



# ITHACA

## UU Connections

2024/2025 Issue No. 8

April 2025

### *Our Spiritual Journey*

It was 14 years ago in January when someone asked if I would be interested in auditioning for the organist gig that had just opened up at the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca. This job for the Unitarians was technically for just over 3 months - February through the first week of June - and I could agree to that. I had never played for a Unitarian Universalist church before, but I had a friend in college who was always trying to convince me that this would be my place. Plus, one look at the Helmuth Wolff mechanical action organ, a sibling to the organ in the Chapel at Anabel Taylor Hall where I had fallen in love with this type of design, clinched the deal.

Somehow, that dissertation got successfully defended (Iron Deficiency Anemia and Child Behavior in Senegal) and baby #3 was about to join the family. My dreams of returning to Senegal more permanently were pushed aside. I would try to find work on local nutrition issues and these UUs were starting to grow on me. Mostly, it was Mark Pedersen, the long-time congregational administrator and underground minister-without-a-degree who counseled everyone who came into his office and lived his UU values with his every action. He was an employee but also a member, volunteering in the classrooms and organizing events outside of his job description. This was just the sort of church colleague I needed and despite the ups and downs of ministers-interim minister-no ministers-back to a called minister, he was the rock that kept our ship afloat. I have missed him every day since his sudden death in 2018.

And now, after 14 years of music ministry to this congregation, I am ready to step down. There are projects that have been left unfinished in my life that I need to get back to, and already new projects are beckoning for my involvement. I saw my role as Music Director at First Unitarian as a way to comfort the activists in our community, giving respite and inspiration so they could continue the work you are called to do. Now, I am taking back the 25-30 hours a week that I devote to this place to find other ways to serve my wider community. Thank you for your love and support through all of these years. (And no worries, I will be staying on through the beginning of June! Hopefully, a new musician will be hired by the time September comes around.)

*With love,  
Stephanie*

#### **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.

#### **FUSIT Listserv**

If you would like to be added to the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca listserv, please fill out the form at <https://fusit.breezechms.com/form/oe48af>. If you have any questions, email Michelle at [office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org).

#### **Sunday Services in the Sanctuary at 10:30 am**

*Live-streamed on our YouTube channel*

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

#### **Join the fun of our Community-Wide Online Spring Auction!**

**April 25, 26, 27**  
9 am Friday through  
9 pm Sunday

**100+ wonderful local  
community vendor donations!**

**PLUS a special concert on  
Saturday, April 26  
with singer  
Alice Di Miele  
7 pm in the Sanctuary**

*Details on page 9*

**First Unitarian is a  
UUA-recognized (LGBTQ)  
Welcoming Congregation**

# Religious Exploration News

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

## Greetings from Religious Exploration

This month we are Living Love Through the Practice of Joy.

As we explore what the Practice of Joy means we will be seeking out all of the places and ways that joy is all around us, if only we search for it. Joy multiplies when it is shared and we are here to share in joyful meaning making with all of you.

*I slept and dreamt that life was joy.  
I awoke and saw that life was service.  
I acted and, behold, service was joy.  
- Rabindranath Tagore*

## Classroom Sundays

**Elementary:** This month the upper elementary aged children will be focusing on our monthly theme of Joy through stories, activities, crafts, and games. The younger elementary students will be exploring our UU Values with Legos.

**Middle School and High School:** The youth will continue 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 have participants bring a set of gaming dice to each session if they have them.

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](#)

## RE Snack Sign Up Spring 2025

We are looking for people to bring in snacks for RE on Sunday morning. The number of children and youth in our building every Sunday has been growing and, as you all know, they always seem to be hungry! Thank you so much to those of you who have already signed up. If you are able to provide some snacks to supplement the popcorn that would be great!

[RE Snack Sign Up Spring 2025](#)

## Religious Exploration Wishlist

If you are looking to support the RE program and would like to purchase a gift, here is a list of items that would be useful and deeply appreciated.

[RE Wishlist](#)

## Join our Religious Exploration Program

We are excited to share that we are planning to expand our Classroom Sundays offerings next year to three elementary aged classrooms, a middle school classroom, and a high school classroom. This means we need even more amazing community members to engage with our Religious Exploration Programming by joining one of those rooms for half of the year. Being a part of the lives of our young people is deeply meaningful and the effects last a lifetime. This important programming can only happen with the support of the entire community.

