

# THE PIONEER

Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence 2020 Volume 50 No. 5

## WORSHIP for JANUARY

All Services at 10 am

### January 5: Whose Authority?

The Reverend Janet Bush

*In whose or what authority do you place your trust? Where does your own authority come from, and where in your life do you exercise it? If this is a topic that makes you squirm, why? An exploration.*

### January 12: The Spiritual Practice of Disobedience

Alex Kapitan

*People of faith and conscience are often called to disobey and resist all that stands in the way of peace, of life, of love. But the popular understanding of "civil disobedience" is not the beginning and end of disobedience. Sometimes it is far easier to disobey legal laws than social laws. How does your disobedience show up at the dinner table, the board room, the parent teacher meeting, or social hour? Perhaps you'll make a resolution to practice disobedience in new ways.*

Zr. Alex Kapitan is a lay community minister, educator, editor, consultant, activist, and trans and queer lifelong Unitarian Universalist.

### January 19: Heroes and Heroines

Coming of Age Class Members

*We will observe the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday with a service honoring people who inspire us. Members of our Coming of Age Class will share their reflections about someone important to them.*

### January 26: The Sacred No, Yes, and Maybe

The Nominating Committee

*The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee explores the sacred process of discerning one's service and leadership path within our communities. We explore the power of 'no', the exhilaration of 'yes', and the possibilities of 'maybe'.*



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#### Events & Activities

- ♦ Jan 5, Zen Book Grp, 7 PM - Parlor
- ♦ Jan 8, Spiritual Writing Workshop, 6:30 PM - Parlor
- ♦ Jan 12, Narcan Trng, 11:30 AM - Burleigh Rm
- ♦ Jan 19, Newcomer Breakfast, 9 AM - Social Rm
- ♦ Jan 19, Racial Justice Circle, 12:30 PM - Parlor
- ♦ Jan 22, Spiritual Practice, 6:30 PM - Parlor
- ♦ Jan 24, YG Fundraiser and Climate Action Unveiling, 6 PM - SR
- ♦ Jan 26, Young Adult Grp Skill Share, 11:30 AM - SR/kitchen
- ♦ Jan 31, Racial Justice Movie Night, 7 PM - Social Rm

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# NOTES FROM THE MINISTER

**SONG (3)** by Wendell Berry (1982)

I stood and heard the steps of the city  
and dreamed a lighter stepping than I heard,  
the tread of my people dancing in a ring.  
I knew that circle broken, the steps awry,  
stone and iron humming in the air.

But I thought even there, among the straying  
steps, of the dance that circles life around,  
its shadow moving on the ground, in rhyme  
of flesh with flesh, time with time, our bliss,  
the earthly song that heavenly is.



Wendell Berry is a poet and novelist who has chronicled, celebrated, and championed the natural world and rural life for most of his eighty-five years. This “Song,” with its circle dance, feels to me like a poem for the new year. Once more we complete the round, once more we return to the top. Some of the dancers have left the ring; others have joined.

The city, where the circle is broken and the steps are awry, calls to mind human inventions and interventions of all kinds. One of those inventions is the calendar. Civilization has long imposed the artificiality of its human calendars on the natural calendar of planetary cycles. But at this time of year we do experience an alignment of the two. The New Year begins just a few days past the winter solstice, a pivotal day in the calendar of the planet, a turning towards renewal.

Humankind has sullied the natural world with our inventions and interventions, with “stone and iron humming in the air.” Not to mention silicon and plastic, and excessive amounts of carbon dioxide. And yet we are, still, part of the dance of life on earth, still encircled by it, its rhythm and rhyme, its music, its poetry, all that makes it heavenly and sublime.

Last year at this time I reported that I had started a gratitude practice. There is scant record of how well I maintained it, if at all. Nevertheless – I am grateful. Quite possibly increasingly grateful with each step of the dance, and each return to the circle’s top. Grateful for family and friends, grateful for the work we have been given to do together and for the gifts that make it possible for us to do it. I am grateful for the earthly song that heavenly is, and grateful for all of you.

May the circle we walk together in the year ahead bring hope, renewal, and joy.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janet".

