



ITHACA

UU Connections

2024/2025 Issue No. 1

September 2024

Our Spiritual Journey

UUA President Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt tells us “There is a love that sets us free. Not free as in having the power to do whatever we want but free as in not weighed down or bound by the patterns of hatred and control that get passed from generation to generation. Free as in knowing without a doubt that we are worthy and that it is ours to invite others into the same wisdom for themselves.”

The newly confirmed statement of values and beliefs for Unitarian Universalism, which passed decisively with over 80% of votes in favor of the changes, states: *Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the discipline of Love.*

As we come back together this fall I invite you to open yourself to the power and possibility of that statement, because there is a love that holds us together and sets us free, and it is the same love.

Especially in this election season, which can feel fraught with anxiety and fear, may we all heed the invitation to center that Love. A Love nurtured by our commitments to one another. A Love that lifts up justice and equity. That embraces our generosity. A Love that honors the pluralism of experiences and beliefs that we bring to this community. A Love that honors the interdependent nature of life and our place in it. A Love that transforms hearts and minds. Invite that Love into every part of your being. Then we can truly create a place where all belong, a place where we can do the work of living our shared values through the discipline of Love.

This is my invitation to you.

Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life



Sundae Sunday **Sunday, September 8th 12 pm-1 pm**

Bring the entire family for fun, music, and ice cream sundaes! First Unitarian Society of Ithaca has a crucial role in the creation of the ice cream sundae. According to VisitIthaca.com, the Ice Cream Sundae was invented by FUSIT treasurer Chester C. Platt and first eaten by FUSIT's Rev. John Scott on April 3, 1892. This adds to our rich history of connectedness with Ithaca and the Tompkins County community.

We are excited to celebrate our annual **Sundae Sunday** following the first service of the church year on **September 8th**. Our event will take place from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm in the Garden Entrance or in the Parlor (if weather is inclement).

We will be serving delicious sundaes with Purity ice cream and plenty of toppings, including vegan options.

**Sunday, September 1, 9:30 am,
last summer service in the Parlor**

**Sunday, September 8, 10:30 am,
regular services begin again in the
Sanctuary**

Live-streamed on our YouTube channel

**Nursery childcare and Religious
Exploration classes for children**

Reminder: Water Communion

*Please don't forget to collect a sample of
water from a special place this summer,
which you can share with the congregation
at the Water Communion to be held
on Sunday, **September 8th**.*



Expanding Community

*For many the pandemic and our
increasingly busy, digital world bring about
heightened 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.
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.*

Religious Exploration News

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

Greetings from Religious Exploration

Welcome to a new year of Religious Exploration (RE).

This year Soul Matters offers us an “overarching frame in The Practices of Our Faith. We’re using this frame to focus on how Unitarian Universalism is a lived faith that inspires us to act, live, and love our values out in the world. Or, to put it another way, we’re diving into our long-loved commitment to “deeds, not creeds.” Our frame of practices is also a way for us to connect to our [UUA's new core value of love](#), with each of our monthly themes being framed as a practice that helps us embody love in our daily lives.”

We are thrilled to continue to offer Religious Exploration programming three Sundays a month, with two Classroom Sundays, and one mixed ages Creative Sunday. This programming will help us to continue to meet the needs of our children and youth by offering lessons and activities that are more precisely geared toward each age group.

Our PreK-1st and 2nd-5th classrooms will be focusing on our monthly themes, starting with Invitation, through stories, activities, crafts, and games. The youth will have an exciting opportunity to explore what role they will play in "Building A Better World", an RPG-based curriculum that will lead youth and adults through the process of creating a game setting as a faith development and community-building exercise reflecting Unitarian Universalist values.

Please register your children below for the 2024-2025 Religious Exploration program! This information helps us to plan for the upcoming year.

[First Unitarian Society of Ithaca RE Registration Form 2024-2025](#)

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.

[FUSIT 2024-2025 RE Volunteer Sign Up](#)

Please join our [First UU Ithaca Parents Facebook Group](#)!