[2025-2026 Religious Exploration Engagement 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 April

**April 6** - Classroom Sunday

**April 13** - Classroom Sunday

**April 20** - Creative Sunday Easter and Spring Party

**April 27** - Multigenerational Service

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

## Religious Exploration Events for April

### Spring Celebration

**Saturday, April 19th, 12 pm-2 pm, 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. This event is free and open to the public. All are welcome.

### Music for Little People

**Wednesday, April 2nd and 16th**

10 am-10:45 am in the 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.

### Connection Circle for Parents - Childcare Provided

**Sunday, April 13th**

12 pm-1 pm in the FUSIT Library

A Connection Circle for individuals who are actively parenting. The group will follow the Soul Matters themes with a focus on how they are related to the journey and experience of being a parent. Gatherings will take place monthly on the third Sunday of the month from 12 pm-1 pm, with childcare available. We invite you to join us for an opportunity for connection and community within our larger First UU community, in a safe, confidential and nurturing environment.

### Free Spiritual Yoga Class - April 18

Please join our FUSIT exclusive free of charge Spiritual Yoga class with Madeline Natale. Yoga will be held at Yoga Farm Ithaca (509 N. Meadow St., Ithaca) on the 3rd Friday of the month from 5:30-6:30 pm with tea to follow! Bring your own mug, and maybe a snack to share. For further information, contact Madeline at [reasst@uuithaca.org](mailto:reasst@uuithaca.org).



## Worship Services

*The theme for April is "Living Love Through the Practice of Joy" 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 6, "Joy As Resistance"

*Rev. Janet Shortall*

The world is not owed our misery because suffering is not proof of commitment, righteousness, or worth. Choosing joy is not a betrayal of reality; it is a radical assertion that our lives are meant for more than just enduring hardship. Refusing to let despair define us is an act of defiance against forces that would rather see us broken than whole. Joy sustains movements, nurtures communities, and fuels the imagination required to build something better.

*Special music by Yusuf Ugurer, tenor*

### Sunday, April 13, "Appreciative Joy"

*Speaker Jeannie O'Neill*

Jeannie O'Neill will guide us on a journey of the four faces of love, also called the Brahnaviharas. We will practice ways to engage with these facets of being in the world, with an emphasis on cultivating sympathetic or appreciative joy in our hearts and community. We will also notice the signs and symptoms that our appreciative joy is running low, and how we can be for ourselves in order to show up for others.

*Special music by Chamber Groups from CCOYO*

### Sunday, April 20, "In Whom Do We Believe?"

*Emily Richards, CRE*

In the Easter story it was the women to whom the resurrection was first revealed, and perhaps not surprising that they were, at first, not believed. Whose voices continue to be discounted and whose voices do we turn to for truth? Where do we search for the joy of renewal and rebirth?

*Special music by Stephanie Ortolano*

### Sunday, April 27, "Kindling Joy"

*Emily Richards, CRE*

Join us for a multigenerational celebration of the gifts of the earth and the fire that burns at the midpoint between spring and summer. Dance around the Maypole, share in story and song, and experience the joy of the turning of the seasons.

*Special music by FUSIT Choir*

*Director of Congregational Life*

*Emily Richards*

[CongregationalLife@uuithaca.org](mailto:CongregationalLife@uuithaca.org)

*Pastoral Care Associate*

*Rev. Janet Shortall*

[pastoralcare@uuithaca.org](mailto:pastoralcare@uuithaca.org)

*Preacher and Program Associate*

*Rev. Peaches Gillete*

[pgfreedom09@gmail.com](mailto:pgfreedom09@gmail.com)

*Religious Exploration Coordinator*

*Madeline Natale*

[reasst@uuithaca.org](mailto:reasst@uuithaca.org)

*Childcare Coordinator*

*Melissa Heslop*

[childcare@uuithaca.org](mailto:childcare@uuithaca.org)

*Music Director*

*Stephanie Ortolano*

[music@uuithaca.org](mailto:music@uuithaca.org)

*Choir Director*

*Jayne Demakos*

[choir@uuithaca.org](mailto:choir@uuithaca.org)

