

# the steeple

*The Congregational Newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington*  
June 2022

## My Heart Is Full

*By Christina Fulton, Director of Operations & Finance*



What gets us through difficult times? Is it music? Is it reading? Is it faith? Is it family? Well, it's probably a little of all of these things. The start of the pandemic are days that I will never forget. The staff met every day that week. We started by making cute songs about washing our hands and by Thursday we were telling everyone to pack up what they would need to work from home for a few weeks and leave. Little did we know that we'd actually be working from home for two years!

I got home and set up my little "home office," also known as my dining room table. It was pretty efficient, but my antique dining room chairs squeak really loudly. So after several months of noise, I ordered myself a desk chair. That was a good call. I had the Society's mail forwarded to my home, I took over most of the bookkeeper's job because she didn't have what she needed to do that job from home, and I learned all about Zoom, and so much more. The learning curve was unbelievable.

But as the mail began to arrive in my home mailbox, I started to notice something. People, my UU peeps, were sending me their pledge payment checks in cards! Some just put the check in the card, some wrote short notes, and some wrote long notes. These notes, these cards, they got me through the pandemic. Each beautiful card made



*Irises, FUUSB Memorial Garden, Spring 2022*  
Image: Nancy Knox, Garden Team Chair

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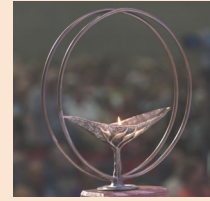
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me smile, and each lovely note made me feel like you were right there with me. I'm so happy that hand-written notes are not totally out of style. Thank you all who sent me cards and notes. Maybe you can see your card in the picture.



**FUUSB members voted at the 2022 Annual Meeting to adopt [the 8th Principle](#)!**



*Images: Christina Fulton*



## From the Ministerial Internship Committee

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By Ashley Waddell

Whether you're a longtime member or just starting to learn about Unitarian Universalism, you've probably met at least a few UU ministers. But have you ever wondered how they became ministers in the first place?

Members of this year's Ministerial Internship Committee are gaining a deeper understanding of the process as they work with our Ministerial Intern, Rowan Van Ness.

Since August, the Committee, comprised of Board of Trustees members Rodney Lowe and Amelia Schlossberg, Board member emeritus Louis deRosset, and new FUUSB member Ashley Waddell, has been meeting monthly with Rowan, serving as a sounding board and offering support and feedback as she builds her skills as a minister. And while a one-year internship doesn't magically transform a seminary graduate into a seasoned parish leader, it's been exciting to witness Rowan's personal and professional growth during her time with us.

Internships allow future UU ministers an opportunity to bring their academic background and divinity studies together with the practice of ministry. Many of you have met Rowan, heard her preach, and perhaps engaged with her in the context of our growing Radical Welcome efforts. She's been working with the Caring and Belonging teams and the Racial Justice Team on other initiatives as well.

In addition to answering practical questions about the congregation and offering feedback on Rowan's work at FUUSB, the Committee has



delved into the more profound facets of becoming a minister. Together, we've discussed how to make time for spiritual development amid the push and pull of everyday life. We've explored what it feels like to become a "Minister," taking on that unique leadership position within a congregation and all that the role entails. We've learned more about all that goes into writing and presenting a sermon. Along the way, we've gotten to know and love Rowan as she matures into the kind of UU leader our Association needs, now and in the years to come.

As a congregation, hosting an internship shows that FUUSB cares about nurturing the next generation of UU leadership, and I personally encourage anyone interested in mentoring new, motivated UU professionals to consider serving on a future Ministerial Internship Committee. It has been a profound and rewarding experience – and as Rowan is still with us until August, it's not over yet!

### Contact FUUSB!

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[FUUSB YouTube](#)

You may have noticed some work taking place in the small plot inside the Meeting House's semicircular driveway. For a couple of years this plot contained a sunflower garden. The sunflowers were a demonstration of the ability of certain plants to remove metal contaminants from the soil. This year the Climate Justice Team adopted this plot for a demonstration of a different sort: the value of native plants.

