*

Please join us for this interactive and engaging service for all ages where we will explore the gift of our Unitarian Universalist heritage through the symbology and stories of our Flaming Chalice.

### Sunday, October 8 "The Climate Crisis: What's Spirituality Got to Do With It?"

*Anne E. Rhodes, Community Energy Educator*

In what ways is the climate crisis calling us to spiritual growth? In the middle of everything falling apart, what is coming together? What does the climate crisis have to do with liberation, and with love?

### Sunday, October 15 "Heritage - Mutualizing Our Humanness"

*Rev. Peaches Gillette, Preacher and Program Associate*

Embracing the collective potential of our individual heritage.

### Sunday, October 22 "My Journey to Making Sense of Broken Children"

*Jim Garbarino*

In a service that blends his personal and professional journey, Jim will be talking about how killers can be understood as "untreated traumatized children who inhabit and control scary adolescents and adults," and how this can become the foundation for compassion and forgiveness-- for everyone involved in a murder and in the criminal justice system.

### Sunday, October 29 "We Remember"

*Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life*

The end of October marks the halfway point between autumn and winter. It is a time when many traditions, cultures, and faiths around the world honor the lives of those who they have lost and those who have come before. A time when the veil between the worlds of the material and the spiritual grows thin. As the earth turns and the leaves fall, let us gather together in our joy and grief.

*Director of Congregational Life and Religious Exploration*  
*Emily Richards*  
[dre@uuihaca.org](mailto:dre@uuihaca.org)

*Director of Pastoral Care*  
*Rev. Janet Shortall*  
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*Preacher and Program Associate*  
*Rev. Peaches Gillette*  
[assocdcl@uuihaca.org](mailto:assocdcl@uuihaca.org)

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### FUSIT Choir, Thursdays, 7 - 8:30 pm

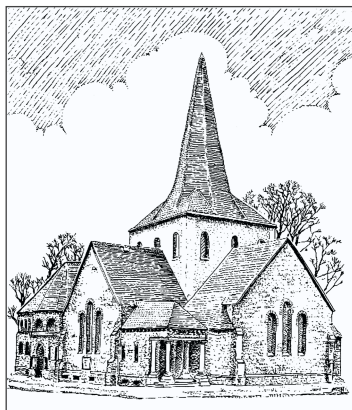
The FUSIT Choir rehearses every Thursday in the Annex and they will sing for the Sunday, **October 29**, service. Our October Soul Matters Theme is: *The Gift of Heritage*. Everyone is welcome to join choir. No auditions. We are all at once fun, serious about being excellent, user-friendly, and inclusive of all singing abilities. For more information contact Jayne Demakos at [choir@uuihaca.org](mailto:choir@uuihaca.org). Enter at 208 E. Buffalo St.

### Spiritual Practices Offerings

Do you engage in a spiritual practice that you would love to share with our community? We are looking for community members to offer opportunities for spiritual connection and deepening. This could include meditation, yoga, dance, journaling, drumming, chant, painting or drawing, breath work, poetry, or any other spiritual practice that you engage in. Offer a single session, or a series. Please contact Emily Richards at [dre@uuihaca.org](mailto:dre@uuihaca.org) if you are interested.



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



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Visit our Website and get  
your newsletter:  
[www.uuithaca.org](http://www.uuithaca.org)

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## Possible Ponderings

### ***The theme for October is The Gift of Heritage***

*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 Gift of Heritage shows up in your life.*

**October 1-7:** What story told by (or about) your ancestors has shaped you the most?

**October 8-14:** If you could change one thing about your family heritage, what would it be?

**October 15-21:** What story do you want to be remembered by?

**October 22-28:** How have your ancestors helped you understand and hold on to beauty?

**October 28-31:** What's the legacy of your first award/triumph?



### **LGBTQ+ Group**

**Wednesday, October 18, 7:00-8:30 pm**

This Small Group is especially for FUSIT's LGBTQ+ community. Gatherings take place on the third Wednesday of each month, from 7:00 to 8:30 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 Ely at [eleanorwillard97@gmail.com](mailto:eleanorwillard97@gmail.com).

