



ITHACA

UUU Connections

2020 / 2021 Issue No. 8

April 1-30, 2021

Ministerial Musings

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

*“Each voice—whether it is conflict-friendly or conflict-averse—has wisdom to contribute.
Wise leaders create safe space for all.”*

- from Is Conflict A Bad Thing? By the Alban Institute

This has been a hard month. The news of my upcoming departure from FUSIT has brought up a lot of emotions for all of us. Some are sad, upset, confused, angry, hurt, or disappointed. Others are feeling acceptance and still others are feeling regret. All of these feelings are normal when entering a time of transition, and know that they are all natural responses when a big change happens.

One of the tasks I’ve been working on with help from the board and other leadership, is to help FUSIT create systems that hold a good container for these emotions and the conflict that has arisen and will continue to arise. Conflict is natural in congregations, and doesn’t need to be avoided. Conflict is not a bad thing - how and whether we deal with it, and what processes we use, help to ensure that the conflict is held with care.

So, two new ministry teams have been created to be these containers. I hope you’ll utilize them and remain focused on how they each help to foster health in this congregation. I want to thank each of the people serving on these teams for their willingness to serve in this way and help FUSIT live into its covenant.

Healthy Congregation Team: Betsy East, Walt Peck, Arthur Woll, Angela Zhang

Email: healthycong@uuithaca.org

The Healthy Congregation Team (HCT) helps to facilitate the well-being of FUSIT by fostering harmonious relations and mediating conflicts within the membership. Also, the HCT is visible and available as a listening ear so that when an interpersonal conflict arises, members can seek support and advice before the conflict grows. They are rooted in our FUSIT covenant.

Shared Ministry Team: Elizabeth Bixler, Laura Free, Rod Howe, Kevin Moss

Email: sharedministry@uuithaca.org

The Shared Ministry Team (SMT) helps to ensure the health of FUSIT by supporting the minister and congregation in the task of shared ministry. The SMT serves as a support to the minister and facilitates communication around conflicts and other issues that arise. They are rooted in our FUSIT covenant.

Together, let’s strive to live into our covenant and have the courage to have hard conversations about what work there is to do.

*With love,
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.

Religious Exploration News

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

Greetings from the DRE

Dear FUSIT Community,

Last month we finally began to see signs of spring, and we began to grapple with the news of changes coming for this community. We spoke about Commitment, to this faith, to one another, to change and curiosity, and to moving forward. This month we will turn our focus to Becoming. Change can feel challenging but it can also offer opportunities for growth and reflection. I hope you will join us as we explore what Becoming means to us.

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 Brian Heltsley, Scott Grover, and Kim Wilkinson for volunteering their time to help get the March packets out to our families that were unable to pick up their packets. The more volunteers we have the less work for each person so please consider generously giving back to the community in this way.

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*

Becoming

This month as we reflect on being a “people of Becoming,” may future possibilities give us the inspiration and hope we need to live them into reality. May you have moments of inspiration and hope in your own life as well.

UU Crate for April

April is here and with it new activities and stories on our theme of Becoming. I hope that you enjoyed exploring Commitment with us last month by committing to growth, giving, and gratitude.

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

Saturday, April 3rd from 11:00am-12:00pm

The Becoming Tree

This month we are offering all RE participants, parents, children, and youth, as well as any other community members who are interested, a chance to come together with messages of hope for the future. Hope for what we ourselves, our families and friends, this community and the world could become.

Paper tags and string, along with markers, will be left on the FUSIT porch beginning **Saturday, April 3rd**. Everyone is invited to come at a time that is convenient for you and leave a note of what you hope to become, or hope will become, by writing it down on one of the tags and hanging it on the cherry blossom tree in front of the church.

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. Joining the RE Team is another wonderful opportunity to get involved and give back to the FUSIT Community.

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

We share the joy of Jim Murphy's grandson, Eugene James Murphy, who has recently entered the world.

Our thoughts are with Rebecca Elgie who has returned home from rehabilitation in Waverly and is doing well. Cards are welcome. 215 N. Cayuga Street, Apt. 224, Ithaca, NY 14850.

Our thoughts are with Joyce McAllister who has recently been diagnosed with late-stage cancer. She is in Hospice at home. Cards can be sent to 201 E. Marshall St, Ithaca, NY 14850.

Soul Matters Material for April on Becoming

Our April worship theme at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca is Becoming. 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-becoming>.



Green Tip From the Environmental Interests Circle

"Plastic film" -- bags, wraps, and a variety of other packaging -- are prohibited in curbside recycling, and are no longer be accepted at the Tompkins County Recycling and Solid Waste Center. But many types of clean, dry plastic film are collected for recycling at certain retail stores and most grocery stores, as required by New York law. The website <https://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/> offers information on the types of accepted plastic film and a national directory of drop-off locations.