Native plants are generally defined as plants that occurred in a region before colonization by Europeans. Many non-native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, ferns, grasses, and vines have established themselves in Vermont's wildlands. These non-native species may outcompete and crowd out native species. Why does this matter?

- Native plants attract native pollinators, including bees, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds. Some of our most beloved butterflies and birds rely on native species as their only source of nectar.
- Native plants provide food for native insects, caterpillars, and other browsing animals, as well as seeds, nuts and berries, all of which support a range of birds and other wildlife. Non-native plants often provide little or no value to wildlife.
- Native plants are adapted to the local climate and conditions, support healthy soil microbes, and should thrive with minimal maintenance. By contrast, the average American lawn requires consistent watering. And it is often treated with petroleum-derived fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides,

which poison our waterways. Native plants establish deep and diverse root systems, which prevent rainwater runoff and soil erosion.

- All of this ecosystem support helps to restore the natural biodiversity of the area, which in turn supports climate resilience.

Our new garden has been planted with several species native to Vermont's dry, sunny areas. Many were purchased as bare root plants, which will take extra time to break their winter dormancy. Once they have had time to establish themselves, we will welcome you into the garden and provide signs to guide your exploration. For now, we ask that you give the new plants space to spread their roots and branches undisturbed. We hope that soon this garden will help to educate our community on the beauty and value of native plantings.

Please contact the Climate Justice Team ([climatejustice@uusociety.org](mailto:climatejustice@uusociety.org)) if you would like to help with this new garden.



*Native plants garden  
Image: Mary Andrews*



*YUuth Group Service Day, April 2022  
Image: Erika Reif*

# Join the Immigration Justice Team in Supporting Vermont Dairy Workers

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*By Mary Andrews, Immigration Justice Team Chair*

The Immigration Justice Team asks that you support migrant workers in our state by petitioning your local Hannaford store to join “Milk with Dignity” now.



“Milk with Dignity” is a key program of the Vermont farmworker advocacy group Migrant Justice. The Milk with

Dignity program

asks grocery manufacturers to source their milk in compliance with fundamental human rights, committing to dairy pricing that supports fair wages, basic benefits, and humane living and working conditions for migrant workers.

Hannaford, a Maine-based subsidiary of Dutch conglomerate Ahold Delhaize, relies on our region’s farms for many of its Hannaford-brand dairy products. The corporation claims that it respects human rights throughout its supply chain, provides fair wages and benefits, and fights poverty and hunger. In reality, Hannaford violates all of these commitments when it comes to migrant farmworkers. Workers on dairy farms supplying Hannaford brands work long hours in unsafe conditions, often without breaks, and can be subjected to wage exploitation. They routinely endure inadequate housing, blatant disregard for their health and well-being, and have no protection from abuse.

On May 1, supporters took action at 30 Hannaford supermarkets across the northeast, de-

manding that the company join Ben & Jerry’s in signing the Milk with Dignity pledge supporting dairy farms and workers. Community Voices for Immigrants’ Rights led leafleting at stores in Burlington, South Burlington, and Williston, seeking to educate Hannaford customers on the plight of dairy workers. Hundreds then joined migrant workers in a rally and march to Hannaford on Dorset Street in South Burlington. Farmworkers are asking allies to “voice their support at their local Hannaford: Put up a Milk with Dignity lawn sign, talk to the store manager, and join a leafleting campaign.”

“We need Hannaford to get the message loud and clear that workers and consumers are united in demanding Milk with Dignity!” says Migrant Justice. Please visit Migrant Justice’s website ([migrantjustice.net](http://migrantjustice.net)) for the “Adopt a Hannaford Toolkit” and to be joined with other concerned customers, including members of the Immigration Justice Team, for actions at your local store.