*President, Board of Trustees*

*Fred Balfour*

[fred.balfour@gmail.com](mailto:fred.balfour@gmail.com)

*Director of Congregation Administration*

*Michelle Waffner*

[office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org)

*Administrative Assistant*

*Loretta Heimbuch*

[adminasst@uuithaca.org](mailto:adminasst@uuithaca.org)

*Engagement and Outreach Coordinator*

*Elizabeth Buckley*

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*Sexton*

*Rachel Seymour*

[sexton@uuithaca.org](mailto:sexton@uuithaca.org)

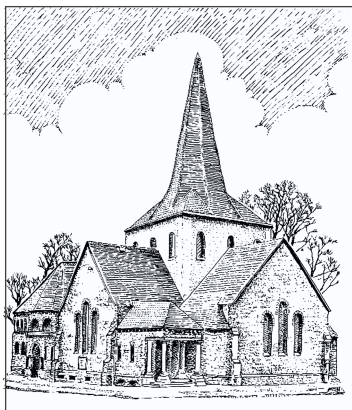
*Bookkeeper*

*Lauren Ponzoni*

[office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org)



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 April is Living Love  
Through the Practice of Joy*

*Possible Ponderings is an offering of ways you might consider  
engaging more deeply with the theme or reflecting on the ways the  
idea of **Living Love Through the Practice of Joy**  
shows up in your life.*

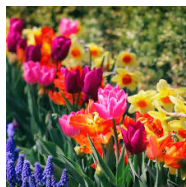
**April 1-5:** What were you first taught about  
“deserving joy”?

**April 6-12:** Are you mostly a creator of joy, receiver of  
joy, notice-er of joy or spreader of joy?

**April 13-19:** Have you been hesitant or scared to ask for  
the thing you know will bring you joy? Are you too  
responsible to let joy in?

**April 20-26:** When was the last time you sought out joy  
for your body?

**April 27-30:** Has choosing joy ever been an act of  
survival for you? Or an act of defiance?



### *Easter/Spring Flowers*

Honor someone's memory with spring  
flowers for our April 20 (Easter) Service.  
These flowers will decorate the sanctuary

during the **April 20** service.

After service is over, you can deliver your flowers to  
another congregant as a gesture of community or take them  
with you to decorate your home.

A list of individuals honored in this way will be listed in  
the order of service on **April 20**.

Orders will be accepted until **April 14**.

To order, please call the office at 607-273-7521 ext. 21

\$12 per plant

*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

We hope you will consider joining us in our social justice efforts and encourage you to reach out and learn more about how you can get involved. Find more information about various teams on our website.

### Side with Love and Shared Plate

Teams, Committees, and Small Groups are invited to sponsor a month for our Side with Love and Shared Plate Collections. The group would be responsible for choosing the organization, communicating with that organization about needed items for Side with Love, delivering goods, and communicating any pertinent information to Michelle and Loretta for the Newsletter, Weekly Announce, and Order of Service.

This is a wonderful opportunity to lift up and support local or national organizations that do work that is meaningful to your team or group. Sign up information can be found below.

[Side With Love and Shared Plate 2024-2025](#)

### April Side With Love and Shared Plate – Village at Ithaca

The Tuesday Evening Small Group has selected Village House, a project of the Village at Ithaca, for our April Side With Love and Shared Plate. Village House is a large duplex in the city which provides safe, supportive housing for homeless youth or youth ages 18 to 25 escaping abusive living situations. Most youth arrive at Village House with little more than the clothes on their backs. To help them we will be collecting: toothpaste, toothbrushes, toilet paper, and laundry detergent.

Original funding for this most worthwhile effort ended last fall. Village House was able to operate through December on private donations, and now the Tompkins County Legislature has approved the use of some Rescue Plan Funds to continue operations until some grant applications are funded. However, in this interim period dollars are needed for wraparound services such as personnel costs, food and supplies.

### 8Th Principle Action Ministry - April 23

The 8th Principle Action Ministry meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month on Zoom to discuss ways to live out our UU values, especially justice and equity. Anyone who is interested in discussion and sharing of ideas for action is welcome.

