



ITHACA

# UUU Connections

2021 / 2022 Issue No. 9

May 1-31, 2022

## Getting to Know Our Team Leaders

**Social Justice Council, shared leadership among members: Jackie Jablonski, Amie Hamlin, Fran Helmstadter, Jim Murphy, Rebecca Elgie and Judy Jones.**

The Social Justice Council (SJC) exists to inform the congregation about important social and humanitarian needs and issues and to provide avenues for constructive service and action. The group meets monthly primarily to select each month's Sharing Sundays recipient and get reports or proposals from SJC Action Teams (SJC Action Teams are formed by a person or group of people who identify a social justice topic on which they want to focus). New members are welcome!



**Hospitality Teams**  
**Fred Balfour, Group Leader**

**Hospitality Teams** help make the Sunday morning services run smoothly and effortlessly, providing a pleasant experience for all attendees.

Hospitality Teams started about eight years ago, developing into four teams, each serving for four weeks on and 12 weeks off. They are charged with doing the jobs that need doing every Sunday. And, happily, we find that many other good things happen. Teams provide an inter-generational activity; they connect people through team building and fellowship; they provide a glide path for newcomers to get involved with a good experience; and they allow a guilt-free 12 weeks of time off. Team members sign up for one specific, easy and well-defined task: A greeter, an usher, a coffee prep maven, setting the snack tables, coffee server, or clean up. Want to join up? Find out more by contacting Fred Balfour at [fred.balfour@gmail.com](mailto:fred.balfour@gmail.com).

The Balfours began attending the Unitarian church while in Buffalo in grad school. After raising three children in Boston, teaching school, and working in the computer industry, they retired in greater Ithaca to be near three of their five grandchildren.

*Please note that the June newsletter will be the last issue of the church year and will cover June through August 2022.*

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

**We invite you to In-Person 10:30 am Sunday Services in May!**

**RE activities after services.**  
**NEW! Children's Sanctuary Play Space during services.**

**Services are also live streamed.**

**Masks required and social distancing encouraged.**  
**See page 10 for new Way Forward Guidance.**

## **Ministry Fulfillment Committee, (previously Minister Search Committee)**

At the March Board of Trustees meeting the Board passed a resolution to establish the Ministry Fulfillment Committee. Over the last couple of weeks six FUSIT members, Betsy East, Scott Grover, Magdalen Lindeberg, Margaret Nichols, Sue Rakow, and Andy Turner have been recruited for this Committee. Huge thanks to these folks for taking on this critical job!

The heart of their charge is to investigate fulfilling "Ministry responsibilities through any available UUA processes, cooperative arrangements with other organizations (either local or regional), combinations of paid and volunteer positions or other non-traditional approaches".

Two things we know going into this: 1.) FUSIT cannot afford a full time minister for the 22-23 year. 2.) We will have to be creative about how to provide the ministry functions – probably only some of them will be done by a minister. That is why we are using the term "ministry".

Over the next few months the committee will look at all the options to fulfill the ministry responsibilities. They will look for a person or persons, interview them and bring their recommendations to the Board. They will also recommend how to provide ministry functions this next year even if they do not find a minister.

The Ministry Fulfillment Committee will keep you posted about their work. Please support this Committee and the Board as we figure out next year at FUSIT. Please direct questions to the Board so the Committee can get to work.

*Nancy Miller for the Board of Trustees*

# Religious Exploration News

For information about Religious Exploration, please contact Emily Richards at [dre@uithaca.org](mailto:dre@uithaca.org).

## Greetings from the DRE

There is nothing quite so beautiful as the sound of children. Laughing, playing, filling spaces with their exuberant clatter. A blessing that we have received in abundance this past month. A balm for the soul.

As we turn our focus in May to Nurturing Beauty, I invite you to notice the beauty that already exists within yourself, one another, and our community. The beauty of voices raised in song, of hands stretched out in welcome, of the sounds above our heads of little feet chasing one another around upstairs playing tag.

Over the last couple of years it has often felt challenging to find the beauty in our lives. To notice the flashes of light and love amongst the fear and isolation, the constant checking of numbers in charts and tables, the masks and distancing. And yet there too is beauty. There is grace in our care for one another. In our concern for the community as a whole and the most vulnerable among us. In the love that is beyond self-concern, that is wearing a mask.

And yet each new season has felt liminal. As if we are existing always in a place of in-between. Not yet free from the concerns that have defined our existence for the last two years and yet balancing, once again, on the precipice of hope and renewal.

In all of these things lies beauty and somehow it is not a contradiction. We can nurture it where we find it with love, compassion, and understanding. We can see the beauty in both the ways in which we are still, and never will be, "back to normal" while celebrating the wonder of new growth, reconnection, and opening up. There is beauty all around us that will continue to grow if we choose to nurture it.