Emily Richards CRE (Credentialed Religious Educator) - Director of Congregational Life
Madeline Natale - Religious Exploration Coordinator

Religious Exploration Schedule for September

September 8th - Multi-Generational Service and Water Communion

September 15th - Creative Sunday

September 22nd - Creative Sunday

September 29th - Classroom Sunday

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

Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 8th-9th and 10-12th Graders

The First Unitarian Society of Ithaca and the First Congregational Church of Ithaca are excited to offer the Our Whole Lives comprehensive sexuality education program during the school year 2024-2025. Our 8th and 9th graders will do OWL this fall (register now!) and our 10th-12th graders will do OWL this spring (registration to come!).

The 8th and 9th grade program will run Sundays from 1 pm-3:30 pm, October through January with one full-day OWL Con on Saturday, **November 2nd** from 10 am-9 pm.

All dates, including the two options for Parent Orientation, can be found on the registration form.

Social Gatherings for the 8-9 Program

Sunday, **September 8**, 12 pm-1 pm

Sundae Sunday at FUSIT with Ice cream and Icebreakers

Grab your ice cream and then meet us in the Annex at 12:00 pm

Parent Orientations

Thursday, **September 19th**, 7-8:30 pm at FUSIT OR Sunday, **September 22nd**, 3:00 pm-4:30 pm at FCCI

The 8th & 9th grade program will run Sundays from 1 pm-3:30 pm October through January.

Register your 8th or 9th grader for OWL here:

[8th-9th Grade Our Whole Lives \(OWL\) Registration 2024-2025](#)

*Love is the
spirit of this church
James Vila Blake*

*Love is the spirit of this church,
and service its law.
This is our great covenant:
To dwell together in peace,
To seek the truth in love,
And to help one another.*

Religious Exploration Events for September

Sundae Sunday

Sunday, **September 8th**, 12 pm-1 pm
Free ice cream and activities in the parking lot next to the Parish House! All are welcome.

September Movie Night

Friday, **September 13th**
5:30 pm-8:00 pm, Arch Room
Drop your kids off, or stay and join us, for a movie night, complete with dinner and snacks.
[September Movie Night Registration](#)

Back to School Blessing

Sunday, **September 15th**
Bring your backpack, purse, laptop, device, pencil case and more to receive a special blessing celebrating the start of the new school (and work) year and the joy of Welcome to a beloved community.

Music for Little People

Thursday, **September 19th**
12 pm-12:45 pm, Arch Room
Share in the joy of music in this class which is free and open to the public. Children 0-5 and their caregivers are welcome to meet us in the Arch Room each month. Sing, play, dance, explore instruments, and connect through music.

Religious Exploration Volunteer Orientation

Sunday, **September 22nd** from 12 pm-2 pm
Arch Room

Small Group Ministry for Parents

This will begin for the year on the third Sunday in October and childcare will be provided.

Adult RE

Pub Theology

Tuesday, **September 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 Invitation. 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.

September Worship Services

The theme for September is "Invitation" 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, September 1, 9:30 am (Last summer service in the Parlor)

Bethany Ojalehto Mays, Lisa Levy, Dan Antonioli (guest speakers) **Cornell On Fire**
"We are a coalition of Cornellians and community members calling for a just and comprehensive university-wide response to the climate emergency." (connect@cornellonfire.org)

Sunday, September 8 "Water Communion and Ingathering"

Rev. Peaches Gillette and Emily Richards CRE
Our Water Communion marks the traditional start of the church year, it is a time of ingathering, of coming back together after the summer. Everyone is encouraged to bring a small amount of water from a source that has significance to you. Together we will combine our waters, which symbolize both what we each bring and, maybe more importantly, how we are changed by our commitment to journeying together.
Special music by Stephanie Ortolano

Sunday, September 15 "What Calls Us Forth"

Speaker Magdalen Lindeberg
Special music by Stephanie Ortolano

Sunday, September 22 "Inviting Love Into the Center"

