



# The UNSF Beacon

The Weekly Newsletter of  
The Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence

## Board Report on Social Justice Activities

### February 7, 2022

Vol. 3, Issue 2.2

Visit us on the web at [www.uunorthampton.org](http://www.uunorthampton.org)

### *In This Issue:*

- Board Updates on climate and social justice activities
- UU the Vote Kickoff Party!
- Adult Education Offerings: Widening the Circle 2 Ways

## Board Report

The Board of Trustees met via Zoom on MLK Day, a fitting occasion to consider the social justice work of our congregation. We heard updates from four USNF committees, each with a small group of members actively engaged in the pressing work of fostering equal rights and opportunities. All four are also reaching out to USNF members and friends to join in, there are many ways to help!



We first heard about the *Climate Action Group* (CAG) from Bill Diamond. CAG follows the effects of greenhouse emissions on climate change, its impact on low-income communities, and all human interactions. Because CAG is well connected with other initiatives, it shares impactful local, state, and national climate justice activities with us, sharing key actions our congregation can take to help in critical information campaigns and political decision-making. For example, at the January 9th USNF service, Bill offered up the website link for Massachusetts legislators to gain their support for The Green Future Act, linked here: [greenfuturenowma](https://www.greenfuturenowma.org). CAG was delighted with the number of congregants who accessed the website and took action.

Next, Maryanne Bernini Caughlin presented updates from the *Racial Justice Team* (RJT). During the Winter/Spring 2021, RJT facilitated book talks and discussion groups exploring racial equity that were well-attended. Look for their upcoming book talks for *My Grandmothers Hands* and *Defund Fear*.

The *Widening the Circle of Concern* committee has hosted Listening Circles and Discussion Groups to discuss cultural and institutional changes needed to help dismantle structural and systemic racism within our denomination. A Listening Circle specifically for Young Adults (ages 18-35) in our congregation met in

January. And everyone is invited to the next Widening the Circle of Concern Discussion Group in February. (Details of which can be found below in the Adult Education section.)

Lastly, Susie McCrae shared the work of *USNF the Vote* - to create opportunities for political action protecting voting rights and preserving democracy for all. Their work organizing postcard writing and phone banking events before the November 2020 election helped to increase voter turnout while fighting voter suppression.

Members of the USNF the Vote committee recognize that they could be doing voting rights work elsewhere. However, their plans are to continue to do the work through USNF because it is an issue of faith. By doing this work together they strengthened bonds within the congregation and connected with other UUs. Please join the February 11<sup>th</sup> USNF the Vote Zoom Meeting to learn about current voting rights activities as the 2022 mid-term election cycle begins. (For more info, see separate article below.)

In other news the Forbes Library sent USNF a note thanking us for donating our historical documents to their collection. Also, Ed Olmstead researched the condition of the Charles Burleigh painting, we were pleased to learn it is in fairly good condition, and can be reconditioned for a reasonable cost. More information about this will be coming shortly.

The Board of Trustees congratulates Jessica Harwood, our Director of Faith Development and Community Engagement, and her wife on Maggie Shar on the birth of their beautiful baby girl, Gili Rose Sharwood. (See separate announcement sent Jan 27.)

Laura J. Porter, Clerk for the Board of

Trustees



Charles Burleigh, abolitionist, author, and a First Speaker at the Florence Free Congregational Society. His portrait has hung in the USNF parlor for decades

## USNF the Vote Kickoff Party

Join us on **Friday, February, 11th, 5:30 - 6:15 PM** for inspiration, music, community building, and BYO party snacks.



You'll also hear ideas about how we will make a difference in the 2022 elections and have a chance to share your own thoughts. All are welcome! Via Zoom.

Here is the [Party Kickoff Link](#).

## Adult Education Widening the Circle has double options in February!

In addition to USNF's year-long engagement with *Widening the Circle of Connection*, the UUA report focused on the institutional changes to adopt in dismantling white supremacy, USNF's theme for February is also *Widening the Circle*. This means there are 2 group sessions, one-day apart, with different, but complimentary, approaches. All are welcome to both/either - Welcome, Rejoice and Come In!

*He drew a circle that shut me out-  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle and took him In!*

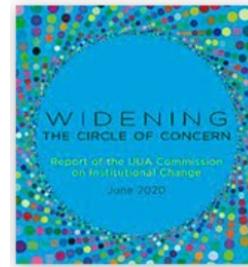
Edwin Markham



**February Spiritual Discussion Group  
"Widening the Circle"  
Wednesday, Feb. 16th, 10-11:15 am.**

Find out more here  
[Spiritual Discussion Group Schedule](#).

<https://zoom.us/j/98681411085>



**February Widening the Circle  
Discussion: Hospitality & Inclusion  
Thursday, February 17th: 7-8:30 pm**

We will explore the chapter on  
Hospitality and Inclusion

<https://zoom.us/j/91395063898>.

**For more information, email [dre@uunorthampton.org](mailto:dre@uunorthampton.org).  
Learn more on our website: [USNF Adult Education Offerings](#)**

## Weekly Offerings

### Adults

Thursdays, 5:30-6 pm - Meditation Circle on ZOOM  
Readings, Silence, Lovingkindness Meditation and Singing For Zoom link email Janet at  
[minister@uunorthampton.org](mailto:minister@uunorthampton.org)

## Sundays

Family Gathering: Early Childhood & Primary RE - 9:30-10 am

Elementary & Middle School RE - 10-11 am

Youth Group - 2-4 pm

## Beacon Schedule

*The USNF Beacon* is published on Tuesdays with featured articles appearing each week. Pictures/Illustrations are strongly encouraged!

The monthly schedule is:

Week 1 - Minister's Notes

Week 2 - Board Report

Week 3 - Committee Reports and Articles

Week 4 - Religious Education and Faith Development

Week 5 - Editor's choice for months with 5 Tuesdays

Articles/photos are due the Friday before the week they are to be published.

Articles should be 250 words max. For longer articles, please contact the [editor](#).

Send Submissions, **with the word Beacon in the subject line** to:

[newsletter@uunorthampton.org](mailto:newsletter@uunorthampton.org)

Contact  
Us



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Office Hours: Mon., Tues., and Thurs., 9 AM - 4 PM, Please call before coming.  
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