



ITHACA

UUU Connections

2017/18 Issue No. 5

January 2018

Sunday Celebrations 10:30 am

— January 7 “*Restful Intention*”

-Rev. Margaret Weis

In a world that asks us to always be doing more and more, what does it look like to take an intentional break? What does the concept of Sabbath teach us about resetting, refueling, and reconnecting in an intentional way? Join us as we reflect on these ideas.

Special music by Ben Pawlak, piano

— January 14 “*An Arc of Possibility*”

-Rev. Margaret Weis

We often speak of good intentions and the importance of having them in our daily lives. But what if our good intentions have a bad impact? We will explore the complicated relationship between intention and impact together through music, word, and community.

Special music by FUSIT Choir/Pick Up Choir

— January 21 “*One Day at a Time: Recovery and Intention*”

-Rev. Margaret Weis

Together we will explore the ways that many twelve-step programs and other ways of living in recovery can be supported and enriched by religious community and intentional living. All of us, those living in recovery and those who are not, have something to gain from this exploration.

Special music by Xak Bjerken, piano

— January 28 “*It’s so rivery, this world*”

- Jeff Collins

“A vast and silent emptiness, full of sound and fury, but no thing ever found. My neighbor I wonder how she is” (from a very old Chinese poem)

Special music by Roberta Crawford, violist

Ministerial Musings

*Come into this place of peace and let its silence heal your spirit;
Come into this place of memory and let its history warm your soul;
Come into this place of prophecy and power and let its vision change your heart.*

- Rev. William F. Schulz

One of my favorite parts of ministry is crafting Sunday services that are engaging, challenging, and interesting. Here at First Unitarian, I am grateful to work with some of the most talented and dedicated staff in Unitarian Universalism. I am also grateful to have a great team of laypeople (members of the congregation) who collaborate with me to create our Sunday services. With the new addition of the aesthetics team, our sanctuary has become a great place to experience, ponder, and reflect on our monthly themes.

We are using the Soul Matters materials to help integrate these themes into our congregational life together. What this means is that our small groups, religious exploration programming, Sunday services, and other aspects of community are using these themes to influence conversation, reflection, and community involvement. If you are interested in learning more about the Soul Matters materials, check out their website here:

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com and keep a look out for the monthly link to the packets in the newsletter and weekly announce. Also, if you have ideas of how to further integrate these thematic approaches into our congregational life, please let me know!

You may have noticed that we are trying some new things in our Sunday services together. Sometimes the music is woven into the sermon, or we will go right into singing a hymn without an introduction. These are examples of how Stephanie, Jennifer, and I are seeking to create a flow in the service that allows us to become more immersed in the experience. We appreciate your willingness to try these new things, and hope that you'll continue to engage with our experiments with an open heart and mind.

This month I will gather with many of my Unitarian Universalist colleagues and other interfaith clergy at the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association Institute for Excellence in Ministry. While there, I will engage in a multi-day workshop with Dr. Marcia McFee. Dr. McFee is a talented and inspiring creator of transformational worship, held in high regard. Last year, your Celebrations Associates engaged in a day-long training with Dr. McFee. I hope that my time with her will help to enrich the ongoing inspiring, creative, and engaging worship experiences at First Unitarian.

As we reflect on our monthly theme of “intention,” I hope you'll think about how we are intentional in our Sunday services together. I invite you to reflect on the ways that you bring intention to your involvement at the congregation, and your life during the week. What are the ways that your intention reflects your values and hopes for yourself and the world? How does your engagement with this community enrich those things?

*Take good care,
Rev. Margaret*

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@unitiaca.org.

Adult RE Programs:

History Project of First Unitarian

You probably know that First Unitarian of Ithaca is now 150 years old! In honor of this milestone, a book on our history is in the works. And we want you to take part. Please join us as we reflect on our church by sharing memories, hopes, and stories about our building, our ministries, and people we have known and loved. Sessions will be held at 9:00 am on Sunday, **January 7, 14, and 21**, as well as 7:00 pm on Wednesday, **January 17**. All sessions will meet in the Arch Room and will be facilitated by Walt Peck. This is an opportunity for both seasoned and newer members and friends of the church to share and to listen as we seek to live out our mission and vision, so all are encouraged to attend.