*Emily Richards, Director of Religious Exploration*

## Adult RE

### **Pub Theology is Back!**

#### **May 24th at 6:30 pm, Liquid State Brewing**

Join us for an evening of good fellowship and conversation at our favorite local brewery (owned by FUSIT members!). We will gather at 6:30 and reflect together on the monthly theme of Nurturing Beauty. Non-beer and non-alcoholic drink options available! 21+ after 7:00 pm. No outside food allowed. Silo Food Truck Wednesday-Sunday and pizza served the other days. Bring your friends! Hope to see you there! Pub Theology takes place on the 4th Tuesday of every month. 620 West Green Street, Ithaca

## RE Plans for May

### **In-Person RE for Children and Youth**

#### **RE in the Arch Room + Parents Group**

##### **Sunday, May 1st, 11:45 am-12:30 pm**

Kids of all ages are invited to join us for an opportunity to reconnect with one another and our space. We will focus on the joy of being together and engaging in collaborative creation. Pre registration is not necessary but all children must be signed in and out by a parent or guardian.

*Parents will be invited to stay and have an opportunity to meet in a separate space for group discussion and support.*

#### **Nature Walk at Monkey Run**

##### **Sunday, May 8th, 12:30 pm-1:30 pm**

Meet us at Monkey Run at the parking lot at the corner of Hanshaw Rd and Lower Creek Rd for a nature walk. All are welcome.

#### **RE in the Arch Room + Parents Group**

##### **Sunday, May 15th, 11:45 am-12:30 pm**

Kids of all ages are invited to join us for an opportunity to reconnect with one another and our space. We will focus on the joy of being together and engaging in collaborative creation. Pre registration is not necessary but all children must be signed in and out by a parent or guardian.

*Parents will be invited to stay and have an opportunity to meet in a separate space for group discussion and support.*

#### **Nature Walk at Taughannock Falls**

##### **Sunday, May 22nd, 12:30 pm-1:30 pm**

Meet us at Taughannock Falls for a stroll up the Gorge Trail to the waterfall. All are welcome. *(continued on page 9)*

## Nurturing Beauty

*Rev. Suzelle Lynch*

Our community is filled with beauty!  
When you open the door to greet me,  
that's where the beauty begins.  
When you share with me what's important to you,  
Beauty is there as I listen.  
When we join hands to practice compassion  
Beauty's heart blooms like a flower.  
When we teach or learn or work for justice  
Beauty abounding sparks joy in all.  
Let's light the chalice for beauty now –  
the beauty we seek,  
The beauty we share,  
the beauty we nurture together.



## May Worship Services

The theme for May is "Nurturing Beauty" and the Celebrations Team is looking forward to speakers whose voices can help us to explore this theme as individuals and as a community:

### May 1, "Finding Light Within the Darkness"

Speaker Peaches Gillette

Peaches Gillette is an educator, an ordained chaplain, and a published poet. She has worked with battered women, veterans, the mentally disabled, and the incarcerated. She currently sits on the Tompkins County Human Rights Commission and served as a Tri-chair of the Eastern Southern Tier of the Poor People's Campaign. Her most transformative education occurred by experiencing the harshness of racism she faced as a child growing up in Brooklyn, and by being raised by a mother who did not allow the ugliness of racism to diminish her sense of peace, her love of others, or her faith.

### May 8, "The Piano: A Symbol of love. Is what you think as true really true?"

Speaker Regi Carpenter

In this original story, a young girl finds the redemptive power of a mother's love.

### May 15, "Reflections on time spent at the Shambhala Buddhist meditation retreat center Karmê Chöling"

Speaker Valerie Graves

Valerie has spent most of her adult career working with young children in Montessori classrooms and supporting their parents as they grow into their role as caregivers and guides. She is also a musician, enjoying playing guitar and piano. She currently works as a committee secretary for JEDEC, an international standards organization for the memory industry, while also working part time as a program coordinator for Namaste Montessori School.

### May 22, "True Joy: Reflecting on Purpose Unapologetically"

Speaker Nia Nunn

Looking forward to an opportunity to share, model, and encourage deep reflection on practicing our purpose and naming what brings us joy...on a daily basis. What daily practices remind you of your purpose? How often do you name and share your joy?

With many life changes, such as ongoing pandemic uncertainty and a shifting racial consciousness paradigm, this sermon will invite listeners, thinkers, and feelers to engage in their own self-study.

### May 29, "A Journey of Science and Faith"

Speaker Jonathan Lunine

My life has been one of passion for, and practice of, science. Some people find it surprising, then, that I also believe in God. In this brief sermon I will outline my journey to faith and why, for me, it was one of nurturing both science and faith and the beauty that connects them.