### **Women's Circle, Monday, October 23**

Women's Circle will meet via Zoom on Monday evening, **October 23**, 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](mailto:ananda7733@gmail.com) or 607 539 7733.

Zoom link Meeting ID: 819 4014 1421

Passcode: 874536



### **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/>



## ***Social Justice at FUSIT***

The Social Justice efforts at FUSIT have experienced the loss of several social justice activists this past year. We would like to remember the efforts of the following who for so long were advocates for those who were most in need in our community.

**Rebecca Elgie:** Single Payer Health and related health care matters

**Jim Murphy:** Peace, Veterans Affairs and Support for Refugees of War

**Martha Ferger:** Martha founded and chaired the Social Justice Committee at FUSIT and remained involved in social justice efforts for many years

**Fran Helmstadter:** Single Payer Health and Mothers Against Drunk Driving

These individuals leave a large space that their efforts filled – in our congregation and our community. We are grateful for the inspiration they provided and will hold them in our hearts as we continue their work.

*“It’s a drop of water in the sea. But after this drop, the sea will never be the same.” –Mother Teresa*

Efforts to engage in the community and alleviate suffering for those who are disadvantaged by economic, racial, or political injustice have continued over the summer and into the fall by dedicated FUSIT volunteers. We hope that you will join in our efforts.

### **Village at Ithaca**

Our long-standing relationship with the Village at Ithaca and the SNAP donations collections is continuing. Check out the Tompkins Weekly Aug 30 issue for an article about our work with the Village.

### ***Village at Ithaca Seeking Donations***

In order to sustain this effort of helping 30 Ithaca neighbors in need with products they cannot buy with their food stamps, the SGM meeting on Friday (Nancy, June, Bev, Barb, Mary, Sue, Sam and Terry, Rene) and Elton Hall funded our congregation’s portion of the effort during the summer. Area churches are assisting and contributing as this is an Interfaith effort.

*Meryl Phipps, the director of the Village reports: “The First Unitarians always stick with us!!”*

### **Planting Seeds**

SIDE WITH LOVE in October will benefit Planting Seeds, an organizing effort coordinated by Richard Russell, a FUSIT member representing REACH Medical. The items being collected include men’s/women’s coats and other winter items. Watch for more details in the Weekly Announce.

### **Rise Together**

Consider donating to the project Rise Together initiated by the Healthcare Team to abolish medical debt owned by our regional low income and BIPOC neighbors. A donation of \$20 relieves \$2000 of debt! Rise Together will be the Shared Plate recipient in October. You can donate online at RIP Medical Debt Rise Together. Please contact Judy Jones at [jw2@cornell.edu](mailto:jw2@cornell.edu) for information or to donate.

### **Babies First**

Babies First is expanding!! The group provides free car seats and equipment to families who otherwise could not afford the items. Look for details in the newsletter and/or Weekly Announce coming soon! Babies First is in our basement and work has been done to move to a larger, brighter space.

*“You People Save Lives.” — Laura M, Social Worker.*

### **Sanctuary, Migrants and Farmworkers/ Ithaca Sanctuary Alliance**

On September 8, 2023, First Congregational Church of Ithaca welcomed Yeni Auqui and Edgar Escarrache and their two daughters into its sanctuary apartment while their legal request for asylum is in process so they will not be deported while that process unfolds.

First Baptist Church of Ithaca, St. Catherine’s of Siena Catholic Church, First Unitarian Society of Ithaca, Living Hope Fellowship, Congregation Tikkun v’Or, the Tompkins County Immigrant Rights Coalition, and the Peace & Social Justice Committee of the Ithaca Quaker Meeting have committed to support FCCI and persons in sanctuary by providing material, interpersonal and spiritual support.

Efforts continue with many other initiatives including Demonstrating Our Values through Eating (DOVE), the Environmental Interests Circle (EIC), monthly lunches for the Ithaca Homeless Shelter, bagging groceries at the Ithaca Kitchen Cupboard and educational and outreach activities through the Anti Racism Ministry Team (ARMT).