Pachamama Alliance presented by Jennifer LeBaron

The *Awakening the Dreamer Symposium* is a transformative workshop designed to help you tap into your personal potential to create a thriving, just, and sustainable world. In as little as 2 hours, the Symposium can re-kindle lives, waking people up to their unique role in transforming humanity's future while building local communities of like-minded friends that support this collective goal. The workshop is presented by over 4,000 volunteers in 78 countries!

Join us Wednesday, **January 10**, 7pm - 9pm in the Parlor for our second *Awakening the Dreamer Symposium*.

Winter Greetings to All!!

We hope that this finds everyone cozy and warm, and that you enjoyed a blessed and joyous Holiday season! We here in the Lifespan Religious Exploration Program are looking forward to the New Year and its many opportunities to Connect, Engage and Inspire! We invite YOU to **explore** with us as we learn together about ourselves and our world.

We are especially excited to welcome the **many new families and individuals** who have joined our community in the past months. In celebration of the New Year and of the Winter semester of RE Programming, we take pleasure in reintroducing the 2017-2018 Children and Youth curriculum and our Adult RE programs. **Please come visit us at the RE table in the Parlor, starting January 7th** to check out our offerings for this year, register your child (if you haven't already) and pick up our new Program Information Sheets! Look for our upcoming **WINTER RE Parent Meeting, January 14th** at noon - a special time where you can come, meet our staff, ask questions and hear more about our RE mission and vision here at the First Unitarian Society. We have new parent resources and opportunities for engagement... so come find out how you AND your kids can get involved!

With the guidance of our **new minister, Rev. Margaret Weis**, RE will be renewing its commitment to providing a **safe and healthy environment** for growth and learning throughout the lifespan, fostering intergenerational connections and an expanding family ministry. Please see us at the RE table or **on the web**, where we will share some new program policies and procedures to ensure that our covenanted community remains safe, strong and vibrant!

Intergenerational RE is growing too, with a special focus on sharing the wealth of skills in our community through Adult Forum presentations and Learnshops designed to address topics of interest to our rich and diverse community of all ages. Whether taking part in local social activism, or heading for parts unknown on a Service Learning adventure - **the sky's the limit** as we explore ways to inspire ourselves and one another. **Among the many RE Events to look forward to this month:**

January 7th, 14th and 21st - Explore the History of the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca with Walt Peck, 9:00 am in the Arch Room

January 20th - Guatemalan Fiesta Community Dinner (benefits FUSIT Service Learning) followed by our **Annual Coffee House and Talent Show!!** Start practicing that awesome interpretive dance routine now...

Following our **program break** on December 31st, RE returns with **Children's Chapel on January 7th**, offering your children a time to explore holding sacred space together, along with the addition of new monthly **Creative Sundays**. We are expanding this popular program, and will feature visiting artists leading community Visual Art Projects, Music and Drama Enrichment and many other exciting activities one Sunday a month. Age specific programming will occupy the second and third Sundays for your child's peer group.

Looking forward to seeing you all very soon!

Ann and the RE Team

Joys and Sorrows

Our condolences go out to the friends and family of Louise Baker who died peacefully at home on December 5. A Unitarian for more than sixty years, she joined FUSIT four years ago when she moved to Ithaca to live with her daughter Sue Smith. No memorial service has been planned per Louise's request.

Our condolences go out to Kay Durant and former long-time church member Virginia Simons (Arlington, MA) on the death of their grandson Harrison Pearce Durant on December 8 in Elon, NC. A memorial service to celebrate Harrison's life is being planned for early January in the Boston area.

New Hearing Loop System is Here!

Do you use hearing aids and has your T-coil been activated? Our new loop in the sanctuary is operational! If you don't have activated hearing aids or if you just need hearing assistance, grab a receiver and headset from the baskets at the entries and give it a try. The receiver has a volume switch so you can adjust. At the end of the service, please return the receivers and headsets to the baskets.

