



ITHACA

UUU Connections

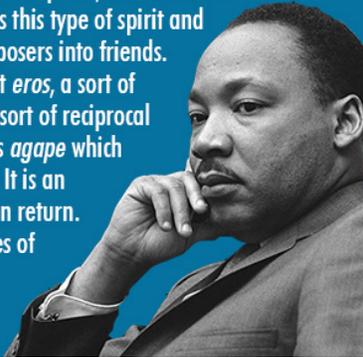
2020 / 2021 Issue No. 6

February 1-28, 2021

Ministerial Musings

"The end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. The type of love that I stress here is not *eros*, a sort of esthetic or romantic love; not *philia*, a sort of reciprocal love between personal friends; but it is *agape* which is understanding goodwill for all men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. It is the love of God working in the lives of men. This is the love that may well be the salvation of our civilization."

—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



You're probably getting used to hearing me preach and teach about love being one of the most radical things we can do. Most of the time, when I'm reflecting on the ways that Love can transform our lives and our relationships, I am referring to agape, the love that MLK refers to in the quote above.

Agape is a love that is rooted in relationship and interconnection – a fierce love that honors the divinity and holiness of each of us. It involves the honoring of each other as fellow journeyers in this movement toward justice and the creation of the beloved community.

This month we are reflecting on the ways that this broad and expansive love shows up in our relationships, our neighborhoods, and our congregation. We are reflecting on how we are called as individuals and as families to engage with our neighbors in the creation of the beloved community. We are acknowledging that beloved community is not an end point or a destination, but a way of living our lives.

At the end of this month, there will be a national conference for UUs called the New Day Rising Conference National (<https://www.uua.org/leadership/events/new-day-rising-2021>). This event will take place on Saturday, February 27th, and I hope you'll consider participating. In this day-long workshop, we will gather with Unitarian Universalists across the country to expand our understanding and co-creation of the beloved community, with racial justice at its core.

May we be brave enough to explore the ways love shows up in our lives, and may we be courageous enough to help bring that love to others.

Stay well,
Rev. Margaret

**Join the FUSIT
(internal) Facebook
Page: [https://
www.facebook.com/
groups/171869686459/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/171869686459/)**

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

**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!**

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.

Religious Exploration News

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

Greetings from the DRE

Dear FUSIT Community,

January brought us a new year filled with hopes for increased connection and togetherness, as well as events that filled many of us with concern. Whatever the future brings we will continue to move forward holding each other in beloved community, which happens to be our theme for this month. I hope your imaginations were sparked by our conversations and activities and that your stuffy friends came back to you excited to share their adventures with you.

Helpers will be needed each month to assist with delivering the UU Crate packages to families who are unable to pick them up. Please let me know if this is something you can commit a small amount of your time to helping with.

A special thank you to Scott and Dawn Grover, Jennifer Streid Mullen, Joan Doria, Brian Heltsely, and Leah O'Connor for volunteering their time to help get the January packets out to our families that were unable to pick up their packets. I have been overwhelmed with gratitude the last several months from the support that I have received in this endeavor.

If you have a child or youth you would like to be added to our Religious Exploration program to receive weekly emails and monthly activity boxes, you can contact me at the email address provided above.

*Emily Richards,
Director of Religious Exploration*

Beloved Community

This month we're exploring the many ways our UU faith invites us to become "A People of Beloved Community." Beloved Community is a special type of community. It has multiple characteristics that we will focus on this month. As we honor the people and stories which move us toward Beloved Community, may you also find healing and a deep sense of wholeness from this work.

UU Crate for February

February is here and with it new activities and stories on our theme of Beloved Community. I hope that you were able to create a new constellation, build a home for faerie folk, and use your imagination to create new stories and ideas with the activities provided in January.

February packages will be available for pick up on the FUSIT porch during the following time:

Saturday, February 6th from 12:00pm-1:00pm

"Love Is" Compilation

This month we are offering all RE participants, parents, children, and youth, as well as any other community members who are interested, to participate in a special video sharing love for our **February 14th** service. You can submit a picture of a word or phrase, a picture of a piece of original art, or a short video that answers one or several of the following questions:

- What does love mean to you?
- How do you show love?
- What makes you feel loved?

