



ITHACA

UUU Connections

2017/18 Issue No. 4

December 2017

Sunday Celebrations 10:30 am

— December 3 “The Hope of Not Knowing” -Rev. Evin Carvill-Ziemer and

Rev. Margaret Weis

There are times of our lives when we are more aware of what we don't know. And times in our collective life together when we come face to face with how much we don't know—about what works, about what is right, about what the future holds. The spirituality of Advent speaks to living in these times.

Special music by UUUU and Friends

— December 10 “A Letter to My Daughter about Hope” -Andrew Quagliata

We are surrounded by fear, hopelessness, and despair. You may ask, “How can I live in this world?” We must choose to ward off cynicism and embrace hope.

Special music by Judy Stock

— December 17 “Tending the Flame of Hope” -Rev. Margaret Weis

Join us in reflection for a Hanukkah inspired service about the ways hope sustains us even in times when it seems unwelcome or impossible.

Special music by Adult Choir and Klezmer Band

— December 17 @ 7:00 pm “Quiet Christmas Service” -Rev. Margaret Weis

This time of year can be one of hustle and bustle, stress, and even sadness.

Gather with us in the Parlor for a service of quiet, wonder, solace, and reflection as we take a moment of pause in an otherwise chaotic time.

Special music by Stephanie Ortolano

— December 20 @ 7:00 pm “Winter Solstice Celebration”

An interactive, non-traditional and creative celebration to mark the turn of the year and the beginning of a new one. In the Annex.

— December 24 @ 10:30 am “Family Christmas Eve Service”

-Rev. Margaret Weis

Join us for a “no rehearsal” pageant and intergenerational service! We will sing and celebrate together as we reflect on a story of hope being born into chaos.

Special music by Barry Low

— December 24 @ 5:15 pm and 8:00 pm “Love Born Anew”

A Candlelight Christmas Service with Rev. Margaret Weis

Join us at Sage Chapel on the Cornell campus for our annual Christmas Eve service. We will reflect together with story, with song, and with community.

Special music at 5:15 trombone quartet and at 8:00 Adult Choir

— December 31 “Hope at the Threshold”

Rev. Margaret Weis

There are moments in life that require us to move across the threshold from where we have been to where we are yet to be. How do we cross these thresholds with wonder, hope, and courage?

Special music by Kurt Lichtman, vocalist

Ministerial Musings

We are entering into a season of light, of reflection, and of joy. For many, the winter holiday season is one of laughter, of memory, and of great celebration. For others among us, it is a season of struggle, of worry, and of sadness.

For those of you who have lost someone you love, who are struggling with addiction or to pay the bills, know that this congregation is a place for you.

For those of you tired of the pressure to buy the perfect gift or plan the perfect holiday celebration, know that this congregation is a place for you.

For those of you who are seeking a place of community and of love, know that this congregation is a place for you.

I hope and pray that we will all find moments of pause and of quiet reflection during this busy time. I also hope you will make an effort to witness the good and love that is so prevalent in this world.

Looking for opportunities for reflection and deepening? Make sure to take a look at the Possible Ponderings questions in this newsletter and each week in the order of service. Also, there will be a Winter Solstice service (December 20) and a Quiet Christmas service (December 17). The Quiet Christmas service is designed for contemplation, reflection, and community during a season that is often overwhelming (even if that overwhelm is for good reasons!).

I also want to take this opportunity to remind you about the Human Needs Fund, which is available to offer short-term financial assistance to those in our congregation that need it. If you are interested in learning more about this fund, please contact me.

As the weather turns colder, and the opportunities for connecting in community continue to multiply, I wish you and yours times of love and warmth.

*Take good care,
Rev. Margaret*

Our Mission

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

**Church Office
Will Close**

at 4:00 pm on Friday,
December 22, and will
reopen on Tuesday, January
2nd at 9:00 am.

**Gala Auction 2017
A Rousing Success!**

This year's auction was a gamble of sorts...

No dinner?!? Live music? Small silent auction? Fortunately, due to a lot of hard work by many people, a great time was had by many and over \$16,000 was added to the budget! Many thanks are due to the event's co-chairs Amelia Habicht and Emily Hopkins, who also was our lively auctioneer.

