



James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Weekly News for 6/17/2026-6/23/2026

This Sunday, June 21, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

“General Assembly Sunday Worship” with Rev. Jen Youngsun Ryu

Join us for a powerful and communal experience – the largest annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists in worship. The sermon will be offered in three pieces, called “The Gap One Breath Deep,” “Love Is,” and “Disciples of Love,” between singing and wisdom readings. You can [view the order of service here](#).

The Rev. Jen Youngsun Ryu (she/her) [image from uua.org] serves the Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, arriving in 2021 while the building was still closed and the congregation was finding its way back to one another. Born in Seoul and raised in Ohio, she found Unitarian Universalism as a young adult in Baltimore and was drawn to a faith that honors both the tough mind and the tender heart. [Click here to read more...](#)



The entire offering will support [Side with Love](#), the organizing strategy team of the Unitarian Universalist Association. They harness the power of love to confront oppression and build a world where all people can thrive. Through organizing, leadership development, political education, and collective action, Side with Love equips Unitarian Universalists and aligned communities to take spiritually grounded, justice-driven action in this decisive moment.

Come early to grab a cup of coffee or tea and a light snack to enjoy during the service, and stay after for the community meal!

Worship Associate: Michael Nunley

[Service Webpage](#)

[Zoom Link for Service](#)

After Service: Community Meal

Next Sunday Worship: [“Sweet Sorrow”](#) with Rev. Karen Armina

Next Sunday after Service: Rev. Karen’s Farewell-Thank You Reception

Our June Theme: Flourishing Together

Our June theme reminds us that our well-being is based on mutuality and relationship. In this space, you'll find a new invitation into reflection every week.

Check in question: What do you need - or what do you need to do - to regain your faith in a future where we will all flourish together?

Nobody's free until everybody's free.

-- [Fannie Lou Hamer](#)

Ministry Connections

Minister's Monthly Musings

From Rev. Karen Armina



Dear Ones,

First of all: Happy Pride!

I'm spending a lot of time reflecting on our shared ministry these days, as I get ready for its close. I'm honored and grateful for the time I've served this congregation - you all have been a huge part of making me the minister I am, and I'll carry your stories and all I've learned here with me.

It feels a little strange to be considering the theme of "flourishing together" during my last month as your minister. As I was filling in a form for my exit interview with the UUA, I remembered some of the things we've created during our 12 years of shared ministry, that feel fitting to share as part of this theme: [Click here to read more...](#)

Minister's Availability

Rev. Karen is away on study leave on June 15-21 to attend General Assembly and Ministry Days. There will be no office hours during this time.

Regular office hours will resume on **Tuesday June 23:**

- **In person Tuesdays** at Java Cat Coffee House (4221 Lien Road) 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- **In person Fridays** at Reeb 12:00-2:00 pm
- **Virtual Fridays** on Zoom 5:00-6:00 pm
- **Evenings and other times by appointment**- Karen's availability isn't limited to office hours! Please [send her an email](#) to set up a time.

Community Minister's Corner

From Rev. Bowie Kling-Garcia, Affiliated Community Minister



Friends,

I am excited to join in on the newsletter fun, now with my own columns every other month! As your Affiliated Community Minister, I have a special role with Reeb volunteering with the church while you all support my ministry in the community. In this column moving forward I would like to share with you all what I am observing in my work as a hospital chaplain, opportunities to get involved in the world, or how our faith guides us in current events.

In the month of June we are approaching my favorite time of year - Pride! Being a church who is welcoming and affirming of the LGBTQ+ community is such an important role that we play in our country. [Click here to read more...](#)

Music Ministry

Good (but conditional) news from the hiring team - we have offered the Director of Music Ministry position to an outstanding candidate! We have a verbal yes, and we're working on some final negotiations, including a start date. We've closed the job announcement in the meantime. More to come soon!

Information about intermittent choir rehearsals and choir Sundays is currently being sent out via the choir google group email list. [Contact David Henry](#) if you would like to join the choir email list. See **Small Group Ministries** and the **Congregation and Community Calendar** below for updates.

Are you a musician looking for an opportunity to share your music? Maybe you played an instrument in a school band or orchestra and would love to be able to play again. Maybe you are a singer/songwriter who would like to introduce us to new songs. Maybe you would like to share your love of a non-traditional instrument from another part of the world. There are opportunities at Reeb to play and/or sing with others – or to play a solo. All are welcome. We would love to hear from you. Please [contact David Henry](#).