All submissions need to be received by **Friday, February 5th**.

Facebook Story Time

Weekly story time with Audrey is continuing live on our Facebook page! Please join us **each Tuesday at 7:00pm** for an opportunity to gather together virtually and enjoy a story that touches on our theme for the month.

Ways to Help

Volunteers are needed to drop off the monthly UU Crate packages to participating families. This typically happens on the last or first Saturday of each month (depending on when the first Sunday service falls) and only requires an hour or so of time. Please reach out if you are interested in volunteering for the RE program or joining the RE Team, contact information is provided above.

Joys and Sorrows

Happy birthday wishes go out to Barbara Shew who recently turned 92 years old.

Our thoughts are with Trudy Pantalia and family as she has been experiencing some health concerns. You can help out with a meal via their meal train at <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/9w55ko>.

Our thoughts are with John Pfeleiderer and his family as he has been experiencing some health issues as of late. Well wishes for a speedy recovery are welcomed!

A speedy recovery is wished for Walt Peck who recently underwent minor surgery.

Thank You

Thanks to your generosity at the Christmas Eve service, we collected \$1612 for both Babies First and Food Bank of the Southern Tier.

Soul Matters Material for February on Beloved Community

Our February worship theme at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca is Beloved Community. 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-beloved-community>



Green Tip From the Environmental Interests Circle

New York Law prohibits throwing many types of rechargeable batteries in your garbage. They can be dropped off for recycling at the Tompkins County Recycling and Solid Waste Center or any retail store that sells them. Non-rechargeable batteries can be disposed of in your garbage; Tompkins County does not have a recycling program for them, but many other New York municipalities do.

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.

February Sunday Services

Sunday, February 7: *Many Faces, Many Stories*

Rev. Margaret Weis

Together we will explore some of the stories of Black and African American Unitarian Universalists who have been significant in our faith tradition, its history, present and future.

Sunday, February 14: *A Love Letter to the World*, *Rev. Margaret Weis*

What would it look like to write a love letter to the world? Who would you love to send a message of gratitude, love, and appreciation to? What places would you like to thank for the ways they have nourished you this year? Join us as we reflect on the ways the world has brought love to us and how we can bring love to the world.

Sunday, February 21: *Dance in the Desert, Bring Your Tambourine*, *Rev. Erin Walter*

Drawing upon scripture, spiritual practice, and original music, Unitarian Universalist Rev. Erin Walter visits (virtually) from Austin, TX, to help us reflect on how to foster joy and gratitude in 2021, even as we continue to live in a pandemic. Rev. Erin J. Walter (she/her/hers) is a minister, activist, and musician based in Austin and winner of the 2017 Sermon Award from the UU Women's Federation. A former YMCA director, Rev. Erin is the singer/songwriter for band Parker Woodland, whose music you'll hear in this service. She serves as a board member for the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry and the Affiliated Community Minister of Wildflower (Unitarian Universalist) Church in Austin. You can find more about her music and ministry at ErinWalter.com.

Sunday, February 28: *Widening the Circle of Concern*, *Rev. Margaret Weis*

As we envision living into beloved community, how do we do so with an eye for our growing edges? This past year the Commission on Institutional Change of the UUA published a document called Widening the Circle of Concern. This report focused on our congregations' attempts to create community that have been successful and ways we can grow into a deeper and wider circle of relationship. Join us as we start to explore the invitations in this report and how they might show up in our shared ministry together.

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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minister@uuithaca.org*

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*Music Director
Stephanie Ortolano
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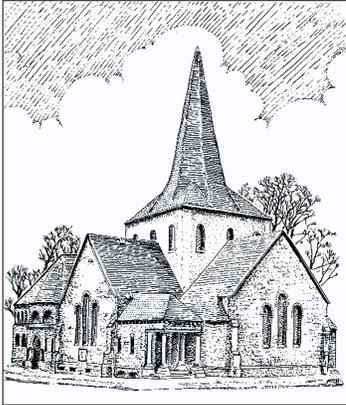
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Visit our Website and get
your newsletter:
www.uuithaca.org



Possible Ponderings

The theme for February is Beloved Community

Possible Ponderings is an offering of ways you might consider engaging more deeply with the theme or reflecting on the ways the idea of Beloved Community shows up in your life.

