



James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Weekly News for 9/3/2025-9/9/2025

This Sunday, September 7, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

“It Comes In Waves – Water Communion” with Rev. Karen Armina

It's time for our annual ingathering and water communion service! This morning, we'll explore water's movement; sometimes it's still, and sometimes it brings waves big enough to knock us over. We'll combine waters we bring, and we'll share in an “Empty Cups for Gaza” ritual. And we'll share a ritual of welcome for our new Director of Family Ministry. Bring water that holds meaning for you to blend in our communal bowl!



Photo by Karen Armina

[Service Webpage](#)

[Zoom Link for Service](#)

Worship Associate: Stephen Rich

Special Music: JRUUC Sacred Breath Choir & JRUUC Folk Group

After Service: Coffee & Conversation

Next Sunday Worship: “[Alone Together?](#)” with Rev. Karen Armina

Next Sunday after Service: Coffee & Conversation

The Share the Plate recipient for August 31 and September 7 is [Worker Justice Wisconsin](#). WJW advances justice in our community by building collective power with faith and labor allies. They empower workers to stand up for their rights and fight for a just and living wage for all, paid time off for all, workplaces free from discrimination and harassment, opportunities for collective bargaining without retaliation, and a healthy work/life balance. WJW was nominated by the Worship Team.



Our September Theme: Building Belonging

Our September theme reminds us that one of the practices of building community is that of creating and nurturing belonging. In this space, you'll find a new invitation into reflection every week.

Check in question: Of all the communities you have belonged to, think about your favorite - if you could say thank you to it, what would you say?

We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick.

-- [Brené Brown](#)

Ministry Connections

Minister's Monthly Musings

From Rev. Karen Armina



Dear Ones,

I've had a series of mini-vacations throughout August, and I'm planning one more in early September. It has been a lovely summer of going to places in which I can ground myself in nature, and spending time with my son and some of our chosen family and grounding myself in relationship. And now, as I re-enter congregational life and begin musing on this month's theme, Building Belonging, I find myself wanting to reiterate an invitation I periodically make: **come and talk with your minister!** I plan to create periodic listening circles after worship where small groups can meet with me and talk together about your hopes and dreams for our congregation, as well as any challenges and disappointments you're experiencing. You'll find announcements for these in the "Congregation and Community Calendar" section of the newsletter as I schedule them.

I also want to make sure you all know that I would love to talk with you one-to-one. There's a whole slew of reasons a person might want to do this - all of them perfectly good! - among them:

- When you don't know me, but would like to.
- When your child doesn't know me, but would like to or you would like them to.
- When your family doesn't know me, but would like to.
- When you're going into the hospital or someone else in the congregation is.
- When someone close to you has died or is critically ill.
- When you have suggestions for a sermon, or about worship in general.
- When you'd just like to visit, or know someone else who'd like to.

- When you're thinking about sharing your gifts in our shared ministries of worship, religious exploration, justice work, or any other aspect of congregational life.
- When you are looking for a way to deepen your spiritual life.
- When your children have questions of faith and you would like me to visit with them.
- When you have religious or spiritual questions.
- When you are celebrating one of life's joys and want to share the good news.
- When your child has joys and accomplishments to share with their minister.
- When you or someone in your family are feeling sad, or lonely, or lost.
- When you have lost your job, found a new job, been promoted or demoted.
- When you or a family member is ill.
- When you would like to make plans for a memorial service. When you would like to make plans for your own memorial service.
- When you are planning to be married. When you are challenged by the demands of marriage. When you are separating or planning to get a divorce.
- When you are pregnant and glad you are or wish you weren't, also if you want to be pregnant but aren't.
- When you would like your child dedicated.
- When you feel ready to join the congregation.
- When you want to share your experience of or appreciation for our beloved community. When you have concerns about the congregation or our faith community.
- When you have a good story to share.
- When you are afraid or angry about the state of the world.
- When you want a listening ear.

When you want to reach out, please [email me](#), and we'll set up a time to talk. And as always, if something happens to put you into crisis and you want to talk to your minister, [call or text](#) me any time.

In faith and love, Karen

Minister's Availability

Rev. Karen will return to regular office hours the week of 9/15. Please [send her an email](#) to set up a time if you'd like to meet with her before then. She will be away on vacation Monday 9/8 through Thursday 9/11 - please [reach out to Jeanette Clawson](#) if you have a pastoral emergency during this time, and she'll contact Karen if needed.