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/84035815856?pwd=aHdwYVpoYldBVnRQNXdHhZDUDlUT09>

Meeting ID: 840 3581 5856 Passcode: 989761

### The Environmental Interest Circle (EIC) Will Meet April 2 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. This group usually meets the first Wednesday of the month in the parlor and over Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/81644753524?pwd=SDBqATN5elM3ejltbGdJeGhPa3QxQT09>

Meeting ID: 816 4475 3524 Passcode: 894885



## 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](mailto:eleanorwillard97@gmail.com) for more information.

### April 11 - Day of Silence

Day of Silence is a national student-led demonstration where LGBTQ+ students and allies take a vow of silence to protest the harmful effects of harassment and discrimination of LGBTQ+ people in schools.

### Women's Circle Meets on April 28

Women's Circle usually meets via Zoom on the 4th Monday of the month from 7-8:30 pm. 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: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/82169260621?pwd=ZDkyanRKMmo2czhqSWgrSVhmbGFqdzo9>

Meeting ID: 821 6926 0621. Passcode: 015515

### Pub Theology

Tuesday, April 22 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 *Living Love Through the Practice of Joy*. 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. 620 W. Green St., Ithaca.

### Crochet and Knitting Circle

Are you looking to join a tight knit group? Meet us in the Annex Youth Room from 12-1 pm every Sunday to exchange blissful stitches. This is an unstructured crochet and knitting circle. All ages are welcome, children under 12 years old must be accompanied by a designated adult.

### The Gathering (from the UUA)

[The Gathering](#) is a new **monthly virtual event** from *Side With Love*, designed to offer:

- **Spiritual Grounding** – Strengthen your heart and spirit for the work ahead.
- **Political Analysis** – Understand the threats to democracy and justice.
- **Collective Action** – Organize with others to block anti-democratic forces and build a just and loving world.

The next Meeting is **April 14**, 8 pm.



**Beacon on Aurora -  
An evening with ISMAY,  
Sunday, April 6,  
doors open at 6:30 pm, concert  
begins at 7 pm**

There's music you hear and there's music you see, the best kind achieves both. ISMAY creates music that is a tapestry of alternative American roots full of alt-country textures and lush folk songs that transport you straight to the land where they were written – deeply rooted in the heart of Sonoma Mountain. It is music that transcends tradition and blurs boundaries, embodying the sound of the New American West. Driven by singer/songwriter Avery Hellman, ISMAY released their debut full length album *Songs of Sonoma Mountain* in 2020, to widespread acclaim. It was named one of the 10 best Albums in the Bay Area and garnered features in *American Songwriter*, *No Depression*, *Sonoma Magazine*, and more. Their sophomore album, *DESERT PAVEMENT* (1/26/24) was produced by Andrew Marlin of Watchhouse and recorded at the famed Echo Mountain Recording studio in Asheville, NC. It is a brilliant representation of ISMAY's unique sound, its songs evoking the landscapes and lifestyles of rural northern California, where Avery spent most of their 20s working the land on the family's ranch. "The perspective of my songwriting is very rooted in ranch life," says Avery.

*\$20 suggested donation at the door. Cash preferred. Electronic payment options (direct to artist) will also be available.*

### **FUSIT Choir**

Come sing with us! The FUSIT Choir rehearses on Thursdays, from 7-8:30 pm in the Annex. Join in this wonderful, joyful and important part of our community service. Text Jayne at 607-256-9488.

### **Care Cafe - April 13th and 27th**

*2nd and 4th Sunday of each month in the FUSIT Library*

Rev. Peaches Gillette invites you to the Care Cafe. During our time in the 'cafe', we openly express our thoughts, reaching into ourselves and deeply touching upon and sharing what it means to be fully human in a complicated world. Each gathering will focus on a loosely structured theme around spirituality, encouraging participants to freely explore all aspects of their spiritual journeys. The flow of participants from week to week has created perfect cross-currents of relationships, broadening and securing FUSIT's sense of community. Time together in the Care Cafe allows many of us to meet and know one another more intimately.

