

# the steeple

*The Congregational Newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington  
April 2023*

## From the Board of Trustees

*Hope Baker-Carr, Board President*



As the days grow longer and the sun brings warmth again to the world around us, I feel an immense energy, excitement and promise for the days ahead. The pandemic feels as though it is behind us, and ahead, the enthusiasm of a new ministerial candidate who has answered our call, and the continued good work of so many who are involved in various activities of our Society.

Your Board of Trustees had been hard at work, as well. I am so proud of the individuals who have dedicated their time to this work, the knowledge, thoughtfulness, care and concern they bring to the table, always acting in the best interests of the Society as a whole. One group of board members is heavily engaged in creating the Spring-time in Vermont Auction, consisting of both an online auction with dinners, events, and services, followed by an in-person event, with raffles, live bidding, and music. The annual event serves to build connections among members and friends of our Society as well as fulfilling the board's obligation to fundraise.

At the same time another group is hard at work, reviewing the full Board Policy Handbook, to clarify, update, and in some cases, revise policies put into place in 2017. Safety Policies that dealt only with the safety of children in the Faith Development program are being greatly expanded to incorporate the concept of safety as an aspect of our

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## *From the Board of Trustees*

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covenant. To that end it addresses how we, as a radically welcoming congregation, can work to ensure the safety of our buildings and grounds and the health and safety of individuals attending our programs. Once approved, the revised Policy Handbook will be available on the FUUSB website, under Member Resources in Governance Documents.

Another Board initiative this spring has been to hold a series of Community Conversations, once a month after the service, in an effort to increase transparency and communication. In addition to this work the Board has been reviewing and responding to various initiatives proposed by the Racial Justice Team and the Climate Response Team (a subgroup of the Property Team) as it considers ways in which our Meeting House can be refurbished to conserve energy, improve air circulation, and become carbon neutral. All of this is taking place in addition to the routine board work of reviewing financial reports and budgets, and staying abreast of how the Senior Minister and staff's work is going. The agenda is always full!

### **Contact FUUSB!**

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[uusociety.org/information/staff](https://uusociety.org/information/staff)

[FUUSB YouTube](#)

## *From the Transition Team* **Celebrating Rev. Tricia!**

*Kameron McConnell, Lindra Moerdyk,  
& Jonathan Sands*

On Sunday, June 11, Rev. Tricia will deliver her final sermon as Developmental Minister of our congregation. Tricia and her husband Peter came to Vermont in May of 2019 and there is



much to celebrate about the time we shared together. When we first welcomed Rev. Tricia to the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, she let us know that Vermont was something of a mystery to her. As if to say you've seen the rest of New England and we want you to really get to know us, COVID had a special way of holding her captive here.

The Meeting House on June 11 will be alive with the excitement of expressing gratitude and wishing her well in retirement. We hope you can plan for an extended time together to celebrate. Expect a brief pause between our 10 a.m. service and an hour-long party in the Sanctuary, featuring songs, stories, poetry and laughs. In the pause between events, water and snacks will be available in the Parlors and children will be occupied. At 12:30 we'll gather on the Meeting House grounds to picnic and visit. Spread the word and mark your calendar!



## *From the Ministerial Search Team*

# Where Have We Come From and Where Are We Going???

*Peggy Owen Sands*

In spring 2022, FUUSB began preparations to have a new settled minister starting August 2023, following the retirement of Rev. Tricia!

April through June 2022, the congregation nominated and elected a 7-member ministerial search team: Nancy Hellen, Rose Ledoux, Tom Porter, Brian Haas, Amelia Schlossberg, Tom Hyde, and Peggy Owen Sands.

On October 9, 2022, the congregation charged the team to work hard, have fun, listen deeply, examine our biases, center our shared faith, and hold this congregation through the search process! You gave us fun necklaces, bunny ears, chalices, and goggles to remind us of this charge.

October through November 2022, the congregation attended listening sessions and took a survey about who we are as a congregation and how we hope our new minister will help us grow in the future. We heard from you that we are a fun, exciting, and justice-focused congregation!

In December 2022, we hosted a Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop to help us all examine our biases so that we can be open to whoever might be our next minister. We also wrote 41 pages(!) about us that the UUA shared with all UU ministers looking for a new congregation.

In January 2023, 21 ministers applied to our congregation! WOW! We read about each minister and chose ten to interview. We weighed their strengths with our congregation's hopes for our future, then unanimously chose four of them to invite for weekend visits.

In February and March 2023, the four ministers came here for weekend-long interviews. The tour

of our beautiful building and the clock in the tower was always a highlight, and we loved watching each minister lead a worship service.

In late March 2023, in contemplative dialogue, we shared each minister's strengths, to match those strengths to the hopes and desires of our congregation. All seven members of the Search Team came to the unanimous choice of Rev.



*Rev. Karen G. Johnston*

Karen G. Johnston. We are honored that the choice was mutual, and Rev. Karen G. Johnston has joyously agreed to be our candidate for settled ministry!

Next, **Candidating Week:** Rev. Karen will lead worship on Sunday, April 30 and Sunday, May 7. She will meet with as many of you as possible in between those Sundays. Then, all congregation members will vote on May 7 whether to call Rev. Karen to be our settled minister.

*The Candidating Week schedule can be found at [uusociety.org/members/ministerial-search](https://uusociety.org/members/ministerial-search).*



*Ministerial Search Team announcement on Sunday, April 2, 2023: (left-right) Tom Porter, Nancy Hellen, Amelia Schlossberg, Rose Ledoux, Tom Hyde, Peggy Owen Sands, Brian Haas. Image credit: Nancy Knox*



**SPRINGTIME  
IN VERMONT  
AUCTION**

***Springtime in Vermont*, this year's First UU Society online auction, began April 16 & ends Friday, April 28 at midnight!**

Visit the auction website at [auctria.events/FUUSBSpringAuction2023](https://auctria.events/FUUSBSpringAuction2023) to register and start bidding on paintings, dinners, sailing outings, food items, crafts, & much more! Help build community while supporting FUUSB!

And join us on Saturday, April 29 at 4:30 p.m. at the Meeting House to celebrate with raffles, music, food, live bidding, & more!

Email [springauction@uusociety.org](mailto:springauction@uusociety.org) with any questions.

The 2023 UUA General Assembly will be held June 21-25 in Pittsburgh, PA & online! Visit [uua.org/ga](https://uua.org/ga) to learn more!



*Easter Sunday service, April 9, 2023. Image credit: Jeb Spaulding*