Emily Richards CRE
By an overwhelming majority UUs voted to embrace a new set of values during this summer's General Assembly, with love at the center. But what does it mean to be a people who place love at the center of our faith? How do we invite that love into ourselves, our communities, and our world?
Special music by Stephanie Ortolano

Sunday, September 29 "Re-imagining Community"

Rev. Peaches Gillette
All ideologies have a way of stagnating. How can we keep the idea of community renewed and regenerating to encompass more and more?
Special music by FUSIT Choir

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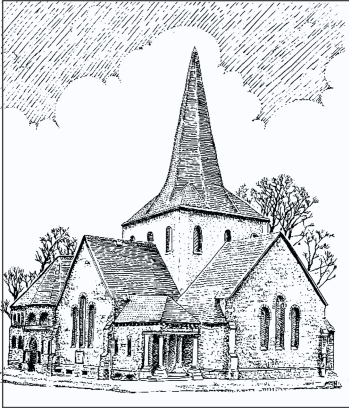
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Visit our Website and get
your newsletter:
www.uuithaca.org

Possible Ponderings

The theme for September is Invitation.

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

September 1-7: What is the most beautiful invitation you ever received?

September 8-14: What question do you need to invite into your life in order to enter the next phase of becoming?

September 15-21: This year we're exploring practices that help us embody our new UU core value liberating love. Whose "act of invitation" has taught you the most about what it means to love?

September 22-30: If you could only invite two new things into your life in the coming year, what would they be?

September Board of Trustees Meeting

The Board will meet on the third Tuesday of the month, on **September 17**, at 6:30 pm. Board meetings are a hybrid format, taking place in the church parlor and through Zoom.

All FUSIT members are invited to attend these meetings. Ten minutes are set aside at the beginning of the meeting for congregation feedback. Please join us!

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/88258776990pwd=VUxUTUMraVZDUFQzQndSVFRraFIPdz09>

Meeting ID: 882 5877 6990

Passcode: 602445

Thanks to Your Generosity

Thanks to your generosity for the Shared Plate in May, we were able to donate \$368 to Alliance of Families for Justice.

*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!*



Side with Love

In September, we are collecting donations for the Southside Community Center, which works to affirm, empower and foster the development of self-pride among the Black American residents of greater Ithaca. Please bring children's school/art supplies (markers, crayons, paints, paper, brushes, clay, colored pencils, etc.) to any September Sunday service.

Shared Plate

September's Shared Plate offering will be donated to the Village at Ithaca. Village at Ithaca advocates for educational equity and excellence for all students, particularly Black/ African American, Hispanic/Latino/Latinx, low income, and any other underserved students within Tompkins County through strategic community relationships, assessment of the local district's practices and policies, and responsive programs and services. The ongoing partnership between FUSIT and the Village at Ithaca has supported families in our community in countless ways, from serving 30 families weekly with free food and household goods to hosting beautiful student-led social justice art to supporting unstably housed youth and families as they settled into permanent housing.

8th Principle Action Ministry

The 8th Principle Action Ministry (8PAM) began meeting via Zoom on the fourth Wednesday of the month starting on August 28th at 7:00 pm. We will have a special speaker joining us for the meeting. Beth Murray, Administrator for Worthy Now Ministry, a UU-related organization, will be describing a letter-writing program to people in prison. Beth will answer questions for those interested in volunteering to write letters. Currently, there is a waiting list of over 100 people who would like to correspond with someone "outside". Feel free to contact Peggy McKernan at peggy.ithaca@gmail.com for information.

The 8PAM team has met several times over the summer as a Democracy Circle, continuing the postcard writing effort organized by Nick Garin. We also explored ways to mobilize disenfranchised voters for the November election by connecting with various UU groups and national organizations. The Democracy Circle will continue to meet in the Fall after Sunday service starting on **September 15** at noon. Look for an announcement as to the location.

Also look for future program offerings including book discussion and film viewing opportunities.

Contact joAnn kowalski for more information or to offer ideas or suggestions at jmkowalskiro@gmail.com.



LGBTQ+ Group Meets Monthly

This Small Group is especially for FUSIT's LGBTQ+ community and meets monthly. ***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. Please reach out to Ely at eleanorwillard97@gmail.com for more information.