Rev. Peaches Gillette [pgfreedom09@gmail.com](mailto:pgfreedom09@gmail.com)

### **Soul Matters Material for April - Joy**

The Soul Matters theme for April is *Living Love Through The Practice of Joy*. 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/SoulMattersApr2025>

## **Joys and Sorrows**

*Joys and Sorrows are 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.*

### **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 to our community. Send your submissions to [joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org](mailto:joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org).*

*From John Gaines-*

We all know the quality of the work that our Music Director, Stephanie Ortalano, does for the whole range of music programming at FUSIT, but we would like to acknowledge the behind the curtain work that Stephanie has been doing to prepare the slide set that you now see on the Sanctuary screens every Sunday, but you have also been seeing since Covid hit on the YouTube stream. From the Tech Team, a big THANK YOU to Stephanie!

"Thank you for all your support of the Advocacy Center, the families we serve, and the community. The clothes and monetary donations will make such a difference to so many."

*-from The Advocacy Center for February's Side with Love and Shared Plate*

### **Office Hours in April**

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

### **Newcomers Inspired**

### **Connected and Engaged**

(NICE)



April 27, May 4,



May 18

Contact Elizabeth:

[membership@uuithaca.org](mailto:membership@uuithaca.org)

**All are welcome!**



## Together We Rise

Our stewardship pledge campaign did very well in March but is not yet at our goal of \$350,000, the amount of revenue that our current level of staffing, programming and infrastructure requires. If you have not yet sent in your pledge, please dig that letter out of the mail pile and send it in. Alternatively, you can go to the FUSIT home page and hit the 'donate' button to record your pledge electronically. This pledge is for your planned gift to support the 2025-26 church year. A majority of congregants have chosen to increase their pledge relative to last year to help our congregation RISE out of a fiscal risk zone. Whether large or small, increased or static, your pledge is an important contribution. Thank you for your support.

*Stewardship Committee*

*Matt Hare, Jeanette Knapp, Wendy Schearer and Margaret Nichols*

### **Nametags**

If you would like a nametag, please fill out the **nametag request form** at the Welcome Table or contact [adminasst@uuithaca.org](mailto:adminasst@uuithaca.org) and we'll make one for you. Then look for your new nametag in the Narthex nametag cabinet (corner of Buffalo and Aurora Sts.).

## Unirondack 2025

**Friday September 5 to Sunday September 6  
(or Monday September 7)**

**!!! Very important date notice !!!**

Our annual weekend is **NOT over the Labor Day weekend this year**. We know these 2025 dates are when school is back in session, so there will a 2-day registration option (arrive Friday evening, depart Sunday before dinner) and a 3-day registration option (arrive Friday evening, depart Monday anytime).

Registration opens: **April 15**.

*Registration link will be sent to the Listserv at 1 pm,  
April 15th.*

What's Unirondack? FUSIT's wonderful annual intergenerational family camp in the gorgeous Adirondacks. We cook meals together, swim and boat in the lake, sing songs, have campfires, go on hikes, play gaga, make arts and crafts, have discussion groups, and do all sorts of other wonderful things from the deeply philosophical to the wildly silly and fun.

Come join us. It's an amazing way to get to know many other FUSITEers and build community.

*Questions? Email Sue Mann ([susan.m.mann@gmail.com](mailto:susan.m.mann@gmail.com))  
or Michele Hochstetter ([mbochstetter@gmail.com](mailto:mbochstetter@gmail.com))*

### **2024-25 Annual Report Submissions**

Annual Reports from all teams and committees are due by **May 1st** in order to be included in the FUSIT Annual Report for the Annual Meeting on **May 21st**. Please send your team's brief re-cap of major events/accomplishments to Loretta at [adminasst@uuithaca.org](mailto:adminasst@uuithaca.org). In an effort to streamline the final Annual Report, **we are asking each team/committee to summarize their activities in 150 words or less**. Longer submissions may be edited. Charts, graphics and photos are encouraged as well and should be sent in JPEG format.

Thank you so much!

**Mark Your Calendar!  
FUSIT Annual Meeting  
Wednesday, May 21st**

### **UUs of Color Affinity Group - April 7**

If you are a UU of Color, please join us Monday, **April 7**, from 6 - 7 pm for community, resource sharing, and activity planning. Please contact [poc@uuithaca.org](mailto:poc@uuithaca.org) for online meeting details.