Marshall Hopkins and Robin Cisne assisted Emily with the live auction along with runners Lucy Woll, Mary Hopkins and Kai Truame. Loretta Heimbuch was a huge behind the scenes help with graphics and organization and Alice Churchill and Mark Pedersen were responsible for the entering of data in the computers. Marie Benedetti took charge of the silent auction and Sue Roenke was the cashier.

Even though there wasn't a dinner, a number of cooks helped prepare the fabulous array of over twelve types of hors d'oeuvres including the cooking team captains Amelia Habicht, Laura Free, Loretta Heimbuch and Stephanie Ortolano and sous chefs Joan Doria, Barbara Need, Mark Pedersen, Terry Starr, Sam Weeks and Carol Whitlow. The beverages were poured by Earl Rose and Stephen Maybee and the food servers were Joan Doria, August Doria, Lisa Earle, Joann Kowalski, Therese O'Connor, Nancy Dytman, Kai Truame and Sophie Wray. A great thank you goes out to our intrepid clean up crew consisting of Maureen Coven, Martha Ferger and Sue Roenke. Our apologies to those who helped out and whose names were inadvertently omitted from this list.

And of course, many many thanks to all those who generously donated their special items, services, excursions, food, meals, and so much more.

Religious Exploration News

For information about Religious Exploration, please contact DRE Ann Stephenson at drefusit@gmail.com or 273-7521 ext. 23. To request childcare for any church event, contact Child Care Coordinator Meggan Conklin at childcare@unitusa.org.

Greetings!

The harvest has passed, along with our thanksgiving for the abundance of this waning year. The quiet tans and russets of the resting fields, their crops spent and green growing days a fading and chilly memory, have us settling in for the coming winter. Their gifts are given, or so it would seem...

But in their peaceful silence, they contain the most precious gift of all - hope. The comfort of needed rest after work well done, the promise of the warmth of the coming spring. Potential, powerful and potent, lies just below the earth's frosted surface.

In this time, we too cultivate Hope - our inner harvest - and look outward toward a world needful of peace and sustenance. In RE, we too are looking outward - seeking the many ways we might comfort and sustain. Children and youth, along with their adult guides, are gathering books and food for those in need. As a intergenerational community, we contemplate our helpful hearts; reaching out to the lonely, and to those less fortunate than we.

The RE team would love to share with you several ways to do just that! Collect non-perishable foodstuffs as a family, and deposit them in collection baskets near the Garden or Narthex entrance. The "Babies First" Christmas tree will also be in the Garden Entrance through the month of December. We invite you to help your child participate by taking an ornament from the tree, and in turn, leaving a gift for a baby in our basket there.

Gathering together to spend time or share a meal over these holidays with those whose families are far away, is also a wonderful way to abundantly share hope and joy. Or, plan to join us in February for an adventure in service and sharing, as we discover connection and other cultures on our trip to San Lucas Mission in Guatemala! Contact the RE program (drefusit@gmail.com) for more information.

Whatever way you may choose to do so, Hope shared enriches both the giver and receiver. A heartfelt and hearty wish for joy and peace from all of us, to you and your family this Holiday season. Thank you for sharing your time with us this year!

In Gratitude,
Ann P. Stephenson, MA
Director, Lifespan Religious Exploration

Don't Miss These Programs in December:

December 3 - *Stories from the Senior Troupe at Lifelong: Adventure!*
from 12-1:30 in the Arch Room

December 6 - *Climate Change in New York (Part 2)* from 7-9 in the Parlor, with Mark Wysocki, Cornell meteorologist

December 10 - *Gingerbread House Making*, 12-2:00 pm in the Annex

Soul Matters Material for December on "Hope"

Our December worship theme at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca is Hope. This month's packet includes a few short readings, spiritual exercises, and discussion questions for you to consider. Here is the link:
<http://tinyurl.com/FUSTI-Hope>

Joys and Sorrows

Our condolences go out to the family and friends of Carrie Lazarre, an attendee at First Unitarian for several years, who died on October 30.

Our condolences go out to the friends and family of Don Postle, a long time member who died on November 13 at Kendal. A memorial service to celebrate Don's life will be held in our Sanctuary on Saturday, **December 16**, at 10 am.

Our condolences go out to Simon, Sara, Sam and Rowan Catterall upon the death of Simon's mother, Celia Catterall, in England on November 12.

