



ITHACA

UUU Connections

2017/18 Issue No. 6

February 2018

Sunday Celebrations 10:30 am

February 4 "Continuous Unknowing"

-Rev. Margaret Weis

In seeking out new knowledge, inspiration, or wisdom we often find ourselves with more questions than answers. Join us as we reflect on the ways not knowing guide us in our perseverance.

Special music by First Unitarian Choir

February 11 "Nothing Is Wasted: Making Meaning in the Face of Loss"

Guest speaker Rev. Diana K. Davies

Our commercial culture generates waste at an unprecedented level: garbage, certainly, but also wasted resources, plundered landscapes, and lives lost to poverty and violence. How do we live in a way that promotes creation, beauty, and complexity, while countering a culture of waste?

Special music by VOICES Multicultural Choir

February 18 "Like Hollow Bamboo"

-Rev. Margaret Weis

Perseverance does not always mean rigidity. What are the ways that flexibility and fluidity foster perseverance, strength, and possibility?

Special music by Sharon Costianes, vocalist

February 25 "A Step Along the Way"

- Rev. Margaret Weis

Perseverance is an effort not only for individuals, but for communities. Join us as we reflect on the ways communities persevere, grow, and strengthen themselves.

Special music TBA

Ministerial Musings

Every year, thousands of Unitarian Universalists gather together to sing, to serve, and to exercise their place in the democracy of our shared faith. This annual gathering, at General Assembly (GA), is an incredibly inspiring, interesting, educational, and uplifting experience. This year General Assembly will be held in Kansas City, Missouri!

Each year, at General Assembly, there is a speech given called the Ware Lecture. Last year, the lecturer was Bryan Stevenson, author of the acclaimed book Just Mercy. Former lecturers have included Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Kurt Vonnegut, Mary Oliver, Krista Tippett, Cornel West, and Reinhold Niebuhr. You can watch the videos of many of these Ware Lectures here: <https://www.uua.org/ga/program/highlights/ware-lecture>

The 2018 Ware lecturer has not yet been announced – so stay tuned!

I hope you'll consider travelling to Kansas City for GA this year. There are many ways to engage with UUs from all over the world in workshops, worship, social witness, and music. If you are a member of this congregation you can go as a delegate for the congregation, which means that you can vote on our behalf on issues of public witness, questions of our involvement in various moral issues, and lots more. If you are a youth (high school) you can be a delegate, too! And, there is a Youth Caucus that holds its own worship, workshops and more. Oh, and there is a Bridging ceremony for graduating seniors during the Synergy Worship – a collaboration between the Youth and the Young Adults. It is an amazing ceremony!

I'll be at General Assembly this year and will be walking during the Service of the Living Tradition for having attained Final Fellowship as a UU minister. This is another milestone in my formation as a minister, and I would be honored to have you there to celebrate with me!

Unitarian Universalism is such an amazing faith tradition and I hope you'll head out to GA and experience some of that amazement with your fellow UUs from across the world!

For more information, follow this link: <https://www.uua.org/ga>

Hope to see you there!

Rev. Margaret

Our Vision

As the Unitarian Universalist presence in Ithaca, we envision ourselves as a vibrant, dynamic community. We cherish fellow seekers, nurture open dialogue and spiritual growth, and inspire action on matters of conscience, serving as a beacon of reason and hope in our interconnected world.



Upcoming Adult RE:

The Series of Programs about Alzheimers

*February 28 and March 7
from 7-8 pm in the Parlor*

This series of programs about Alzheimers, will be presented by Carianne Wilson, Associate Program Director of the Alzheimers Association of Central New York.

Topics will include
**Basics of Alzheimer's,
Know the 10 Signs,
Healthy Living,
and Dementia Conversations.**



Donate to the Mission

The Guatemala trip is full, and folks are welcomed to make donations to the Mission <https://www.sanlucasmision.org/donate/donations-overview/> if they would like to support their work (monetary is best) :)

Mystery Pals

Please note that Mystery Pals is taking a hiatus this year, due to the Guatemala trip.

Lifespan 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@nuithaca.org.

Greetings from RE!

So many of you have expressed interest in it, that I wanted to share with you the story we recently told during the 'Time for All Ages'. As our theme this month is Persistence, this story is especially meaningful:

Once upon a time, in a far away village in India, a small boy came running to the town elders. "There is a huge creature in the village today!" he said.

