

The Chalice

Published by the
Unitarian Church of Sharon
**A Welcoming Congregation
of the Unitarian
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JULY/AUGUST WORSHIP SERVICES
No Worship Service

Summer Sandwich Sundays

7/14 and 8/5 @ 10:30 AM
Regular services resume 9/8

Find information about additional summer services at our sibling congregations in Canton, Franklin, and Boston in this newsletter.



CHURCH NEWS

Art Wall,

Looking forward to showcasing new artists and new art in the fall. Have a creative summer!

Tai Chi

Classes continue at the church on first and third Saturdays, 8 am to 9 am, rain or shine. Bring a few \$ and you and your body. All welcome; bring friends and family!

Meditation Group, weekly on Mondays 7-8 PM

Join Carol Abrams, local meditation teacher, for a simple weekly mindfulness practice in our Vestry. All welcome.

Summer Services at First Parish in Canton, UU

This summer, join us at First Parish in Canton for a series of relaxed, contemplative worship gatherings and theme discussions we're calling Soulful Sunday, based on the Soulful Sundown programs offered at UU congregations across the country (and even the world!)

During each session, we'll have gathering music, a story or reading, a time for shared reflection on the theme, a time to share meaningful poetry, music, or other art, and a sharing of our joys and sorrows.

Soulful Sunday gatherings will take place at 3pm in the Chapel, Address: 1508 Washington St, Canton, MA 02021.

Snacks and beverages will be provided, but feel free to bring additional contributions!

June 30th

July 14th and 28th

August 11th and 25th

You're invited to a summer service at Arlington St. Church in Boston to hear **Rebecca Reid** preach on **August 25th at 11 am**. The address is 351 Boylston St. Her sermon topic is about acts of love and community. A light picnic in the gardens across the street will follow the service. You are welcome to bring something to share, but your presence is most appreciated. If you can't make it in person but would like to attend virtually, the Zoom link can be found at ascboston.org on the main page. She would love to have you there!



Worship Committee News

The Worship Committee is planning a **potluck dinner/retreat** on **August 29th** to plan for the new church year. We welcome new members, and that would be a great time to join us. Current members: Ellen Bordman (Chair), Peter Raskin, Tom D'Avanzo, Dave Slater, Ashley Tsongas, Hema Sarang-Sieminski, and Gary Webber. Please reach out to one of us if you have any questions or suggestions regarding the UCS worship services for the new church year.

CHURCH NEWS, continued

First Universalist Society in Franklin – July Summer Services



First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is pleased to announce our Summer Sunday Worship Series for June 30, 2024 through July, 2024. Please join us each Sunday as we explore the Unitarian Universalist (UU) values of Equity, Transformation, Generosity, Interdependence, Justice, Pluralism and Love. All services start at 10:00 am. Afterwards, we invite you to stay for coffee, cookies and conversation.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation located at 262 Chestnut Street, Franklin MA. For further information about FUSF please explore our website at fusf.org or contact our Interim Minister, the Reverend Beverly Waring at 508- 528- 5348 or minister@fusf.org.

June 30: Equity's Call

The Unitarian Universalist value of Equity declares "...that every person has the right to flourish with inherent dignity and worthiness." Join Marggi, one of FUSF's Lay Leaders, as she explores how this value has been a guiding force behind the eclectic spiritual path that eventually led her to the UU world. Marggi will further explain how she views equity as the cornerstone that allows any type of organization to optimally thrive and for every other UU value to organically unfold.

July 7, 2024: Transformation: Present Moment, Wonderful Moment

FUSF Lay Leaders Ann Willever and Ellen Adduci will explore the Unitarian Universalist value of Transformation through the teachings and practice of Zen Buddhist monk and peace activist, Thich Nhat Hanh. Ann and Ellen are also members of the Path of Peace Sangha that meets at FUSF on Monday evenings. The service will include guided, silent and walking meditation, all of which are part of the Monday evening Sangha gatherings. Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings focus on mindfulness and, together, we will reflect on how this practice has helped us deal with the challenges of everyday life and transform suffering as we discover more joy and compassion. No previous meditation experience is needed.

