



# ITHACA

## UUU Connections

2025/2026 Issue No. 1

September 2025

### Our Spiritual Journey

Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. Julián Jamaica Soto reminds us that

*"All of us need all of us to make it."*

Beloveds, we begin this new church year in a time of uncertainty. These are not easy days. Perhaps, like me, you feel like we are being asked to believe in love when love itself is under attack. To believe in belonging when all we are being shown is a people divided.

And yet, believing in belonging means believing in love. It means choosing one another again and again, even when it's hard. Even when the world is telling us that it's safer to turn away, to divide, to close in. In these times the very act of opening ourselves up to others, to welcoming people in, can feel like an act of moral courage.

Rev. Rali Weaver tells us that "belonging is not a place, but a promise". We don't arrive at belonging, we offer it to one another.

Love is at the center of this faith, a liberating love. A love that reminds us that we offer belonging when we show up, when we listen, when we make space, and when we live out our values. Bell hooks wrote "Love is an action, never simply a feeling." Now, more than at any other time, we are being called on to act. To welcome in the stranger. To provide shelter from the storm.

And if that love, that sense of belonging, feels hard to hold onto right now, that's okay. Let us hold it for you. Let us hold you. That's part of what belonging means, too.

May this community be a sanctuary, a place of both safety and courage. And may we, together, keep returning to this truth: Love is not gone. It's just waiting for us to live it.

Here you are welcome. Here you belong.

*Emily Richards, Director of Congregational Life*

#### **Reminder: Water Ceremony and Ingathering**

Please don't forget to collect a sample of water from a special place this summer, which you can share with the congregation at the Water Ceremony and Ingathering to be held on the second Sunday,

**September 14th**, which is a change from previous years. We will also be welcoming [Empty Cups for Gaza](#) as Unitarian Universalists from all over the country voted to pass the "Solidarity with Palestinians" Action of Immediate Witness at General Assembly this summer, calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. You can find more information at the link above.

#### **Sunday Celebration at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary.**

*Live-streamed on our YouTube channel.*

*Nursery childcare and Religious Exploration  
classes for children.*

#### **Sundae Sunday**

Sunday, **September 14th** 12 pm-1 pm

*Bring the entire family for connection, fun,  
and ice cream sundaes!*

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca had a crucial role in the creation of the ice cream sundae. According to VisitIthaca.com, the Ice Cream Sundae was invented by FUSIT treasurer Chester C. Platt and first eaten by FUSIT's Rev. John Scott on April 3, 1892. This adds to our rich history of connectedness with Ithaca and the Tompkins County community.

We are excited to celebrate our annual Sundae Sunday following the second service of the church year on September 14th. Our event will take place from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm in the Garden Street Entrance on Aurora Street. We will be serving delicious sundaes with Purity ice cream and plenty of toppings, including vegan options.

# Religious Exploration News

For information about Religious Exploration, please contact Madeline Natale at [dre@uuithaca.org](mailto:dre@uuithaca.org)

## Greetings from the Director of Religious Exploration

Welcome to a new year of Religious Exploration (RE). We are kicking it off with the theme “belonging”. In the simplest terms belonging is to be a part of something. If you're reading this you are already a part of our community at the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca. I do not believe that “being a part of something” can fully describe how we feel within this community. When we feel safe and supported we begin to feel like we belong. This feeling of safety and security comes from authentic inclusion. This month I encourage you to brainstorm ways that this community has made you feel included. Let us take what we have learned and put it into practice so one day we all may feel like we belong.

We are thrilled to continue to offer Religious Exploration programming three Sundays a month, with two Classroom Sundays, and one mixed ages Creative Sunday. On Sundays that do not have RE programming, we hold an interactive multigenerational service in the sanctuary. This year we are expanding from 3, to five classrooms. This will help us continue to meet the needs of our children and youth by offering lessons and activities that are more precisely geared toward each age group.