**TO CONTACT THE MINISTER:** Please email or call for an appointment Mondays, Tuesdays, or Thursdays. [revjanetbush@gmail.com](mailto:revjanetbush@gmail.com); 584-1390 x202 (office); 727-8497 (home – before 9 pm for non-emergencies)

# REPORTS & ARTICLES

## Report From the Board of Trustees

*Make a Joyful Noise - Creating a Musical Landscape*

At this month's meeting, the Board heard a brief report from Jon Sass about planning for the upcoming stewardship campaign. Most of the meeting was then focused on our music program. The Music Visioning Team reported on their efforts to envision our music program going forward. In September, they were asked to address the following main questions:

- What role does music play in people's lives in and outside the congregation,
- What is most appreciated or missing in our music program,
- How might music be used to help move us towards greater multi-cultural understanding,
- How might it help us be more welcoming of people with different backgrounds, and
- What qualities do we need in our next music director?

The team collected thoughts and ideas from the congregation through an online survey and several listening circles. The team was very pleased with the level of response from the congregation: nearly 120 people responded to the survey and about 60 people participated in the listening circles. The answers were passionate, thoughtful, some practical, some to ponder on, all a joy to hear or read and, in the circles, to witness the enthusiasm with which they were shared and become platforms for additional responses and ideas. It was obvious that music is considered to be a very important part of life at USNF.

A few of the important points from the report:

- While there is much appreciation for what is already happening at USNF, there is a strong call for more variety in our music program.
- There is a desire to foster more participation of members of the congregation, including our youth, in the music programming.
- Possibly establish a Music Council that might help to enhance and extend our music program.
- Change should happen incrementally.

There are many ideas for our music program throughout the report, which will soon be posted to the member section of our website.

The Board greatly appreciates the fine work of the visioning team: Cat Batson, Laurel Foster-Moore, Ginny Fuhringer, David Junno, and Ed Olmstead. And, many thanks go to Craig Dreeszen for setting up and compiling the survey results.

Next steps for the Board are to develop a meaningful job description and assemble a search committee, with the goal of finalizing our choice for a new Music Director in May. That person will assume the job next fall.

—Submitted by Dave Nelson for the Board

# REPORTS & ARTICLES

## Will You Step Up to Leadership?

This is the last in the series of articles about the positions that the Nominating & Leadership Development Committee will be seeking to fill this spring for the 2020-2021 year. Below are some reflections by members who previously served in two other positions for which we will be seeking candidates. If you would like more information about any of the positions or about the committee, please contact Nominating Committee member Sheri Hall-Smith at [hallshs@aol.com](mailto:hallshs@aol.com).

Here are Joan O'Brien's thoughts about serving on the Board of Trustees:

*It's a privilege to serve on the Board. I am part of a team of great people that is trying to do its best work in overseeing USNF, a place that means the world to me. It has also been an excellent way for me to learn about the congregation and its inner workings, or at least those we discuss. I need to show up to meetings on time and prepared, having read whatever documents Kathie Bredin has sent out for us to discuss, and I need to be willing to ask questions and offer my thoughts on the business at hand. In many ways the meetings are like any other Society meetings: opening and closing words, chalice lighting, checking in, and then down to the agenda, which might have quick items that require a vote, or recurring topics that we re-visit. I find it to be an incredibly respectful group - members are conscientious and focused; however, we also enjoy one another and laugh regularly. Being on the Board can also mean some additional duties/responsibilities. As a Board member, I make an extra effort to show up for more -- not all -- events, though no one mandates this. It's not everyone's cup of tea, and not every moment is riveting, but I find it to be both engaging and educational.*

And here are Naomi Klayman's thoughts about serving as Co-Moderator of the Coordinating Council:

*The Coordinating Council is comprised of committee chairs, program leaders, and anyone with an interest in the 'big picture' of USNF. The initial goal in forming the CC was to facilitate communication and cooperation among committees, and this remains a key role. Over the past two years, the CC has further evolved to become the information and action hub for social justice and community engagement activities at USNF.*

*To this end, Jessica Harwood, our Director of Community Engagement and Religious Education is an active member. She supports the Co-Moderators with agenda planning and meeting facilitation. These three typically connect by phone, email, or in person about a week before the CC meetings, which occur on the first Monday of the month from 7-9 pm throughout the church year. The Co-Moderators also serve on the Leadership Team, which includes the President, Vice-President, Past-President, and Clerk of the Board of Trustees. This group meets with the Minister semi-regularly, every two-three months as needed.*

*This position is great for anyone wanting to be made aware of the broad range of USNF committees, programs, and activities. It requires group facilitation skills, including keeping folks on track and on time, and designing agenda items that are engaging and informative. It is a wonderful way to feel connected and informed at USNF!*

— Submitted by the Nominating & Leadership Development Committee

# REPORTS & ARTICLES

## LEARNING, GROWING, AND SHARING OPPORTUNITIES IN JANUARY

### *From the Racial Justice Team*

**Raising White Kids Book Group. January 5, 11:30 AM - 1 PM: Chapters 1-4; February 2, 11:30 AM - 1 PM: Chapters 5-End.** *Raising White Kids* by Jen Harvey provides critical information about how to talk about race and racism with kids. While we realize that not all kids in our education program are white, we strongly believe in the importance of teaching white kids to be anti-racist and the book is helpful for parents, caregivers, grandparents, teachers and anyone who works with kids. RSVP to [dre@uunorthampton.org](mailto:dre@uunorthampton.org).

