



ITHACA

UUU Connections

2020 / 2021 Issue No.2

October 1-31, 2020

Ministerial Musings

*At times we need to quiet our minds to truly listen
deeply to the world and its call to us. Using
this finger labyrinth may be a tool
to help you listen deeply in
this moment.*

**Sunday Celebrations at 10:30 am
View Sunday worship at www.uuithaca.org**



Religious Exploration News

For information about Religious Exploration, please contact Emily Richards at dre@uuithaca.org.

Greetings from the DRE

Dear FUSIT Community,

Thank you so much for welcoming me so warmly into this new role. It was such a joy to see many of you and your children this past month as families stopped by and picked up their first UU Crate. And although my smiles were hidden safely behind my mask I hope you all know how wonderful it was to have those moments of connection with you.

For those of you who received your first monthly box, I hope that you have had a chance to explore the items inside and that it has given you an opportunity for creativity and sparked your curiosity about the months to come!

A huge thank you to Jessica Brown, Patricia Conroy, and Jill van Leuken for their help getting all of the boxes out to families who were unable to pick them up.

If you have a young person who is interested in participating and are not yet registered for our RE program please let me know.

*Emily Richards,
Director of Religious Exploration*

Deep Listening

This month we're exploring the many ways our UU faith invites us to become "A People of Deep Listening." Deep listening brings us into the realm of compassion. Deep listening points out the importance of listening to your heart.

UU Crate for October

I know it may feel like you just came and picked up your first monthly box, but here we are again! Since September began our year in the middle of the month this next packet of fun UU activities to do together at home will be coming to you more quickly than usual.

Packages with materials to refill your box can be picked up on the FUSIT porch during the following times:

Friday, **October 2nd** from 4:30 pm-6:30 pm

Saturday, **October 3rd** from 10:30 am-12:30 pm

RE Zoom Meetings

Beginning in October RE participants are invited to join a ***once monthly Zoom meeting on Sundays from 12:30 pm to 1:00 pm.*** These meetings will be divided up based on age and will allow more opportunities to stay connected with one another and our faith.

The monthly schedule will be as follows:

PreK - 2nd Grade - 1st Sunday

3rd Grade - 5th Grade - 2nd Sunday

6th Grade - 8th Grade - 3rd Sunday

9th Grade - 12th Grade - 4th Sunday

The first meeting will be held on Sunday, **October 4th.**

If there is a 5th Sunday no group meetings will be held.

I will communicate any necessary adjustments to this schedule in advance if changes need to be made.

Facebook Story Time

Weekly story time with Audrey started back up in September! Please join us each Tuesday at 7:00 pm for an opportunity to gather together virtually and enjoy a story that touches on our theme for the month.

Share With Us

We would love to see images and/or videos from our families and children of you doing the activities that we have shared with you. Do you have an awesomely messy oobleck picture? Or maybe you've perfected the jumping rubber band trick and want to share your skills. We would love to see and hear from you. You can post them to our Facebook page or send them in an email.

(continued on page 3)

(DRE Message continued from page 2)

Expanding Community

For many this pandemic has brought increased feelings of isolation and being cut off from others. We always welcome new members to our community and faith and hope to provide a safe space of connection and learning for all during this time of physical distancing. Please continue to invite any and all people that you know that you believe could find meaning by exploring what the FUSIT community and Unitarian Universalist faith can offer.

Ways to Help

Even though we are not meeting in person for the foreseeable future there are still ways you can help! One way to do so is to join our monthly Zoom meetings.

Please reach out if you are interested in volunteering for the RE program or joining the RE Team, contact information is provided above.

Soul Matters Material for October on Deep Listening

Our October worship theme at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca is Deep Listening. This month's packet includes a few short readings, spiritual exercises, and discussion questions for you to consider. Here is the link: <https://tinyurl.com/fusit-deep-listening>.

Book Discussion Group

October's Book Discussion Group is scheduled for Friday, **October 2**, at 12:30 pm at Stewart Park. The book is *A Burning* by Megha Majumdar. Please bring a mask and lawn chair.

The upcoming **November 6** is *Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell. Meetings may revert to Zoom due to the weather. Contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at streidmull@gmail.com.

Our Mission

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

Sunday, October 4: Listening to RBG, Speaking Truth to Power

Rev. Margaret Weis

One source of Unitarian Universalism is the words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love. On this 27th anniversary of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg being sworn into the Supreme Court we will listen deeply to some of her prolific words and glean wisdom from them.

Sunday, October 11: Paying Attention to the Water

Speaker Magdalen Lindeberg

First steps toward examining how structural racism has shaped my life experiences and family history, and reflections on the meaning of belonging.