Our elementary classrooms explore monthly themes, through stories, activities, crafts, and games. The Middle School youth group will have an exciting opportunity to visit neighboring faiths through the “Crossing Paths” curriculum. Lastly, our Highschool youth will use what they have learned through their RE experience to explore and share spiritual practices that resonate with them using an approach similar to small group ministry.

The nursery is open every Sunday from 10 am-12 pm.

Please register your children below for the 2025-2026 Religious Exploration program! This information helps us to plan for the upcoming year.

[FUSIT Religious Exploration Registration 2025-2026](#)

We have so much appreciation for all of the community members who have volunteered to enrich our community through participating in our Religious Exploration programming. Volunteering for the RE program is a gift of welcome that we all have to give and I hope you will consider joining our amazing team of volunteers. This important programming can only happen with the support of the entire community.

[FUSIT Religious Exploration Volunteer Sign Up 2025-2026](#)

Please join our [First UU Ithaca Parents Facebook Group](#)!

## Religious Exploration Schedule for September

**September 7th** - Creative Sunday

**September 14th** - Multigenerational Service

**September 21st** - Creative Sunday

**September 28th** - Classroom Sunday

The Nursery will be open every Sunday from 10 am-12 pm for young children between the ages of 0 and 4.

## Our Whole Lives (OWL) for 10-12th Graders

The First Unitarian Society of Ithaca and the First Congregational Church of Ithaca are excited to offer the Our Whole Lives comprehensive sexuality education program during the school year 2024-2025. Our 10th-12th graders will do OWL this winter (registration to come!).

We plan to run OWL for 8th & 9th grade again in Fall of 2026.

## Religious Exploration Events for September

### Sundae Sunday

Sunday, **September 14th**, 12 pm-1 pm

Free ice cream and activities in the Garden Entrance next to the Parish House! All are welcome.

### September Movie Night

Friday, **September 26th**, 5:30pm-8:00pm, Arch Room

Drop your kids off, or stay and join us, for a movie night, complete with dinner and snacks.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdVyBAtwxgLugZB6oO6ZCtu1pZbbJUeaNgoLEuFDRJhjaslw/viewform>

*“I was so shocked to learn that the opposite of belonging is fitting in. Because fitting in is assessing a group of people and changing who you are. But true belonging never asks us to change who we are. It demands we be who we are.”*  
Brené Brown

### **Back to School Blessing**

Sunday, **September 7th**

Bring your backpack, purse, laptop, device, pencil case and more to receive a special blessing celebrating the start of the new school (and work) year and the joy of Welcome to a beloved community.

### **Religious Exploration Volunteer Orientation**

Saturday, **September 13th** from 12 pm-2 pm  
Arch Room and via Zoom

### **Small Group Ministry for Parents**

This will begin for the year on the third Sunday in October and childcare will be provided.

### **Music for Little People**

Wednesday, **September 24th**  
12 pm-12:45 pm, Arch Room

Share in the joy of music in this class which is free and open to the public. Children 0-5 and their caregivers are welcome to meet us in the Arch Room each month. Sing, play, dance, explore instruments, and connect through music.

### **Adult RE**

### **Handwerker Gallery Visit with David Salomon**

Following the service on **September 21**, David Salomon will lead a tour and discussion of the exhibition Section as Cosmogram: From the Heavens to the Earth that he curated at Ithaca College's Handwerker Gallery at 1pm. You can meet us at the gallery or gather with us in the parlor after coffee hour and follow us there.

### **Pub Theology**

Tuesday, **September 23rd**, 6:30 pm  
Liquid State Brewing, 620 W. Green Street, Ithaca

Join us at Liquid State Brewing for an evening of good fellowship and conversation at our favorite local brewery (owned by FUSIT members!). We will gather at 6:30 pm and reflect together on our monthly theme of Invitation. Non-beer and non-alcoholic drinks options available! 21 and over please. Bring your friends! Hope to see you there! Pub Theology takes place on the 4th Tuesday of every month.