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.

April Worship Services

Sunday, April 4: Easter, Rev. Margaret Weis, Rev. Laine, Rev. Jennifer Hamlin-Navias, Rev. Douglas Taylor, Rev. Rachel Baker, Rev. Marty Pelham, Rev. Jo VonRue

We gather for a multi-congregation celebration of Easter and the rebirth of spring. We will share music, stories and reflections on the miracle of plants and critters beginning to return from their winter dormancy, and we contemplate the mystery of Jesus in the Tomb. There will be time during the Story for All Ages to show your spring colors, please bring a spring hat or scarf or other spring finery as you feel moved.

Special music by Dan Duggan and Peggy Lynn

Sunday, April 11: Widening the Circle of Concern, Rev. Margaret Weis

New Member Welcome during worship

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.

Sunday, April 18: What has BECOME of us?

Speaker Magdalen Lindeberg, FUSIT member

Reflections on the emerging parts of ourselves

Sunday, April 25: Becoming, Rev. Margaret Weis

Michelle Obama once said, "Becoming is never giving up on the idea that there's more work to be done." Join us for a service where we will reflect on the work to be done to become our best, most true, and beloved selves in religious community

Mark Your Calendars for the AIDS Ride for Life!

The 2021 annual AIDS Ride for Life will be held on Saturday, **September 11th**. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, this year's event will be a hybrid version, allowing the rider to choose the manner in which they would like to participate. More details to come.

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

Vunteer for the RE UU crate delivery on Saturday, **April 3**, at noon at the church.

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
Rev. Margaret Weis
minister@uithaca.org

Religious Exploration
Emily Richards, Director
dre@uithaca.org

Music Director
Stephanie Ortolano
music@uithaca.org

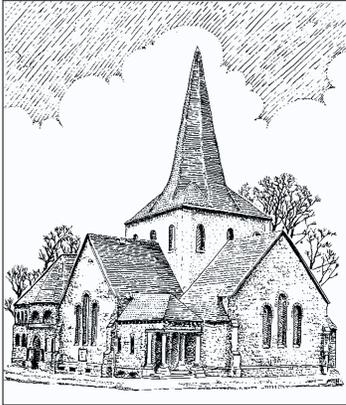
President, Board of Trustees
Andy Turner
ast4@cornell.edu

Congregational Administrator
Jessica English
office@uithaca.org

Administrative Assistant
Loretta Heimbuch
adminasst@uithaca.org

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

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

Possible Ponderings

The theme for April is Becoming

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

April 4 - 10: How has the darkness of this year nurtured you to become your best self?

April 11 - 17: How might you widen your circle - of people, of communities, of perspectives?

April 18 - 24: How have you become more of yourself throughout the years?

April 25 - May 1: They say time does not change us, but rather unfolds us. What are your thoughts on that?

Women's Circle Monday, April 26, at 7 pm

Women's Circle will meet via Zoom on Monday, **April 26**, 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. Anyone is welcome to bring a poem or a reading. 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 March will be held on Monday, **April 12** and Monday, **April 26**. 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/ithacauus and Twitter, @IthacaUUs.

News from the Antiracism Ministry Team

Our congregation has been grappling with the ever-current subject of structural and institutional racism on many fronts. The Antiracism Ministry Team is our umbrella group for several efforts falling under three headings: programs, projects, and communication.

Our best-known program is the “Living the Pledge to End Racism” workshop series, which we hope will eventually involve everyone in our congregation. In the Sunday service on March 28, participants shared their experience of the first workshop. Check it out on the FUSIT YouTube page. We are currently in our second round of workshops. To date, more than 40 congregants have taken part. Contact the office if you’d like to be notified about the next workshop.

We’ve also launched a Zoom series with films, lectures, and group discussions on race-related subjects. We meet on the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of the month (this month on the **13th and 27th**). Check FUSIT weekly announcements or the FUSIT Facebook page for the details of each event. Contact Peggy McKernan at peggy.ithaca@gmail.com with questions or suggestions.

Hopefully, you have noted the “Antiracism Ministry” paragraph that appears in every mid-week announcement (red box). Take a moment to educate yourself and follow the links to resources and ways to take action.

The Anti-racism Projects Group has concentrated on two fronts: continued support for the Tuesday Evening Small Group’s work with the Village at Ithaca (collecting and delivering supplies to families in need) and self-education on the local re-imagining law enforcement efforts.

If you’re curious about any of these efforts, or interested in working with the Antiracism Ministry Team, contact Beth Howard at beth4howard@gmail.com.

Side With Love Collection on Pause

The Side with Love Collection will be on pause through the end of the church year. Many thanks to Madonna Stallmann for organizing this important part of our outreach ministry.