Environmental Interest Circle

On **September 1st** bethany ojahehto mays and friends will be speaking at the morning service in the Parlor, bringing us news of the group Cornell On Fire which works to push the university to do better work on issues of social and environmental justice.

Are you interested in how intergenerational conversations can contribute to building a sustainable community? On **September 8th**, local Sunrise Ithaca organizer, Ace Dufresne, will be with us at noon in the Annex. Don't know what the Sunrise Ithaca organization does? Ace will explain. Climate justice issues, the Ithaca Green New Deal, crossing the generational divide all will be touched on and Ace will also have resources to help attendees get involved. Please join us at 12:00, **September 8th**, in the Annex.

Work on converting the fossil fuel powered heating system in the Annex to electric heat pumps continues. Almost all of the inside work has been completed. The contractor, Simply Installs, worked above and beyond a normal workday schedule and, when converting the ground floor spaces, did a good job of minimizing disruption to the pre-school's programs and operations. Now we're waiting for a crane to remove the outdated, existing (and very very heavy) HVAC equipment from the roof, and to raise the new compressors for the Air Source Heat Pumps onto the roof, out of sight and hearing. When complete, we will not only have equipment sized properly for the current uses of that building, but we will have also eliminated, in that building, the direct use of fossil fuels.

The Environmental Interest Circle (EIC) Meeting

Wednesday, **September 4**, at 7:00 pm
in the Parlor and over Zoom

The Environmental Interest Circle meets to discuss/ exchange ideas and actions that further sustainable living for each one of us, for the FUSIT congregation, and for our congregation's role in the greater community.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81644753524?pwd=SDBqaTN5elM3ejltbGdJeGhPa3QxQT09>

Meeting ID: 816 4475 3524

Passcode: 894885

LGBTQ+ Days of Remembrance

September 23 is Celebrate Bisexuality Day

Also referred to as Bisexuality Pride Day and Bi-Visibility Day.

Celebrate Bisexuality Day is observed annually to recognize and celebrate bisexual people, the bisexual community, and the history of bisexuality.



AIDS RIDE FOR LIFE

CELEBRATING 26 YEARS OF CYCLING | SEPTEMBER 7, 2024

09.07.24 | ITHACA NEW YORK

Ride for Life - Volunteers Needed

The 26th Annual Ride for Life will be held on Saturday, Saturday, **September 7**

Once again, Rod Howe will be coordinating the Ride for Life's first pit stop. Location will be the same as last year: Genoa Historical Association which is located right on 34B before you get to the four corners in King Ferry. Our theme will focus on kindness, and this will continue as a FUSIT coordinated pitstop.

What is the Aids Ride for Life? Every year cyclists from all over gather at Stewart Park to cycle the 90—100 miles around Cayuga Lake in order to raise funds for Southern Tier Aids Program (STAP). Traditionally FUSIT volunteers have supported this event by helping cheer on the riders at the first pitstop. Southern Tier Aids Program serves folks living with HIV/AIDS, others with two or more chronic illnesses, people who are LGBTQ+ Youth at Identity Youth Center, or Syringe Exchange participants. Come cheer on the riders!

[General info](#) for volunteers

[Sign up Volunteer Form](#)

Soul Matters Material for September - Invitation

The Soul Matters theme for September is *Invitation*. 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/SeptemberSoulMatters2024>

Feed My Starving Children

It's time to sign up for the Ithaca Mobile Pack, where we pack food pouches for kids worldwide right here in Ithaca. Liz Einstein had reserved 13 spots for us on Saturday, **September 28th** and those spots have all been filled by FUSIT members.

But volunteers are still needed for Friday and Sunday. If you are available to volunteer on Friday, **September 27**, or Sunday, **September 29**, please register on your own at registration@ithacamobilepack.org. This event, which FUSIT has been involved with for three years, is held at the NY Army National Guard Armory at 1765 Hanshaw Road. It's a powerful and fun way to make a difference in the world! 11 packing sessions are planned, with the goal of packing 225,000 meals.

