

# THE PIONEER

Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence 2020 Volume 50 No. 7

## WORSHIP for MARCH All Services at 10 am

March 1

To Err is Human

The Reverend Janet C. Bush

*Musings on mistakes, judgment, and forgiving.*

March 8

The Race is On!

The Reverend Janet C. Bush

*Super Tuesday will have come and gone. In collaboration with members and friends in our UU the Vote effort, we'll consider how the election season will engage us in the months leading up to November. How do we participate? How do we sustain ourselves and one another as citizens and as spiritual beings?*

March 15

Compassion and Wisdom in Zen Buddhism

David Caruso

*The service will explore the interdependence of wisdom and compassion in the Zen tradition and their relevance for individuals and society today.*

March 22

Beyond Belief

The Reverend Janet C. Bush

*Do you believe in God? What does that question even mean? As UUs we affirm that all of us have the right to responsibly pursue our own search for truth and meaning. And we commit to support one another on our spiritual journeys.*

*Today we'll consider the God or god(s) we do or don't believe in.*

March 29

Youth Service

USNF Youth Group



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### Events & Activities

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- ◆ UU the Vote Letter Writing Party, March 4, 12, 18 and 26, 7 PM
- ◆ Mar 7, Sanctuary Fund Raising Concert Featuring The Hoping Machine, 7 PM
- ◆ Mar 11, Spiritual Writing Workshop, 6:30 PM
- ◆ Mar 13, Racial Justice Movie Night 7 PM
- ◆ Mar 15, Adult Racial Justice Learning Circle, 12:15
- ◆ Mar 18, Movement Voter Project, 6:30 PM
- ◆ Mar 20, Older Adult OWL, 1:30 PM
- ◆ Mar 21, Sanctuary Benefit Concert w/ Rise Up at the Academy of Music
- ◆ Mar 25, Zen Meditation, 6:30 PM
- ◆ Zen Meditation Group Tuesday Nights 7:30 PM Parlor

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# NOTES FROM THE MINISTER

Forgiveness is an act of vulnerability – both from the one seeking forgiveness and the one offering it – as it reveals the risks of trying to love in an imperfect world.

*Reverend Gretchen Haley*



If I have wronged you and we both know it, my apology is an act of vulnerability, of taking down my guard and confessing my fault, of risking my unacknowledged sense that I am a perfectly kind and compassionate, even infallible, person. For most of us, when we wrong someone we also violate our own standards of how we want to relate to them. Asking for forgiveness means being aware and humble enough to name our failure and request repair.

But what about all the ways we wrong others without their knowing it? Wrong that comes in unbidden, automatic and unstated assumptions about a person based on their race or background or remarks they have made? Or the harm we do through gossip or complaining about someone behind their back?

If you never do any of that, you are assured a prime spot in the for-real Good Place, wherever it may be. Most of us have work to do.

I was raised in a liberal Protestant church. I loved the music, the stories, the ritual, the prayers. But some of the things that I learned Jesus said made me feel I could never be good enough: “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; ... And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. ...Be perfect, ... as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5) As I child, those verses terrified me.

In the same sermon, Jesus also says, “If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” (Matthew 6) Some evangelical Bibles translate “trespasses” as “sins.” The most accurate translation, I learned much later, is financial obligations, or “debts.” So I’m not sure that passage helps, although there are other places where God is revealed as loving and forgiving. Worth a sermon or two someday, perhaps.

We cannot possibly be perfect. Usually, we would do more harm by voicing our unwanted assumptions and judgments and or by sharing ill-considered criticisms with people we judge. So we can’t ask for forgiveness directly. We can, however, ask it of others who hold us in community, and we can ask it of ourselves.

Forgiveness is our March topic, one that will be the subject in our Small Group Circles program, our monthly writing workshop, and at least one worship service. It’s a topic that has begun to arise in the programs of the racial justice task force. Most of us have work to do.

I am blessed and honored to be doing it with you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "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

*Submitted by Mark Glenny, Board Clerk*

At the February meeting, Board members continued work on the exciting journey of the USNF Music Visioning Team. The Board discussed, revised and approved the position advertisement and description of the USNF Director of Music: "The Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence is a mid-size Unitarian Universalist congregation with a history of excellence in music, a passion for social justice, and a worship program that seeks to inspire and involve us all." The full advertisement and description will be posted on our website soon.

