



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of York



## February 2021 e-Newsletter

### UUCY's Knitting Group



**We meet from 10 AM to 11:30 AM every Tuesday morning. All year long!**

Our traditional meeting space is the Carriage House Sun Room where we have pretty good light and can sit in a circle. In nice weather, we bring lawn chairs and sit outside.

If you like to knit or crochet or even have spare time to have a conversation, please feel free to drop in as often as you want. We have spare yarn, patterns and needles in the closet in the Leader Room so we can even get you started if you want to learn! Not everyone makes things and not every member is a UU. Most of us are retired, though we always enjoy hearing a younger perspective! This group has been meeting for many, many years and welcome new comers!

#### **Zoom Meeting—**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85673585334?pwd=UDFrSGM4NnJYdFppRFpHdHlMVVh5QT09>

**Meeting ID:** 856 7358 5334

**Passcode:** 714721

### Catch Up On Past Services



**Subscribe to our channel**

### February Share the Plate Partner



Here's a message from Jean Treuthart, CEO of YWCA York. She shares our historical relationship between the UUCY and the YWCA Racial Justice Program. To show our support, YWCA, is our sponsored "Share the Plate" partner during the month of February.



## **UUCY Ramblers: Walk safely with UUCY Friends!**



L-R: Sue Bupp, Cho, Kate Haldeman, David MacVeigh, Carol Stowell, Joel Piperberg, Sherry Lookofsky, Marta Smith, Joan Fulton and Deb Gogniat (behind the camera).

Are you a walker and eager to reconnect with UUCY friends in a safe outdoor environment? Consider joining us for one or more of our four neighborhood rambles hosted by members of UUCY. We started Rambles in December and an average of 10 walkers showed up each time. There's **two Rambler Walks each week**. Each walk is an average 2- 3 miles; we wear masks and socially distance. Whether you prefer brisk or leisurely walking, all are welcome to come and walk at your own pace. If weather is an issue, contact the host to see if it is canceled.

## **Tuesday's at 10:00AM**

**Week 1 (Feb. 4)** - Highpoint Scenic Vista & Recreation ([https://yorkcountypa.gov/images/pdf/Parks/2020\\_Highpoint\\_Brochure.pdf](https://yorkcountypa.gov/images/pdf/Parks/2020_Highpoint_Brochure.pdf))

**Week 2 (Feb. 11)** - Heritage Rail Trail North ([https://yorkcountypa.gov/images/pdf/Parks/2020\\_Heritage\\_Rail\\_Trail\\_Brochure.pdf](https://yorkcountypa.gov/images/pdf/Parks/2020_Heritage_Rail_Trail_Brochure.pdf))

**Week 3 (Feb. 18)** - Sam Lewis (<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks/FindAPark/SamuelSLewisStatePark/Pages/default.aspx>)

**Week 4 (Feb. 25)** - Springettsbury Twp Park - Route 24 across from Boscov's/Galleria Mall. Park in the lot by the children's play structure & township building.

Please join me,  
Corlyn - [TuucyB@gmail.com](mailto:TuucyB@gmail.com) or (717) 668-1834

## **Thursday's at 1:30PM**

**Week 1 (Feb. 2)** - Eastern Ramble meeting at John Rudy Park (main entrance, near BR), hosted by Julie Amberg ([juliesamberg@gmail.com](mailto:juliesamberg@gmail.com) or 717-654-4203)

**Week 2 (Feb. 9)** - Central Ramble- UPMC Wellness Trail. (Parking lot B park in lots overlooking Roosevelt ave. marked Wellness Trail) hosted by Joan Fulton  
[joanfulton60@gmail.com](mailto:joanfulton60@gmail.com) or 717-873-7541)

**Week 3 (Feb. 16)** Northern Ramble meeting at Cousler Park ( Entrance A on Church Road with largesign & BR) hosted by Carol Stowell ([stowellcarol@gmail.com](mailto:stowellcarol@gmail.com) or 717-292-0708)

**Week 4 (Feb. 23)** Southern Ramble meeting at York Township Park. (25 Oak Street, York) Hosted by Deb Gogniat ([gogniatd@gmail.com](mailto:gogniatd@gmail.com) or 717-578-3085)





## Join us for Beloved Conversations Virtual Registration for Spring Term 2021: February 1 - 26, 2021

Beloved Conversations—the signature offering of The Fahs Collaborative at Meadville Lombard Theological School—is a program for Unitarian Universalists seeking to embody racial justice as a spiritual practice. In Beloved Conversations, we are here to heal the impact of racism on our lives, in order to get free together.