Care Team December Meeting

The Care Team will meet on Sunday, **December 17**, from 12:15-1:15 in Room 122. Co-chairs Margaret Nichols, mnr1@cornell.edu or 273-3772 or Pat Court, pgc1@cornell.edu or 257-0942.

Annual Christmas UU Book BoUtique December 3 & 10

UU Book BoUtique will be open and ready to provide you with choice books for your life, your holiday pleasure, and gift giving. We feature the best of Beacon and Skinner Presses. As you may know, Beacon Press is a few years older than this church and has a remarkable history in itself as a UU cornerstone and provider of excellent UU literature.

So purchases from the Boutique not only support our church library, currently rehoused and being reorganized, but also our own Beacon Press. Why Beacon Press? It has received rave reviews from folks as diverse as Cornell West, Howard Zinn, Albert Einstein and Daniel Ellsberg. Want to know what they said? You've got some reading to do and we've got just what you need.

Rev. Weis Community Office Hours

**Tuesdays 2-4 pm at CTB (Collegetown Bagels)
on N. Aurora Street.**

Additional times to meet with Rev. Weis are available by making an appointment. Please email (minister@uuithaca.org) or call (607) 218-4281 to make an appointment. Fridays are her day off and, as such, she does not check email on Fridays.

Office: 607-273-7521 ext. 22, Cell: 607-218-4281

Thanks to...

...HT2 Team D, the Dynamic Dynamos, under Coordinator Margaret Nichols, for greeting, ushering, snack providing, coffee prepping and cleaning up at the Sunday services on October 22 and 29, and November 5 and 12.

Snack providers, please remember to provide a list of potentially sensitive ingredients.

For more information about Hospitality Teams, please contact John Gaines, Overall HT Coordinator at [\(607\) 898-3943](tel:6078983943) [898-3943](tel:8983943) or jag222@cornell.edu.

2018 Finger Lakes Calendars will soon be here. Available in the Parlor from Liz Einstein for \$13 of which \$8 is profit. These gorgeous calendars by artist Dewey Neild make wonderful holiday or hostess gifts, which can be easily mailed. This year the proceeds will go to Golden Opportunity (GO), a local non-profit tutoring program for at-risk children living in low-income families. Sale dates are **December 3 and 9**.

UUUU & Friends

Come join the music making on Sunday, **December 3**, at 10:15 in the Sanctuary. Singers of all ages are welcome. We'll learn a new song together and then sing it for the congregation during the service. UUUU & Friends is going to happen the first Sunday of each month. Contact Music Director, Stephanie Ortolano, at fusitmusic@gmail.com.

Pastoral Emergencies

In case of a pastoral emergency (death or hospitalization), the Rev. Margaret Weis can be reached at 607-218-4281 (cell) if you need to speak with her.

For non-emergency pastoral care, please contact one of the chairs of the Care Team: Pat Court at pgc1@cornell.edu or 257-0942, or Margaret Nichols at mnr1@cornell.edu or 273-3772.

Additionally, if you need a ride to any event at church, please contact either Pat or Margaret at the numbers listed above as early as possible, so that they can contact a member who is willing to help. If you are willing to provide occasional rides for others, contact Pat or Margaret to give them your name and contact information.

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273-7521, ext. 22
minister@uuithaca.org*

*Religious Exploration
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*Music Director
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*Care Team
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Beth Pallace, 273-7521, ext 24
memcoord@uuithaca.org*

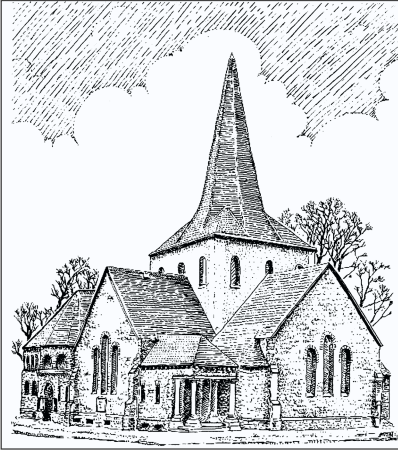
*President, Board of Trustees
Laura Free
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Loretta Heimbuch, 273-7521
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**First Unitarian is a UUA-
recognized (LGBTQ) Welcoming
Congregation**

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



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

Board of Trustees December Meeting

The Board of Trustees will hold their monthly meeting on Tuesday, **December 12th**, at 6 pm in the Parlor. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Women's Circle

The 4th Sunday of December is Christmas Eve, so we will reschedule. Perhaps do a social evening in one of our homes the week between Christmas and New Years. Keep an eye out for news in the Weekly Announcements, listserve and our Women's Circle email list. Or contact Nancy Miller

ananda7733@gmail.com or Wendy Salomon wendysalomon15@gmail.com.

