



Minister's Monthly Update

July 2020

We have made it to summer! Not a normal summer, to be sure... nevertheless, with the school year over and graduations done, summer plans and picnics and bike rides and road trips *are* happening, though with lots of adjustments to keep everyone safe. Gardens are flourishing, with gardeners home more... and Zoom is still a precious lifeline of connections and learning for many.

First UU has transitioned to this different summer. This past Sunday was the official beginning of summer worship, with a wonderful Poetry & Music service led by two members of our Worship Associates Team (with no Minister in sight)! The Bridging Ceremony was lovely – and in some ways more intimate on video. I'm very grateful to all of the Worship Associates - Mavis, Melinda, Doug, Cheryl, Judy, and Kristin, as well as Erika and Margo and Gabriel for all their work with me in all these weeks of transition and change.

First UU is on a two-week Summer Break! –July 15-29

In order for all FUUSB staff to get some time off this summer, we are officially taking a two-week break. The building will continue to be closed and staff won't be accessing email, though several groups will continue to meet online. If you have questions, please reach out to your group leaders.

In particular:

Love & Justice vigils will happen at 5:15 pm on Wednesdays – newcomers are always welcome! Please bring a mask.

A new session of Encouraging Faith Leaders begins on July 23: *A series of five, 2-hour modules offered to the formal and informal leaders at FUUSB, designed and delivered by Sarah Russell, who has distilled many years of experience in corporate training down to these five areas for congregational leadership. See Realm or contact Sarah if you want to join the class (sarahhallrussell@gmail.com).*

In an emergency please call the main FUUSB line: 802-862-5630 and leave a message. Voicemails will be checked once a day.

There is much good work happening at FUUSB in this different kind of summer.

Faith Development: Erika is working with faith development leaders from three other UU congregations in the area to create a regional middle school online group – the every-other-week gatherings are already happening. YUUTH Group is also thriving, with plans for new collaborations with UU youth around the state underway. Plans for in-person OWL this fall are coming together... assuming, of course, that we can offer it safely. And posted **Story Paths** continue – you don't need to be a child to enjoy them!

Justice and Outreach: The Racial Justice Team is getting ready to launch several groups who will work together through the challenging and important work in *Me & White Supremacy* by Layla Saad. You can sign up to join a group through the website. Jud Lawrie and Climate Justice folks are collaborating with a local group to plant sunflowers that pull lead from the soil (more on this next month!). Immigration Justice Team members continue to keep us all informed about how to support asylum seekers whose situations are more dangerous than ever. And the UUA is very actively promoting UU the Vote around the country (uuthevote.org). I hope all of you will take some time this summer to educate yourselves about everything that's happening in our country in these urgent times. We can all find at least one way to get involved!

Outside Vespers - in person! (at a distance! with masks!): Summer only lasts so long... Because all the science tells us that it is healthy to be outside, and good for our spirits to be with other people when we can do so safely, Erika and I are working with Rev. David Ruffin to organize Vespers services in the Memorial Garden on Wednesday evenings, starting August 12. We're excited about this new program and what it can offer... both for those who feel able to be there in person, and those who watch on the video recordings. Of course we will continue to monitor COVID-19 guidance from the state to be safe. Watch for more information, including how you can register to attend, in early August.

Sunday Worship Services

There will be no FUUSB recorded service for the next two Sundays – so we hope you will take this time to explore Unitarian Universalism by taking a virtual “tour” of online services from UU congregations around the country. This is easier than ever, since so many UU congregations are offering good online worship – in extraordinary variety!

Below is a somewhat random list of congregations you might check out, with particular recommendations from some of our Worship Associates. Names in **bold** are YouTube channels, where you can find videos to watch anytime:

- **UUSF Media** (First UU Church of San Francisco)
- **First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego**
as Melinda Lee puts it: *Those Californians have their act together!*
- **All Souls New London** (All Souls UU Congregation, CT)
- **First Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashville** (TN)
- **First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis**
from Judy Brook: *Here is a wonderful sermon by Rev. Jim Foti from the week George Floyd was murdered and the city burned. I chose it because I grew up in the Minneapolis area and was curious how they handled the news that Sunday.* - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqHITN2m-ZS88XHopHEJZPw>
- **All Souls Church Unitarian DC** (All Souls UU, Washington, DC)
from Mavis Milne: *All Souls is a very large, big city congregation that has a diverse staff and congregation. The highlight for me is the music, which can be sublime! Much of it is performed by UU paid professionals and much of it rooted in gospel tradition.*
- **Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson UUCT** - Rev. Bethany Russell-Lowe, Minister (Sarah Russell & Rodney Lowe's daughter!)
from Kristin Kany: *This heartwarming service has beautiful music, impassioned singing, and joyful dance - all forms of art that help anchor us in times of need, and propel us into hope, like a happiness trampoline! Four Arizona ministers collaborated on this service, giving us viewers glimpses into different meeting houses and congregational styles. Enjoy! I truly did.* - <https://youtu.be/pLT4AVTP8RE>

eNews returns on Thursday, July 30

Zoom Coffee Hour returns on Sunday, August 2

Wednesday noon Zoom-In Lunch with the Minister begins again on August 5.

I hope to have a focus for these drop-in conversations, and I'm very open to your suggestions about what those might be. Send me your thoughts! After the Summer Break watch for the Zoom link in Christina's Saturday email: "The Links."

The staff and I so much appreciate your support and understanding – thank you for your persistence, creativity and openness during these unprecedented times.

Many blessings to all of you!

Rev. Tricia