February 1 - 6: When, or where, have you been surprised to find beloved community in your life?

February 7 - 13: Reflect on a time when you felt outside beloved community. What emotions were present for you? How did you find a sense of belonging?

February 14 - 20: If you were to write a love letter to the world, what would you say?

February 21 - 28: Where have you found joy and gratitude this week?

Women's Circle Monday, February 22, at 7 pm

Women's Circle will meet via Zoom on Monday, **February 22**, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. We are now generally 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.

Zoom link is: Meeting ID: 819 4014 1421
Passcode: 874536

Men's Group Meets Twice Monthly

The Men's Group meetings for February will be held on Monday, **February 8** and Monday, **February 22**. All who identify as male are invited to join us from 7:00-8:30 pm. For information or questions contact Carsten Hess at carsten@hess.net or Kevin Moss at kevinm607@hotmail.com.

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/ithacaus and Twitter, @IthacaUUs.

A Culture of Appreciation

As we continue to learn how the culture of white supremacy permeates our lives, our understandings, and our congregational culture, I want to invite you all into a culture of appreciation. One characteristic of white supremacy culture is perfectionism, which often shows up as a culture of critique and criticism. An antidote to this characteristic is to foster a culture of appreciation where we are invited to reflect on how making mistakes can be a learning opportunity. This is something for us to consider – how can we be a learning organization and foster a sense of appreciation for those who create our ministries together?

One way this can show up is during our Sunday worship services. Did you know that our staff and tech team spend hours and hours each week to create the services on Sundays? Some weeks we've even spent between 10 and 15 hours to create one 1-hour service. This is a lot of time and energy and love that is poured into each week's service! So, we appreciate the care with which you offer your feedback and comments – knowing that we have poured our love out as a gift to this community!

New Day Rising National - February 27 REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Ready to take a new step in racial justice work? Want to learn what your fellow congregations are working on, and how you might apply it at home? Join a continent of UUs as we explore next steps in creating Beloved UU Communities.

—**On Your Own:** Watch compelling video TED-talk style testimonials from selected congregations around the continent sharing their learnings, hopes and next steps in their quest for racial equity in their congregations

—**Together: Worship:** Workshops-Caucusing. With plenty of breaks on Saturday, **February 27th**, 12:00 noon-9:00 pm.

Registration opened in January 2021. Brought to you by the Unitarian Universalist Association. Contact [Rev. Margaret](#) if you are interested in attending.

General Assembly 2021 - Circle 'Round for Justice - Healing - Courage

General Assembly (GA) is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. The UUA Board of Trustees has passed a resolution making the 2021 UUA General Assembly a 100% virtual event. All details can be found at the UUA GA website.

Registration is currently open.

Registration for virtual GA 2021 is \$200 per person. This year FUSIT will pay for up to 10 people to attend.

Pedersen Memorial GA Scholarship

This scholarship was developed using funds donated to FUSIT in memory of Mark Pedersen. Mark loved attending General Assembly and wanted more members of FUSIT to attend GA as delegates. In his memory this scholarship was created to help defray the costs for registration and/or travel to General Assembly for those with financial need.

Application deadline is **March 1st**.

Email office@uuthaca.org for further information and to request an application.

February Book Discussion Group

The next Book Discussion Group meeting is scheduled for Friday, **February 5**, at 12:30 pm via Zoom. The book is *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson

Upcoming books for 2021 are as follows:

March 5: *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett

April 2: *Life of a Klansman* by Edward Ball

Contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at streidmull@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events



Common Read Book Group: The Common Read will be on pause for the time being as we find a new time for meeting.

Sharing the Love Online Auction - February 12, 13 & 14. Ready to donate a service or item? please fill out this form and someone from the team will get back in contact with you to answer any questions and finalize your item. [Donate to the FUSIT Share The Love service auction](#)

Have an idea but not quite sure? you can also email us at auction@uuthaca.org

Living the Pledge Leaders Cohort Workshop is currently full for January and February. The next workshops will be offered in the spring. Contact Rev. Margaret if you are interested.

