



ITHACA

UU Connections

2019 / 2020 Issue No. 8

April 2020

Ministerial Musings

**Sunday Celebrations at 10:30 am
For the time being, until further notice,
to view worship on Sunday, go to the
website: www.uuithaca.org.**

Dear FUSIT Members and Friends,

Per the guidance of the UUA, we are canceling all gatherings, including in-person worship on Sunday, effective immediately.

This is the kind of response we now need here to flatten the curve of infection, which means to avoid an exponential growth and peak of illnesses that will immediately outstrip the hospital beds, dedicated staff, and ventilators available in our community and beyond.

Here is what we need to do: Stay home. Stop everything. Cancel the music concert, postpone the dinner party, don't go to the play. Yes, I mean you. Yes, I mean the thing that you have been looking forward to for quite some time. Yes, I understand that you are heartbroken. I am, too.

What experts are currently encouraging, as incredible and hard as it sounds, is isolation from community life as we all know it. Just for a time. So we can give our nurses, doctors, techs, and hospitals a fighting chance. So that every older or vulnerable person (which means most of you, let's be honest, and if it doesn't mean you, it means your parents and grandparents and friends) has a greater possibility of making it through this. So that, when we finally come back together, there are not empty spaces at our table and in our pews.

My people. My congregation. Community with whom I have agreed to walk together in these years. I love you more than you know. Yes, really and truly. Yes, even you. Especially you. You with your brave, broken heart. You with your many hopes.

This is indeed an emergency. It is a risk to many you love. The need for social distancing is immediate and dire.

Get home. Stay home. If not for you, then for those in your life that you could be unknowingly exposing.

And let us know what you need.

*With fierce love and gratitude,
Rev. Margaret*

Religious Exploration News

For information about Religious Exploration, please contact Susanne Quagliata at drefusit@gmail.com.

From Susanne Quagliata, Acting Director, Religious Exploration

This new and unpredictable time has me feeling all sorts of feelings. One feeling that I'd like to share is my gratitude for our faith. I am learning day by day that when things get hard or scary or even more uncertain, to lean into our values.

Here are four simple ways that we can all do this.

- 1 **Be a helper.** There are always helpers, even in troubling times. Why not be one. Call someone every day. Check in via text. Connect on FaceTime. It might be our inclination to focus on our fears, but if we look for ways to help it will elevate our optimism.
- 2 **Stay calm and focused.** Take things one step at a time. And if you can, take those steps outside and appreciate your surroundings. Breathe deeply, sing and dance, talk to a calm friend on the phone.
- 3 **Show gratitude.** Say thank you to the people working hard to keep us all safe. Doctors who are treating the sick, school leaders who made the decision to close so we can slow the spread of the virus, store clerks who continue to show up so we can restock on necessities.
- 4 **Show compassion and recognize our humanity.** It is likely that we will go through periods of fear, frustration, even anger. Be kind to yourself, your family, and all others during this time.

We are on this journey together, this new uncertain journey. Let's all lean in, way in, to our UU values. I will continue to share resources in my weekly email to families. Please reach out to me directly if there is any way I can support you and your family.

Join the FUSIT (internal) Facebook

Page: [https://
www.facebook.com/
groups/
171869686459/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/171869686459/)

Leave a message for Jessica or other FUSIT staff by calling the Google voicemail number at (607) 218-2088 and she will pass any information along or call you back.

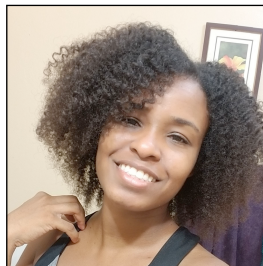
Did you know...

*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](https://www.facebook.com/FUSofI/Instagram)
www.instagram.com/ithacauus and Twitter, @IthacaUUs.*

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

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.



***Please Welcome Our New
Community Engagement and
Outreach Coordinator,
Viviani "Vivi" Tillett***

Viviani "Vivi" Tillett moved from Belize to Ithaca 11 years ago. After working retail for 7 years she ventured and found massage therapy as a new career path. She has been practicing massage since 2016. When she is not practicing massage she enjoys playing and sitting in front of the woodstove with her two dogs, Hunter and Darlin.

Vivi looks forward to bringing her joy and compassion to her new roll as Outreach and Engagement Coordinator at FUSIT and connecting with current and new members of the community.

Joys and Sorrows

Our thoughts are with ...

...family and friends of Pat Court who passed suddenly after heart surgery.

...family and friends of Barbara Kane Lewis who passed away on March 5th.

...Linda Loomis who was able to finally go home after six months of rehab.