CHURCH NEWS, continued

July 14: Generosity: The Artist Within

Creativity is an inherent quality in every person. The natural inclination to create and innovate is a fundamental part of human nature. Sue Sheridan, an accomplished artist, and Lay Leader at FUSF, will explore how the visual arts, and painting in particular, can provide a pathway to creativity; and perhaps even lead to a sense of communion with something greater than ourselves. By viewing paintings and describing the creative process involved, Sue will explore how to access the artist within. As one of our UU values states, Generosity connects us to one another in relationships of interdependence and mutuality. By sharing our gifts of creativity with one another, we are cultivating a spirit of gratitude and hope.

July 21: Interdependence: The Web of All Existence

Join us as FUSF Lay Leader, and landscape architect, Steve Derdiarian explores one of the new UU values, Interdependence. He will start with examining the Interdependent Web against the perspective of the scale of time, then how we share relationships with plants and living creatures in our own backyard and finally, how we, as humankind, fit into this amazing tapestry of life. Steve will also touch upon some of the things we each can do to promote biodiversity in our lives, along with the first exciting steps FUSF has taken this spring to promote biodiversity on our property. After service please feel free to walk the grounds which include new native plant gardens, a peace pole and garden and a labyrinth.

July 28: Justice: What We Choose to Center

The UU value of Justice challenges Unitarian Universalists “to work to be diverse multicultural Beloved Communities where all thrive”. What practices can help us cultivate a community in which all belong? Please join Louise Marcoux, a Lay Leader at FUSF, to reflect on what our stories place at the center – and what they marginalize – and explore how we each might become more open to narratives different from our own.

From the Minister



Dear Ones,

Virtual GA has come and gone! I had hoped to include a full report on my Virtual GA experiences for this column, but unfortunately I got Covid, and missed most of it. It was a good reminder that this virus is still very much a thing of the present. Thankfully, my bout of Covid was mostly mild- just some days of fatigue which, sadly, coincided with General Assembly. I plan to catch up with colleagues and view workshops of interest over the summer. Our UCS delegates, Barbara Nelkin-Rose, Gare Reid, and Beth McGregor, participated in GA. They will have some reflections to share in the coming months, in addition to the brief Delegates Report they have submitted for this newsletter.

The biggest news coming out of this GA is that the revisions to Article II of the UUA bylaws, where the Seven Principles have been documented since the 1980s, passed. What difference will this make in our faith movement? Only as much as we make of it! When the Seven Principles were first adopted 40 years ago, no one could have imagined the impact they would have. But two generations of UU's have embraced the Principles, using them in RE curricula and sermons and more, and generally taking them to heart (however hard it was to actually know them by heart). So now we have a new way to understand and describe Unitarian Universalism, and it's up to us to make it our own. I don't plan to abandon the Seven Principles, or the Eighth Principle; after all, holding something as a principle of faith is not entirely a matter of bylaws revision. But I also am excited to work with the new Article II. The values it describes, and the actions it encourages us to take as we strive to live up to those values, are indeed a reflection of my UU faith, and I will be proud to make use of the new Article II.

As far as the summer schedule goes, I wanted to just reiterate a couple of things: my own plans and our Summer Sandwich Sundays. I will be away on vacation and study leave from June 22 through July 13, August 11 through August 18, and August 22 through August 26. Otherwise I will be around. And I hope you join us on **Sunday, June 14 at 10:30 AM** and **Sunday, August 4 at 10:30 AM**. We will gather in the Vestry to make sandwiches for our homeless neighbors at MainSpring House. After we finish with the sandwiches we will circle up for a simple worshipful time together, led by Rev. Jolie. Bring your bagged lunch and stick around after our worship circle so we can enjoy a meal together. All ages welcome. Happy Summer, friends.

Yours in faith,
Rev. Jolie

From the President



Dear UCS members and Friends,

Greetings from your new president! While I know most of you (having been a member for almost 24 years), we've had a healthy influx of new members to the church, so I feel like I should introduce myself.

I have been involved at UCS in a variety of ways over the years including as a volunteer in the Religious Education program (now Faith Development), as an OWL facilitator for three different age groups, in the Social Justice Committee including the original Welcoming Congregation committee that led us towards our current status as a Welcoming Congregation, and for the past three years, as a member of the Board of Trustees. I don't list these things as a demonstration of my credentials, but rather as an illustration of my priorities and interests. As many know, I'm married to our former Director of Religious Education, Louise Marcoux. Not so many know that we were both involved in RE even before coming to UCS, serving on the RE committee and as teachers at two previous UU congregations that we belonged to, before moving "back east", where we both were raised, in the year 2000, You may also know me as the astrophysicist who has occasionally answered space-related questions during the family service.