*Love & Justice Vigil for Ukraine, March 2022  
Image: Mark Kuprych*



## From the Climate Response Team

*By Chip Patullo*

This team is about the future of the physical church properties' energy use and emissions and how to reduce them as much as possible. Our goal is to try to get the church beyond even Net Zero, off fossil fuels altogether.

We spent the year first by soliciting bids for energy engineers to draft and develop an energy plan. We selected a local company, CX Associates, who have completed the first phase of the plan. The report outlines a number of options and the energy savings, as well as use alternatives. We are working with Burlington Electric Department and Vermont Gas Systems for their expertise and rebates, as well as Burlington's 2030 District planning for reducing emissions and optimizing energy.

One option includes air sealing and boosting the insulation in the attics and exterior walls. Note that there is a complication, as there is some hazardous material under some of the insulation that has to be removed before the Sanctuary can be re-insulated.

Another action is to increase the ventilation system with heat recovery and filtration for safe use of the church in the times of Covid. This would increase energy use but would make attending safer. Another option is to upgrade heating equipment efficiency. OR we might be able to eliminate fossil fuels by installing ground source heat pumps and use electricity to heat and cool the property by exchanging heat with the aquifer on the church grounds. We could also expand the solar array to power

these heat pumps. There are a number of technical details within many of these options.

The next phase of the report is to look at these options and give them prices to evaluate our approach and options. Once we have that we will solicit bids from contractors to install the various possibilities. In order to do this, we will need a fundraising campaign. The scope of that is to be determined.

We wanted to share our efforts to use our church to model the best of what is possible in a historic building for other congregations and others in the community. We'll keep you posted as we move forward.



*Spirit Play-Making, Sunday Children's Faith Development program, Spring 2022  
Image: Erika Reif*

## From the Women's Alliance

*By Ellen Hsieh, Women's Alliance Chair*

Like other UU small groups, the Women's Alliance has had to meet via Zoom for the last two years. While these meetings allowed us to keep in touch, they were not as enjoyable as our monthly luncheon meetings. So we were very happy to be able to meet in person for our April meeting.

We have continued to make our yearly contribution to JUMP, as well as to help out wherever we can in the Society. We donated a gift card from Homeport for the auction, and several of our members donated meals and cooking lessons to support the auction also.

At our April meeting we voted to replace the rocking chair cushions for the three rocking chairs in the Sanctuary and the vestibule. While I was measuring those chairs, David told me that the alcove cushions were in very bad shape and we decided to recover those also. Those cushions have now been recovered and are back in the alcove. The cushions for the rocking chairs were on backorder, but have now started to arrive.

We continue to support Elz Curtis and her work on the book on the Meeting House and look forward to completing that work in the near future. We are also discussing ideas for making the vestibule more welcoming.

Our last meeting before our usual summer break is our annual potluck luncheon at Rita Bortz's house in June. Hopefully we will be able to meet in person at the Meeting House in the Fall.



*New cushions in the alcove  
Image: Ellen Hsieh*



### **Summer Worship Schedule**

**June 26 - 12:30 p.m.**

**[UUA General Assembly Online Worship](#)**

11 a.m. - [Zoom Coffee Hour](#)

July 3 - No service - FUUSB July Break

**July 10, 17, 24, 31 - 10 a.m.**

**[Live-Streamed Worship](#)**

**Sign up to attend in person at**

[rsvp.church/r/eJ7rm65u](https://rsvp.church/r/eJ7rm65u)

11 a.m. - Outdoor Coffee Hour

**August 7, 14, 21, 28 - 10 a.m.**

**Outdoor Worship**

Summer Garden Childcare

11 a.m. - Outdoor Coffee Hour

11:15 a.m. - [Zoom Coffee Hour](#)

*More details will be shared at*

[uusociety.org](https://uusociety.org)!



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SOCIETY OF BURLINGTON**

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**VISIT US ONLINE!**

[UUSOCIETY.ORG](http://UUSOCIETY.ORG)



*FUUSB Annual Picnic - Memorial Garden, Elmore State Park Campout, June 2022  
Images: Erika Reif*