All who identify as women are welcome.

Men's Group

The Men's Group meeting for December has been changed to **December 18**, due to the conflict with the holiday. All those who identify as male are invited to join us 5:30 - 7:30 pm in the Arch Room to share stories and eat some pizza. Newcomers welcome.

Please contact David Salomon (dsalomon01@gmail.com), Jens Wennberg (jens207@gmail.com) or Mark Piechota (markpiechota45@gmail.com) for more information.

Did you know...

...that First Unitarian Society of Ithaca has a Facebook page, where you can find out about the exciting events happening in our congregation, see pictures of past events and connect with other area UUs. Like our page at <https://www.facebook.com/FUSofI/>.

"Babies First" Annual Ornament Exchange

*The "Babies First" Christmas tree will be in the Garden Entrance through the month of **December**. We invite you to take an ornament from the tree and return a gift for a baby to our basket there. We will be encouraging all of the children to participate in this exchange but also hope that all of you will help us make life easier for babies and their families. We can use donations of good used or new baby clothes and blankets, diapers, and dollars to buy car seats! All gifts should be unwrapped. Celebrate the birth of a baby this year. Questions? Call Jane McArthur 216-2151.*

Calling All Crafters!

*"Babies First" could use your help creating ornaments for our Christmas tree. It will be in the Garden Entrance on **December 3rd**. Please bring ornaments that day. Questions? Call Jane McArthur 216-2151.*

Introducing Unitarian Universalism

Are you new to our community and want to get connected? Have you been coming here for a while and are now considering membership? Would you just like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism?

Please join us for an opportunity to dig deep into your spiritual history and find your place among others who are seeking deeper meaning. All participants will get a chance to share their experience and we will provide more insight into the origins and meaning of Unitarian Universalism.

This class is a must for newcomers!

Please join Rev. Weis for Introducing Unitarian Universalism on Sunday, *December 17* from 12-1 pm in the Library Room at First Unitarian.

RSVP via email to memcoord@uwithaca.org or sign up at the Welcome Table on Sunday. See you there!

From the Social Justice Council

The Social Justice Council will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, **December 11**, at 6:00 pm in the Arch Room. Come to learn what our various action teams are doing, and participate in choosing the recipient of each month's "Sharing Sunday."

At it's November meeting, the Social Justice Council chose to donate the Christmas Eve offering to "Babies First" and the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, with each receiving half of the total amount collected that evening.

Upcoming Titles and Dates for Book Discussion Group

December 1: *Lab Girl*, by Hope Jahren

January 5: *A Long Way Home*, by Saroo Brierley

February 2: *Fall Down 7 Times Get up 8*, by Naoki Higashida

March 2: *The Not-Quite States of America*, by Doug Mack

The group meets on the first Friday of the month at 12:30 pm in the Library (upstairs in Parish House). For more information please contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at Streidmull@gmail.com or 351-3087.

Choir News

Thursday Rehearsals

November 30, 7-9 Annex (music for 12/17 7-7:45pm, 12/24 -7:45-9pm)

December 7, 7-9 Annex (music for 12/17 7-7:45pm & 12/24 - 7:45-9pm)

December 14, Annex/Sanctuary (music for 12/24 7-8:15pm & 12/17 8:15-9pm)

December 21, Annex (music for 12/24)

Special Holiday Choir Weekend Rehearsals

Saturday, **December 2nd** - 10:30-12:30 am - Annex, music for 12/24 (10:30-11:30) music for 12/17 (11:30-12:30)

Sunday, **December 10th** - 12:15-2:15 - Sanctuary music for 12/17 (choir plus klezmer band)

Sunday, **December 17th** - 12:15-2:00 - Annex - music for 12/24

Saturday, **December 23rd** - 10:30-12:30 pm - Annex - music for 12/24

Services

Sunday, **December 17**

9:30 am - rehearse 12/17 music

10:30 am - sing two songs in service

12:15 pm - rehearse 12/24 music

Sunday, **December 24** (Sage Chapel evening service)

6:30 pm - rehearse

8:00 pm - service at Sage Chapel, four pieces

Dress Code

For Christmas Eve please wear a festive outfit that is some combination of black, white, grey and red.