Folk Group - 6/20 and 6/27

The folk group is meeting on **Saturdays, June 20 and 27 from 10:30 a.m. to noon in the multipurpose room**. We will practice the music for Karen's final service and Goodbye Ritual on June 28. Please join us in celebrating Karen's time with us at Reeb with music! We'll be performing Stephen Lee Rich's song "Goodbye, Dear Friend," which he wrote for this ceremony. We'll also be performing "Heart Wide Open" by Leah Morris and "Turn! Turn! Turn!," by Pete Seeger. And we'll lead the shared music "We'll Be Known For Our Love," "Love Will Guide Us," and "Now Let Us Sing." The sheet music for the June 28

service is at [this link](#). The audio files for practice are at [this link](#). If you'd like to be added to the folk group email list, please [contact Mike](#).

Open Mic - 7/11

The July open mic will be on **Saturday, July 11** (note the new date - second Saturday instead of first) from **6 to 8 p.m.** Share your prose, poetry, songs, and jokes, and be entertained by the local talent! Hosted by Stephen Lee Rich.

Religious Exploration and Family Ministry From Emily Smith, Director of Family Ministry

This Week: Our service on 6/21 will be multigenerational with everyone together in the sanctuary. After service, we will have our **June community meal** - please bring a dish to share!

Next Week: Our service on 6/28 will be multigenerational with everyone together in the sanctuary.

June Community Meal: Our next community meal will be on **Sunday June 21**. If you plan to attend and can bring a dish to share, please sign up to do so on the sheet posted by the kitchen window.



Small Group Ministries

Offering and Receiving Connection, Support, and Spiritual Practice

[Read more here](#)

Meditation With Friends - Wednesdays, 6:30-7 p.m., newcomers welcome, [Zoom Link](#)

Sacred Breath Choir - Intermittent rehearsals, contact [David Henry](#) to join the choir mailing list

Folk Music Gatherings - Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. - noon, contact [Mike Stimson](#)

Laughter Yoga - Paused until September, contact [Virginia Harrison](#)

[Zoom Link for Meditation](#)

Our Congregation and Community Calendar

Potluck for People, Peace & Planet - 6/20

Building Unity will conclude their Juneteenth activities with the Potluck for People, Peace & Planet on **Saturday, June 20 at 6 p.m. at JRUUC**. This monthly gathering helps us to find each other, share vital information, and explore the possibilities of united action. See [our flyer](#) for more information.

Sweet Justice at First Unitarian Society - 6/26

First Unitarian Society of Madison (FUS) announces “Sweet Justice,” a fundraiser to support immigrant communities and families in Wisconsin. The event takes place **Friday, June 26, from 6 to 8 p.m.** FUS is located at **900 University Bay Drive**. See [their flyer](#) for more information, and [click here to register](#).

Rev. Karen's Farewell-Thank You Reception - 6/28

Rev. Karen's last worship service with JRUUC will be on **Sunday, June 28**. **After service** there will be a reception where members and friends can say final goodbyes and well wishes, and share gratitudes and reflections on what Karen's ministry with us has meant to them. We will have paper hearts for people to write their messages for Karen to take with her. In preparation for the reception, we will need people to purchase and/or make things and volunteer to set up and clean up the event. [Sign up HERE to help out!](#) [Contact Virginia Harrison](#) with questions.

Save the Date

August 23 - Annual Collaborative Service with FUS, Prairie, and Reeb

Congregation News, Invitations & Announcements

Welcome Rev. Denise Cawley!

The Interim Search Committee and Board of Trustees are absolutely thrilled to announce that [Rev. Denise Cawley](#) will be joining JRUUC as our interim minister on August 3, 2026. (The first Sunday service with Rev. Denise is to be determined. Meet and greet opportunities to come!)

The Interim Search Committee—Heike Saynisch, Charlie McNulty, and Virginia Harrison—resonated immediately with Rev. Denise for her strong [social justice](#) background, warmth, [creativity](#), and compassionate chaplaincy.