Save the Date!  
Annual End-of-the-Year Picnic  
and Flower Communion  
Sunday, June 12, 10:30 am  
Stewart Park (large pavillion)

## Joys and Sorrows

Patty Bergman and Dave Wentzel are happy to announce the birth of their second grandchild: Zoey Tasmyn Spadaro born March 18th. Her big sister Maya is thrilled also.

Our thoughts are with Martha Ferger who was recently hospitalized with heart failure while visiting her daughter in Washington DC. She is returning to Ithaca to stay with her daughter and son-in-law, Carol and Bill Klepak. Please send messages of love to Martha at: 9 Coventry Walk, Ithaca.

Joys and Sorrows are now shared during Sunday Service. Please send notices to the team at [joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org](mailto:joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org). When considering what is shared in Joys and Sorrows, please note, these services are live streamed and available to the public on our YouTube Channel.

### Thanks to ...

...the help of two fine young people, Gemma McArthur & Guthrie Graves, five Corsi Rosenthal air purifiers were recently built! Gemma & Guthrie worked for 2 1/2 hrs. putting the air filters together and because of their efforts our RE classrooms and other FUSIT gatherings will be much safer!

### Soul Matters Material for May - Nurturing Beauty

The Soul Matters theme for May is Nurturing Beauty. This month's packet includes a few short readings, spiritual exercises, and discussion questions for you to consider. The material can be found at

<https://tinyurl.com/SoulMattersMay2022>

### May Book Discussion Group

On **May 6th** the group will discuss *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo. Looking ahead to **June 3rd**, the group will discuss *Unorthodox* by Deborah Feldman. All meetings are at 12:30 pm on Zoom. For further information contact Jennifer at [streidmull@gmail.com](mailto:streidmull@gmail.com).



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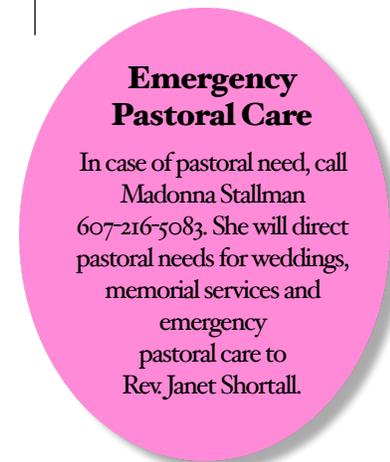
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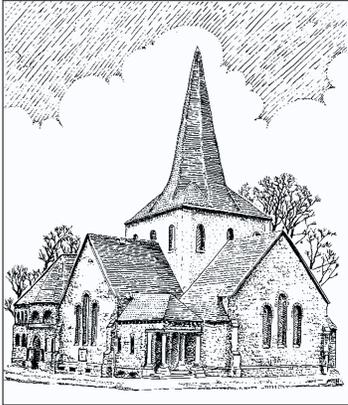
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Visit our Website and get  
your newsletter:  
[www.uuithaca.org](http://www.uuithaca.org)

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## Possible Ponderings

### *The theme for May is Nurturing Beauty*

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

**May 1-7:** What makes a beautiful soul? What do you do to beautify your own soul?

**May 8-14:** What did your family of origin teach you about what it means “to be beautiful”?

**May 15-21:** What parts of life have become more beautiful as you’ve aged? What’s something you know now about beauty that you didn’t know when you were 16 years old?

**May 22-28:** Who in your life needs to be told they are a beautiful soul?

**May 29-31:** Have you ever experienced a “beautiful goodbye”?

### **Women's Circle, Monday, May 23**

Women's Circle will meet via Zoom on Monday evening, **May 23**, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. We are now generally meeting on 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](mailto:ananda7733@gmail.com) or 607 539 7733.

Zoom link Meeting ID: 819 4014 1421  
Passcode: 874536

### **Men's Group, Monday, May 23**

The Men's Group will meet once a month on the 4th Monday of the month. The February meeting is scheduled for **May 23** at 7:00 pm in the Parlor. All who identify as male are invited to join us. For further information please contact Carsten Hess at [carsten@hess.net](mailto:carsten@hess.net) or Fred Balfour at [fred.balfour@gmail.com](mailto:fred.balfour@gmail.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](http://www.instagram.com/ithacaus) and Twitter, @IthacaUUs.

### **Social Justice Council Upcoming Meetings**

The Social Justice Council will meet on **May 9 and June 13**. Meetings are held from 5-6:30 pm on Zoom.

The Social Justice Council exists to inform the congregation about important social and humanitarian needs and issues and to provide avenues for constructive service and action.

SJC selects each month's Sharing Sundays recipient and gets reports or proposals from SJC Action Teams. For more information, contact Jackie Jablonski at [jackiejab@me.com](mailto:jackiejab@me.com).