**Music Director Search Committee:** The Board members approved the formation of the Music Director Search Committee as well as their formal charge. The search committee includes David Beauvais, Nancy Cheevers, David Junno, Laurel Foster-Moore and Lee Miller. The Board thanks all who have stepped forward to help with this exciting journey. The Search Team has already chosen meeting dates and Kathie Bredin will be meeting with the Team to provide details of their formal charge in finding suitable candidates. The Board encourages anyone who may have suggestions for candidates to encourage them to review the job description and contact the Search Team to be considered as a candidate for the Music Director position.

**Stewardship Campaign:** The Board extends their appreciation to the Stewardship Team for their work in organizing this year's campaign and profound gratitude to all who are able to contribute and support the Society. Pledges from the annual Stewardship campaign are critical to the Society's program budget. Even if you are not able to make a financial pledge this year, all contributions and support opportunities are always encouraged.

**Reminder:** If you are interested or experienced in web-based communication and can consult or help with re-inventing our monthly newsletter, please contact USNF Board President Kathie Bredin; [kbredin@comcast.net](mailto:kbredin@comcast.net).

**Upcoming:** The General Assembly is the annual meeting and convention of the Unitarian Universalist Association and this year it will be held in Providence, R.I., June 24 - 28. The Board encourages anyone interested in attending or serving as a delegate from the USNF to contact Kim Henrichon; [kahenrichon@gmail.com](mailto:kahenrichon@gmail.com). You'll find the complete announcement on page 4.

# REPORTS & ARTICLES

## 2020 UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY Rooted, Inspired, and Ready!

*Submitted by Kim Henrichon, Trustee*

General Assembly, the annual meeting and convention of the Unitarian Universalist Association, is happening June 24 - 28 in Providence, R.I.! This year's theme, "Rooted, Inspired and Ready," will include topics on exploring partnerships with Indigenous peoples of the Northeast, inspired leadership, "UU the Vote", climate destruction and more. Attendees "worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process." Anyone can register to attend and our congregation can appoint up to 4 delegates to vote on the annual business. Early registration is \$400, with a deadline of March 15. Variable housing options open up on March 2. If you are interested in attending, and/or serving as a delegate, please contact Kim Henrichon, [kahenrichon@gmail.com](mailto:kahenrichon@gmail.com). Scholarship funds to offset expenses for those in need are available upon request. Visit the UUA website for more information and complete details; [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga).

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### UU THE VOTE

USNF has joined the national Unitarian Universalist initiative, "UU the Vote." Since the 2020 election will have such an impact on the U.S. and beyond, we want to help align the country with UU Principles -- to respect and nurture the Earth and all living things.

One of the key USNF events in the program is our letter-writing campaign. We will customize pre-printed letters to under-represented residents in swing states to help register them to vote. Later in the campaign season, we will write to progressive voters in swing states to remind them to vote on November 3.

Letter writing parties have begun and will continue weekly. We hope you can join at least one party and if possible, please bring ten Forever stamps, ten envelopes, and a pen (preferably blue). Letter writing parties for March will be held at the Society on March 4, 12, 18 and 26 with a start time of 7 PM. Be sure to check the weekly *Sunday Times* for room assignments and any schedule changes.

# REPORTS & ARTICLES

## Auction Fundraising

In April there will be an opportunity at Sunday social hours to auction off game nights, nature walks, paddling and water excursions and other fun events. Vacation Home weeks/weekends donations are being collected by Rich West. Additionally, we will have food, art and other donations available and some workshops that you will be able to sign up for. This is part of an effort to make up for the \$10,000+ that our 2019 Spring Auction brought in. If you are able to donate a skill to run a workshop, a fun or educational excursion or other item, please speak with or contact Cathie Brown ([cathiebrown@comcast.net](mailto:cathiebrown@comcast.net) or 413-575-1736). We appreciate your generous support.

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## Building Bridges: Portraits of Immigrants and Refugees

USNF will be hosting an art exhibit in the sanctuary during the month of March. The exhibit is from [Family Diversity Projects](#), an award-winning nonprofit organization that creates photo-text exhibits and books in order to help eliminate prejudice, stereotyping, name-calling, and harassment of people who are discriminated against due to race, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, size, and mental or physical ability.