## **September Worship Services**

*The theme for September is "Building Belonging" and the Celebrations Team is looking forward to speakers whose voices can help us to explore this theme as individuals and as a community.*

### **Sunday, September 7, "An Invitation to Fellowship"** Emily Richards, CRE

Do you find yourself wishing for deeper connection and a true sense of belonging? Are you looking for an opportunity to engage more deeply with your fellow congregants? Please join us for this Connection Sunday for meaningful discussions and community.  
*Music TBA*

### **Sunday, September 14, "Water Ceremony and Ingathering"**

Rev. Janet Shortall, Rev. Peaches Gillette and Emily Richards, CRE

Our Water Ceremony marks the traditional start of the church year, it is a time of Ingathering, of coming back together after the summer. Everyone is encouraged to bring a small amount of water from a source that has significance to you, and/or an Empty Cup for Gaza. Together we will combine our waters, which symbolize both what we each bring and, maybe more importantly, how we are changed by our commitment to journeying together.  
*Music by Emily Richards and Laura Ramos*

### **Sunday, September 21, "Axis Mundi and First Unitarian"**

David Salomon, FUSIT member

This talk will frame our own First Unitarian building as an Axis Mundi, that is, as a place that links the heavens with the earth, the universe with the underworld, and the sacred with the secular.

These themes are also present in an exhibition of architectural drawings David Salomon has curated at Ithaca College's Handwerker Gallery, on display from August 28 – October 1. There is an [opening reception on September 4](#), 5:00 pm, and David will lead a tour of the exhibition following the service on September 21 as part of our Religious Exploration Programming.  
*Music TBA*

### **Sunday, September 28, "Longings of the Soul"** Emily Richards, CRE

We all long for places where we can be our authentic selves, where we don't need to change or hide to be welcomed and embraced. A place to belong. Belonging is an invitation not just to be a part of the whole, but to be whole. How do we answer those longings for ourselves and one another?  
*Music by FUSIT Choir*

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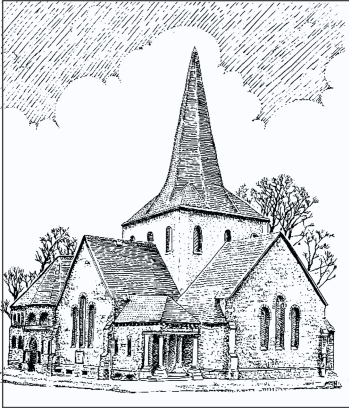
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Visit our Website and get  
your newsletter:  
[www.uuithaca.org](http://www.uuithaca.org)

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## Possible Ponderings

### ***The theme for September is Building Belonging***

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

**September 1-5:** Of all the communities you have belonged to, which is your favorite? If you could say thank you to it, what would you say?

**September 6-12:** Do you know what it is like to be in a community or relationship that requires you to remove or deny parts of yourself to belong?

**September 13-19:** What long hoped-for life do you need to let go of in order for you to belong to the life right in front of you?

**September 20-26:** Self belonging is about self-love. So...what if you are the love of your life?

**September 27-30:** What is the greatest lie that our culture tells us about belonging?

### ***Parking***

The church does not have a parking lot, but there is free parking on the nearby city streets on Sundays and the Town of Ithaca allows us to use their lot on Sundays (on the corner of Aurora and Buffalo, directly across from the church). Please do not park in the lot next to the church on Aurora St.

### ***Current Volunteer Opportunities***

Volunteering is a great way to meet others in the First Unitarian Community and give back at the same time! Current Volunteer Opportunities can be found here: <https://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/index.php/connection/volunteer/>

### ***FUSIT Listserv***

If you would like to be added to the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca listserv, please fill out the form at <https://fusit.breezechms.com/form/oe48af>. If you have any questions, email Michelle at [office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@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!***



## ***Social Justice***

*We hope you will consider joining us in our social justice efforts and encourage you to reach out and learn more about how you can get involved. Find more information about various teams on our website.*

### **Side with Love and Shared Plate**

Teams, Committees, and Small Groups are invited to sponsor a month for our Side with Love and Shared Plate Collections. The group would be responsible for choosing the organization, communicating with that organization about needed items for Side with Love, delivering goods, and communicating any pertinent information to Michelle and Loretta for the Newsletter, Weekly Announce, and Order of Service.