...Norma Helsper who is home at Longview and would love people to contact her by text at 607-319-9301.

... Betsy East who recently broke her femur and will be recovering at home over the next 4-6 weeks and her partner Elizabeth Bixler who will be caring for her.

Treasurer Wanted

Interested in playing an important role at FUSIT and helping shape our programs each year? We will need a new Treasurer some time in 2021. Treasurer's key responsibilities include annual budget preparation and helping monitor spending versus budget. We have a bookkeeper and payroll services, so Treasurer is also responsible for overseeing bookkeeping and integrity of financial systems. Being comfortable with spreadsheets, basic accounting, and coordinating with various team leaders is important. Treasurer attends most Board meetings and is a member of the Finance Team. Overlap/training/partnership with current Treasurer over the next year, and expected term is 4-6 years. If you might be interested, please contact Treasurer Jennifer Streid-Mullen.

Thanks to...

...everyone who contributed to the February Shared Plate. We were able to give \$527 to support Open Doors English.

....Hospitality Team 4, under coordinators Russ Charif and Wendy Wolfe, who organized volunteer power to make Sunday services and coffee hour a welcoming time on February 23 and March 1 and 8.

Babies First

Please note that for the time being, the Babies First program has been temporarily suspended.



Magic Is Happening!

Would you believe that just two weeks into our 2020-21 pledge drive 75 members and friends have already pledged \$171,000!?! Halfway already! Truly magical. Thank you!

If you were here on pledge Sunday to dance your pledge up the aisle and enjoy our Magic of Ministry feast, you could feel the energy of fellowship and generosity. Thank you for making it such a festive gathering.

If you could not be with us and feel it is wise to stay close to home these days, fear not. By the magic of the telephone (607-273-7521), the Internet (unitarian.ithaca.ny.us) or the U.S. Post Office (P.O. Box 6, Ithaca, NY 14851) you can pledge today. You can even text the amount you would like to give with the word Spark to (607) 260-6616. For example, type in "\$25 Spark" to the number above and you will give \$25 to the 20-21 Stewardship campaign.

Just think what magic we can create in the coming year when all of us pledge with love. Pledges at all levels are welcome and needed. Our resources vary, but each contribution is important.

You can pay your pledge weekly, monthly, or all at once. The fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30, so you have until the end of June 2021 to complete your pledge, but it is important to make it now. The Board of Trustees is already working on the budget that will be voted on at the annual meeting in May.

How much First Unitarian can plan to do depends on how much income there will be. Our annual giving, that we are pledging this month, accounts for 75 percent of First Unitarian's income.

Questions about pledging? Want to know more about what your pledge supports? Check out our website or contact Sharon Costianes (sharon.costianes@gmail.com) or David Salomon (dsalomon1@gmail.com).



Help us minister our magic in our congregation and beyond. Make your pledge today.

*Sincerely,
Sharon Costianes, David Salomon, and the entire
Stewardship Team*

Minister

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

Religious Exploration
*Susanne Quagliata, Acting
Director, 273-7521, ext. 23
drefusit@gmail.com*

Sexton
Sandy Soule, 272-4475

Bookkeeper
*Lauren Ponzoni
bookkeeper@uuithaca.org*

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

Adult Choir Director
*Jennifer Lawrence Birnbaum,
fusitchoir@gmail.com*

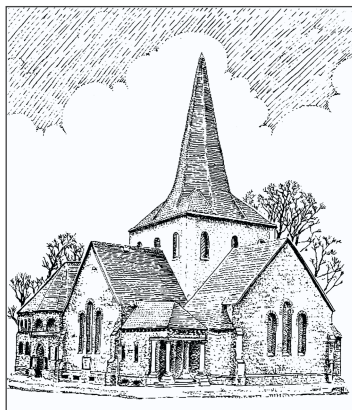
***Community Engagement
and Outreach***
*Viviani Tillett
memcoord@uuithaca.org*

President, Board of Trustees
*Andy Turner
ast4@cornell.edu
607-227-9820*

Congregational Administrator
*Jessica English
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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

Ministry Meetings

If you need to have a ministry meeting, please contact the office at office@uuithaca.org or the team leader to see if the meeting will take place through Zoom.

Zoom Video Communications is a remote conferencing services company which provides free remote conferencing services that combine video conferencing, online meetings, chat, and mobile collaboration.