Founded by two of the artists who created these exhibits, photographer, Gigi Kaeser and interviewer/ editor, Peggy Gillespie, Family Diversity Projects also provides speakers and workshop leaders for conferences and exhibit venues.

The exhibit will coincide with two Sanctuary Fundraisers in March along with a Hawkins-Majumder lecture on March 22 with attorney Lauren Burke . The public will also be invited to view the exhibit on Sundays following the service and during the Pete Seeger sing-a-long concert on March 7. We will also be donating the plate in March to help support the good work of this organization.

For further information about the organization and these exhibits, please visit their website; [Family Diversity Projects](#). This event is sponsored by the USFN Coordinating Council.

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## Resisting White Supremacy: “Uniting Against Anti-Semitism and Racism in an Age of Extremism” March 25 at 7 PM

Lecia Brooks of the Southern Poverty Law Center will speak to the rise in antisemitism and racism in the United States and suggest actions to strengthen alliances among diverse communities to stand together against hate. The presentation will be held at the Northampton Center for the Arts on Hawley St. in Northampton, and is co-sponsored by USNF and the Tikkun Olam social justice committee of Congregation B’nai Israel. Please attend and spread the word to friends and family who may be interested.

# REPORTS & ARTICLES

## NEWS FROM SANCTUARY

The sanctuary team is thrilled about an upcoming musical event that is sure to be fun and inspiring, and, we hope, a boon to our ongoing fundraising. Some of you may remember the rollicking concert we had more than a year ago in the Great Hall when the incomparable Rise Up Productions performed songs from Broadway shows like “Hamilton” and “Rent.”



Well, **Rise Up for Irida** is back by popular demand. Thanks to a generous grant from the UUA Funding Program, we’re renting the Academy of Music and are gearing up for a singalong show by Rise Up Productions. They’ll be performing and inviting participation with songs from the ever-popular “Hamilton” on **March 21 at 7:30 PM**. Tickets go on sale soon and we hope to sell out the Academy with people who know all about sanctuary, and others who do not! We’re making our big tent even bigger.

Speaking of fundraisers, for Pete Seeger fans out there, on **March 7 at 7 PM**, in the Great Hall, **The Hoping Machine**, a musical group from the Berkshires, will perform and lead a sing-along, “Pete Seeger: A Life in Song.” Admission is by donation, with a portion of the proceeds going to support our sanctuary effort.

Meanwhile, Irida’s pierogis are making their way to the Northampton Survival Center’s freezer. Anyone interested in supporting both the Survival Center and Irida is invited to purchase a dozen pierogis for \$10, which will be donated to the Northampton Survival Center. To order pierogis please email Bill Diamond, [diamondwd59@gmail.com](mailto:diamondwd59@gmail.com).

As always, if you are new to the Unitarian Society and would like to learn more about how to get involved in sanctuary, please email [sanctuary@uunorthampton.org](mailto:sanctuary@uunorthampton.org)

*-- Submitted by Laurie Loisel, on behalf of the Sanctuary Team*

# REPORTS & ARTICLES

## 2019 Youth Group Transylvania Trip Follow Up

*Submitted by Cathie Brown*

During last summer's youth group trip to Romania and Transylvania, we attended a Sunday Service at our partner church. Mihaly Benedek, the minister of the congregation, opened the service with words to honor our connections as partners for 29 years. It took a while but we had his words translated into English so that we could share them with you (see below). There are many miles between our two congregations yet we continue to grow and learn from each other, making our relationship more meaningful over the years and hopefully, those to come.



“Every source of water is a great gift of the nature, the gift of God, the blessing of God for people. Forty or fifty years ago, in a summer vacation, I worked with my grandparents on the field. We mowed the grass, we dried the grass and carried home with a horse cart. We used it as a forage for the buffalos at winter time. So we worked on the field all day if the weather was good. We ate the lunch and dinner near to a spring in the shadow of a tree.