Sunday, October 18: Learning How to Listen

Rev. Margaret Weis

What does it mean to listen deeply - to the world, to our yearnings, to each other? How can we approach listening deeply as a spiritual practice at this time in our lives?

Sunday, October 25: Feeding the Wolves

Rev. Margaret Weis

How do we listen deeply to the conflicted emotions within us and in this divided

New Time for Women's Circle

Women's Circle will meet via Zoom on **Monday, October 26th** from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. We are now meeting the **4th Monday** of the month. All who identify as women are welcome. This is a drop-in group, so no need to sign up; just come. For information or questions contact Nancy Miller at ananda7733@gmail.com or 607-539-7733.



Green Tip From the Environmental Interests Circle

The Blue Jeans Go Green™ program run by Cotton, Incorporated takes donations of used denim clothing via retailers, collection drives, and mail, to be recycled into cotton-fiber products such as building insulation.

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.

Minister

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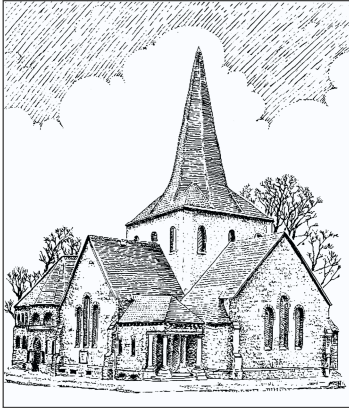
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Join the FUSIT (internal) Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/171869686459/>

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

Possible Ponderings

The theme for October is Deep Listening

Possible Ponderings is an offering of ways you might consider engaging more deeply with the theme or reflecting on the ways the idea of Deep Listening shows

October 4 – 10: Who are the prophets in your life? Who do you listen to for guidance?

October 11 – 17: How are you listening to what is calling you in this moment?

October 18 – 24: How did you learn to listen to your heart? To others? To the world?

October 25 – November 1: How do you manage the conflicted emotions you feel in your life?

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

Social Media Connections

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 www.instagram.com/ithacauus and Twitter, @IthacaUUs.

Website Updates

If you see any info on the website that you believe is incorrect or out of date, please send the url and the incorrect info in an email to Jessica at office@uuithaca.org. We could use all eyes on the website to make sure it's current. Thank you for your help!

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.

**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!**

Way Forward Team Report for October

The Way Forward Team has met 3 times with Rev. Margaret since August 1, and will continue to meet as long as the pandemic limits the use of our facility. The FUSIT board has passed this charge to the team:

The Way Forward Team is charged with discerning best practices for the re-opening of FUSIT's buildings amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and advising the board and Rev. Margaret on appropriate policies to adopt with regard to this process.

Team members are: Sara Catterall, Megan Conaway, Geoff Dunn, Jessica English, John Gaines, Lynn Garman, Scott Grover, Marsha Kardon, Stephanie Ortolano, Walt Peck, Emily Richards, Molly Robbins, Lyn Staack, Jennifer Streid-Mullen, Angela Zhang.

FUSIT's building and grounds remain closed to congregational activities. All use of the building must be approved by the Moving Forward Team and the FUSIT Board. A sign in/out sheet will be placed in the parlor outside the sanctuary doors and everyone entering the building, even for brief visits, should sign in with name, date, time in and time out. This information will be used for contact tracing of COVID 19 cases if needed.

Everyone on the Way Forward Team looks forward to a time when it will be safe for everyone in our congregation, regardless of health status, health vulnerability or ability, to be reunited in person in the sanctuary, and when the building is again busy with meetings of small groups and teams, and when concerts, speakers and joyful events fill our calendar.

Rev. Margaret reminds the congregation that if financial considerations are a problem related to keeping you or family safe during this pandemic, please contact her and she will consider a use of the Human Needs Fund (for masks, sanitizer, etc.).

Library Notes

We are still ordering books for our library, particularly ones that pertain to social and environmental justice. Now that Jessica has returned to regular hours, the following books can be signed out with her by making an appointment to pick one up:

"A Planet To Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal", 2 copies. This was the EIG's read for September.

"The Story Of More: How We Got To Climate Change and Where To Go From Here", by Hope Jahren (author of Lab Girl)

"How To Be An Anti-Racist", by Ibram X Kendi

"Me And White Supremacy", by Layla F. Saad



You've Been Flocked! Join in the FUN!

We are trying out a new way of bringing joy to each other, and raising some money for our congregation in the process! Interested in having the yard of one of your friends, neighbors, or co-workers "flocked" this fall?

Send an email to the office to find out more information, and we will deliver a flock of rainbow-colored lawn flamingos to their yard and stick them in their grass for the day - completely out of the blue!

What's the point? To have fun!