**Building the World We Dream About - Listening Circle Examining Race and Racism. January 19, 12:30-3:00 PM in the Parlor.** UUs have been working on becoming an antiracist/multicultural faith community for decades, and experience shows that the work is ongoing and is most effective when it begins with ourselves—as individuals, congregations, and members of diverse communities. “Building the World We Dream About” is an adult program designed to help Unitarian Universalists and their congregations open themselves to learning about cultural identity and inclusion, with a goal of self-transformation and building community with people of diverse ethnicities, races, and cultures. The curriculum has been field-tested in more than thirty congregations all over the United States.

We will offer one or two sections of this program, beginning in January, approximately once a month. Sessions will be facilitated by members of our anti-racism team, and timing and scheduling of the future sessions will depend on participant commitment. Please join us for the kickoff meeting on January 19. FMI contact Jessica Harwood, Rev. Janet Bush, or a member of the team: Sheri Hall-Smith, Jane Simonds, Nancy Sardeson, Chris Mohn, Corky Klimczak, Marianne Caughlin, or Joanna Brown. RSVP to Jessica at [dre@uunorthampton.org](mailto:dre@uunorthampton.org).

**“Black MTV at USNF” Join us on Friday, January 31** at 7 PM in the Social Room for an evening of music videos by African American singers and rappers, along with clips from commentators and cultural sources. Booker Bush will select the videos and help lead the conversation. (**NOTE:** Some of the videos include strong language and may evoke strong responses. Please let us know if you would like childcare ([dre@uunorthampton.org](mailto:dre@uunorthampton.org)). Popcorn will be served!)

**Grades 4-8 Racial Justice Curriculum.** During the months of January and February, 4th through 8th graders will be examining their own identities and biases with regard to race. They will learn about the history of race in the United States and the various ways that racism manifest today. Goals of this program are to help the students learn to listen, empathize, and be aware in new ways.

# REPORTS & ARTICLES

## **NEWCOMER BREAKFAST — Sunday, January 19, 9 AM Social Room**

ALL ARE WELCOME TO THE NEWCOMER BREAKFAST!

Newcomers (those who started attending for less than about year or so) are especially welcome. It is a nice way to meet people. Everyone is invited to say hello. We will have a wonderful assortment of breakfast foods: homemade granola, freshly baked muffins, fresh fruit, pastries, and more. Of course, bring your children. The Newcomer Breakfast has been a great success in the past and we expect it to be just as wonderful this year!

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## **Adult Education Offerings for January**

**Raising White Kids - January 5, 11:30 am-1 pm.** Book group with lunch and childcare provided. (See page 5 for details.)

**Spiritual Writing Workshop - January 8, 6:30-8 pm**

**Opioid Overdose Education - January 12, 11:30 am-12:30 pm.** Come learn and discuss how the opioid overdose crisis is impacting the region. Gain a basic understanding of the physiology of addiction, how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose, and how our community is responding and how you can get involved. Attendees can leave with Narcan, a drug that reverses an opioid overdose, if they choose.

**Building the World We Dream About: Adult Racial Justice Learning Circle - January 19, 12:30-3 pm.** (See page 5 for details.)

**Spiritual Practice Exploration:** Each month, we are offering an opportunity to learn about and try out a different contemplative or spiritual practice.

**Lectio Divina - January 22, 6:30-8 pm.** Contemplative reading and other spiritual practices to try at home. A participatory experience of the ancient practice of *Lectio Divina*, and a few other simple practices using chant or poetry.

Next up: Zentangle 2/26, Zen Meditation 3/25, Reiki 4/29.

**Young Adult Skill Share - January 26, 11:30 am**

**Racial Justice Movie Night: Music Videos - January 31, 7-8:30 pm.** (See page 5 for details.)

# REPORTS & ARTICLES

## Young Adult Group

Young Adults have been combining forces with Youth Group to cook and serve at the local Interfaith Shelter. Everyone has enjoyed getting to know each other and in ways that help serve our community. Shelter cooking and serving will continue on the 2nd Sundays through April.