Your neighbors and our community need you to stay connected and get involved!! If you are interested in learning more about any of these efforts, please reach out by emailing [sjlt@uuithaca.org](mailto:sjlt@uuithaca.org).

### ***Environmental Interest Circle Tuesday, October 10, at 7 pm***

The Environmental Interest Circle is exploring the possibilities for money-saving and climate-saving improvements to the heating/cooling systems in our three FUSIT-owned buildings. Also we have begun to discuss a variety of ways to help congregants be better informed about climate action, make personal changes and join us in collective action steps. Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month. Contact Matt Franke-Singer at [mfs@twcny.rr.com](mailto:mfs@twcny.rr.com) for further information. This meeting is held in the church parlor and over Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/82995290979?pwd=NkZDS2V3MWJvd1JVTURmcTNSWFZnZz09>

Meeting ID: 829 9529 0979

Passcode: 750261

## **Adult Religious Exploration (ARE) Programs**

**PLEASE NOTE.** Based on recent survey results, **Adult Religious Exploration (ARE) programs are now scheduled for NOON IN THE ANNEX after the close of the Sunday services.** This offers enough time in the parlor to enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, a snack, and a bit of socializing before heading up to the annex for continued friendly learning and discussion. All are welcome.

On **October 1**, join our past president of the board **Don Barber** as he presents the first of Netflix's four-part series **"Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones"** by Dan Buettner to learn and discuss why certain communities around the world have such long and satisfying lives. It turns out the things that help us live longer are the things that make life worth living. A plant-based diet, natural exercise, having purpose and a sense of belonging, and one's pace of life are a few of the big "secrets." Perhaps they are obviously known, but how do these communities actually do them? And could our UU community learn from these remarkable centenarians?

On **October 15**, **Regi Teasley** will speak on **Flood Preparation in Tompkins County** in the annex at noon. Regi states, "We are seeing more extreme rain events and more intense heat waves in Tompkins County. Let's get ready together for the risks ahead by thinking about how to prepare, who to contact for help, and how to get through it. Also, I would like to hear your concerns and suggestions about what we need from the county and first responders." Regi is a retired Sociology professor, environmentalist and chair of the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council's Climate Adaptation Committee.

## **Pub Theology**

**Tuesday, October 24th, 6:30 pm**  
**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 Gift of Heritage*. Non-beer and non-alcoholic drinks 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.

## **Expanding Community**

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

**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!**

## **Joys and Sorrows**

*Joys and Sorrows are now shared during Sunday Service. Please send notices to the team at [joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org](mailto: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.*

-Our thoughts are with the family of Micheline Contiguglia who passed away on Friday, September 15. A memorial was held in the Sanctuary on September 30.

-We mourn the loss of Fran Helmstadter who died on Saturday, September 16. Fran was a member of FUSIT since 1996 and was a long-time member of the Social Justice Council. Those wishing to send a condolence note to Fran Helmstadter's family can send one to her son Theo Helmstadter, 8 Avelina Lane, Sante Fe, New Mexico 87506.

## **Appreciations**

An appreciation from Barbara Shew:

"JoAnn Kowalski has been and is still providing her leadership skills to FUSIT, even though she is over an hour away since recently moving to Corning. She has been involved for several years with: leading the Anti Racist Ministry Team's activities; working with the Village At Ithaca, a facilitator with the Living The Pledge to End Racism; organizing the Side With Love activities; Co-leader of the Common Read group, volunteering in the Religious Education Program; helping to organize our Library; leadership for the year long planning for voting on the 8th Principle; and is currently on the Ministry Visioning Team and Social Justice Leadership team! You are special, JoAnn! Thanks for your dedication to FUSIT."

*As we nurture a culture of appreciation at FUSIT, let's sing praises to the many people who help make our community the wonderful place it is. 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. Send your submissions to [joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org](mailto:joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org).*

## **Ministry Team Fair**

**Sunday, October 22, during coffee hour in the Parlor**

Enjoy a cup of coffee and snacks while learning about the many and varying ways you can get involved here at FUSIT. We want to learn about you! What are you passionate about? What brings you joy? What are your gifts and talents? Explore our many teams and ministries and find out how volunteering can deepen your connection to this community.