Music Ministry

From Jennifer Hedstrom, Director of Music Ministry

Hymn of the Month: “We Will Carry Each Other” from Sing Out Love

Have you heard?! After over 2 years of work, discussion, and trouble-shooting the UUA has launched our first ever virtual hymnal! The vision of “Sing Out Love” is, [according to the UUA website](#), “to build a living collection of song resources through an accessible, equitable, online platform grounded in UU values. This virtual hymnal will help Unitarian Universalism live into our prophetic calling as a joyful, liberatory, and anti-oppressive faith.” You may have a lot of questions! I don’t think I could possibly answer them all in one blurb and, to be honest, Rev. Karen and I are still learning a lot as we explore this new resource. What I *can* tell you is that a lot of great new UU hymns are coming your way and our Hymn of the Month series will be a great way to get to know many of them!



September’s hymn of the month is composed by Soren Austenfeld and was inspired by conversations with UU colleagues and friends. Austenfeld currently serves as the music director at First Parish in Malden, which is located in the greater Boston area. I’m certain you’re going to love his creation!

Accessing **Sing Out Love** and its many resources requires a login. If you are interested in accessing the entire hymnal, please contact revkaren@jruuc.org.

Sacred Breath Choir is gathering again! Sacred Breath Choir welcomes folks of all voice types and musical backgrounds. We meet weekly on Thursdays from 7-8:30pm and sing at 1-2 worship services per month. Singing is nourishment for the mind, body, and spirit. Nourish yourself and your community by joining Sacred Breath Choir! Email Jennifer at music@jruuc.org with questions.

Share Your Skills: Did you know that your Director of Music Ministry gets 1-2 Sundays off a month? On those Sundays, JRUC volunteers or local professionals accompany Sunday worship in their place. Do you have significant piano or guitar skills and feel capable of leading our congregation in song? Please email Jennifer at music@jruuc.org to be added to a list of volunteers who could serve as the primary musician on Sunday mornings when Jennifer is not available.

Religious Exploration and Family Ministry

Great news! We’ve hired a new Director of Family Ministry. Emily Smith is a life-long UU and a member of First Unitarian Society. Emily will be at the Water Communion Service this Sunday, and you’ll get to hear more about her in next week’s e-news.

This Week: Our Ingathering / Water Communion service this Sunday will be multigenerational, with everyone together in the sanctuary. Rev. Karen will meet with our youth in the youth room at 11:45.

September Community Meal: The next community meal is **Sunday, September 21**. Details are still emerging - check back here over the next couple of weeks.

Small Group Ministries

Offering and Receiving Connection, Support, and Spiritual Practice

[Read more here](#)

Laughter Yoga - Second Mondays starting September 8, 6:30-7:30 p.m., contact [Virginia Harrison](#)

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

Sacred Breath Choir - Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m., contact Music Director [Jennifer Hedstrom](#)

Folk Music Gatherings - First & third Saturdays, 10:00-11:30 a.m., contact [Mike Stimson](#)

NEW Soul Matters Group “Building Belonging” - Wednesday 9/17, 7:15-8:45 pm, contact [Rev. Karen](#)

(see description below)

[Zoom Link for Meditation](#)

Covenant Groups are Forming for 2025-2026

Covenant Groups are part of the Adult Religious Exploration Program at JRUUC. Groups are randomly created at the start of each church year, based on the availability of people interested, and they meet monthly. They are closed groups, for confidentiality and community-building, and are made up of 6 to 10 people plus a facilitator. They have several purposes: to **build relationships** through the practice of **deep listening**, and to practice **shared ministry** with each other and our congregation as a whole. Please see [this brochure](#) for more information, and [sign up here](#) if you'd like to be part of a virtual or in-person Covenant Group this year.

NEW! Soul Matters Group - 9/17 7:15-8:45 pm

Covenant Groups will begin in October - in the meantime, you're invited to check out what small group ministry is. Rev. Karen will facilitate this group based on our monthly theme, Building Belonging, in which you'll be invited to reflect together on the gifts you received from your connection to some community you've been part of, using a set of “sentence starters”:

Before I found this community/group, I was...

Before I found this community/group, I saw myself as...

It was _____ (luck, effort, time, grace, etc.) that led me to this community/group.

While everyone in the community/group mattered deeply, the two people who especially made the community/group what it was were _____ and _____.

If I had not had this community/group in my life, I would have...

This community/group changed me from a person who _____ into a person who _____.

When I think back on my memories of belonging to this group, the moment that stands out is...

The thing that made this community/group unique was...

At the time, I don't think I fully understood how this group was...

If I could go back and change one thing about my time with this community/group, it would be...

The way we handled conflict also made this group unique. For example, there was the time when...
If this community/group was a weather pattern, it would be a _____.
If it was possible for me to gather the community/group together again and say thank you, I would say...
Contact [Rev. Karen](#) for more information.