With regards to the future of UCS, I have a few top priorities that I hope to help facilitate. At the top of the list is the Future of the Sanctuary project that has gotten off to a good start and will be looking at issues of structural soundness, energy efficiency, aesthetics and general usability of the sanctuary. This is a crucial project to ensure the church's long term sustainability. Next on the list is the Name Change Task Force. Some members care deeply about this, while for others it doesn't matter so much. Our name does have an impact on how we're viewed in the community, and changing it would involve some work on our part. I also hope to promote deepening involvement of our newer and younger members (many of whom have dived in remarkably quickly!). I hope that we all can promote a feeling of ownership in new members - moving from what "they" are doing to what "we" are doing. To that end and as part of our commitment to democracy in our congregation and beyond, I hope to continue the board's efforts at transparency. I'd like all members to know who is on the board and what the board is doing. Our meetings are open to all members and the minutes of past meetings are available (look in the weekly news email and the orders of service for more information).

Finally, whether we're looking through the old wavy glass or new energy conserving windows, I hope that we will always continue to look outward to the world and maintain our vision of a more peaceful and just world and our search for ways of achieving that vision.

Jon Slavin

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Food Pantry Harvest!



We planted a crop of about 60 plants on May 5 and harvested 14 oz of lettuce, baby kale and spinach on June 16! These bags were delivered to the Sharon Food Pantry by the Social Justice Comittee (thank you Gare!) on June 18 and were gratefully recieved. What we learned: a) The auto watering system is challenging and we were not able to use it this year. We would have reaped a bigger harvest if we had volunteer waterers to come 3 x week. b) Liquid fertilizer should be part of the watering routine as nutrients are used up quickly in those relatively small pots and they get washed right through containers via drainage. c) In the future, we will package lettuce mix in market sized bags ready to go to individual families. We did not fill all of the stackable planters, we could fill them all next time! d) We could start from seed in early March - this would save money and provide more hands on learning.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT, continued

Education for Sustainability at the Unitarian Church of Sharon

When asked if they wanted to make this food pantry gardening part of the regular curriculum at church, the children gave a resounding “Yes!!” As such, Christine is changing up her usual professional development plans and going outside of UU professional development circles to pursue learning targeted at expanding on this project. Education for sustainability (EFS) supports more sustainable patterns of living and takes into consideration the interdependence of environmental, social, and economic systems. It links knowledge, inquiry and action to make positive change. Gardening is a way to teach sustainability. Gardening for food justice brings us into the realm of education of sustainability. The Religious Education and Social Justice Committees and I believe this is a great fit for the religious education program here at UCS.

This summer Christine will attend a week long EFS program at Shelburne Farms in Shelburne, Vt. that will give her the opportunity to sink deeper into this type of learning and to tailor it to the needs of our specific program and curricula. Christine is excited to return to subject matter from her master’s degree and bring this back to UCS.

P.S. Christine primarily works remotely during the summer. The best way to reach her is via email at dre@uusharon.org or cell phone (781) 291-9162

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



The Social Justice Committee encourages you to visit the UCS website (uusharon.org) for information about the social justice programs at church. The Social Justice pages are a great source for information about opportunities to engage, resources, and links to partner organizations and groups that we collaborate with in our work.



Brown Envelope Collections

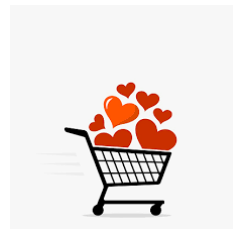
The May BE collection raised \$940 to be split between two important recipients: the **Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network – BI-JAN** (beyondbondboston.org), and **Green Roots** (greenrootsej.org). We rounded up these donations to \$500 for each organization.

The June BE collection will support **Pink Haven** (pinkhaven.org), a collective of organizations and individuals who are committed to trans liberation and joy and to growing community defenses, mutual-aid, and alternative systems of care for gender diverse people. We are deeply grateful to First Parish Malden, Universalist for serving as the fiscal sponsor for this life saving work. (Pink Haven and the Trans Resistance Network were just recognized with the President's Award for Volunteer Service at the UUA General Assembly.)