### **Thanks to Your Generosity**

Once a month, the offering made during our Sunday service is donated to an organization chosen by the Social Justice Council.

The recipient of March's Sharing Sunday was **Doctors without Borders (Medicins Sans Frontier or "MSF")**, which, thanks to your generosity, received \$630. MSF provides medical humanitarian assistance to refugees and other victims of conflict, natural disasters, epidemics and healthcare exclusion around the world. It is currently helping Ukrainians with teams in Ukraine itself as well as in Poland, Moldova, Hungary, Slovakia, Russia, and Belarus. More information about how MSF is responding to the war in Ukraine is at <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/how-msf-responding-war-ukraine>

### **Annual Spring Cleaning of Our Church Buildings**

Our annual Spring Cleaning will be Sunday, **May 22**, from noon to 2! Weather permitting, there will be tasks inside and out, for all abilities and ages. It's always helpful to bring garden tools and kneeling pads if you want to work outside. We will also need people with large vehicles to take recycling, trash and other items to Solid Waste and ReUse. Contact Sara Catterall at [sara.catterall@gmail.com](mailto:sara.catterall@gmail.com) with any questions, or ideas for jobs that need to be done.

### **You've Been Flocked! Brighten Someone's Day!**

Interested in "flocking" the yard of one of your friends, neighbors, or co-workers? You can rent our rainbow colored lawn flamingos from the office and place them in someone's yard to add a little color to their day. This is a great way of bringing joy to each other, and raising some money for our congregation in the process! Suggested donation: \$20. Email [office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org) to rent the flamingos today!



### **Your Board is Listening**

*Summary of the Winter 2021-2022 Open Question Responses*

This winter, the FUSIT congregation was asked a second Open Question by the Board of Trustees, A question that is vital to our liberal religious organization and necessary to inform our path going forward, as we work to grow and strengthen our community after a couple of very challenging years. The winter open question was: **"Given our history and our hopes for the future, for what purpose does our religious community exist in 2022 and beyond? In other words, what is and should be our true Mission?"**

Of the 92 responses, the most popular themes that emerged was the importance of providing opportunities for spiritual growth, learning, and healing for individuals (21) and fostering a sense of community within FUSIT (21). Transforming the world and bringing positive change to the larger community and world was the next theme prioritized by many responses (18). Similar themes of shifting to focus from oneself to the greater world and the need for the community to focus specifically on social justice projects (16) had strong support. It is clear that many people look to the church to connect with others who share their need for spiritual growth and wholeness, and that through that work, many share a collective hope to transform the world around us.

The mission of the church can include, but can also go beyond, our familiar mission statement "to create connection, find inspiration and engage the world." The Board, staff, and congregation are working together to define the mission of our organization. The answers to the winter Open Question can help guide that work. The Board is meant to serve the mission of the church and clarifying that mission is a point of utmost importance to inform the Board and Ministry decisions going forward.

*Valarie Graves for the Board of Trustees*

### **Adult Choir Returns!**

The FUSIT adult choir is meeting again on Thursdays at 7 pm in the Annex. We will be singing at the service on **June 6**. All are welcome! Please join us! You do not need to attend all rehearsals to be a part of this group.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Music Director, Stephanie Ortolano, at [music@uuithaca.org](mailto:music@uuithaca.org)

### **Red Cross Blood Drive**

Thursday, **May 12**, from 10:00 am-6:00 pm.  
The blood drive will be held in the church parlor.  
Enter through the garden entrance on Aurora Street.  
Walk-ins welcome, appointments appreciated.  
Call 1-800 RED CROSS or visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) to make your appointment.

## **Your Board is Listening: Winter and Spring Open Questions**

From John Gaines

You provided almost 100 responses to the Winter Open Question - "**Given our history and our hopes for the future, for what purpose does our religious community exist in 2022 and beyond? In other words, what is and should be our true Mission?**" What an interesting and engaging set of responses! We discussed them at the March 16th Board meeting and you will be hearing more from Valerie Graves, Margaret Nichols, and Nancy Miller on the three major response themes that have emerged. Stay tuned for that! Now it is time for the final Open Question for this church year.

The Spring Open Question is "**In living out our Second Principle, promoting justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, how can we do the vital work of dismantling systems of oppression while promoting and supporting kindness, trust, and gratitude within our community?**" How do **YOU** respond to this question?

Please send your response(s) to [jagivjagiv@gmail.com](mailto:jagivjagiv@gmail.com) by **May 1**. Please try to limit each response to one concise sentence. If you would like to see the Google sheet with all responses, please email me.

Thank you for your assistance in this vital work!