Board of Trustees January Meeting

The Board of Trustees will hold their monthly meeting on Tuesday, **January 9**, at 6 pm in the Parlor. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Care Team January Meeting

The Care Team will meet on Sunday, **January 21**, 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.

Rev. Weis Community Office Hours

Tuesdays (except January 23) 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@uuihaca.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 A, under Coordinator Jesse Koennecke, for greeting, ushering, snack providing, coffee prepping and cleaning up for the Sunday services on November 19th and 26th, and December 3rd and 10th.

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 or jag222@cornell.edu.

FUSIT Choir News

Happy New Year!

Did you make a resolution to find a new way to connect with others in your community? 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

January 14 (pickup choir of Justice Choir music in honor of MLK Jr.)

February 4

March 11

April 15

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.

*Minister
Rev. Margaret Weis
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minister@uuihaca.org*

*Religious Exploration
Ann Stephenson, Director,
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-Pat Court
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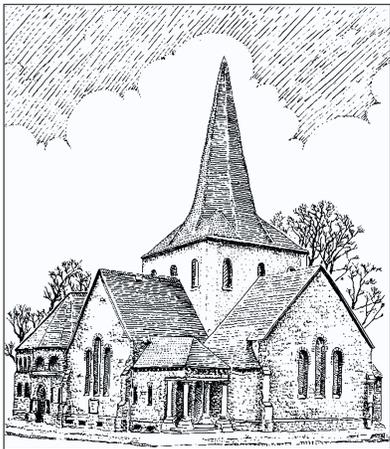
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**First Unitarian is a
UUA-recognized
(LGBTQ) Welcoming
Congregation**

The First Unitarian Society of Ithaca
306 North Aurora Street
P.O. Box 6
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Visit our Website and get
your newsletter:
www.uuithaca.org

Soul Matters Material for January on “Intention”

Our January worship theme at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca is Intention. 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-Intention>

Women’s Circle

The Women’s Circle will next meet on Sunday, **January 28**, at 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 January will be **January 22**. 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.

Blood Drive Thursday, January 11

Fuel your community! At the Community Blood Drive on Thursday, January 11, from 1-6 pm in the Parlor. Sponsored by the American Red Cross. Please call 1-800-REDCROSS or visit their website at www.redcrossblood.org to make an appointment. Walk-ins welcome.



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/>.

Our Mission

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

A Pastoral Message from Rev. Weis

We live in challenging times. Our country is experiencing an uncovering of sexual assault and abuse by people in power nearly everyday. These patterns have existed for millennia, and now people who have been victimized are speaking openly and honestly about their experiences. Many are feeling relief that silence is being broken. Others are feeling confusion and sadness that icons in this community and this country are imperfect people. Still others are wondering if it is safe to speak about their experiences.

As Unitarian Universalists, we strive toward a world where everyone is treated fairly and justly. We also acknowledge that we are all imperfect beings and that we have a responsibility to own the impact of our actions – whether well-intended or otherwise.

Here at First Unitarian we are working on ways to build a beloved community with the values we hold dear – justice, love, and compassion. One way we have done this is by creating a congregational covenant, the words for which you can find here:

<https://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/2017-Congregational-Covenant.pdf>

We are learning to live into this covenant and discern the ways that we can create a community that is safe and caring for all. In order to do this, we are working on policies and other guidelines to help people navigate and prevent instances where there are power imbalances, or where words or actions may make another person feel uncomfortable.

So what does that look like – to live into covenant, particularly with consideration to safety and boundaries? Here are some ways that we can live into our shared covenant, and make safer spaces in the congregation and our daily lives:

1. Always ask someone if you can hug or touch them beforehand. Where children are concerned, ask their parent for permission. Everyone has different comfort levels with physical contact and it is important to respect those boundaries.

2. Remember that intention is important, but so is impact. You may not have meant to hurt someone's feelings or make them uncomfortable, but the impact of your actions matters.