Pub Theology - Wednesday, February 17th, at 6:30-8:00 pm

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 BELOVED COMMUNITY. Invite your friends! Pub Theology takes place the **3rd Wednesday of the month**.

FUSIT Vision of Ministry

Approved by Board of Trustees January 13, 2021

In the year 2021-2022, the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca will project our mission of creating connections, finding inspiration, and engaging the world in the following ways:

Connection: We will work together to support the physical and emotional needs of our community as we continue to convene remotely, and also to re-connect and recover from the strains of the pandemic when the church doors reopen. We will create space for healing and building a congregational culture that reinforces our vision, mission and adheres to the principles of our covenant.

Inspiration: We will continue to advance opportunities for congregational faith formation by creating spaces for dialogue and reflection that help members of our community grow their Unitarian Universalist spiritual identities, strengthen community, and embody our values and principles in their daily lives. We will embrace ideas and opportunities to support a culture of innovation and creativity that allows us to re-imagine what it means to be part of FUSIT in a rapidly changing and uncertain world.

Engage: We will strengthen and extend our collective commitment to service and social justice based on our UU principles; projecting our UU voice and values in Ithaca and beyond. This year, our engagement efforts will focus on our congregational commitment to anti-racism, including our embrace of the UU Living the Pledge program and exploration of the proposed UU Eighth Principle, building our personal and congregational commitment and capacity so we can be more effective within our own walls, and in the broader community.

Board of Trustees 'Sense of the Meeting' January 13, 2021

The FUSIT Board of Trustees "Sense of the Meeting" immediately reports highlights after a Board of Trustees meeting. The full meeting minutes will continue to be made available after approval, i.e. with a one month lag.

← **Vision of Ministry:** The Board has approved a new Vision of Ministry for 2021. The full text is shown here.

Join in! - Videos/Images Invited: You are invited to participate in our church services by submitting a short video. First, you can record a short chalice lighting video and send it to Rev. Margaret for use in a future Sunday service. Standard wording (or use your own):

"The flaming chalice is the symbol of mystics and heretics, artists and activists, reformers and refugees, and Unitarian Universalists everywhere. We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action."

Second, you can send an image or a short video about what love means to you to Emily Richards, our DRE, for use in a February service.

Sanctuary and Organ Repairs: The scaffolding is in place and work has begun on Sanctuary and organ repairs! Many donations to the capital fund have helped make these repairs possible. Thank you all for your generosity!

FUSIT Service Auction coming up in February: Look for opportunities to donate in weekly announcements and upcoming emails! Sign up to attend on our [Facebook event page](#)! And remember: this year's auction theme is LOVE!

Nominating Committee: The Board will appoint two new members to the Nominating Committee in February. Thank you to Arthur Woll, Fred Balfour, and Beth Howard for their hard work!

Treasurer Succession: The Board is continuing the search for a new treasurer (or co-treasurers) who can train with Jennifer Streid-Mullen this spring. If you would like to volunteer, or to recommend someone for the position, please [read the job description](#) and contact Jennifer at streidmull@gmail.com. Please note that there is flexibility in how Jennifer's standard responsibilities can be shared.

The next Board meeting will take place on Wednesday, **February 10, from 6:30-8:00 pm** on Zoom. All interested persons are invited to attend. Contact Andy Turner at ast4@cornell.edu

Budget Requests Sought for 2021/2022

Committee and event chairpersons are encouraged to submit their committee's 2021/2022 budget requests to Jennifer Streid-Mullen at streidmull@gmail.com by Friday, **February 12th**.

Social Justice Council Needs Volunteers for Day Center Lunches

SJC needs three more volunteers to make and deliver lunches to the Day Center in Ithaca on **Tuesday, February 2nd**.

Volunteers may be individuals, families, or groups of any kind. You would buy supplies, make the lunches within 24 hours of delivery, and deliver them between 9:30 and 11:30 am to 618 W. State Street. Each lunch will include a sandwich, a piece of soft fruit, and a cookie or other small dessert.