### **Partnership Governance Committee**

FUSIT's lay leadership activities are organized within committees that advise the Board of Trustees and ministry teams and staff that work with staff on the ministry of our church. This arrangement is part of our partnership governance structure. The Board of Trustees Policy Book created the Partnership Governance Committee (GovCo) to advise the Board on governance issues. Recently the Board asked GovCo to review FUSIT's by-laws and policy manual and recommend changes to keep this partnership structure functioning during times of transition. GovCo recommended and the Board accepted GovCo's recommendation to form two teams to partner with the Board in conducting the operations and ministry of our church to ensure that FUSIT continues its dynamic work and is able to easily move through the transitions into the future—whether that involves a new minister, a part-time minister or a lay-led congregation.

The new teams are the **Ministry Visioning Team (MVT)** and the **Operations Administration Team (OAT)**. The MVT will guide and coordinate the work of the various ministry teams to implement the annual Vision of Ministry and propose budget expenditures for ministry work. The OAT will guide and coordinate the work of the paid staff, including budget support, staff evaluation, and hiring of new staff as needed. Both teams will consist of 4 members with 2-year terms. If you are interested in being part of one of these teams, let the Board know at [board@uuIthaca.org](mailto:board@uuIthaca.org).

In addition to helping these teams gain their footing, GovCo will review and recommend changes to the Policy Book to reflect the new partners (MVT and OAT) and their role, to assure the transition to the future occurs without disruption to FUSIT's many services and activities and preserves our organizational structure. Laura Free is GovCo's chair and deserves thanks for much hard preparatory work and sometimes tedious labor in crafting the language of GovCo's recommendations.

## **Message from the Board**

The weather is turning nicer, so most Ithacans are thinking 'Spring!' But, as Treasurer of our congregation, I am thinking 'Budget Season!' So, in concert with our able Finance Committee, Finance Chair Nathan Fawcett and I have been piecing together a preliminary budget for the Board's consideration at our next regular monthly meeting. Once the Board has had its input, we will be sharing it with the congregation and, once in final form, we will be presenting it for approval at this year's annual meeting. Expect additional detailed information for your consideration in the coming weeks.

For now, I can share a little of the process. Many members of the congregation offered input on the budget. Though not every request could be met, we did what we could with limited resources. But I hope that the budget fairly rewards our wonderful staff, as well as reinstating funding for programming that we all want as our Society looks to the future.

However, as my able predecessor, Jennifer Streid-Mullen, was careful to point out, First Unitarian of Ithaca is facing a challenging financial situation. Yes, we have been able to balance our operating books, but only through a combination of one-time sources of revenue which will not come again. Looking forward to the 2022-23 fiscal year, we will not likely be able to afford a full-time, UUA sponsored minister. Instead, the Board has looked deeply at what ministerial functions are most important to meet and finding alternative ways of meeting these needs. Funding for these ministerial functions is in the budget, but exactly what this looks like is still unclear. Await further news.

*Walt Peck, Treasurer of the Board*



### **Summer Services Are Back!!**

Summer Services will be held again in the parlor at 9:30 am **June 19 through September 4**.

Help us create these more informal services or volunteer to present a sermon. Be part of bringing our congregation back together in person over the summer.

*Contact Jens Wennberg at [jens207@gmail.com](mailto:jens207@gmail.com) to let us know how you can help.*

## **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.*



**Library Team**  
**Barbara Shew, Leader**

Our library contains books in many subject areas pertinent to UU history and values. Subjects include: UU history and authors; World religions; philosophy; death and dying; meditation; social issues, particularly strong in anti-racism, environmental and other current social issues. Many of the books in the library are published by the UUA's Beacon Press and members and friends donate books as well. The congregation is encouraged to use the collection by browsing or signing books out. The library can be accessed anytime the office is open. Email [office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org) to check the schedule. The library is located on the second floor of the Parish House, at the top of the front stairs. A book group, led by the Library Committee, is devoted to reading the UUA's, "Common Read", a title chosen each year for all UU's to read. Contact: Barbara Shew, [barbrandy51@gmail.com](mailto:barbrandy51@gmail.com).

Barbara graduated from Ithaca High School in 1947, from the University of Michigan in 1951 and was married to Randy Shew that year. She obtained her Master's degree in Library Science from Syracuse University and was head librarian at the founding of TC3 and 20 years at the Ithaca High School Library. She and her four children attended FUSIT in the '60's and '70's. After retiring in 1986, she and her husband became "snow birds" and did extensive traveling. After his death in 2015 she became an active church member. She organized our library and has served on the Antiracist Team, helped organize FUSIT films, co-leads a "Common Read" book group, is on the planning group for adopting the 8th Principle and is FUSIT's liaison to ACT (Area Congregations Together). Barbara enjoys reading, gardening, travel, pastel painting and spending time with her children, 10 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

**UU Reads for Social Justice**

The UU Reads For Social Justice Book Group will meet on Tuesday, **May 10** at 7:00 p.m. to discuss, "Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry", edited by Mitra Rahnama. It was one of two titles selected for the UU Common Read in 2017/18.