Rev. Denise says of her work with congregations, “I very much enjoy the brilliance I find in congregations. I love watching groups learn together, struggle, grow, love each other up, celebrate and create community together. I find the pace of that transformation might be slow for a year and suddenly the congregation might take a giant leap before my eyes. The work is magic. I am dedicated to bringing people into that magic.”

She created [this video of introduction](#) for our Flower Communion service (last Sunday, 6/7) as a way to help us start to get to know her.

Below is Rev. Denise's letter to the JRUUC community:

I am thrilled to be joining James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation as your Interim Minister! From the moment I learned of this community, I was moved—the name James Reeb carries such profound meaning in our tradition, and everything he stood for resonates deeply with my own calling. The leaders I have met have already impressed me with their passion and vision, and your reputation for justice work is inspiring. The congregation's proximity to the Wisconsin state capital and the University of Wisconsin only adds to my excitement about the collaborative possibilities that lie ahead for us together.

I bring visual arts, interactive rituals, and dramatic storytelling into my ministry. Artmaking is a vivid part of my own spiritual practice and of the healing journeys I am honored to offer others. Those who know me have called me Artist, Respectful Collaborator, Inclusionary Leader, and Magical Spirit—words I hold with deep gratitude.

My Master of Divinity is from Meadville Lombard Theological School, and I have had the privilege of pastoring congregations in Oregon, Illinois, and Wisconsin. I serve as a chaplain at Advocate Aurora Healthcare and have appreciated my time as an administrator at the UU Ministers' Association. Feel free to call me RevD or Rev. Denise! I hold four units of Clinical Pastoral Education certified by the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy, with trauma expertise using Kintsugi Psychology tools, and am nearly finished with my Kintsugi Resilience Associate (KRA) Certification with Community Care Chaplains. For more than 25 years, justice work has been close to my heart and central to my calling.

I live in Milwaukee with my spouse, Rev. Matt Aspin who is minister at Hartland's Lake Country Unitarian Universalist Church (you might know him from when he was minister at Prairie UU for two years in Madison). We live with our wonderfully fuzzy dogs and sometimes our busy teenage kids. My background in arts, fundraising, marketing, and communications was shaped by years of nonprofit work and educational foundations at Alverno College and Parsons School of Design.

I look forward to wonderful collaborations when we meet in August.

Help Needed for Annual Collaborative Service

Sunday, August 23 will be the day of our annual collaborative service between FUS, Prairie, and Reeb. The planning team is looking for someone from Reeb to help coordinate the potluck after the service. If you're interested in helping out, please let [Stephen Rich](#) or [Marti Everett](#) know.

Singing Resistance

Singing Resistance is building a mass movement of singers to protect and care for our communities in the face of rising authoritarianism. We are grounded in love, nonviolence, and solidarity. In the context of escalating violence towards our communities and federal invasions of our cities and towns, we sing because song is an antidote to fear, song helps us connect to each other, and through song we can name and protect what we hold sacred. We sing publicly in the streets for the sake of solace, strength, solidarity, to voice our dissent, and to refuse cooperation with oppressive and autocratic forces. Singing Resistance Madison is made up of smaller groups called pods, and we have a pod here at Reeb. You can [contact Sharon Kohli](#) for information, and you can follow Singing Resistance Madison on instagram at singingresistancemadisonwi.

Share the Plate Nominations Needed

Each Sunday, half of our collection plate goes to an organization within our community. Any member or friend of JRUUC may nominate an organization or program. We invite Reebers of all ages, committees, and groups at JRUUC to participate. This is generally for non-profit organizations but can include profit organizations or an unincorporated organization or a project if it meets “Sharing the Plate” Nomination guidelines. (This is an attempt to honor grassroots movements.) Please use the [Nomination Form](#) and fill out the form completely, including the organization’s contact person and mailing address. **Priority will be given to, but not limited to, organizations/projects that:**

- Honor the [JRUUC mission](#) and support [UU values](#).
- Support our current focus, seasonal or annual theme or a worship service at JRUUC and where appropriate, can supply speakers or present programs during a service or at other times.
- Are local, sustainable and have active participation on some level by one or more Reebers. However, national or global organizations are not excluded.
- Represent a diversity of issues, interests and community needs.

Lawn and Grounds Care

Warmer temps mean it’s time for lawn and grounds care! [Please see the sign-up sheet](#) and sign up for a week (or two) that you can mow the lawn and pick up trash around the building. Instructions for how to access the mower are on the sign-up sheet. If you have any questions, please [contact Renee Buchanan](#).