Summer BE donations (online, and during our Summer Sandwich Sunday gatherings) will support our ongoing monthly commitment to provide brown bag lunches to the shelter at MainSpring House in Brockton.

Summer Sandwich Sundays: MainSpring House lunch making on **July 14 & August 5 @ 10:30 AM**

Join us in the vestry to make sandwiches for Father Bills and MainSpring House. We will then circle up for a simple worshipful time led by Rev. Jolie, and we'll all enjoy a bring-your-own bagged lunch together after. Hope to see you there!



Want to help make the Brown Bag lunch program work? You too can help to make the MSH lunch program a success whenever you shop for your own groceries. We fundraise to purchase supplies for this effort with our **Shopping for Justice** program (S4J), where we ask you to purchase grocery cards from local chain stores for your personal shopping needs. We buy the cards in bulk, and get a 5% discount, which funds the lunch program (your grocery purchases are one-to-one, dollar for dollar, since the 5% donation comes from the stores). Stop by the Social Justice Table in the

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued

Pride 2024



Boston Pride kicks off with a celebration at Arlington Street Church



UCS celebrates Pride!



Crowds, color and style take to the streets!



Our traditional Human Rainbow for Pride!



And Sailing Swords, oh my!

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued



Wondering WHY the Black Lives Matter Banner was taken down from between the front pillars of our building? The Social Justice Committee Explains.

The next time you come to UCS, you may notice that the large BLM Banner that has been displayed between the pillars for the last 3+ years has been taken down AND a new and larger BLM placard has been mounted on top of our Wayside Pulpit, replacing the smaller BLM placard below the Wayside Pulpit. Members of the Social Justice Committee thought it was important to inform the congregation why this change has occurred.

HISTORY AROUND THE BLACK LIVES MATTER SIGNAGE:

2015: At the 2015 General Assembly of the UUA, in response to an Action of Immediate Witness, a motion was passed in which the UUA committed to supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and encouraged individual UU congregations to do the same, urging them to display a BLM sign on their own congregational site. See the statement here: <https://www.uua.org/action/statements/support-black-lives-matter-movement>

2016: The then UCS Board of Trustees discussed the question of signage in relation to Black Lives Matter. They voted to place a sign below the Wayside Pulpit (on the corner of our property) which reads "Black Lives Matter" and voted to leave the sign in place "indefinitely". In addition, the Board also approved the placing of the large banner reading Black Lives Matter at the front of the church over the Martin Luther King weekend, to remain in place one week.

2020: In response to the racist police killing of George Floyd, in May of 2020, along with other numerous instances of police killing unarmed Black people, the Social Justice Committee felt strongly that a large BLM banner should be displayed between the pillars and remain there throughout the year. In our appeal to the Board, Gare Reid shared: *The intention of the Social Justice Committee in bringing this request to the Board of Trustees has been to maintain the visual presence of the Unitarian Church of Sharon at the forefront of the cultural storm around racism that has consumed the nation in recent months... The new banner will function, in a bolder, more visible manner, as both an inwardly directed challenge to the UCS to continue this vital work [around racism], as well as a message to the world that this is a cause that cannot be ignored or minimized.* The Board approved the display of the BLM Banner between the pillars and agreed that it could remain up for a year. Once approved, the Social Justice Committee led a Dedication/Commitment Ceremony in October of 2020, addressing the need for the BLM banner and expressing our commitment to the work we were called to do against racism and oppression.

Fall of 2021 & 2022: The Board approved the continued display of the BLM banner between the pillars and the SJC facilitated a Re-Commitment Ceremony during October of both 2021 and 2022, acknowledging that our work against racism and oppressions requires ongoing action.

Fall, 2023: The SJC again requested that the Board approve the continued display of the BLM banner between the pillars for another year and made plans to lead the annual Re-Commitment Ceremony. The Board initially approved this request. However, some congregants voiced an objection to the continued display of the Black Lives Matter banner, concerned that the BLM movement was too controversial and political, and that it even supported the Hamas terrorists and their invasion of Israel. While the Social Justice Committee understood these concerns, the majority of its members still wished to move forward with their plans, noting that it is the statement itself: "BLACK LIVES MATTER" that is important and that we do NOT deem it to be a political statement, nor do we intend it to be such. Rather, it is a statement of humanity in line with our UU values. However, in light of the controversy, we understood and supported the need for the Board to carefully consider the matter and their desire to develop a clear policy around signage. The Board finalized their new policy and shared it with the SJC in May of 2024, and in light of the new guidelines, which no longer permitted long-term displays of signage between the pillars, the members of the SJC then voted and submitted the following request, which was granted:

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued



Some assembly required

We asked that once the current Black Lives Matter displayed between the pillars was taken down, a large BLM placard be posted on a new and improved Wayside Pulpit in a more prominent location than the current sign already there.