No one had any idea what this creature was. Being nearly blind, the sages were unsure of what help they could be, but they decided, "Even though we would not be able to see it, let us go and feel it anyway." So all of them went where the creature was. Encircling it, they each lay their hands upon it.

"This is no animal - it is a tree trunk!" said the first elder who touched a sturdy leg.

"Oh, no! it is like a rope," said the second sage, who touched the tail.

"Oh, no! it is like a thick python" said the third, her hand touching its trunk.

"It is like a big banana leaf" said the fourth sage who touched the ear of what was, of course, an elephant.

"It is a huge wall that cannot be moved" said the elder who touched the belly of the beast.

They began to argue about the true nature of the creature - everyone last one of them insisting that they were right. A wise woman who was passing by saw this. She stopped and asked them, "What is the matter?" They said to her, "We cannot agree to what this great creature is like." Each one of them believed they alone had held the truth.

The wise woman calmly explained - "The reason every one of you is seeing it differently because each one of you touched the different part of this Creature. This elephant has all the features you described."

"Ah!" They all said. There was no more fight. They felt happy - for all of them from where they sat, had a piece of the truth.

When we honor one another's unique perspective, we understand the truth of the whole more fully.

Why is this important? At times such as these, when we struggle to understand those whose perspectives are so very different from our own, **persistence** is needed to be mindful that the truth - the WHOLE truth - lies in part with all of us. To honor our right, our freedom, to seek truth and meaning for our selves in our own way, on our own path, is one of our central guiding principles as Unitarian Universalists. We honor that this month.

As some of our Community venture out into the greater world this February to do service at San Lucas Mission in Guatemala, we celebrate our capacity for openness, for learning, and our persistence in challenging our comfort zones and presuppositions, allowing experience - and the experiences of others - to inform our truths.

We hope you will join us in exploring that adventure when our travelers return at the end of the month, during special RE programming, and as part of Rev. Margaret's series on our UU Sources! Watch the web for these and more special events this month!

Wishing you all Love and Light,

-Ann

Joys and Sorrows

Our thoughts are with Dawn St John and her son, Liam, upon the death of Dawn's father on January 2nd.

Our thoughts are with Wendy Wolfe upon the death of her father on December 28th.

We are happy to report that Margaret Lay Dopyera is recuperating at home following a fall and hip surgery, and she appreciates everyone's cheery thoughts. Feel free to message her at margaret.dopyera@gmail.com.

February Book Discussion Group

On Friday, **February 2**, the book group will meet at 12:30 pm, in the Library, to discuss *Fall Down 7 Times Get up 8* by Naoki Higashida. For more information please contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at streidmull@gmail.com or 351-3087.

From the Social Justice Council

The Social Justice Council will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, **February 12**, at 5:30 pm (please note earlier time) in Room 122. Come to learn what our various action teams are doing, and participate in choosing the recipient of each month's "Sharing Sunday."

Board of Trustees February Meeting

The Board of Trustees will hold their monthly meeting on Tuesday, **February 13**, at 6 pm in the Parlor. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Care Team February Meeting

The Care Team will meet on Sunday, **February 18**, 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.

Thanks to...

...HT2 Team B, under Russ Charif, for greeting, ushering, snack providing, coffee prepping and cleaning up for the Sunday services on December 17, 24, 31 and January 7.

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

Hospitality Teams are a "we" effort and not "they" thing. In that light we need to add people to all four teams. It is fun work and you get to know others through shared work in service to us all. And we have snacks! If you are a newcomer or a recent returnee who wants to know more, please see me at the Welcome Information Table on Sunday or get in touch with me, John Gaines, at (607) 898-3943 or at jag222@cornell.edu.

Help Needed to Provide Lunches for the Friendship Center

We need two more volunteers for **February 6** to provide 15 bag lunches each to the Friendship Center.

Lunches must contain a sandwich, a piece of soft fruit (no apples) and a cookie or other small dessert and be prepared within 24 hours of delivery to the Friendship Center at 531 State Street, Ithaca, between 9:30 and 11:30 am.

Your expenses can be reimbursed by the Social Justice Council: keep track of what you spend and contact Jackie Jablonski at jackiejab@me.com.