If we could not eat near to a spring, adults asked children to look for a spring and carry water. As children, we met by the spring with each other. All of us went there for water. Now, as an adult, I am happy when I think about these meetings, talks with my friends by the spring. We mention nature as the church of God and the church as the house of God. In my childhood I met my friends by the spring. Two thousand years ago Jesus met the Samaritan woman speaking about God and praying.

Today we have met by a spiritual spring coming from Northampton and Karácsonyfalva. We also talk about God, because God is love. This is written on the pulpit as well. I greet you with love, our friends from Northampton. Welcome to Karácsonyfalva. I hope you feel good in our village. As the spring use to be cleaned, renovated. We use to clean out, refresh, make our meetings memorable as well.”

Mihaly Benedek – July 2019

Minister Karácsonyfalva, Transylvania

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## RE at Home - Exploring Values

How did you develop your values? How do you live out your values in your everyday life? How do you help your children to clarify and develop their values?

The Coming of Age class has been exploring their values this month, with activities that would be great for families to do together at home (thank you to Dave Junno and Peg Johnson who helped to develop and implement this activity).

Create a list of values. For younger kids, the adults might create a simple list ahead of time. For older children, you can generate the list together. You might want to use the 7 Principles of Unitarian Universalism as a jumping off point for brainstorming values.

Make sure everyone understands the values. Even just talking about what justice, kindness, integrity, or empathy are can lead to really rich conversations.

Think of a hero and explore which values that person demonstrates. How do they live their values? This is a helpful way to think about the meaning of the values and how people can live their values.

Now think about each person's personal values. Have each person narrow down the list of values to 3-5 that are most important to them. Discuss why they are the most important.

Brainstorm how you show your values in your everyday life.

If you do engage in this activity at home, please share the learnings with me ([dre@uunorthampton.org](mailto:dre@uunorthampton.org)).

## Education Program Updates

### Early Childhood

We have sad news from Asa: "I've really enjoyed getting to know the parents and the children of the early childhood classroom during my time here as a teacher at USNF. It has been both fun and rewarding to spend each Sunday morning with the youngest USNF members. It is with a heavy heart that I've needed to make the decision to scale back on teaching while I focus on completing my Bachelor's from UMASS this semester. I look forward, however, to returning as a member this coming fall, and seeing you all again in that capacity."



### K-3rd Grade

During the month of February, this class focused on generosity and upstander behaviors. Through stories, art, activities, and role plays, they considered how to help their peers feel included, how to offer thanks and gratitude, and how to interrupt mean behaviors.

*Continued next page*

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## 4-8th Grade

Over the past month, the 4th-8th graders have created a timeline of major events in the history of race, racism, and resistance in the US. Come see their work at the end of the RE hall. They have also been learning about identity, implicit bias, and microaggressions. They are learning skills to interrupt discrimination when they see it and to engage in dialogue, rather than debate about contentious issues.

## Coming of Age

The Coming of Age class has been thinking critically about their values and how they demonstrate their values in their actions and behaviors. They visited the UU Congregation in Amherst to explore Unitarian Universalist worship and learn about the 5th principle from Reverend Rachel. This month, they will learn about Zen Meditation from David Caruso and deepen their understanding of Unitarian Universalism.

## Parent and Caregiver Group

For our next book group, the parents and caregivers are invited to read *This Book is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work* by Tiffany Jewell (a local author and educator). This book is intended for middle grade readers, but is a helpful guide to the history of racism and tangible anti-racist actions everyone can take. The meeting will take place on March 22, 11:30-1 pm. If you would like to order a book at 20% discount, please email Jessica ([dre@uunorthampton.org](mailto:dre@uunorthampton.org)).

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## MARCH RE CALENDAR

### March 1, 8, 15, & 22

This is the schedule for MOST Sundays. Special events for kids, parents, caregivers, and adults (including adult education) are listed on the events page.

- Early Childhood: 10-11:15
- Elementary: 10:20-11:20
- Junior Youth: 10-11:20
- Youth Group: 4:00-6:00

### **March 8 - K-1 Parent, Caregiver & Child Our Whole Lives (OWL) Orientation, 11:30-1.**

- K-1 OWL will meet on March 22, March 29, April 5, April 12, May 3, May 10, May 17, and May 31.
- Contact [dre@uunorthampton.org](mailto:dre@uunorthampton.org) to register.