This is a wonderful opportunity to lift up and support local or national organizations that do work that is meaningful to your team or group. Sign up information can be found below.

#### **Side With Love and Shared Plate 2024-2025**

Menstrual Equity Center will be the recipient of September's Side With Love and Shared Plate. Every Sunday service in the month of September we will be collecting menstrual products as part of the initiatives aimed at providing access to affordable, sustainable menstrual products and promoting menstrual health education in the Ithaca, NY, area.

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance (DIA) opened the MEI outside their office in Center Ithaca in 2023 to eliminate period poverty through advocacy and community engagement.

### ***8th Principle Action Ministry***

Please join us on Zoom on **September 24** at 7 pm to gather in community to share ideas and companionship, engage with one another and educate ourselves during this turbulent time in our history. We plan to learn more about the issues and legislation being proposed as well as actions to be taken.

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/84035815856?pwd=aHdwYVpoYldBVnRQNXdHhZDUDlRUT09>

Meeting ID: 840 3581 5856 Passcode: 989761

### ***The Environmental Interest Circle***

The Environmental Interest Circle meets to discuss/exchange ideas and actions that further sustainable living for each one of us, for the FUSIT congregation, and for our congregations' role in the greater community. We will meet on **September 3** at 7 pm in the parlor and over Zoom, and continue to meet every first Wednesday of the month.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/81644753524?pwd=SDBqaTN5eIM3ejltbGdJcGhPa3QxQT09>

Meeting ID: 816 4475 3524 Passcode: 894885

## ***Message from the Board of Trustees***

Greetings Beloved Community. This summer in a competitive race, I narrowly won the coveted seat of Board President. (Be advised, this entry is laced with sarcasm). While in truth this isn't a position many people seek, nor was I seeking it, I am proud to be able to fill this need, and I'm grateful to Fred Balfour for paving the way these last two years.

I thought I would take this opportunity to introduce myself. I've been a UU for four years but consider myself a lifetime pluralist, spiritualist, and social justice seeker (with Southern Baptist redneck roots). My partner, Ben, and I have two awesome kids - Stonie (5) and Ren (2) and a few too many pets. I'm a clinical psychologist specializing in childhood trauma and school behavioral health. I like skiing, hiking, sweet tea, and wine. I think I'm funny although most people, particularly my family, do not agree.

I also think a lot about Relational Health. Relational health is an all-encompassing term to describe what it means to develop and maintain meaningful relationships. As you all probably know, meaningful relationships aren't easy, and being in true connection to others means tolerating distress, forgiving, letting go, speaking up, being vulnerable, being humble, and trying again, over and over. With that said, I want you to know a few things as we enter into a relationship with one another:

This is a congregation of humans, and I like interacting and communicating in a way that honors our shared humanity. I hope our Society is a place where you feel enough trust to be your genuine self and acknowledge the humanity in others. If it's not, let's work on that together.

I have a few strengths but far more weaknesses. I'm probably going to mess up at some point. But I promise, if I do, I'll own it and try to fix it. If I offend you, please tell me. I'm not here to be right, but to get it right, and I think repairing relationships is one of the most important human things we can do. Sometimes I take on too much and miss things, and I rely on people around me to keep me accountable.

There is so much to celebrate within this congregation, and there are also relational hurts and pains. Some are fresh wounds and some are old but remain unhealed. Please tell me about those, and let's work on healing together. In general, I hope you all speak up, especially those of you who are often quiet, in a way that honors our Covenant and can better our relational health. I keep secrets for a living, and I'm not easily scared off. I'm always willing to talk individually.