The Friendship Center is a safe supportive drop-in center run by Ithaca Rescue Mission that serves three free meals a week. Our congregation provides 60 bag lunches on the first Tuesday of every month. For more information, please contact Jackie.

Minister
Rev. Margaret Weis
273-7521, ext. 22
minister@uuiithaca.org

Lifespan Religious Exploration
Ann Stephenson, Director,
273-7521, ext. 23
drefusit@gmail.com

Child Care Coordinator
Meggan Conklin
childcare@uuiithaca.org

Sexton
Sandy Soule, 272-4475

Bookkeeper
Lauren Ponzoni
bookkeeper@uuiithaca.org

Music Director
Stephanie Ortolano
607-708-8088
jusitmusic@gmail.com

Adult Choir Director
Jennifer Lawrence Birnbaum,
jusitchoir@gmail.com

Care Team
-Pat Court
pgc1@cornell.edu or 257-0942
-Margaret Nichols
mnr1@cornell.edu or 273-3772

Membership Coordinator
Beth Pallace, 273-7521, ext 24
memcoord@uuiithaca.org

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Laura Free
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Mark Pedersen, 273-7521 ext 21
cadmin@uuiithaca.org

Administrative Assistant
Loretta Heimbuch, 273-7521
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Pastoral Emergencies

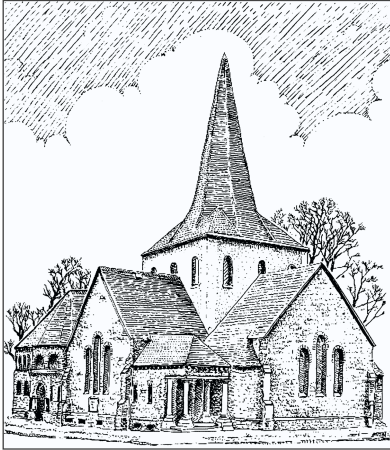
In case of a pastoral emergency (death or hospitalization), the Rev. Margaret Weis can be reached at 607-218-4281 (cell) if you need to speak with her.

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.

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

Soul Matters Material for February on “Perseverance”

Our February worship theme at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca is Perseverance. 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/FUSIT-Perseverance>

Women’s Circle

The Women’s Circle will next meet on Sunday, **February 25**, 12 noon to 1:30 pm in the Arch Room. All those who identify as women are welcome. Feel free to join any or all Circles and invite others. We are seeking to find a place of support around issues specific to women. Women’s Circle will be ongoing every 4th Sunday of the month. If you have questions please contact Nancy Miller at ananda7733@gmail.com or Wendy Salomon wendysalomon15@gmail.com.

Men’s Group

The Men’s Group meeting for February will be **February 26**. 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.

Fragrance Free Consideration

Some members of our congregation experience serious allergic reactions to strong fragrances and scents. Please refrain from using them when attending events at the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca.

Did you know...

The First Unitarian Society is on social media? You can find out about events happening in our congregation, see pictures of past events and connect with other UUs.

*Like and follow us on Facebook,
<https://www.facebook.com/FUSofI/>
Instagram and Twitter,
[@IthacaUUs](https://twitter.com/IthacaUUs)*

Art in the Parlor

The Thirteenth Art of Friends show will open on Thursday, **February 1**. Exhibited will be paintings, photographs, drawings, digital prints and more by thirty-five artists from the Ithaca area and beyond. A reception has been scheduled for **February 17** from 2-4 pm. The show will run through **March 29, 2018**.

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

**Newcomer Luncheon & Intro
to Unitarian Universalism
Sunday February 4,
from 12-1:30 in the Annex**

Join us to learn more about the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca (FUSIT) and enjoy some delicious food in a relaxed, welcoming environment. The Newcomer's Luncheon is a great place to meet the staff and leaders of FUSIT, other newcomers, and current fellowship members. This event is FREE and Childcare is available with advance notice. RSVP required: memcoord@uuithaca.org or talk to Beth at the Welcome Table on Sunday. **Dietary Restrictions should be included with RSVP**

**Exploring Unitarian Universalism
Sunday, February 18,
from 12-2:30 in the HS Annex Room**

Considering Membership? Rev. Margaret will hold Exploring Unitarian Universalism on Sunday, **February 18** from 12-2:30 pm in the High School Room of the Annex. Exploring UU is a great opportunity to discuss how we all got here, explore the twists and turns in your spiritual journey and learn more about what makes First Unitarian Society of Ithaca such an inspiring place to be in 2018! Don't delay! This is a great primer as you are considering membership and will provide the information that you need before participating in our "New Member Ceremony" on Sunday, **March 11**. RSVP: memcoord@uuithaca.org or at the Welcome Table. Childcare available with advance notice.