Our congregation provides 60 lunches (usually four volunteers making 15 lunches each) on the **first Tuesday of every month**. SJC can reimburse your expenses, at your request.

To volunteer and/or ask questions, please contact Jackie Jablonski at jackiejab@me.com.

The FUSIT Antiracism Team is Up and Running!

The Antiracism Ministry Team (ARMT) is moving forward rapidly with the goal of facilitating and supporting anti-racism education and action in the FUSIT community. The Team is working in three areas: Programs (including The Pledge to End Racism and the Living the Pledge workshops, as well as other education and training), Projects & Activism (including support for the Village at Ithaca), and Communication (informing the congregation of anti-racism events and groups both within and beyond FUSIT). The ARMT is meeting twice a month; contact Beth Howard for more information. (beth4howard@gmail.com)

Our first FUSIT Living the Pledge workshop got underway on Saturday January 9, and will run for 6 weeks. Almost all participants in this first cohort have also undergone initial training to be leaders and facilitators in future Pledge workshops. We hope to run our next workshop in the Spring of 2021, when anyone in the FUSIT community is welcome to sign up. Space is limited. Contact Rev. Margaret or call the office to get on the list.

One project underway was initiated as a Small Group Ministry effort, but now involves many congregants buying, donating and delivering food and supplies through Village at Ithaca for families in need, in order to free up Village resources for their core mission of educational equity. They could use more FUSIT households donating either supplies or money. Contact Fred Balfour or Judy Jones for more information. (fred.balfour@gmail.com or jwj2@cornell.edu)

In addition to supporting and publicizing the Village at Ithaca project, the Antiracism Team is monitoring the conversation around police reform and reinvention in New York State and Tompkins County. Local officials have asked for community input, including that of faith communities, and we are examining ways we might take part in the conversation and take an anti-racist stand as a congregation.

If you want to become better informed about many race-related issues, try subscribing to the daily email from antiracismdaily.com.

Sanctuary Repair Project, Winter 20-21

For a long time, we've been wanting to make our Sanctuary look better. To do so and to take advantage of being unable to use the Sanctuary during the pandemic, we have put together a construction project to fix the plaster cracks and repaint the Sanctuary. Several experts have concluded that the steeple is sound and the cracks are not growing. Buildings and Grounds has been working to develop the scope and details of the project which will also include completing the upgrade of Sanctuary lighting to LED's. In addition, some additional areas of the Sanctuary could use more insulation. These efforts will require a significant amount of scaffolding in the Sanctuary this winter. At the same time, we need to do some major maintenance work to preserve and protect the organ.

The whole project – organ maintenance, insulation, plaster repair, repainting, and LED lighting - will come to about \$150,000. Work has begun and will be done in approximately eight weeks.

Despite the financial hardships of these times for many people, a few generous members have contributed over \$85,000 to this project. The balance will be financed by a loan from our Endowment, at payments that will remain constant with current levels for the next 5-10 years. If you would like to contribute to this project, please contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at streidmull@gmail or Jessica at office@uuihaca.org.

February's Side With Love Collection

This month's collection will be going to the Ithaca Free Clinic, a program of Ithaca Health Alliance, which facilitates access to health care for all, with a focus on the needs of the underinsured and uninsured. The organization provides 100% free medical and holistic care.

Items needed are: disinfecting wipes, cleaning supplies, laundry detergent (fragrance free), hand sanitizers, paper towels, ink cartridges 246 and 245 for a Canon printer, carpet cleaner and dishwashing liquid. They also accept monetary donations.

Collections will take place on Sunday mornings, at your home, or you may drop them off in the container on the parish house porch any time during the week. If you would like to have your contributed items picked up at your home on Sunday morning, or if you drop something at FUSIT please let Madonna Stallmann know at 607-216-5083, or email madonnaoftheprairie@gmail.com. Also, if anyone would like to help Madonna with pick ups you may contact her at the phone number and email address mentioned above.

Looking for a meeting with Rev. Margaret?

Please visit this link to see availability and set up a time.

<https://calendly.com/weis-rev>



The organ is currently wrapped in plastic to protect it during the Sanctuary repair project.

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