And finally! Most of us in leadership at FUSIT, including myself, don't have enough time to do what's required. We welcome your leadership on our team so we can enjoy a fulfilling year where all hands are involved and no one person burns out. (And if you're thinking to yourself that you're not leadership material, think again! We welcome thinkers, feelers, and doers, those with spare time and those with none).

*-Megan McCormick, President of the Board*

### ***September Board of Trustees Meeting***

The Board will now be meeting on the third Wednesday of the month (formerly third Tuesday), on **September 17**, at 6:30 pm. Board meetings are a hybrid format, taking place in the Parlor and through Zoom.

All FUSIT members are invited to attend these meetings. Ten minutes are set aside at the beginning of the meeting for congregation feedback. Please join us! Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/88258776990?pwd=VUxUTUMRaVZDUFQzQndSVFRaFIPdzo9>

Meeting ID: 882 5877 6990 Passcode: 602445

### *Mark Your Calendar!*

## **Fall LIVE Service Auction, Saturday, October 25**

We're already planning our **LIVE SERVICE AUCTION** this fall!

Don't miss out on this fun evening which includes a delicious pre-auction dinner and competitive bidding on goods and services from FUSIT members and friends. This will be a live in-house auction (not involving local businesses- unless the owners are directly affiliated with FUSIT). Our focus is building community and connecting members of our congregation, in addition to raising funds.

Think about what kinds of services would interest you! Excursions, dinners/brunches, gardening/yard assistance, favorite foods, organized hikes, babysitting, IT help, boat rides and more.

*If you'd like to be involved in the planning committee, contact the co-chairs, Loretta Heimbuch [adminasst@uuithaca.org](mailto:adminasst@uuithaca.org) and Jane Koestler [j.e.koestler@gmail.com](mailto:j.e.koestler@gmail.com).*

### **Join Us - Choir Season 2025-26 Begins!** 🎵

*Lift your voice, share the joy of music, and be part of our welcoming choir community.*

#### **First Rehearsal: Thursday, September 4**

7:00-8:30 pm

...and every Thursday thereafter (except holidays).

We sing together one Sunday each month—our full season schedule will be shared at the first rehearsal.

Whether you've sung in choirs for years or are joining for the first time, you are warmly welcome.

Questions? Text Jayne Demakos, Choir Director, 607-256-9488

*Choral music is not one of life's frills. It's something that goes to the very heart of our humanity, our sense of community, and our souls. -John Ritter*

### **Office Hours**

Beginning in September, Michelle will be in the office Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays and working remotely on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. If you have in person office business, please send an email to [office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org) to make an appointment.

### **Soul Matters Material for September**

The Soul Matters theme for September is *Building Belonging*. 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/SoulMattersSept2025>

### **Joys and Sorrows**

*Joys and Sorrows are 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.*

### **Appreciations**

*As we nurture a culture of appreciation at FUSIT, let's sing praises to the many people who help make our community the wonderful place it is. Who here at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca have you noticed doing something above and beyond, who has been a quiet unsung hero, or who is doing an exceptional job? It can be a member or staff or friend to our community. Send your submissions to [joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org](mailto:joysandsorrows@uuithaca.org).*

-Thank you to Sara Catterall, the head of our Buildings and Grounds team for coordinating the painting of the Parish House. It looks beautiful!

-Thank you to Dick Kurtz for installing an air conditioner in the Parlor, making that room much more comfortable for summer services and for renters!

### **Stay Connected**

Curious about events and happenings at First Unitarian Society of Ithaca? Check out our Facebook page and stay current with what's going on in the community!