Another important way to help is to donate monetarily, at the same website, towards the cost of the meals we will pack that weekend.

Small Group Ministry opening!

Interested in a Small Group Ministry but you don't like to drive in the evening? Are you just open to zoom meetings? If so, our Monday SGM meets the first and third Monday evenings at 7 on zoom. It's a great chance to discuss important life topics and get to know others. We rotate leadership of the sessions, which can be fun, but if you're not comfortable leading, that's ok too. We frequently do the Soul Matters topic, as well as a mix of other things. We'd love to have 1-2 new members in this group! If you are interested or have questions, contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at streidmull@gmail.com.

Joys and Sorrows

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.

Appreciations

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 of our community. Send your submissions to joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org.

-Many thanks and deep appreciation to Dick Kurtz for his invaluable and ongoing work and innumerable hours spent on the heat pump project at the church.

Congratulations to the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal Congregation of FUSIT

From the LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director of the UUA: "You have successfully completed the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal for 2024. Sincere congratulations on your ongoing commitment to LGBTQ+ welcome and inclusion in and beyond Ithaca, NY.

It was a pleasure to read about all you have accomplished and the powerful work you have done to ensure that FUSIT is meeting the needs of queer and trans congregants and the wider community in the following ways: Welcoming Worship (September 24 and January 21), Welcoming Days of Observance (posted in the newsletter and mid-week announce), Welcoming Religious Education (LGBTQ+ Allyship presentation with Dr. Courtney Johnson plus hosted a four month long book discussion group to discuss "Authentic Selves"), and Supporting a Welcoming Project (donated to Planned Parenthood Out for Health)."

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.

Diners Club 2024: Come Dine with Us!

Diners Club is a wonderful way for adult members to get to know each other better while eating delicious food! As a Diners Club member, you participate in up to five small dish-to-pass dinners between October and April with a final all group gathering in June. Dinners are held in members' homes with each participant bringing part of the meal. Each month, new dining groups are created, providing the opportunity to dine with a variety of members throughout the year.

To sign up, please fill out this [google form](#). If you prefer, you will also be able to sign-up in person in the Parlor on Sunday, **September 8** after the service. Finally, if neither of these options work, you can contact the coordinator, Jane Koestler, at j.e.koestler@gmail.com. The October dinner assignments will be e-mailed to members in late September. Hope you can join us!

We Are All the Care Team

Michelle Obama spoke recently about creating a world where we take care of each other. As a congregation, we covenant to promote compassion and acceptance of one another. We seek to create and sustain a community of caring, in which we come together to do the work of kindness.



To this end, we ask for your help in providing care and support to each other in times of illness, bereavement, and other life challenges. We can do so much good when we work together. Whether you have time for an occasional task or long-term commitment, please contact the Care Team to volunteer!

The Care Team is a group of congregation members who act on behalf of the congregation to provide pastoral care, and support for members and friends. Our goal is to provide various kinds of short term support. When volunteers are available we will provide meals, food shopping, rides to appointments, rides to church, friendly phone calls, cards and visits for those that are isolated, ill or needing support. For those who need referrals for health care, mental health or eldercare, we have lists of resources and members with experience with these Community resources.

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

In addition, Nancy Dolge, ndolge@gmail.com and Rita Barber, barber.rita@gmail.com, co-chair a team of volunteers who coordinate Memorial Service Receptions for FUSIT members. Contact them to bake or help with receptions. We all are the Care Team. Sometimes it might be you that needs support, sometimes it might be me. There is enough love and care to go around if we come together. Join us!

Nancy Miller for the Care Team

Ministry Team Fair

Sunday, September 29th

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 First Unitarian Society of Ithaca website (<https://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/index.php/about-us/our-elected-leaders/our-committees/>) 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@uithaca.org.

Office Hours This Fall

The office is generally open 9 am - 4 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and 8 am - 3 pm on Sundays. Michelle works remotely on Wednesdays.