April Book Discussion Group

The next Book Discussion Group meeting is scheduled for Friday, **April 2**, at 12:30 pm via Zoom. The book is *Life of a Clansman* by Edward Ball.

For information contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen at streidmull@gmail.com.

Farewell Message from the Congregational Administrator

Hello FUSIT family, I am writing to let you all know that Friday, **April 30th** will be my last day of employment with FUSIT. It has been a joy to work with many of you over the last 2.5 years and I will miss you greatly. I am excited to be taking a position with Yoga Farm Ithaca as their Marketing and Outreach Director which will provide my family with greater financial stability as well as an opportunity to learn and grow in professional areas that I am excited about. Wishing the FUSIT community continued positive growth.

Warmly, Jessica

**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!**

Upcoming Events



New Member Ceremony - *Sunday, April 25th*

Living the Pledge Workshop - Spring Cohort, continues on Saturdays, April 3, 10, 17 @9:30-11:30 This workshop is currently at capacity, but we are hoping to offer another cohort in late spring/early summer. If you are interested in participating in upcoming Living the Pledge Workshops, please email office@uuithaca.org to be placed on the list. For more information about the Living the Pledge workshop, please visit richmondpledge.org

Pub Theology - *Wednesday, April 21, 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 COMMITMENT. Invite your friends! Pub Theology takes place the **3rd Wednesday of the month**.

General Assembly Info (<https://www.uua.org/ga>)

Social Justice Council

Social Justice Council needs four volunteers to make and deliver lunches to the Ithaca homeless shelter on Tuesday, **April 6th**. 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. Deliveries are now made through a window on State Street, so there's no need to go inside.

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.

Sanctuary Renovation - Fresh and Clean

The insulation, plaster repair, and repainting of the Sanctuary is complete! And the three pendant lights have been rehung with their new LED bulbs, which will cut the energy use of those fixtures by over two thirds. Thank you very much to all the donors whose generosity made this possible. And thank you to Jessica English, Reverend Weis, and the Finance, Endowment, Buildings and Grounds, and Aesthetics Committees. Next up: the renovation of our organ!



The sanctuary looks AMAZING! We cannot wait until we can all be back together enjoying this beautiful space.

Update from the FUSIT Board of Trustees

The FUSIT Board of Trustees will be providing a brief "Sense of the Board Meeting" report and sharing it through the weekly newsletter the week after a Board of Trustees meeting. The full meeting minutes will continue to be made available but this brief meeting summary is intended to keep the congregation tuned in to the activities and priorities of the Board.

Here is the "Sense of the Meeting" from the March 10 meeting, held on Zoom from 6:34-8:05 pm.

President Andy Turner opened the meeting by lighting a chalice. Elton Hall read a brief selection.

Congregational Communication: The meeting was attended by several FUSIT members in addition to the Board and staff. We welcome anyone interested in attending Board meetings, and thank Jens Wennberg for being our first Congregational Communication participant.

Volunteer Opportunities: The Care Team has been very active over the past few months, and would welcome any additional volunteers to help provide rides, meals, and companionship to FUSIT members and friends in need. This is a great opportunity to build and maintain our community bonds! Contact Nancy Miller (ananda7733@gmail.com) to lend a hand.

Service Auction: FUSIT's inaugural online Service Auction was a great success -- around 50 people offered donations and around 60 people participated in the auction, raising roughly \$6,000. Thank you to all who participated, and let's look forward to a second auction this fall!

Environmental Responsibility: The Board delegated two members to propose amended wording to the 2021-22 Vision of Ministry, which will be voted on in the April meeting.

Ministerial Transition: Thank you to everyone who participated in the discussion of our timelines, goals, and needs! Your input is valued as we move together through this time of change. The Board is continuing to research our options, and will hold a balcony meeting to decide our direction and appoint both an interim search committee and a transition team.

Leadership Opportunities: The Board is working with the Nominating Committee to better convey a sense of what serving on the Board involves. Check with Arthur Woll (arthurwoll@gmail.com) or Fred Balfour (fred.balfour@gmail.com) to see if a Board term might be a good fit for you, and help shape our congregation's future!

The meeting ran overtime, and the remaining agenda items will be addressed at a time and date to be determined.

The next regular Board meeting will take place on **April 14, 2021**, from 6:30-8:00 pm on Zoom.

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

If you haven't registered for Virtual GA 2021 already, there is no better time than right now! Registered attendees are among the first to hear program announcements, such as the Ware Lecturer and featured speakers, and only registered attendees will have access to the NEW! GA app (coming soon). So register early to join online discussions, familiarize yourself with the GA schedule, and find your place in our community of communities.

Click [here](#) to register.

Need help getting an appointment for a COVID Vaccine?