### Phases

*Beloved Conversations Virtual* will be released in three phases:

- ⇒ **WITHIN** (the individual, personal work we each need to do), launched in Fall 2020
- ⇒ **AMONG** (the institutional, systemic change needed in our congregations), planned launch in Fall 2021
- ⇒ **BEYOND** (the work outside our congregations, with our local communities), planned launch in Fall 2022

The first phase "Within" focuses on the internal work that each of us needs to do as we engage personal exploration of race and our work for racial justice. This work is different for white folks and for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and other racially targeted groups (BIPOC+)\* and "Within" phase will be done entirely in race-based caucuses/courses.

### More Information at Our Website

Go to [meadville.edu/beloved](http://meadville.edu/beloved) to read more about the program.

The link to the registration page will be made available on February 1 and stay open until February 26.

## Women's Perspective



Let's use our time together to reflect on our "pre-pandemic" selves and communities, considering the changes that have occurred and sharing our intentions that may involve some "tried and true" qualities and/or brand new lessons leaned to bring into our futures.

This link provides further intention setting directions. <https://www.becomingminimalist.com/intention-setting/>

**8:30 - 10AM** Women's Perspective zoom gathering

**2/13:**

**Zoom Meeting—**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85632933549?pwd=YUwyQ1I5QkZlQWRkdElyZHNiR0RlPz09>

**Meeting ID:** 856 3293 3549

**Passcode:** 863158

**2/27:**

**Zoom Meeting—**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87302672519?pwd=Ym55a0V5aGowa1k5ZmxwVXA3WVR2Zz09>

**Meeting ID:** 873 0267 2519

**Passcode:** 1955

**Let's Stay Connected Ladies!**



# Adult Faith Development Corner

## Mindfulness Exploration Discussion Group

Sunday Evenings 7 – 8PM

Facilitator: Donna Alcorn

Interested in exploring or deepening your spiritual practices? Come and join us on Sunday evenings as we nourish our capacity to keep an open heart and mind, lean into discomfort, and strengthen our own flourishing in this world. Feel free to attend when the spirit calls you.

**Zoom Meeting**—<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86087245534pwd=L29pOFAwY3dIVWVyeWZyYIBQQnVCZz09>

**Meeting ID:** 860 8724 5534

**Passcode:** 605136

## February 7th

Cultivating a courageous heart Parts 1 & 2 in response to the Capitol invasion - presented by Tara Brach.

<https://www.tarabrach.com/cultivating-courageous-heart/>



## February 14th

<https://www.tarabrach.com/cultivating-courageous-heart-2/>



## February 21st

Pema Chodron - The Noble Journey (of Mindfulness) From Fear to Fearlessness

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6t\\_SGso\\_1PY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6t_SGso_1PY)