Unitarian Universalist Association's New Core Value of Love

After a democratic process involving thousands of Unitarian Universalists discussing the faith's values and core theology over the past three-plus years, delegates at General Assembly 2024 voted decisively to approve a new [statement of values and beliefs for Unitarian Universalism](#), which places love at the center of this faith.



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/> and Instagram www.instagram.com/ithacaus

Blast from the Board

Acronym Anxiety

Earlier this month, I was eating lunch with one of our Team Leaders. He is an ex-Board member and has been around for over a decade. I mentioned working with OAT and MVT.

"I'm confused by the new acronyms," he said.

"I've heard that comment more than once." I said.

In fact, younger members tell me a couple of things.

-One is that the church acronyms are confusing and mystifying.

-Second, the acronyms seem a special language used by insiders and old-timers. It feels like FUSIT is a bunch of closed groups.

Two years ago, our Communications Committee (no mystery with this name) noted that the monthly reports were "acronym rich" and were confusing to read, even for Board members. The committee developed the following footnote for Monthly Reports Template.

FUSIT Acronym List (partial)

8PAM - 8th Principle Action Ministry

ARE - Adult Religious Exploration

BoT - Board of Trustees

CT - Celebrations Team

FUSIT - First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

GovCo - Governance Committee

HT - Hospitality Team(s)

LREDA - Liberal Religious Educators Association

MRT - Memorial Reception Team

MVT - Ministry Visioning Team

NomCom - Nominating Committee

OAT - Operations Administrative Team

O&E - Outreach & Engagement

RE - Religious Exploration

SGM - Small Group Ministry

SJLT - Social Justice Leadership Team

TLC - Team Leaders Council

UUA - Unitarian Universalist Association

UUUU - UU Ukulele Union

Here's a "proper" sentence using the above.

"The MVT is informing the MRT to check with the HT and CT before organizing the program for the SJLT at the next BoT meeting."

Holy Acronym! Batman. Is this confusing or what?

What do you, the reader, think of this issue? Do you have any suggestions? You can buttonhole a Board Trustee on Sunday morning. You can email me at fred.balfour@gmail.com or Board Spokesperson Wren.Tuatha@goddard.edu. Can we make our community easy to understand and access?

On another important issue, see the Stewardship Committee message adjacent. The Committee is sponsoring a "Next Steps Weekend" on **October 4-6th**. Stewardship has retained a UUA-related consultant to review FUSIT's environment relating to long term growth and propose pathways to pursue our mission. Our Committees and Teams will work with the consultant on Friday & Saturday, reporting recommendations to the membership during the Sunday morning service. Initial focus will be on how to improve our annual stewardship campaign. INTERESTED? Talk to a member of Stewardship or a Board Trustee.

Fred Balfour, President of the Board of Trustees



Congregational 'Next Steps' Weekend with UUA Consultant October 4-6, 2024

Stewardship Consultant, Lydia Ferrante-Roseberry, will be with us the weekend of **October 4th**. She will meet with our board and staff on Friday, and our members and friends on Saturday morning to hear about our culture, concerns, and our hopes and priorities for the congregation. Saturday afternoon, she'll be conducting a special workshop on Stewardship. A core focus of the visit will be on identifying recommended next steps and practical information to help us successfully pursue our mission. In particular, FUSIT has been growing since we came out of the pandemic, but volunteerism seems to be reflecting pandemic legacy effects. With Stewardship, our main source of operating revenue, the congregation fully emerged from our pandemic low and leaned into the 'Gifting Grows Connections' theme to reach our target. Nonetheless, our target was modest relative to what would propel our mission, and our age distribution and pledge size distribution generate future vulnerabilities that need to be planned for.

On Sunday after the service Lydia will present her initial observations and recommendations to our entire congregation. A follow-up meeting and report will be delivered within two weeks of the visit.

Snacks and childcare will be provided during Lydia's presentation after the Sunday service.

Please make room in your schedule to participate so that we will get the most out of this visit.

Thank you!

*Matt Hare: FUSIT Stewardship
Fred Balfour: Board of Trustees*

Our Mission

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