**"Seaway Gathering" in Syracuse NY
April 13-14**

*This spring we will have what we're calling the "Seaway Gathering" in Syracuse NY **April 13-14**. This is open to all UU's but with a special invitation to those congregations of the former St Lawrence District.*

Friday night is the annual Gould Lecture followed by a coffee house and possible other entertainment.

Saturday our keynote speaker is Central East Region's Regional Lead Rev. Megan Foley. We will have opening and closing worship, youth bridging, workshops, break out groups, and childcare.

- **Friday, April 13:**
 - Gould Discourse
 - Coffee House
 - Youth Overnight
- **Saturday, April 14:**
 - Keynote by Rev. Megan Foley
 - Workshops
 - Closing Worship and Bridging

Registration is coming. To propose a workshop: <https://uua.wufoo.com/forms/z10z9091i8v68p/>

Finally, we are looking for a few more people to join the planning committee, send an email to eziemer@uua.org if interested. In particular we don't have representatives from the Northern NY cluster or the Southern NY/NE Pennsylvania cluster.

Possible Ponderings

February 4-10: It is said that mastery requires persevering through 10,000 hours of practice. If you are feeling like you are failing or not good enough, might it be time to consider that you are only 5,000 hours in?

February 11-17: Are you sure your strategy of "grin and bear it" is still working? What's the worst that could happen if you just walked away?

February 18-24: The saying is widely known: "Trees that bend in the storm don't break." Are you trying to stand tall and remain immovable, when life is asking you to bend?

February 25 – March 3: We all fall down. Very few of us pick ourselves up on our own. Perseverance is rarely a solo act. Who in your life needs a bit of help getting back up off the mat?



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



First Unitarian Choir News

Come join choir! We rehearse on Thursday evenings and you can join for a month, a semester or the whole year.

If you would like to join in for future service, please contact Jennifer Lawrence Birnbaum at fusitchoir@gmail.com for more information.

UPCOMING CHOIR SUNDAYS

February 4

March 11

April 15

May 20

Thanks for Your Support of "Babies First"

Our "Babies First" program thrives because of the generous contributions of our congregation. When the program had a funding crisis in late summer and early fall, we appealed to the congregation to consider making personal donations beyond their usual support of our bake sales. The response was immediate and substantial. The additional \$1500 allowed us to provide 33 families with car seats. We have received amazing support through bake sales, diaper drives and the Christmas Eve collection. We are very grateful for this support from members of our congregation. We also thank the Presbyterian church for a Wiggans Grant of \$500.

We would like to hear from anyone who has an interest in becoming involved with the Babies First Program. We are a very small committee and would welcome new involvement. Lois Ecklund, coordinator, can be contacted through e-mail, lecklund@twcny.rr.com or 273-2940.

Weekly Food Collection

Be a sweetheart and bring a weekly donation for the food pantry. Bring a box or can of food each Sunday – items like a big box of dried spaghetti, a jar of spaghetti sauce, a can of sliced mushrooms, and a can of parmesan cheese. Drop off your nonperishable items in one of the baskets found in the Garden Entrance and we will deliver them to a local food pantry. Thank you!

Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary

with keynote talk by S. Bear Bergman

Three Problems Facing Trans Communities (and Three Solutions Anyone Can Help With)

In addition to Bear we will be offering many workshops. For folks who want to be good allies but don't know much about gender-nonconforming issues there will be workshops such as **Trans 101**, and a **panel discussion with gender non-conforming folk**. For folks who live beyond the binary, workshops such as **Trans Inclusive Medicine**, **Trans Parenting** will be offered as well as time for a **Name and Documents Legal Clinic**. And for all focused on the future a **De-Escalation Workshop**.

Saturday February 10 from 9:00 am–4:30 pm

*First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse
109 Waring Road, Syracuse, NY 13224*

*Tickets available at: **Eventbrite***

*[http://buildingbelovedcommunitybeyondthebinary.
eventbrite.com](http://buildingbelovedcommunitybeyondthebinary.eventbrite.com)*