Any questions? Please contact Jennifer at fusitchoir@gmail.com or leave a message in the office. Please pass this on to any of your friends/colleagues who may be interested in participating.

Thanks so much!

Jennifer Lawrence Birnbaum, Choir Director

Possible Ponderings

December 3 – 9: What might it mean for you to "be hope"? It is one thing to believe in hope, but another to be it.

December 10 – 16: Who is hope for you? Whose way of being in the world helps you believe that tomorrow will be better? What are you doing to ensure that their inspiration remains front-and-center rather than faded and far away?

December 17 – 23: What if hope doesn't swoop in and wipe away all the pain? What if hope is you standing squarely inside the pain and saying to it, "You are not the full story"?

December 24 – 31: What if your darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but instead the darkness of the womb? What if this pain of yours is not about death and loss, but new life trying to be born? Could it be that Life - like any good midwife - is calling you to "breathe and push"?

December 31 – January 6: Are you bringing more hope into the world than you realize? Are you sure that your everyday commitments and work can't be seen as "bringing hope into the world"? If you don't think of your work and commitments in that way, how might life look different if you did?

Winter Solstice Celebration

On Wednesday, **December 20** at **7 pm in the Annex**
all are welcome to a celebration of the Winter Solstice.

Our celebration is an interactive, non-traditional, and creative celebration to mark the turn of the year and the beginning of a new one. We hope you'll join us. We also need readers and facilitators during the celebration, as well as snack providers, set-up and clean-up crews. If you'd like to help or have questions, email or phone Marsha Kardon mfkardon@gmail.com, 272-6582.



Join Us for Christmas Dinner on December 25 at the Church

On Monday, **December 25th**, there will be a holiday dish-to-pass dinner in the Parlor at 2:00 pm. Please contact Mark Pedersen at cadmin@uuithaca.org or 273-7521, ext. 21, to let him know what food you plan to bring to the dinner and if you'd like to help set up or clean up.

Ushers needed for Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve (TWO SERVICES)

We are looking for individuals/couples/families who are willing to usher at EITHER the 5:15 pm or 8:00 pm service at Sage Chapel. Ushering involves not only helping folks find seats and collecting the offering but also helping with the candle lighting ceremony. Please contact Steve Hand shand35@gmail.com or 275-7008 or Geoff Dunn gdunn@frontier.com or 280-5953.

Art in the Parlor - "Threads of Change"

The Quilt Divas fibre art, exploring changes in social issues, will be on exhibit in the Parlor from **December 1, 2017, through January 10, 2018**. There will be a Gallery Night Reception on Friday, **December 1**, from 5-8 pm.

Invitation to Share Flowers

It is time again to deliver a poinsettia to someone in our congregation who has experienced a loss, an illness, is unable to be present with us, or is celebrating the joy of a new child. You'll find the wreath in the Parlor on Sundays beginning **December 3rd**, and each paper holly leaf has an address showing, with the name and phone number on the back, for each intended recipient. Just remove the leaf and select a poinsettia to deliver. A Care Team member will be near the board to answer your questions about deliveries and pertinent recipient information.

Two Christmas Eve Traditional Candlelight Services

Bring your family and friends and join us in one of our festive and glorious services filled with readings and fellowship, candlelight and song, with the Rev. Margaret Weis.

Sunday, December 24 at 5:15 and 8:00 pm

Sage Chapel at Cornell

Please join the greater-Ithaca community in one of these traditional candlelight services at Sage Chapel on the Cornell Campus. There will be TWO services - one at 5:15 pm which will feature a trombone quartet and one at 8:00 pm which will feature the Unitarian Choir, led by Jennifer Lawrence Birnbaum, plus trumpet and flute.

**There is also a third service on Sunday, December 24th at 10:30 am
at the Unitarian Church**

Need a Ride to Sage Chapel on Christmas Eve?

If you need a ride to either the 5:15 or 8:00 pm Christmas Eve services, please contact Pat Court pgc1@cornell.edu or 257-0942 or Margaret Nichols mnr1@cornell.edu or 273-3772, as early as possible, so that they can contact a member who is willing to help. If you are willing to provide a ride for others on Christmas Eve, contact Pat or Margaret to provide your name and contact information.