### **March 14 - High School OWL, 10-3 pm. Last Class!**

**March 22 - Parent & Caregiver Group, 11:30-1 pm.** Childcare and lunch provided. Please RSVP.

### **March 29 - Youth Group-led Multigenerational Service**

- Early Childhood: 10-11:15
- Elementary & Junior Youth: Participate in the service.



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## YOUTH GROUP

*by Annie Doran*

Youth Group is focusing most of their energies in March on preparing a powerful worship service on March 29. Please come to hear the voices of their youthful wisdom!

We are simultaneously preparing for a ribbon cutting ceremony (and party) this Spring to roll out our Downtown Composting Pilot Project. Between our fundraiser dinner last month and an award from USNF's Social Justice Funds, we may have just a couple hundred dollars to go (thank you all who contributed!). If you are interested in helping complete our project goals, please talk to one of the youth or contact Annie ([youthfulUSNF@gmail.com](mailto:youthfulUSNF@gmail.com)). And stay tuned for details and info about how you can engage!

In the meantime, our second lock-in of the season was held February 28 - 29. We kicked it off with some intergenerational interconnectedness as the wider RE community was cooking and eating dinner and playing games with the Youth Group. Lock-ins are always a beautiful, connected, and fun time!



*Summer worship service given by 2018-2019 Youth Group members who traveled to Transylvania.*

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## YOUNG ADULT GROUP

*by Annie Doran*

Our third Skill Share of the year will be March 8. It is shaping up to be focused on clothing repair. Please come with an item of clothing you've had stashed away in the corner of your closet, just waiting for this moment! We will also have space and listening ears to voice our opinions on the direction that the congregation's music program takes in the future. And we'll enjoy the kimchi, kraut, and yogurt we made last skill share! FMI contact Annie: [youthfulUSNF@gmail.com](mailto:youthfulUSNF@gmail.com).

# SAVE THE DATES

## Adult Education Offerings

**Spiritual Writing Workshop - March 11, 6:30-8:00 PM.** Everyone is welcome to attend. The group reflects on the monthly theme in writing and discussion.

**Racial Justice Movie Night - March 13, 7-8:30 PM.** Booker Bush will bring back “Jaybo” and commentaries, and we’ll take time to share questions and thoughts.

**Building the World We Dream About: Adult Racial Justice Learning Circle - March 15, 12:15-2:45 PM.** Everyone is welcome to join this learning circle about race, racism, privilege, bias, and allyship. The meetings are intended to be a balance of learning, reflecting, and sharing. Please email Jessica, [dre@uunorthampton.org](mailto:dre@uunorthampton.org), for information.

**Older Adult OWL, Friday, March 20, 1:30-3:30 PM.** Older Adult Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education is intended for adults over 50. We will be offering 4 workshops this year. The March workshop is Attitudes about Aging. You do not need to attend all workshops.

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

**Zen Meditation, March 25, 6:30-8:00 pm.** David Caruso will provide an introduction to Zen Meditation. Everyone will have the opportunity to practice it.

## Events, Workshops, Activities

(all take place at USNF unless otherwise noted)

**March 4, 12, 18 and 26 , UU the Vote Letter Writing Parties, 7 PM.** See page 5 for more information.

**March 7, Pete Seeger: A Life In Song Benefit Concert Featuring The Hoping Machine, Great Hall, 7 PM.** A fundraiser to help support Irida Kakhtiranova and her family as she continues to fight her deportation case. Entry by donation. Hosted by the USNF Sanctuary Team.

**March 18, UU the Vote - Movement Voter Project, 6:30 PM, Social Rm.** Support grassroots voter empowerment through the Movement Voter Project (MVP). Learn about more positive actions you can take to protect our democracy. Together we are Sowing and Growing Grassroots! Please join us. Hot soup and bread will be served.

**March 21, “Rise Up Irida” Sanctuary Benefit Concert, 7:30 PM, Academy of Music**

**March 25, Resisting White Supremacy: “Uniting Against Anti-Semitism and Racism in an Age of Extremism”, 7 PM, Northampton Center for Arts, Hawley St., featuring Lecia Brooks of The Southern Poverty Law Center.**

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

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**MARCH PIONEER DATES**

**Deadline: March 26**

**Publication: March 31**

*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).