Invitation from Your Worship Team: Centering in Beauty

If you’ve been attending Sunday services recently, you’ve likely noticed a new element near the beginning. We believe that offering a brief time of centering can help us arrive more fully into the space we make sacred together, and that beauty can be a great way to do that. Who can’t use a little more beauty in their lives these days, right? The images we’ve shared up to now have been offered by Rev. Karen or members of the Worship Team. We’d love to widen our sources and include your images

of beauty! **If you have an image you'd like us to show on a Sunday morning, please [email it to Rev. Karen](#)** (with a title if you have one).

Deadline for the Weekly Newsletter Submission

Please send your submissions to news@jruuc.org by **10 a.m. on Tuesdays**. *Remember to include relevant event and announcement information, such as date, time, location, links, contact information, and how long you would like the information included in the newsletter.*

JRUUC Online Giving and Directory

[Breeze](#) is JRUUC's website for online giving and the directory. If you would like to create an account, or if you need any help, email Bryan Rainey, our office administrator, at office@jruuc.org.

Website Errors or Suggestions? Contact web@jruuc.org

If you notice an error or something important missing from our website, please let Susan Podebradsky know by sending an email to web@jruuc.org. It helps if you send a link to the specific page in question. You can also let us know if there is something you can't find, something new you would like to see, or something you really like to see. Thanks!

Unitarian Universalist Association News & Connections

Want to act but you're not sure how? Join forces with other UUs!

 A public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love's power to stop oppression, with four intersectional justice priorities: Climate Justice, Decriminalization, Democracy, and Reproductive Justice & Trans Rights. [Click here](#) to learn more. We build strong movements when we take action together. Organize teams and networks that can take these actions together, and get support on practical organizing skills and support at our [Organizing School](#) and [Skill Up](#) resources. **Side with Love offers two ways to take concrete action:**

Weekly Action Update features essential resources, upcoming events, and spiritual reflection to support work across our intersectional priority areas. [Click here to view this week's update!](#)

The Gathering:
Second Mondays at 7 pm
A monthly virtual event
designed to offer:



- Spiritual grounding - strengthen your heart and spirit for the work ahead

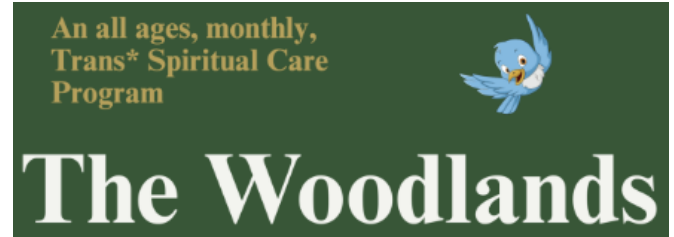
- Political analysis - understand the threats to democracy and justice
- Collective action - organize with others to block anti-democratic forces and build a just and loving world

[Click here](#) for more information, to register to receive the Zoom link, and to view previous recordings.

The Woodlands:

First Sundays at 3 pm

A UUA monthly online gathering designed for trans children, youth, and adults – as well as the parents and caregivers of trans people. [Click here](#) to learn more about the sessions and to register online.



LOVE *RESISTS*

Activates people of faith and conscience to resist the harm inflicted by criminalization, to create safer, more just, welcoming, and sustainable communities. [Click here](#) to learn about current actions, and to download resources and tools to bring the Love Resists campaign to your community by expanding sanctuary, growing solidarity, and raising your voice.



UUs support the use of inclusive democratic processes to make decisions within our congregations, our Association, and society at large, and UU the Vote engages in year-round movement-building work toward building a truly inclusive democracy. Wisconsin is a key state for UU the Vote's action initiatives. [Click here](#) to learn how you can get involved in getting out the vote.

And here are some other UUA resources relevant to these times:

[Community Resilience Hub](#)

[ICE and Immigration Enforcement in Congregations](#)

[Expanding Sanctuary](#)

[Wisdom and inspiration from UUA President, the Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt](#)

[More UUA Updates](#)

[See our website for more information - **jruuc.org**](#)

Please submit articles for the newsletter to news@jruuc.org by Tuesday at 10:00 am.