*A complete list of Teams and Committees can be found on the FUSIT website along with a description of the group and the group leader. Group members can be found in Breeze under Tags.*

*We are extremely grateful for all Team and Committee leaders and members! If you would like to join one of the Teams, email [office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org).*

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

## **October Side with Love Winter Item Drive**

**Planting Seeds** is a Recovery Community Organization working in the field of recovery and addiction. The primary thrust of Planting Seeds is to unite the Recovery Community in Ithaca and help individuals navigate their way from the culture of addiction to the culture of recovery. Planting Seeds tries to find means of meeting recovery needs in Ithaca, especially for those experiencing homelessness.

Planting Seeds throughout the month of October is gathering winter gear for those in need. Coats, hats, gloves, scarves, thermal wear, and blankets will be collected. If the FUSIT community could help with these supplies Planting Seeds would be most grateful. The items will be donated to REACH MEDICAL for distribution. Thank you with a warm heart.

*Message from Richard Russell, FUSIT member*

## **Soul Matters Material for October - The Gift of Heritage**

The Soul Matters theme for October is *The Gift of Heritage*. 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/SoulMattersOct2023>

## **FUSIT Supports Ithaca Mobil Pack**

On September 30, 20 FUSIT volunteers joined the *Feed My Starving Children* program to help prepare 225,000 meals for this global organization. The Ithaca event is coordinated by local churches through ACT (Area Churches Together) and other campus groups who sponsor this annual event, which is held at the NY Army National Guard Armory on Hanshaw Road.

Besides our service, the group needs to raise \$66,000 to cover the cost of food we pack during the weekend. Would you please consider a donation to help at [ithacamobilepack.org/](http://ithacamobilepack.org/)

## **Lunches Needed for 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.

For this fall, we are seeking one more volunteer for **October 3rd** and three more volunteers for **November 7th**. Can you be one of them? 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](mailto:jackiejab@me.com).

## **Nametags**

If you would like a nametag, please fill out the **nametag request form** at the Welcome Table or contact membership @uuithaca.org and we'll make one for you. Then look for your new nametag at the Welcome Table after the Sunday service.

## **Congregational Conversation Sunday October 29 12-1 pm in the Sanctuary What are MVT & OAT?**

What are the Ministry Visioning Team (MVT) & Operations Administration Team (OAT)? Who is on these Teams? What do they do? Last year First Unitarian Society of Ithaca embarked on an experiment which divided up the traditional tasks of a full time minister. Three amazing part-time people, Emily Richards, Rev Janet Shortall, and Rev Peaches Gillette, carry out some of those ministry tasks, especially on Sunday mornings. Plus two teams (MVT & OAT) have taken on the support and administrative operations roles for programs and more. A lot has changed in the last several years. Whether you are a long term member or new to the church this may all be confusing. Join members of OAT and MVT in the sanctuary for a presentation with time to answer your questions. We want you to know what we do!



### **From the Music Team**

**Beacon on Aurora**, our monthly concert series, continues on Sunday, **October 1**, for an evening with Albertan Songwriter **Scott Cook**.

Living as a troubadour since 2007, he has toured Canada, the US, Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere, and has released seven albums of plainspoken, keenly observed verse along the way. He has been nominated for English Songwriter of the year, his third Canadian Folk Music Award nomination. His single "Say Can You See" was the second most-played song of 2020 on Folk Alliance International's folk radio charts.

Doors open at 6:30 and the concert starts at 7 pm.  
\$20 suggested donation at the door. Cash preferred.

For more information and to reserve your ticket, go to <https://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/index.php/beacon-on-aurora/>

Contact Music Director, Stephanie Ortolano, at [music@uuithaca.org](mailto:music@uuithaca.org)

if you are interested in helping make this series a success! Bakers, coffee makers, and ushers needed!