This was a joint project of the Committee for Antiracism, Anti-Oppression and Multiculturalism of the UU Minister's Association and Skinner House Books. "Centering" is the first book to center the stories, analysis, and insight of UU's of color offering their religious leadership.

It is available to order through inSpirit (UU Book and Gift Shop), [uaa.org/bookstore](http://uaa.org/bookstore), 800-215-9076. Also available as an eBook in the Amazon Kindle store and on Google Play. There are two copies available in the FUSIT Library to share. If you have questions, contact JoAnn Kowalski or Barbara Shew.

We invite all to join us for this discussion.

**8th Principle "Pro" Committee**

FUSIT will have a vote at our Annual Meeting on **May 25** to adopt the proposed 8th Principle, which reads:

**"We covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."**

This proposal is coming from the ground up and being adopted in congregations like ours, over 155 to date. The UUA has a surprisingly "not good" history, of not embracing the requests of UUs who identify as people of color, from the 1960s since, despite the good intentions of the majority of UUs. The adoption now commits us as individuals and the congregation to get into action against racism internally and in the bigger world NOW, rather than waiting until the UUA may officially adopt the 8th Principle, which will be June 2024 at the earliest. Yes, the UUA processes are long and cumbersome.

There are multiple reasons to support FUSIT's adoption of the 8th Principle at this time, and multiple reasons some congregants are opposed. We hope to provide a forum for this pro/con discussion on a webpage, where you can both read other FUSIT folks' opinions and express your own. This is currently under construction. Many/most of us have found the discussions we have been having informative and nuancing our views, perhaps without changing how we will vote in May. The discussion itself is of great value. Having said that, many of us also want to stop talking and get more into action.

We have prepared a brief 2-page background paper on the 8th Principle, available here <https://drive.google.com/file/d/ruNQnsyoCXxySFnSCpGlutYLzpAqIsyAh/view>, and the non-FUSIT website [www.8thprincipleuu.org](http://www.8thprincipleuu.org) has more information. We have held several discussion groups, and are hosting a **Congregational Conversation on Sunday, May 1**, when all are encouraged to attend and participate.

We hope that a large number of congregants have engaged with issues around adoption of the 8th, and that a large number will show up at the Annual Meeting and vote to express your opinion. If you would like more information, contact Jennifer Streid-Mullen, [streidmull@gmail.com](mailto:streidmull@gmail.com).

**Parking Update**

While we are still not allowed to park in the lot next to the church on Aurora Street, we did confirm that it is ok to park in the Town Hall parking lot on Sundays (on the corner of Buffalo and Aurora) as long as the gate is open.

**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!**



*We have 52% of the chalice flame we need to light our way in the 2022-2023 church year!*

### **Every Pledge Counts**

The chalice flame is burning bright and is more than half full, but we have a way to go before next year's programs will be fully funded! The \$330,000 pledge target for the 2022-23 church year enables a search for a part time minister while maintaining the programs that keep our congregation strong and connected. Almost 80% of each year's expenses are paid for by our annual gifts.

Many of us have pledged our support, as represented by paper cut-out people in this image (see weekly updates to these graphical progress meters on the FUSIT home page). Thank you all!!



For others, there's still time to get your pledge in, and **EVERY PLEDGE COUNTS**. Getting pledges from a high proportion of FUSIT members and friends sends a strong message of solidarity about our congregation, a message that prospective ministers look for. Please send in your pledge card, or call in your pledge to the office at 607-273-7521, or click the 'donate' button on the FUSIT home page.

*Thank you from the Stewardship Team*



### **UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY MULTIPLATFORM / PORTLAND • 2022**

#### **UUA General Assembly, Portland, Oregon June 22-26, 2022**

#### **"Meet the Moment: Reimagining Radical Faith Community"**

Join UUs from around the world for General Assembly in Portland, Oregon. This year's annual meeting of the UUA will be multiplatform (in person and online). In addition to business sessions, the General Assembly (GA) program offers workshops, lectures, and worship and witness opportunities during the five days of GA. Registration options for in-person and/or virtual participation are open. Ibram X. Kendi, author of five straight #1 New York Times bestsellers, including "How to Be an Antiracist", will be the distinguished Ware Lecture speaker. His opening address is free and available to all. For more information contact [generalassembly@uua.org](mailto:generalassembly@uua.org).

#### **History of FUSIT now available!**

The book *A Liberal Church* is the illustrated history of the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca from 1865 to 1945. It was written by Carol Kammen, the Tompkins County Historian, and aided greatly by FUSIT member Beverly Henderson West. Read about being a liberal congregation in the midst of orthodoxy, and wonder how and why FUSIT was planted in Ithaca and how it grew.