[First Unitarian Society of Ithaca Facebook Page](#)

### **Our Mission**

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

## FUSIT Finances

As the church's Treasurer, I have created a mission for myself to improve readers awareness of the church's finances. This will be a long series, but I hope you'll stay with me. I'll try to make this in bite size chunks. I encourage you to write to me with your questions and suggestions because that is how I know I am accomplishing my mission. Email: [sunnybrk@gmail.com](mailto:sunnybrk@gmail.com)

The first point that I want to make is that while finances are necessary for living in the capitalist economy, finances are not our mission and vision. You won't find finances mentioned in the UU Principles and now Values. I'm not sure if that's the reason we don't talk about money at FUSIT. So, I want us to be conscious that money is important to accomplishing our mission but it's just a tool, an important tool, but it's not the end of our work.

The adopted budget for this fiscal year is within a few thousand dollars of one half million (\$492,250). I will be spending time in the coming weeks putting that into perspective both in terms of how we allocate funds and comparison to overarching UUA data.

Our fiscal year does not match our calendar year nor how we think about our own family budgets. The church's fiscal year starts July 1 and ends June 30th. So, we're just starting the 2025-2026 fiscal year. In the future, I'll shorten this to 25-26.

Next topic: FUSIT's Funds

*Don Barber, Treasurer*

## Women's Circle Meets on September 22

Women's Circle usually meets via Zoom on the 4th Monday of the month from 7-8:30 pm. 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: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/82169260621?pwd=ZDKyanRKMmo2czhqSWgrSVhmbGFqdzo9>

Meeting ID: 821 6926 0621. Passcode: 015515



## LGBTQ+ Group Meets Monthly

This Small Group is especially for FUSIT's LGBTQ+ community and meets monthly. **All who identify on the LGBTQ+ continuum are welcome.**

Come enjoy this opportunity for fellowship and community within our larger FUSIT community, in a safe, confidential and nurturing environment. Please reach out to Ely at [eleanorwillard97@gmail.com](mailto:eleanorwillard97@gmail.com) for more information.

LGBTQ+ Awareness Days in September:

- **September 18:** National HIV/AIDS & Aging Awareness Day
- **September 23:** Celebrate Bisexuality Day

## Upcoming Beacon on Aurora

### An evening with Aleksí Campagne

Sunday, October 12, 7:00 pm

(Doors open at 6:30 pm)

Named **Penguin Eggs & Roots Music Canada's New Discovery of the Year**, Montrealer Aleksí Campagne blends his folk songwriting roots with an edgy, multi-layered sound resulting from his unique combination of voice, violin and looping-effect pedals. Aleksí won a 2024 Canadian Folk Music Award for his fully bilingual album, which offers 10 songs in English & the same 10 songs in French. Tickets: <https://fusit.breezechms.com/form/>



### An evening with Hayley Reardon

Sunday, November 16, 7:00

(Doors open at 6:30 pm)

Hayley Reardon is a critically acclaimed folk-pop singer and songwriter, and a storyteller in the truest sense of the word. Her songs serve as postcards from an artist brave enough to take the road less traveled. Reardon dove head first into music at the young age of 15, and has dedicated much of her life to writing, recording and performing music around the world. She has released 4 studio albums, 7 EPs, 1 live album and countless singles-totaling over 85 original songs and millions of streams to date. Reardon has shared the stage with renowned artists including Lori McKenna, Rodney Crowell, Dar Williams, Anaïs Mitchell, Xavier Rudd, John Paul White, Rachel Platten and most recently, Ed Sheeran, who invited Reardon to perform at his Old Phone Pub pop-up in Ipswich, Massachusetts. Tickets: <https://fusit.breezechms.com/form/Hayley-Reardon-11.16>

## 27th AIDS Ride for Life Saturday, September 6, 2025

*The Southern Tier AIDS Program's biggest fundraiser of the year.*

Once again, Rod Howe will be coordinating the Ride for Life's first pit stop. Location will be the same as last year: Genoa Historical Association which is located right on 34B before you get to the four corners in King Ferry (Genoa Historical Association, 920 NY-34B, King Ferry NY).