What's the cost? Sliding scale between \$20-\$100

Upcoming Events



Common Read Book Group

Each year, the UUA suggests a book for members and friends of our congregations to read together. The books that have been read are listed at www.uua.org/read. Often, these books focus on a particular social justice or other spiritually-grounded issue. Join Rev. Margaret for this monthly book group meeting. Please email minister@uuithaca.org to sign up and receive the Zoom information.

We hope you'll take part in this new tradition of engaging our minds about issues that are important to Unitarian Universalists and the world we so deeply love. Discussions will take place on the **first Wednesday of each month from 6-7:30 pm on Zoom**. Please pre-register by emailing Rev. Weis.

—October 7 @6-7:30 pm, *Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry*

Edited by Mitra Rahnema, centers the stories, analyses, and insights of a number of Unitarian Universalist religious professionals of color as they explore how racial identity is made both visible and invisible in Unitarian Universalist communities. For a copy of the book, visit Skinner House Books, Inspirit (UUA bookstore), or contact Rev. Margaret if you need assistance.

Pub Theology - Wednesday, October 21

Join us for an evening of good fellowship and conversation. We will gather at 6:30 on Zoom and reflect together on the monthly theme of DEEP LISTENING. Invite your friends! Hope to see you there! Pub Theology takes place on the **3rd Wednesday of every month**.

***Living the Pledge to End Racism Program* Coming to FUSIT This Fall!!!**

History

Modeled after the Birmingham pledge, this pledge started on the 50th anniversary of Selma and was created and developed by Annette Marquis and Anita Lee at The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond, Virginia. We want to adopt our own pledge here at FUSIT and in greater Ithaca.

The Ithaca Pledge to End Racism

I BELIEVE that every person has worth as an individual.

I BELIEVE that every person is entitled to dignity and respect, regardless of race or color.

I BELIEVE that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful; if it is my thought or act, then it is harmful to me as well as to others.

Therefore, from this day forward:

I WILL strive daily to eliminate racial prejudice from my thoughts and actions.

I WILL discourage racial prejudice by others at every opportunity.

I WILL treat all people with dignity and respect.

I WILL commit to working with others to transform the Greater Ithaca region into a place that treats people of all races, ethnicities, and cultures with justice, equity, and compassion, and

I WILL strive daily to honor this pledge, knowing that the world will be a better place because of my effort.

By signing this Pledge, you are committing to work every day to end racism in the Greater Ithaca area. Sign this Pledge only if you are ready to do so, as it will require perseverance if it is to make a difference. Even as you might consider it, keep the text on your mirror or another prominent place so you might confirm your willingness to make the commitment. We each have work to do on the racism, internalized racism, and prejudice in our own hearts. We are at a different place in our journeys so we ask that you sign it when you are ready, when you can sign it with full integrity.

If you make the Pledge know it will not be easy. If you feel you have had a moment when you failed, read and renew your commitment, keeping the need for the Pledge and your commitment to it before you.

Goals

The primary goal of this workshop is to develop confidence in our abilities to:

- Integrate the Ithaca Pledge into our daily lives
- Recognize and challenge systemic racism
- Confront racism and bias in our everyday lives, and
- Take leadership in ending racism in our community, our culture, and our lives

As part of the program, participants develop a community of support and an understanding of how to use support in deepening our work in building a just and equitable multicultural world.

Who is this Program for?

For people who have engaged in other anti-racism/multiculturalism training, this workshop is designed to take your understanding and your competency to a deeper level. If you've never taken a class about racism, this workshop will challenge you to invest in and deepen your learning so you can put yourself on the road to intercultural competence.

Participation

Participants are asked to commit to being present at ALL SIX SESSIONS (approximately 12 hours of large and small group work) and complete various assignments both in preparation for the first session as well as between sessions.

The Living the Pledge workshops are led by trained leaders and small group facilitators. If you're interested in becoming a small group facilitator, the first step is to complete the Living the Pledge workshop.

Train-the-Trainer Model

Each training can include up to 20 participants who can then become trainers. Then, in pairs of two, they can train up to 20 participants, and so on and so forth. It is a perpetual training and learning opportunity for the congregation.

Why do we need this at FUSIT?

It is clear that the congregation has some work to do on ourselves in the area of anti-racism. If we want to engage with race and racism issues, we need to do so in an organized and strategic way. This model creates the opportunity for the most people to be engaged and is a perpetual training opportunity. It is essential that this congregation do the necessary work to become a truly anti-racist organization.

What are the next steps?

If you are interested in being considered for the first Living the Pledge cohort, please write to minister@uuithaca.org for more information. We are still waiting for a date for this initial training and will keep you informed as details are solidified.