Our Congregation and Community Calendar

Help Us Protect and Keep Our Immigrant Families Together! - 9/3

There are so many ways to help immigrant families during these frightening times when they need it the most. Just watching the news about all the new concentration camps and the mass deportations without any due process can be traumatizing for them! The white supremacist Christian nationalists may be trying to take over our government, but as Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Great injustices happen when good people do nothing." Join the movement for racial and immigrant justice in Dane County! [Here is the Zoom link](#) for our next Immigrant and Refugee Rights meeting on **Wednesday September 3 at 5:30 p.m.**, and learn what you can do to make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors.

-- Pete, Leila, Sharon, Mary and Kirsten, Immigrant and Refugee Rights Justice Action Ministry (JAM)

Tom Wernigg in Concert - 9/4

Our friend Tom Wernigg is opening for David Rovics at **Muso on Thursday, September 4 at 7 p.m.**

Folk Group and Open Mic Night - 9/6

The next folk group meetings are on **Saturdays, September 6 and September 20 at 10-11:30 a.m.** (first and third Saturdays). On 9/6 we will rehearse the Peter, Paul, and Mary song "[Somos El Barco](#)" for performing on the **Sunday September 7** Water Communion service, and we can also practice any songs anyone wants to perform with the folk group for Open Mic the evening of **September 6 from 6 to 8 p.m.** [Here is a booklet with a fake sheet for Somos el Barco.](#)

National Day of Action for Medicaid - 9/6

The Wisconsin Poor People's Campaign, in partnership with the Non Violent Medicaid Army, is hosting a National Day of Action Rally in **Monroe, WI on Saturday September 6 at 2 p.m.** If you would like to get involved by sharing your healthcare story or helping during the event, please [contact Megan Barry-Luglio](#).

Monthly Laughter Yoga Coming to JRUUC - 9/8

If you enjoyed the Laughter Yoga offered at a service back in April, you'll be tickled to know that we are now offering a monthly Laughter Yoga session available to anyone and everyone! Members of the Laughter Club of Madison will return to JRUUC on the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. for one hour of healing laughter in community. Mark your calendar, and bring a friend! **Second Mondays, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at JRUUC, beginning September 8.** Questions? [Contact Virginia Harrison](#).

Food & Faith Summit - 9/11

Join JRUUC member Joan Kemble at the Food & Faith Summit on **Thursday September 11 from 1 to 4 p.m. at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Madison** (2019 Fisher Street). Despite differences in theological and spiritual imperatives, the mandate for compassion towards those in need – especially the hungry – is deeply ingrained across belief systems. Join us in conversation to see how faith-based institutions can help ensure food is a human right in Dane County.

Book Lovers Club - 9/23

The Book Lovers Club will have its first meeting at **6:30 p.m. on Tuesday September 23!** We will meet from 6:30-7:00 p.m. for general chit chat and enjoyment of treats/any dinner you might want to bring for yourself, and then from 7:00-8:00 p.m. to focus the discussion on books. This group will not follow the traditional book club format of picking a book, reading it, and discussing it as a group. Instead, we are thinking of it as more of a space to share book recommendations, swap books, and eat treats.

Join us! Drop-ins welcome. No need to commit to coming to all of the meetings. Please [contact Renee Buchanan](#) with any questions.

Save the Date

October 18 - Getting to Know JRUUC Class

November 15 - Reeb Rave

[See our Online Congregational Activities Calendar Here](#)

Congregation News, Invitations & Announcements

Caring Tree Co-Coordinator Needed

Hello friends. Your beloved community needs 1-2 volunteers to be caring tree co-coordinators. It is an amazing way to get to know and help others in our Reeb family. The regular responsibilities include a monthly meeting and weekly follow up on Joys and Concerns as needed. The heart of the job is notifying team members about requests for help. Usually it is a fun and easy way to support others.

Sometimes serious situations require a higher level of involvement and communication. Meal Trains need to be set up and monitored periodically. [Contact the caring tree](#) for more information.

Quarterly Potlucks: Opportunity Knocks a Third Time!

Quarterly Potlucks have been going pretty well so far this year, and now it is time to prepare for the Fall potluck. In case you are new or have not yet participated, this is the story: A Quarterly Potluck is a chance for Reeb folks to sit together for a meal and conversation with 5 to 8 friends you may or may not have already met. The magic computer randomly puts the groups together, and one of the group members will host the others in their home at a date convenient to the participants.

If you are already on our list for these events, you don't need to sign up again. If you would like to start participating or just want more info, [write to Jan Gordon](#).

We Need More Greeters!