### **Current Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteering is a great way to meet others in the First Unitarian Community and give back at the same time! Current Volunteer Opportunities are <https://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/index.php/connection/volunteer/>

### **A Heartfelt Reminder-**

The Care Team provides pastoral care and support for congregants who are going through challenging times. If you or any member or close friend of FUSIT need some assistance, contact Kathy Hopkins at 607-582-3025 or [Kathy1122@gmail.com](mailto:Kathy1122@gmail.com). At coffee hour, visit our table and look for folks with pink name tags for more information.

### **Newsletter**

The newsletter is published monthly from September - May and once during the summer.

Please send submissions for the monthly newsletter to Loretta at [adminasst@uuithaca.org](mailto:adminasst@uuithaca.org).

[Newsletter submission deadlines](#)



*"A person will be called to account on judgment day for every permissible thing they might have enjoyed but did not."*

**The Talmud**



## ***From the Board of Trustees***

There can be no doubt that some of the work of the Board of Trustees is tedious. Especially when viewed from the outside, it may seem as if what the board does is crosses i's and dots t's with little effect. More generously, board members may feel that this work is mundane, but necessary. Assuring that someone has the authority to disburse or collect funds, for example, is hardly a flashy activity, but without this sort of work, the Society would soon find itself unable to do the visible things that are more interesting and allow us to pursue our vision.

However, this two-dimensional view of the board leaves out the good stuff. Sometimes the board plays a role in helping the various parts of the congregation work together well. Recently, board members joined others in putting together a celebration of Walt Peck's recent encore tenure as Treasurer. Once, Walt joked he would never realize his dream of owning a Porsche Carrera by volunteering at the church. Board member Renee Rogers proved him wrong by presenting him (a scale-model) Porsche in recognition of his dedication and perseverance.

The Board has been working with the Stewardship Committee this year, helping to find the means to bring church finance expert Rev. Lydia Ferrante-Roseberry to Ithaca to help the entire community understand our attitudes about money and to begin to build a more robust stewardship process at FUSIT. This bringing together of all the elements of the Society that are concerned with our fiscal well-being has been a great exercise in partnerships, cooperation, and building on our strengths. Although it is reasonable to expect it to take a number of years to see Rev. Lydia's ideas come to fruition, we are already experiencing an energized stewardship campaign this spring.

The board is also continuing to learn the power of partnership, extending the lines of communication and collaboration with the ministry team and the administration team. Shared leadership is less a concept on paper and increasingly a powerful way to get things done.

Being present to celebrate the successes of a longtime volunteer, being able to help kindle new ideas about money and fund-raising, seeing the continued evolution of the governance model are a fry cry from the slogging through the policy book, but they make being a board member a dynamic experience.

*Tom Coakley, Board member*

Meet our Board of Trustee members [here](#). For questions or comments to the Board, contact the designated spokesperson at [BoardSpokesPerson@uuithaca.org](mailto:BoardSpokesPerson@uuithaca.org).

## ***April Board of Trustees Meeting***

The Board will meet on the third Tuesday of the month, on **April 16th**, at 6:30 pm. Board meetings are a hybrid format, taking place in the 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

## ***Ready to make a difference as a Trustee?***

As one of nine dedicated board members, the Trustee plays a pivotal role in shaping the church's future. This team's mission? To dream big, set inspiring goals, keep an eye on our programs, and build partnerships within the congregation to bring our shared vision to life.

Together, they'll ensure that church leaders-and even each other-stay on track, accountable, and energized to make a meaningful impact. If interested, please contact Elizabeth Bixler at [ebixler45@gmail.com](mailto:ebixler45@gmail.com).

## ***Stay Connected***

Curious about events and happenings at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca? Check out our Facebook page and stay current with what's going on in the community!

[First Unitarian Society of Ithaca Facebook Page](#)

## ***Expanding Community***

For many this charged political time can bring about increased feelings of isolation and division. 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.

## ***Our Mission***

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

Exciting Newly  
Revised Version!



## **2025 Community-Wide Online Spring Auction**

**3-Day Weekend - April 25, 26, 27**  
**Open 9 am Friday, Closes 9 pm Sunday**

**100+ Wonderful Local Community Vendor Donations**

(Please note: Our **Fall LIVE Service Auction on October 25** will be comprised of  
ONLY donations from the FUSIT community, their friends and family.)