The theme will focus on kindness and will continue as a FUSIT coordinated pit stop.





## Meet Our New Music Director

Dear UU Ithaca Congregation,  
My name is Laura Ramos, and I'm honored to be joining you as your new Music Coordinator!

I hold a B.M. in Music Education from Syracuse University and an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Teaching from Fitchburg State University. For the past eight years, I've taught music and directed choirs in Massachusetts, while also serving as a soloist for a variety of faith communities. These include Christ Congregational Church in Brockton, St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Duxbury, and Union Chapel on Martha's Vineyard—where I had the privilege of singing for services led by Reverend Senator Raphael Warnock, Reverend Otis Moss, former senior advisor to President Biden Keisha Lance Bottoms, and composer Mark Miller. I've also served at the Martha's Vineyard Baptist Church and as interim choir director and soloist at the UU Society of Martha's Vineyard.

In addition to my work with UU Ithaca, I'll be teaching music and chorus in the Onondaga Central School District. Outside of music, I enjoy hiking, practicing yoga, horseback riding, and spending time with my husband and our dog.

I believe music is a powerful connector. When we lift our voices together, we create a shared space of support, hope, peace, perseverance, and justice. I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to join this vibrant community in service—through the transformative power of music.

In Music, Laura Ramos



## Care Cafe

Welcome back from summer! I'm thrilled to announce that we'll hold our Care Cafe again this year beginning on Sunday, **September 21**. Future dates will be announced. Last year's gatherings created such meaningful connections and provided a warm space of support for everyone who joined.

I'm looking forward to continuing that spirit of community and comfort together. Every other Sunday, we will meet in the library at 12:00 pm until approximately 1:30 pm, after service and after coffee.

I hope you can join us as we reconnect and support one another in the year ahead.

Gratefully,  
Rev. Peaches Gillette

## Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that our church is located on land that is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee People and the Cayuga Nation. Their presence is imbued in these lakes, valleys, gorges, and hills. May we nurture our relationship with our Haudenosaunee neighbors, and our shared responsibilities to this Place of their homelands where we mutually reside.

## Ministry Team Fair

Sunday, **September 28th**, During coffee hour in the Parlor  
Enjoy a cup of coffee and snacks while learning about the many and varying ways you can get involved here at FUSIT. We want to learn about you! What are you passionate about? What brings you joy? What are your gifts and talents? Explore our many teams and ministries and find out how volunteering can deepen your connection to this community.

A complete list of Teams and Committees can be found on the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca website along with a description of the group and the group leader. Group members can be found in Breeze under Tags.

We are extremely grateful for all Team and Committee leaders and members! If you would like to join one of the Teams, email [office@uuithaca.org](mailto:office@uuithaca.org).

## Expanding Community

For many this continues to be a time of 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 Unitarian Universalist faith can offer.

## Care Team

The Care Team provides pastoral care and support for congregants who are going through challenging times. If you or any member or close friend of FUSIT need some assistance, contact Kathy Hopkins at 607-582-3025 or [Care@uuithaca.org](mailto:Care@uuithaca.org).

## Pastoral Care Emergencies

Please contact Rev. Janet Shortall at [pastoralcare@uuithaca.org](mailto:pastoralcare@uuithaca.org) or 607-218-2088.

## Nametags

If you would like a nametag, please fill out the nametag request form at the Welcome Table or contact [membership@uuithaca.org](mailto:membership@uuithaca.org) and we'll make one for you. Then look for your new nametag in the Narthex nametag cabinet (corner of Buffalo and Aurora Sts.)



## Join Buildings and Grounds for our Annual Restoration Day!

Come join us Saturday, **September 27**, from 10-12 to tidy up our outside spaces for the new season! Our beds, trees, paved areas, windows, and gutters all need our attention. We may have a painting job as well if one or two people are interested in that! Any suggestions or questions, contact Sara Catterall at [buildings@uuithaca.org](mailto:buildings@uuithaca.org).

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