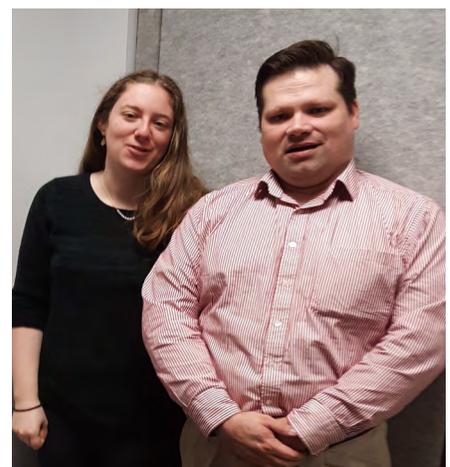
We are looking forward to our next Young Adult Group Skill Share on January 26, after the service. Details to come about what skill will be shared! Stay tuned to the *Sunday Times* for more info. If you are between the ages of 18 and 40 and want to be kept informed, please contact Annie: [youth-fulUSNF@gmail.com](mailto:youth-fulUSNF@gmail.com).



**Top left:** Members and friends gather for food and conversation at the potluck dinner that followed the December 7 afternoon service.

**Top right:** UU Youthers and alums Colin, Alice, Mattie, and Laurentina display their latest creation.

**Right:** Robert Barron and Amanda Van Lankvelt joined the congregation at the Newcomers Breakfast in October.



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## Education Program Updates

### Early Childhood

This past month the RE Preschool has been ready to explore the 4th Principle: Search for What is True. Next month, we will be exploring Principle #5: All People Need A Voice. We will be reading a short board book for toddlers, A is for Activism. We will also be experimenting with our voices through song during our circles, and reading a book about Martin Luther King, for our preschool-aged children.

### K-3rd Grade & 4-8th Grade

December has been busy with projects to contribute to our congregational community, giving the students a chance to practice kindness, compassion, and giving. We started the month with cookie and card making. The kids set up for the potluck on December 7 and contributed the holiday cookies for dessert. Their homemade holiday cookies were also included in care packages to college students in the congregation -- our friends at Smith and Mt. Holyoke, as well as past youth groupers who are spread around the US. The RE students then made pom poms for the multigenerational service on December 22. The students that play instruments chose to work on a song together to share at that service: Jingle Bells.

### Coming of Age

During the month of December, the Coming of Age students met their mentors, got to know each other, explored their values, and did some community service together. We are so grateful to the wonderful mentors this year: Craig Dreeszen, Dan Felten, Sheri Hall-Smith, Juli Kinsman, David Mix Barrington, Betsy Potter and Jon Sass. The Coming of Agers will be helping with the multigenerational service on January 19.

### Youth Group

We had a very sweet Youth Group Reunion to start off the month that included generations that could have spanned from great grandparents to great grandchildren. Colin and Laurentina, who bridged out last year and are very missed, joined us to eat soup and sundaes and play games! Fun was had by all!

Tickets are ready for purchase for the January 24 Fundraiser and Climate Action Unveiling! This is an extra special Youth Group event. Please come! Email [youthfulUSNF@gmail.com](mailto:youthfulUSNF@gmail.com) to reserve your tickets. Sliding Scale \$10-25, kids under 12 are free.

### Parent and Caregiver Group: Raising White Kids

Parents, caregivers, and anyone else who is interested is invited to participate in a book group with *Raising White Kids* by Jen Harvey. (January 5, 11:30 am-1 pm. Chapters 1-4; February 2, 11:30 am-1 pm. Chapter 5-End.) This book provides a framework and tips for educating white children who are anti-racist. Kate Kruckemeyer will facilitate the group. Childcare will be provided. Lunch available for all. Books available at a 20% discount. Please RSVP to [dre@uunorthampton.org](mailto:dre@uunorthampton.org).

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## O.W.L.'s Nest:

### K-1 Our Whole Lives — March—May

*By Jessica Harwood*



When I first heard about the K-1 Our Whole Lives Sexuality class, I was surprised that sexuality education would start so early. Now that I am familiar with the curriculum, it makes perfect sense. The K-1 OWL class is a wonderful opportunity for young children to learn about who they are; build self esteem; understand relationships; develop interpersonal skills, including problem-solving and decision-making; and become responsible for their health and safety.