The majority of the SJC members felt it was important to keep the BLM language and be sure that our message of support was prominent.

MOVING FORWARD



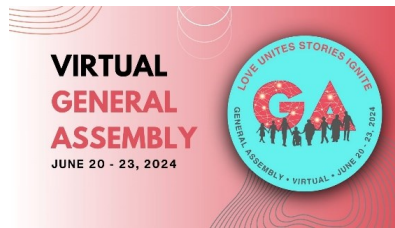
Our new message to the world, and ourselves!

All the parties involved in this process, including the Social Justice Committee, the Board of Trustees, and Reverend Jolie, understand that this is an important and sensitive issue warranting space for deep and honest congregational discussion. It is our intention to ensure that opportunities for such discussion(s) will be provided this coming Fall. Should you wish to be in touch with the Social Justice Committee to share your own thoughts/concerns before then, please feel free to reach out to Gare Reid, Barbara Nelkin-Rose, or any of the other members of the SJC.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

General Assembly 2024: June 20 - June 23 (Thursday-Sunday) Virtual Only

This year's theme: LOVE UNITES, STORIES IGNITE.



A Quick Initial Report on General Assembly, as experienced by a delegate.

I was one of Sharon's three lay delegates to this year's UUA General Assembly, along with Gare Reid and Barbara Nelkin-Rose, and Rev. Jolie as our ministerial delegate. We were among over 2400 delegates from all over the country, meeting online for four days of deliberation, celebration, learning and worship.

The big news from this GA is the final vote on revisions to Article II of the UUA Bylaws, including the Purposes and Principles of the UUA, which were adopted by an 80% majority of the delegates, after a multi-year process of congregational engagement and discussion. You'll see and hear more about this later, as the words and the flower graphic with love at its center become an integral part of our identity. Three proposed amendments, adding Peace and Reason as core UU values and expanding the section on Equity, were not adopted, after very thoughtful and heartfelt arguments on both sides by delegates.

There were multiple other issues and actions as well, including a business resolution entitled "Embracing Transgender, Nonbinary, and Intersex People is a Fundamental Expression of Unitarian Universalist Religious Values." While this passed by a 92% margin, the debate on it, as well as on an Action of Immediate Witness on Solidarity with the People of Palestine, was emotionally charged for many people.

So much goes into a General Assembly and the governance of our Association! Unlike last year, I didn't have time to take part in the discussion groups and Mini-Assemblies that shaped and refined what finally came up to the full delegate body. But I know that everything that did come up was well thought out on all sides. After listening to it all, I sometimes found myself in a quandary over how to vote, and a few times ended up abstaining or voting with the minority. There were times when I chafed at procedures and messages I found tedious and repetitive, but I guess trying one's patience may be one of the prices of both democracy and religious community. It's hard to balance the need for open, honest, effective debate with the religious mandate to hold community together and care for the marginalized and vulnerable, but the leadership did its best to do that. It's also hard to engage with others solely online, in videos and typed chat messages. While online meetings offer the advantage of increased economic and physical accessibility for attendees, there's much richness in face-to-face human interaction, in sharing experiences, casual conversations and meals with friends and strangers. So I'm very glad that next June's GA will be hybrid, in person in Baltimore as well as online, and I hope our congregation will have multiple attendees in both modes.

Some of the many GA programs and workshops will be available to us as recordings here in the fall, and those of us who were a part of this GA will also have a chance to share more. Even now you can experience a few things, including the beautiful Sunday worship service that some of us watched together at church and some of you may have watched at home on Sunday the 23rd. You can find this and other elements of GA, along with more detailed reports on the Assembly's actions, on the UUA website. One of the lessons I carried away from that service, built on the theme of being both a weaver and an inextricable part of an interdependent web, was a lesson the preacher learned as a child from her grandmother, that 'before you learn to weave, you need to learn how to mend.' And we know we have a lot of mending to do in this fragile and torn world.