This book began on the occasion of our 150th anniversary, when Mark Pedersen asked our Ithaca historian Carol Kammen if she could write a book on the history of our church. A meeting was called for those interested in the project, committees were formed, and we proceeded on several fronts. After many delays, not the least of which was caused by the pandemic, the book was finally printed last summer.

The book is now available for a \$15 donation in the parlor after services or in the church office anytime the office is open.

#### **Major Change to Sanctuary Seating**

Social Distancing in the sanctuary has been modified. The Way Forward Team recently made the decision to open up more seating in the sanctuary. Part of the sanctuary will still have every other pew closed to allow for social distancing for those who prefer it. The other part is now open for people to sit where they choose.

#### **Updated Way Forward Team Guidance Phase 3, May 1, 2022**

*These are the **most recent changes** taking place in May. Check the website for complete Way Forward Team Guidance for May.*

**-There will be no limitations for numbers of participants in the sanctuary each Sunday beyond the number of people who can fit in the designated seats. One section of the sanctuary will remain designated for physical distancing and will be clearly marked.**

**-A Coffee Hour will follow each service during which time participants will remain masked for the first ten minutes, until coffee is served, at which point those who feel comfortable doing so may remove their masks for the duration of that designated time.**

**If you are unable to attend Sunday services in person**, we invite you to watch the Live Stream at 10:30 am on our [YouTube Channel](#) and join us for a "Zoom Coffee Hour" following service. You can use the [Zoom link](#) or the meeting ID of 240-797-976.

(RE News continued from page 2)

## Youth Bonfire

**Friday, May 13, 7 pm-9 pm**

**First Congregational Church, 309 Highland Road**

Youth ages 12 and up are invited to join us for a bonfire hosted by our friends at FCC. Snacks and drinks will be provided.

## Other RE Events and Activities

### Playdate and Pizza at the Park

**Sunday, May 29th, 1 pm-3 pm**

**Lower Treman Near the Front Playground**

Please meet us at Treman for a playdate and pizza at the park. Additional snacks and drinks are welcome. Please RSVP so we have an idea of how many people we need to provide pizza for.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScg\\_OtRAfn8c1z86nHYKa3XW6j2Y4UTp1YoNIesdQDKoXWEhg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScg_OtRAfn8c1z86nHYKa3XW6j2Y4UTp1YoNIesdQDKoXWEhg/viewform)

## Our Whole Lives (OWL)

The Our Whole Lives (OWL) comprehensive sexuality education program is one that parents have been asking for us to return to offering since we had to make the move to virtual programming two years ago. In partnership with FCC (First Congregational Church) we are offering a facilitator training this summer so that we can return to OWL programming for our middle school and high school youth in the fall. If you wish to participate and this creates a financial difficulty please contact Emily Richards [dre@uuihaca.org](mailto:dre@uuihaca.org).

### Facilitator Training

**Friday, July 22nd - Sunday, July 24th**

Hosted at FCC, \$350 per participant, Meals provided

See the registration form for more details and to register for this weekend-long training.

<https://fusit.breezechms.com/form/7b3rdb>

## RE Plans for June

### June 2nd-5th, Ithaca Festival Weekend

Please join us as we march through the streets of Ithaca as a part of the Parade. Or visit us in Dewitt Park at our FUSIT table for information and activities.

### June 12th, End of the Year Picnic and Flower Communion

Our final service of the year will be held at Stewart Park in the large pavilion and will include our annual Flower Communion and a potluck meal afterwards. Bring flowers to exchange, food to share, and come ready to play on the beautiful shores of Cayuga Lake.

## Volunteers Needed for RE Programming

RE volunteers are needed to help lead youth and children's activities as well as to help with events. Please consider this opportunity as a way to reconnect with our community, give back, and make a profound difference in the lives of our young people and families.

[RE Volunteer Sign Up](#)

## 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.

## Small Group Ministry

### Small Group Ministry Exploration

**Tuesday, May 10th, at 7 pm on Zoom**

Newcomers and long-standing community members who have never gotten a chance to participate in Small Group Ministry (SGM) are invited to this virtual event. Come and experience how this important aspect of our ministry can deepen your connection to yourself and the community. This virtual meeting will include an overview of SGM, a chance to participate in an example session, and a time for questions and reflections. New groups will be starting up this fall and you can register if you would like to be placed in one at the meeting. If you are unable to attend and want to learn more about SGM you can email Marsha Kardon at [mfkardon@gmail.com](mailto:mfkardon@gmail.com).