The students learn about their bodies and the names for different body parts, as well as how to keep themselves safe and what to do if someone does something that they are not comfortable with. Next, they learn about different family structures, babies, and celebrations. Each class has age-appropriate stories and activities.

As with all children and youth OWL classes, one of the guiding values is that parents are the primary sexuality educators. The curriculum offers weekly opportunities and guidance for parents and caregivers to talk about the topics in the class at home.

We will be field testing the latest version of the K-1 OWL class this spring. It will be offered on Sundays from 10:20-11:20 am from March through May. Families outside of the congregation are welcome to participate. Email [dre@uunorthampton.org](mailto:dre@uunorthampton.org) to sign up.



*At the December 1 Youth Group Service, members of the Youth Group who traveled to Transylvania last summer demonstrate steps to a traditional Hungarian dance.*

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## January Calendar

### January 5

- Early Childhood: 10-11:15 am
- Elementary: 10:20-11:20 am
- Junior Youth: 10-11:20 am Multiple Truths
- Parent & Caregiver Group: 11:30 am-1 pm. Childcare and lunch provided.
- Youth Group: 4-6 pm



### January 11

- Grades 10-12 Our Whole Lives: 10-3 pm
- Bingo Night! Bring a potluck dish to share and bingo prizes (a chance to clean house!): 6-8 pm.

### January 12

- Early Childhood: 10-11:15 am
- Elementary: 10:20-11:20 am
- Junior Youth: 10-11:20 am
- Narcan Training: 11:30-12:30. Open to all.
- Coming of Age: 12:-1:30. Service preparation.
- Youth Group: 4:00-6:00

### January 19: Multigenerational Service

- Newcomer Breakfast 9 am
- Early Childhood: 10-11:15 am
- Elementary & Junior Youth: Participate in the service.
- Coming of Age: Help to lead the service.
- Building the World We Dream About - Adult Racial Justice Learning Circle: 12:30-3 pm.
- Youth Group: 4-6 pm

**January 24, 6 pm: Youth Group Fundraising Dinner - Learn about and support their climate action project!** Spaghetti dinner with gluten free and vegan friendly options.

### January 26

- Early Childhood: 10-11:15 am
- Elementary: 10:20-11:20 am
- Junior Youth: 10-11:20 am
- Young Adult Skill Share: 11:30 am
- Youth Group: 4- 6 pm

# REMINDERS

## Support the Interfaith Help Fund

The Interfaith Help Fund provides one-time emergency help to residents of Hampshire County who need help with heat and utilities, housing issues, medical needs, and food vouchers. The need is even greater this year. Please contribute what you can to the Help Fund. Checks can be made out to Interfaith Help Fund and dropped off in the plate or mailed to the Society.



## Volunteers Wanted? Volunteers Available?

Check out the USNF's Volunteering web page!  
<http://uunorthampton.org/community-life/volunteering>



If you are looking to get engaged, this site is for you! We will be posting short-term, or "seasonal" volunteering opportunities, as well as the ongoing projects currently listed. Check back in to the web page for updates, or visit our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/UnitarianSociety/>

## Making a Flower Dedication

If you have someone special that you would like to honor with flowers at a Sunday service, the first step is to pick an available date on the signup sheet located in the Parlor or online using this link: [Flower Sign-Up](#). Fill in your information and decide whether you would like to bring the flowers yourself or make a monetary donation to the flower fund. That's all there is to it. The flowers can either remain here or go home with you.

## Purchase Grocery Store Gift Cards to Support the Society

The Society purchases gift cards from Big Y, Stop & Shop, and River Valley Market at a discounted rate through each stores' charity program. The cards are sold at the Society for the full value of the card with the Society earning 5% of each sale. Gift cards are sold during Sunday social hours and in the office during the week. Cash, checks (made out to USNF with "gift card" on the memo line), and credit cards accepted. *Please consider donating a Stop & Shop card to our sanctuary effort to help support Irida's family.*

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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***THE PIONEER***  
THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF  
THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF NORTHAMPTON AND FLORENCE

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**FEBRUARY *PIONEER* DATES**

**Deadline: January 23**

**Publication: January 30**

*Articles should be 350 words or less.  
Send submissions to [pioneer@uunorthampton.org](mailto:pioneer@uunorthampton.org).  
Include the word "PIONEER" in the subject line.*

**Office hours: Tuesday through Thursday 9:00-3:00  
Contact the Society at 584-1390. Visit us online at [www.uunorthampton.org](http://www.uunorthampton.org).**