If you are a not-computer-savvy FUSIT community member and would like assistance in making an appointment online, Keith Perry is willing to volunteer his time. Contact: email is preferred KLP3@cornell.edu. Or call 607-280-9705.

Thanks to You

Thanks to your generosity for the February Shared Offering, we donated \$1505 to meals for the Cayuga Medical Center's workers.



Moving Forward with our No-Frills Pledge Campaign

Pledge cards were mailed in March - and many of you have already returned them with generous pledges of support for 2021-22. Thank you! Make your pledge any time this month, by mail, by phone or online.

We miss not having a festive luncheon or gala dinner to kick off pledge season, but this has been a tough year for many. A simple ask for your commitment - your pledge to support our First Unitarian Society of Ithaca as generously as you can - seems enough.

Despite our modest campaign, big things are happening at the First Unitarian. We are saddened that our vibrant Reverend Margaret will be leaving, but hopeful about getting together again in our refurbished Sanctuary in the fall. This year has underscored the importance of community and a liberal faith that welcomes everyone on their spiritual journey.

Knowing how much each of us plans to give over the coming year (July 2021 to June 2022) is vital for the Board of Trustees. They are working on the budget and need to know if there will be enough income for all that our church hopes to do. The more we pledge this spring, the more we can do in the fiscal year ahead. More than 70 percent of church income comes from our annual giving.

Our generosity demonstrates our values. Let love be your guide as you decide how much to pledge this year. Our resources vary. Gifts of all sizes are welcome and needed. You can pay your pledge weekly, monthly, or all at once, but do make your pledge soon.

You can pledge online at uithaca.org, call in your pledge at 607-218-2088 or pledge by email or request a pledge card at office@uithaca.org.

If you have questions about pledging or would like more information, contact David Salomon, Stewardship Chair, or any member of the Stewardship Team: Jens Wennberg, Sam Weeks, Terry Starr, Wendy Schaerer, Jack Roscoe, Margaret Nichols, or me.

—Jeanette Knapp for the Stewardship Team

The Covenant of First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Let us commit ourselves, again and again, to upholding our covenant together.

A Covenant is a set of sacred promises that Unitarian Universalists make with each other to guide and support their communities. First Unitarian Society of Ithaca adopts this covenant to sustain our commitment to each other, affirm our connections when we struggle, and form the foundation of our respectful relationships with each other and the world.

We covenant to:

Be together in community, guided by love and respect.

Be open, friendly, and welcoming to all.

Be engaged in congregational life.

Communicate compassionately, directly, and honestly.

Listen deeply and kindly to each other.

Believe in others' best intentions.

Support and inspire each other's quest for truth and meaning

Acknowledge, respect, and value our differences.

Work to serve our community's shared goals.

Nominating Committee Seeking FUSIT Leaders

Dear FUSIT Friends,

We all know we are in difficult times, with big hurdles facing us immediately and in the near future. In particular, Rev. Margaret's resignation presents challenges in the coming months and years. But, our congregation is enduring and robust. To keep us moving in the many positive directions begun with Rev. Margaret's guidance and support, we need strong, diverse, and committed lay leadership. The Nominating Committee is currently considering candidates for new terms on both the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee. (These are the only two leadership groups whose members are elected by the congregation as a whole). Our bylaws specify that we have a nine-member board with staggered three-year terms. Typically this results in three or four Trustees elected at Annual Meeting in **late May**. New trustees begin **July 1**. Nominating Committee consists of up to five members serving two-year terms.

This year we have five board seats to fill, and three seats to fill on the Nominating Committee. Are there individuals you would like to see leading us into the future? People who you would trust to steward us and help us thrive? Perhaps you see yourself as a potential Board member? If you have names to propose (including your own) as either a Trustee or a Nominating Committee member, or if you simply have any questions, please send an email, call or text to any of us. We'd love to talk with you.

Respectfully,
Your FUSIT Nominating Committee
Arthur Woll arthurwoll@gmail.com
Fred Balfour fred.balfour@gmail.com
Beth Howard beth4howard@gmail.com

“A Door to the World” Benefit Dinner Friday, April 9th, 2021

Here's a chance to sample international cuisine and support Open Doors English, Ithaca's non-profit ESL school for adult English language learners.

We're offering "A Door to the World," a take-out dinner to benefit our ESL classes for immigrants, refugees, and other non-native English speakers in our community

Menu:

A choice of vegetarian entrees (Moroccan lentil stew or Iranian herb and chickpea stew) plus rice, naan, Persian cucumber salad, and cookies from Brazil, China and Russia.

Price: \$20 per meal.

Preorder (REQUIRED!!) by **April 2**

Order online at opendoorsenglish.org

(Open Doors English is a project of the Center for Transformative Action)

Sponsored by the SJC of FUSIT