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/86202278387?pwd=V09LSmZHaVA5anBuQlNQVnk8oNkUydzo9>  
Meeting ID: 862 0227 8387  
Passcode: 319018

### NEW Small Group Ministry for Parents

**Sunday May 15th, 4 pm-5:30 pm**

Beginning this May a new Small Group Ministry is forming, especially for individuals who are actively parenting. The group will follow the Soul Matters themes with a focus on how they are related to the journey and experience of being a parent. Gatherings will take place monthly on the third Sunday of the month from 4pm-5:30pm on Zoom, with the possibility of moving to in-person meetings in the future. We invite you to join us for an opportunity for fellowship and community within our larger FUSIT community, in a safe, confidential and nurturing environment. If interested, please contact Emily Richards, [dre@uuihaca.org](mailto:dre@uuihaca.org).

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/87606340943?pwd=dVczWmpCZVVGNTgxSUVVaGNMLzBRdz09>  
Meeting ID: 876 0634 0943  
Passcode: 188035



FUSIT will be participating in the 2022 Ithaca Festival Parade, which will be held on Thursday, June 2 starting at 6:00 pm. This year's theme is "Together Again".

## **Annual Meeting Agenda**

**Wednesday, May 25, 2022**

**6:00 pm in the Sanctuary and via Zoom**

*All members of First Unitarian Society of Ithaca are encouraged to attend this important annual meeting, which will take place in person and virtually via Zoom.*

6:00 pm Call Meeting to Order

6:10 pm Welcome and Chalice Lighting

- Year in Review
- Hybrid Meeting Protocols
- Approval of 050621 Annual Meeting Minutes
- Adoption of 2022-2023 Budget
- Election of Candidates for the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee
- Adoption of 8<sup>th</sup> Principle

***We, First Unitarian Society of Ithaca, adopt the "8<sup>th</sup> Principle," to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.***

- Closing Words

### **Welcome New Members**

Please extend a warm welcome to those who joined our community by signing the membership book between 4/26/20 and 4/25/21:

*Timothy Ball, Jessica Brown, Lydia Dempsey, Carolyn Emerick, Jennifer Gunn, Chuck Lyons, Emily Olander*

And to those who more recently signed the book:

*Tom Coakley, Margaret Smith, Jackie Jablonski, Philip Terrie and Kathy Wolf.*

### **Become a Member of FUSIT**

New to our church? Or have been coming for a while but now seems like the right time to join as we are emerging into spring? We are planning a new member's Commitment Ceremony on **May 1**. If you would like to officially join First Unitarian Society of Ithaca OR if you joined last year virtually and would like to be part of an in-person ceremony, contact Emily Richards [dre@uuithaca.org](mailto:dre@uuithaca.org).

New members will be able to sign the membership book ahead of the **May 1st** ceremony so that they will be eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting on Wednesday, **May 25**, (you must sign the book at least 30 days prior to the meeting in order to be able to vote). We will welcome you as a new member!!

### **Help Needed to Provide Lunches for the Homeless Shelter**

As a member of Area Congregations Together (ACT), FUSIT provides 60 lunches to the Ithaca homeless shelter on the first Tuesday of each month. So every month we look for four volunteers to share the work and provide 15 lunches each.

Can you please volunteer for **May 3rd**? You would buy supplies, make the lunches within 24 hours of delivery, and deliver them between 9:30 and 11:30 am to SJCS Day Center at 618 W. State Street.

Each lunch will include a sandwich, a piece of soft fruit, and a cookie or other small dessert. Social Justice Council can reimburse your expenses, at your request. To volunteer and/or ask questions, please contact Jackie Jablonski at [jackiejab@me.com](mailto:jackiejab@me.com).



### **Unirondack is back!**

After closing it's doors in 2020 and a limited summer in 2021, Unirondack is open once again. Unirondack is a radically-inclusive, UU-founded summer camp located in the beautiful lake-filled Adirondacks on the ancestral lands of the Haudenosaunee.

### **Come Join the Planning Committee for FUSIT's Unirondack Labor Day Weekend**

Have you been missing Unirondack?! Have you always wanted to go but didn't have a chance? Are you new and curious what it is all about?

Help make this laughter and connection filled weekend possible! So far we are a committee of 2 with great documentation to depend on from past leaders. We need more folks to help plan and bring food/supplies before we can send out registrations. What a gift we would be giving to FUSIT to start a new year with this tradition!

If interested in joining the planning committee or have questions you need answered before joining, please email Michele Hochstetter at [mhochstetter@gmail.com](mailto:mhochstetter@gmail.com).

Thank you!



## **BLACK LIVES of UU**

### **Black Lives of UU Organizing Collective Urges Adoption of 8th Principle in Unitarian Universalism**

The Black Lives of UU (BLUU) Organizing Collective encourages all Unitarian Universalists to advocate for the formal adoption of an 8th principle, articulating a commitment to the dismantling of white supremacy, within the stated principles of our faith.