*Search: **fusit bidding owl***

*Info: [adminasst@uuithaca.org](mailto:adminasst@uuithaca.org)*

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 **Enjoy the fun with a special  
concert during auction weekend!**

*On tour from Oregon,*  
**Alice Di Micele**



*Americana/folk with roots in the natural world*

**Saturday, April 26, 7 pm, in the Sanctuary**

***Tickets at [Humanitix.com](https://Humanitix.com)  
[alicedimicele.com](https://alicedimicele.com)***

*For further information, contact Stephanie at [music@uuithaca.org](mailto:music@uuithaca.org)*

## Church Door Project

We have completed the installation of the new door locking system! This will allow for better access control for renters and help us ensure that the doors are locked when they should be. If you use any of the church rooms on a regular basis or have rented a room for a one time event/meeting, Michelle will be in touch about building access.

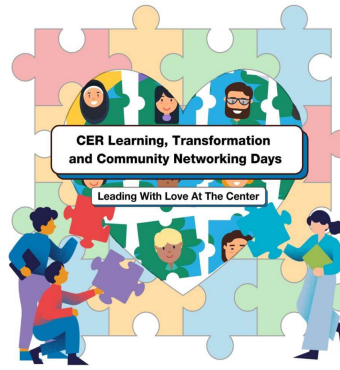
## Automatic Door Opener

-The automatic door opener on the garden entrance is now installed allowing easier access for people who use wheel-chairs or could just use a little assistance opening the door. This will work when the doors are unlocked (for Sunday morning service and other events).

This is made possible by using the funds collected when our beloved Administrator, Mark Pedersen, died unexpectedly in 2018. The decision to use the funds in this manner was made in collaboration with his husband, Rod Howe. Rod feels that Mark would appreciate the funds being used in this way, allowing better access to the FUSIT building that he cared so deeply for. We are grateful for this addition and are grateful for all that Mark contributed to the church and its members during his time here.

## Exiting

- You will always be able to exit the building, even if the doors are locked. There is a motion detector that will unlock the door so you can exit and there is a red exit button near each door in case there is an issue with the motion detector. If you have any questions, let Michelle know ([office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org)).



## Central East Region - Learning, Transformation and Community Networking Days: Leading with Love at the Center

*2025 is calling; how will Unitarian Universalists respond?*

Join fellow UUs for inter-congregational connection, skill-building led by Central East

Region staff, and community-building as we model and practice loving transformation. Let us answer the call together!

Whether you serve on your congregation's board, participate in committees, lead a program, serve as minister or staff, or simply love Unitarian Universalism and want to contribute, this day is for you.

**Saturday, May 3, from 10 am to 4 pm**

**May Memorial UU Society, Syracuse, NY** (ideal for the Western NY, South-Central, and Hudson Mohawk clusters)

More information is available here:

<https://www.uua.org/central-east/events/region/leading-love-center>

**NEW Summer Program**  
Ages 5-12  
\$325 per week  
Scholarships Available  
**CAMP AURORA**  
Creating Connection and Community  
Downtown Ithaca  
Three weeks of fun!  
Fostering self-expression, creativity, and belonging, art, music, movement, field trips, play  
Week One August 11-15  
Week Two August 18-22  
Week Three August 25-29  
For more information, contact us at: [CampAurora@uuithaca.org](mailto:CampAurora@uuithaca.org)  
First Unitarian Society of Ithaca  
306 N. Aurora Street

## Camp Aurora

Camp Aurora is a week-long summer day camp in the heart of Downtown Ithaca for kids ages 5-12 that is centered on community, connection, and engagement. With a focus on creating meaningful experiences through exploring our interconnected-ness to one another and the world, each fun-filled week will include art, music, movement, field trips, story, and adventure. Campers will have an opportunity to learn and grow together with an emphasis on self-expression, creativity, and belonging, with lots of space for free play and building social skills and relationships.

Camp runs from 9 am-3 pm each day.  
Weekly Camp Fee: \$325  
Scholarships Available

**Week One: August 11th-15th**  
**Week Two: August 18th-22nd**  
**Week Three: August 25th-29th**

Register Today:

[Camp Aurora Registration](#)