3. If someone tells you that you've made them feel uncomfortable, carefully listen to them and seek resolution together. We want to foster a sense of agency for the people in this congregation to be honest about their comfort and setting good boundaries.

4. Know that there are people here to listen to you. I am here to listen, as your minister. Ann is here to listen, as your Director of Religious Exploration, and so are the staff and other leaders in the congregation.

We are all in this together. Know that we are committed to creating environments that are nurturing, caring, and that encourage honesty and healthy boundaries.

In faith and fellowship,
Rev. Margaret

From the Social Justice Council

The Social Justice Council will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, **January 8**, 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."

January Book Discussion Group

On Friday, **January 12**, the book group will meet at 12:30 pm, in the Library, to discuss *A Long Way Home* by Saroo Brierley. For more information please contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at Streidmull@gmail.com or 351-3087.

Budget Requests Sought for 2018/19

Committee and event chair persons are encouraged to submit their committee's 2018/2019 budget requests to Jennifer Streid-Mullen at streidmull@gmail.com by **February 23**.

Art in the Parlor - "Threads of Change"

The Quilt Divas fibre art, exploring changes in social issues, will be on exhibit in the Parlor **through January 10**.

Human Needs Fund

This fund is available for short-term, temporary assistance to our members who are having a hard time meeting their financial needs. If you are in need of assistance, please be in touch with Rev. Margaret Weis about your needs. This fund is kept confidential, and only our minister will know of your utilization of it.

Possible Ponderings

January 7 - 13: What dictates your days? Your To-Do list or your intentionality? Do you begin by asking, "What do I have to get done?" or "What do I want this day to be about?"

January 14 – 20: How are you doing at the work of intentional authenticity? Are you succeeding at being the same person on the outside as you are on the inside?

January 21 – 27: Are you serving a purpose or living a lifestyle?

January 28 – February 3: Are you too intentional? Is it time to put down all the "doing" and pay a bit more attention to "being"? Has your long list of intentions left you feeling exhausted and even lost?

Help Needed to Provide Lunches for the Friendship Center

We need two more volunteers for **January 2** and three 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 Jablonski at jackiejab@me.com.

Exploring Unitarian Universalism

You are invited to come 'Explore Unitarian Universalism' with Rev. Margaret Weis on Sunday, **January 7**, from 12 -2:30 pm in the Library!

Please join us for an opportunity to share your personal journey in spirituality. Participants are asked to bring something that symbolizes your spiritual journey and they will get a chance to ask questions. We will also provide a historical framework of the origins of Unitarian Universalism.

Please RSVP at the Welcome Table or by emailing memcoord@uunitthaca.org

New Aesthetics Ministry Team!

*The recently formed Aesthetic Ministry Team has big plans!
Would you like to help?*

Created to help enliven our already lovely buildings and spaces, the Aesthetics Ministry Team will be engaged in some exciting new work this winter! Working with Reverend Margaret and the Celebrations Team, starting in January the Aesthetics Team will decorate the sanctuary with (tasteful, of course!) adornments reflecting the worship theme of the month. Each month, the decorations will change, to provide visual cues as to the shifting themes.

For this, we need your help!

If you've got some good ideas about what images/decorations/colors, etc. should be used to emphasize a particular theme, please share them with the Aesthetics Team! The upcoming themes for the winter/spring are:

- **January: Intention**
- **February: Perseverance**
- **March: Balance**
- **April: Emergence**
- **May: Creativity**
- **June: Blessing**

If this sounds exactly like the kind of church work you'd like to do, please join the Aesthetics Team! We welcome any and all to help with this work!

Email Team Leader Susanne Quagliata: suzms1@botmail.com or team member Laura Free: laurafree5x5@gmail.com for more information and to join the team!

Thank you!

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend on behalf of the congregation.



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

General Assembly 2018
June 20-24
Kansas City, MO
(the city of fountains)

Grounded in a deep belief that we are all prophets, Unitarian Universalists ask, "How can we faithfully meet the demands of our time?" Join us as we dive deeply into questions of mission for our Unitarian Universalist Association, for our congregations and communities, and for each of us.

For more information: www.uua.org