



August Monthly Update

Minister's Monthly Update

August 2020

I resist any suggestion that summer is “almost over” until Labor Day has come and gone. (Perhaps because my birthday arrives in late August...) Fall is my favorite time of year - I delight in the crisper air and beautiful leaves when they arrive. But the end of summer marks the turning of the year for me. Relaxing days are behind us. A new year, with all its unknown challenges, lies ahead.

If anything, that feeling is accentuated in this strange pandemic year. I am determined to enjoy every sunny day, and even warm rainy ones, as long as they last. The staff and I have worked hard this summer, and we've all taken time off, too. I hope you have had at least a few days that felt easier and less anxious during these summer weeks. I hope you'll have a few more before the days grow short.

I can't offer any science to prove it, but I'm pretty sure that soaking up sunshine and warmth now will help us all through the chilly months to come.

In Community, Outside

The grounds of the Meetinghouse are beautiful, and a number of you have found opportunities to come and be here – individually, and sometimes in groups. **Love & Justice vigils** (5:15 – 5:45pm) continue every Wednesday, as they have for years. All are welcome to come and stand – with masks, holding signs – to advocate for justice in solidarity with the larger community. A new tradition is the **Silent Vigil for Racial Justice** on the first Sunday of every month (1 – 1:30pm). If you feel safe doing so, please consider joining in one of these public witness events. It is so good to show up for your deepest values - in community, and with faith that a just world is possible!

On Wednesday evenings through September 2, Rev. David Ruffin is leading a **Vespers** service under the canopy in the Memorial Garden (7pm, about 40 minutes). These lovely informal services are a precious time of reflection, silence, sharing and music – the service feels intimate, even with everyone at a distance and wearing masks. Please sign up and come if it seems safe and right for you. Since we're limiting each gathering to 25 people, you need to **register through your Realm account, or the [website](#)**. A video from each Vespers service will be posted on the

First UU Society's YouTube channel the next day for those who prefer to "attend" online.

Ingathering – September 13!

A plan is in place to celebrate the congregation coming together – and Water Communion – on the traditional Sunday-after-Labor-Day "beginning" of a new year for the Society. **Since we can't gather in person, we are gathering pictures of as many First UU'ers as we possibly can.** A team of volunteer photographers will be available to come to your house or apartment and take your picture on your porch or front steps, your yard or garden, maybe leaning out a window... setting the scene is up to you! We hope everyone will include some water in their picture, in recognition of Water Communion – and perhaps a sign with a message to your fellow congregation members, and the world.

Of course you can send in a selfie, if it's easier. And you can choose not to include your picture (perhaps a sign or image instead?). However you want to be represented, we hope many of you will participate. All pictures we receive will be included in the September 13 worship service.

Here's how it works: **if you/your family want to be included in this First UU Society 2020 Photo Ingathering, send an email to Mary Williams (mary@uusociety.org) by September 1** – including the best way to contact you (email, phone, text). We will divide the list among our team of photographers, and one of them will contact you to set a time for your photo session.

Would you like to be one of the photographers? All you need is a good camera (probably your phone) and some free time in the first week or so of September. If you have questions or want to volunteer, send an email to Christina Fulton (xina@uusociety.org). How about today?

As more plans for the fall come into focus we will let you know – I'm going to continue sending out Monthly Updates for the foreseeable future. Erika, Margo and Gabriel will stay in touch with children, youth and parents about plans and ideas for Faith Development in the coming months, including a possible OWL class beginning in late fall.

Some new online programs are being planned for the winter, when we will need to see each other's faces more than ever... even if it is on Zoom. Watch for Christina's email entitled "The Links" on Saturdays, for information on how to find worship, Coffee Hour, Wednesday Zoom-In Lunch conversations, and other opportunities. We love to see you!

Finally...

Mark your calendars today for a very **special Worship Service on August 30**. Our guest - **Rajni Eddins**, Spoken Word Poet & Teaching Artist – will share his work "Their Names Are Mine." Rajni's work confronts white supremacy while emphasizing the need

to affirm our mutual humanity. His is now an important voice in the struggle for racial justice in Vermont, and the Racial Justice and Worship Associates Teams and I are delighted to welcome him to First UU.

This service will be live, on Zoom. So for that particular Sunday it matters to show up on time, at 10am: watch for the Zoom link which Christina will send out next week, and join in the service and presentation, followed by an interactive conversation with Rajnii.

Thank you for being a part of this sacred community – your good will, creativity and hope for the future make all the difference.

Many blessings!

Rev. Tricia

Developmental Senior Minister

p.s. Here's a treat you might like - a WNYC [podcast](#) that explains why it's so important for people to share meals together!