Soul Matters Material for April on “Wholeness”

Our April worship theme at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca is Wholeness. This month's packet includes a few short readings, spiritual exercises, and discussion questions for you to consider. Here is the link: tinyurl.com/ithaca-wholeness

Pastoral Emergencies

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

**All Church Night
Tuesday, April 21st
(stay tuned as we plan for
an alternate venue)**

Possible Ponderings

April 5-11: When were you first invited into a circle that helped you feel whole? How does that story still direct you today?

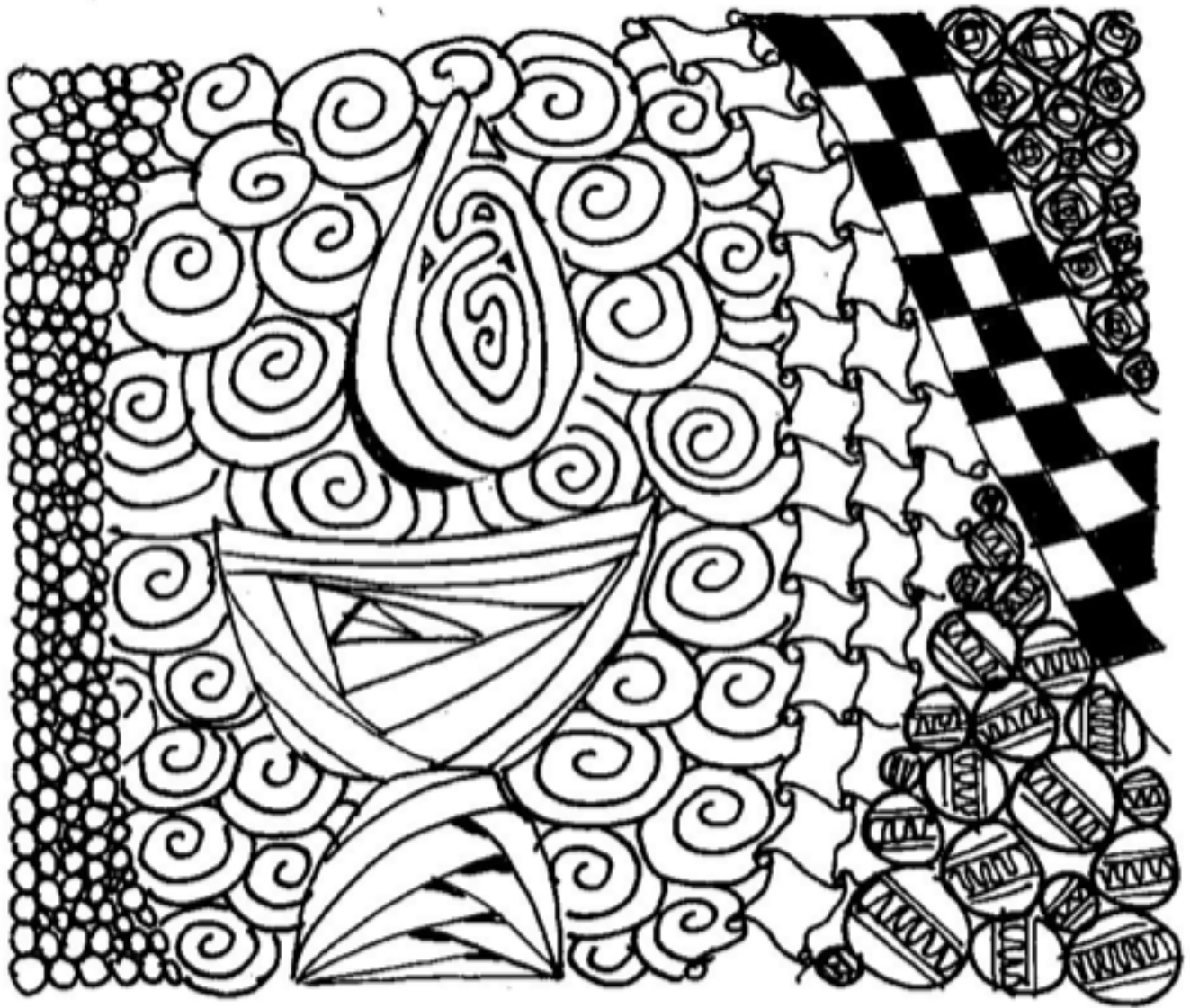
April 12-18: Is wholeness for you a solitary or relational journey?

April 19-25: When did you first discover that repairing the world is one of the best ways to put yourself back together?

April 26-May 2: In what space or place do you feel most whole? How often do you spend time there?

Coloring Zentangles

Zentangles provide a simplistic and lighthearted way to unwind from the stress of the day. It hones your focus by drawing you away from agitation through subtle, calming and intricate strokes that lead to wholesome beauty.



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