Please consider making a difference at JRUUC by becoming a greeter! For one Sunday per month, greeters arrive 20-30 minutes before service to get the building ready to welcome everyone, start the coffee, and greet everyone who arrives. After service, greeters clean up the kitchen so that we are ready to go for next Sunday. Please [contact Liz Chapa](#) if this sounds fun and you'd like to be added to the group. Training will be provided.

Sing with Perfect Harmony Chorus

If you love to sing, and are a member of or ally to the LGBT+ community, consider coming to sing with Perfect Harmony Chorus! Perfect Harmony is Madison's LGBT+ tenor, bass, and baritone chorus. They are looking forward to welcoming new singers starting on August 31 for their fall semester. Please [visit their website](#) for more information.

Please Help Carolina and Salvador in their Healing Journey

Please help the JRUUC Justice Team raise money through our GoFundMe for a wonderful, generous, hard-working immigrant couple from Colombia whom we have been working with, who are already in debt with uninsured medical costs and both need extensive testing and medical care so they can start working again and get back on their feet. See all the details and donate at [our GoFundMe page](#). Then please spread the word by sharing this GoFundMe on your Facebook page and with at least five friends, family and your networks.

Thank you so much for your UU compassion and your support,
Leila Pine, Immigrant Rights Co-Chair, JRUUC Justice Team

Inclusion and Community Care: Thinking about All of Us

From Rev. Karen: We are a community that values welcome and inclusion, and we know that this means listening to each other and making change to widen that welcome. I've heard from some

Reebers about two tangible ways we might make some intentional change, and I'd like to invite us all to reflect on them and engage with them.

First, our mobility-challenged folx need easier access to our building on Sunday mornings, especially if they happen to arrive after 10:00. I ask those of you who are physically able-bodied, to please leave the parking spaces in the city lot on the side of our building open so everyone can get here easily.

Second, you might notice signs in our foyer, encouraging masking and consent stickers as a practice of community care. These are to remind us that we have immunocompromised and Covid-cautious people in our community, that we're still operating under a simple [Covid policy](#), and that using masks and consent stickers protects us all from Covid and other respiratory illnesses. As vaccines and support for the sick are expected to become less available, and information on respiratory diseases is expected to become less reliable, it feels important to remember that the practices we began when Covid was a threat to more of us - multiplatform events, [covenantal consent](#) (stickers), and support for people who choose to mask - are still ways we can take care of each other, and good practices of welcome and inclusion.

Thank you for being part of this beloved community!

Deadline for the Weekly Newsletter Submission

Please send your submissions to news@JRUUC.org by **10 am 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.*

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!



SIDE WITH LOVE

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 and to register to receive the Zoom link for The Gathering.

[Click here](#) to view the recording from the 8/11 Gathering.

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](#)

**The 2025 UUA General Assembly adopted a
Congregational Study Action Item and Three Actions of Immediate Witness!**



This year's adopted social witness statements:

Congregations are invited to engage with the study topics and possible actions listed in the CSAI over the next three years, and to use the AIWs for guidance on issues to take immediate action on.

Three proposed **CSAIs** were admitted for consideration by the UUA General Assembly 2025, and the delegates adopted [Abolition, Transformation, and Faith Formation](#).

Five **AIWs** were proposed for the delegates to consider, and three were adopted:

- [We Declare and Affirm: Immigrants Are People Who Have Inherent Worth and Inalienable Rights](#)
- [Faithful Defiance of Authoritarianism: Reaffirming Our Covenants for Democracy and Freedom](#)
- [Defending LGBTIQ Freedom Amid Funding Crisis: A Call for Global Solidarity](#)

The process:

The [UUA Commission on Social Witness](#) oversees the **collective social witness process** among Unitarian Universalist Association member congregations and groups. Their mission is to amplify emerging social action, promote connections, and nurture accountable social witness across the Association. They facilitate two different types of social witness statements: **Statements of Conscience (SOCs)** which arise from **Congregational Study/Action Issues (CSAIs)**, and **Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs)**. **Congregational Study Action Issues** are issues selected by Unitarian

Universalist member congregations for three years of study, reflection and action. The purpose is to provide member congregations of the Association with an opportunity to mobilize energy, ideas and resources around a common issue. The end result will be a deeper understanding of our religious position on the issue, a clear statement of Association policy as expressed in a Statement of Conscience, and a greater capacity for congregations to take effective action. **Actions of Immediate Witness** are used by congregations in local efforts and empower them to take action and recommend action through other departments of the UUA and other Unitarian Universalist groups.

[Learn about CSAs and AIWs here](#) - and please **talk with Rev. Karen** if you'd like to hear more about how these are chosen, talk about what excites you about them, and share your ideas about how our congregation might work with them.

[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.