## **Emergency Pastoral Care**

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





## Message from the Board of Trustees

I'm new around here. My family and I first visited FUSIT in November 2021 when we moved to Ithaca. Having abandoned my dogmatic Southern Baptist megachurch upbringing — but not my love for spiritual connection and community — I couldn't believe something like this existed. I was suddenly filled with hope that my family could have a spiritual sanctuary without conditions.

I haven't used these words in decades, but I would say that my decision to join the Board of Trustees this year was a "calling." No, I didn't hear G/god's voice — if anything I heard the anticipated grumbings of my two small children, one life partner, four live-in grandparents, two clingy dogs, and one full time job saying, "You don't have time for this!" But what I did feel was pulled from within. Pulled to step out of what felt comfortable and feasible, to participate in something I knew had significant meaning, and to trust that my family and I would figure it out.

While I was deliberating this decision last winter (while very pregnant and overwhelmed), I was reminded about the research on helping and "felt obligation." People who sacrifice for others actually cope better with their own life challenges. And, when we enter into commitments to give something of ourselves, we're more likely to benefit from the feel-good brain chemicals that come with helping. While I didn't have a lot of time, I definitely needed feel-good brain chemicals, so I hesitantly "answered the call" and braced for impact. But the impact didn't come. So far my BoT experience has been nothing short of full. Full of connection, full of ideas, full of laughs, full of tough questions, and of course, full of meetings. But most of all, it is full of meaning and purpose. And while my brain is mostly scrambled eggs and the BoT may be getting a less-than-ideal version of me, I certainly feel a sense of peace and resilience knowing that I am a part of something impactful, and that I am capable of juggling it amidst my busy life.

In a culture that is trending with messages of self-help and boundary setting, I wonder if an important message is getting lost: That giving of ourselves and being involved in meaningful work is a powerful form of self-care. Now, I'm not advocating for ditching your exercise routine or quiet reading time in favor of constant service to others. As a clinical psychologist, I'm in the business of helping people's lives feel less stressful, not more. That said, I do think that many of us may consider how even small gifts of our time, our thoughts, and our service can act like bubble wrap around us in this world that seemingly throws a new set of daggers our way every day.

As we collectively work to build a culture of involvement, I hope you too will consider what yours can be, resting on the science that it will fill you with more than you expect.

*Megan McCormick for the Board of Trustees*

### October Trustees Meeting

The October meeting will be held Tuesday, **October 17**, at 6:30 pm. The board meeting is a hybrid format, taking place in the church parlor and through Zoom. Monthly board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month. 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@uithaca.org](mailto:office@uithaca.org) or check the Weekly Announce email for the Zoom link.

### Ministry Visioning Team (MVT) Begins the 2023-24 Church Year

*The Ministry Visioning Team met on September 7 to discuss the priorities for the year ahead. The team consists of former members Emily Richards, Nancy Miller, Don Rakow and JoAnn Kowalski. Rev. Janet Shortall has joined the team this year.*

Much of the team's work during the year will focus on how best to support the Ministry staff and teams in carrying out the 2023-24 Vision of Ministry.

#### Annual Vision of Ministry 2023-2024

Create opportunities for spiritual growth and faith development by:

- Centering Social Justice as a core/ part of who we are and an avenue to individual and societal transformation.
- Inviting more opportunities for connecting with each other in meaningful ways.
- Exploring our roots as a pluralistic, multi-faith community, and offering ways to engage in wisdom and practices of many spiritual traditions.

During the first meeting, the team reviewed the changing Religious Exploration program and its growth since there will now be classrooms by grades as well as the Crossing Paths program for middle and high school students. We will also be looking at how to support Miranda Bianchi, the newly hired Engagement & Outreach Coordinator.

The MVT will be working with the Board of Trustees on open questions to be presented to the congregation since this is an important part of developing the annual Vision of Ministry.

MVT works closely with the Operations and Administration Team (OAT) and will plan regular meetings and communication with them during the year.

We are looking forward to a Volunteer Fair scheduled for **October 22** where teams will be invited to showcase their work and recruit volunteers. MVT members will also be checking in with team leaders throughout the year to determine how best to support them in carrying out the Vision of Ministry.