## February 28th

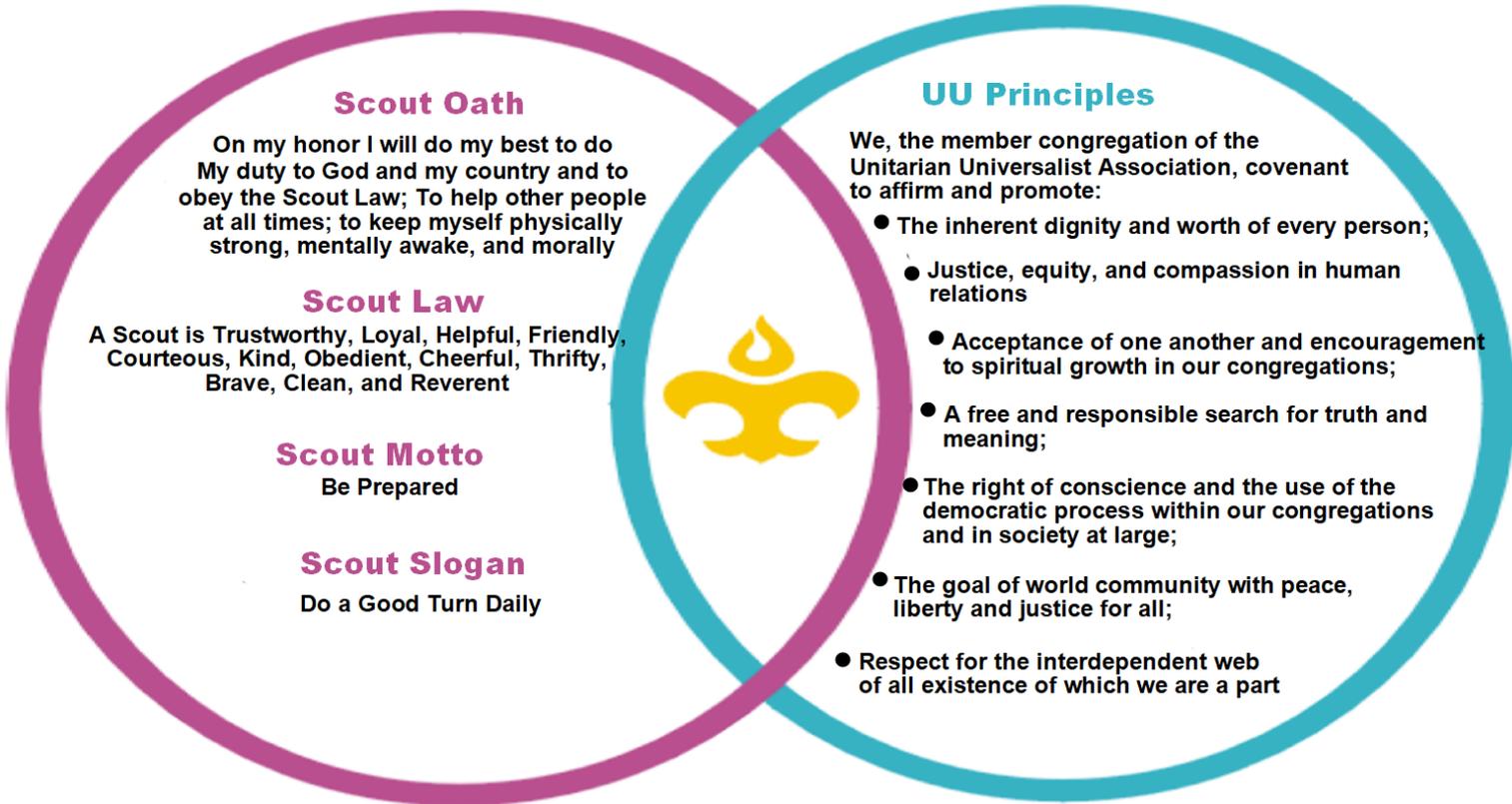
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6t\\_SGso\\_1PY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6t_SGso_1PY)





The “*Aims of Scouting*” are character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness.

**CUB SCOUTING** is for boys and girls in kindergarten through fifth grades, or 6 to 10 years of age. Children who are older than 10, or who have completed the fifth grade, are eligible to join the [Scouting BSA](#), or [Sea Scouting](#) or [Venturing programs](#). **Cub Pack 37** (K-5th grade) meets in the sanctuary during the school year on Wednesday nights from 7-8 PM. **Our Cub Pack 37 program is eagerly welcoming new members!** For more information on Cub Pack 37, contact **Cub Committee Chair George Kain**, cell 717-880-8730, email [ghkain3@gmail.com](mailto:ghkain3@gmail.com)



## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE



Last month we were privileged to read the wonderful story of members, Ron and Mary Toomey. The Membership Committee would like to make this a monthly column in order to fight the isolation caused by the Pandemic, and to simply help us to get to know each other better. This will be an opportunity to learn about each other, and to develop our interpersonal relationships for the future. We are inviting all members, and friends of UUCY to participate. We will provide you with a set of common questions, such as “How many years have you been a UU?” and “How long have you been attending UUCY?.” There will also be a set of fun, and thought provoking questions such as ---- “What is your favorite book?, or “What would your theme song be?”, or “What was the best advise you were ever given?. “ Or you may choose to share your story with us, as the Toomeys did so beautifully.

If you are interested in participating please contact the membership committee [membership@uucy.org](mailto:membership@uucy.org). Or be **prepared** for the membership committee to contact you!

# WORSHIP COMMITTEE

**You can play a role as we strive to nurture each other's spirits!**

Worship Committee is looking for folks to serve as Worship Associate for these Sundays:

**February-7, 14 and 28**

**March-7, 14 and 21**

This role can be performed remotely from your home or from within the sanctuary.

A script will be provided for you to preview and get comfortable with at least 24 hours before the service. You will also be invited to insert a few words of your own that tell of you and/or your family's engagement in the UUCY community.

A brief "run through" happens (usually a few days before the service) so everyone is comfortable and confident with the flow of the service.

If you are considering taking on this role, know that the degree of 'stage is significantly less than when you stand at the pulpit in a sanctuary full of people!

Contact me via my email address or text me:

**Robert Felton**

[rbrtfelton@gmail.com](mailto:rbrtfelton@gmail.com)

**717-712-2935**

Looking forward to hearing from you!



## Religious Education Small Groups

**2/7**

No RE Small Groups this Sunday. Watch Monthly Theme Videos. MS Youth Group to meet Thursday (2/11) at 7:00PM.

**2/14**

RE Small Groups for Elementary (11:30AM), PreTeen (11:30AM), and HS Youth (3:00pm). MS Youth Group met on Thursday (2/11) and will meet again in two weeks.

**2/21**

No RE Small Groups this Sunday. Watch Monthly Theme Videos. MS Youth Group to meet Thursday (2/25) at 7:00PM.

**2/28**

RE Small Groups for Elementary (11:30AM), PreTeen (11:30am), and HS Youth (3:00pm). MS Youth Group met on Thursday (2/25) and will meet again in two weeks.



## **February Worship Schedule**



**ZOOM Meeting**  
**Meeting ID: 92120756270**  
**Passcode:1955**  
**10 AM Virtual Service**

### **February 7th "Perchance to Dream"**



We are all dreamers, even if we are unaware of it. Please join us this Sunday as Rev. Terry invites us to reflect on the connection between our dreams and our spiritual connectedness.

### **February 14th "Luminescence Service"**



Please join us for a special multigenerational service that will celebrate the light that shines within each of us. We honor our Unitarian Universalist faith for allowing us to pursue spirit with reason. We express our commitment to the principles that guide us and to actions that transform the world. And we celebrate the freedom our faith provides toward seeking our own personal truths.

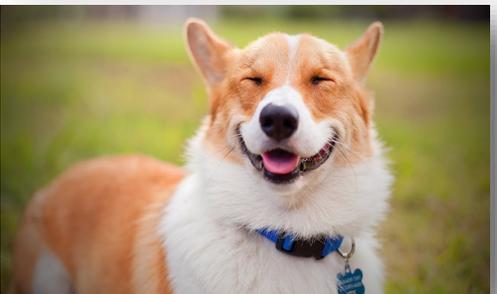
### **February 21st "The Prophets of Ancient Israel " The Most Disturbing People Who Ever Lived"**



Our guest speaker this Sunday, Rabbi Michael Pollack, will explore the philosophy and character of the prophets of ancient Israel. We will ask: Who were they, what kind of people were they, what motivated them, what did 'hope' mean to them? Who were these disturbing people who were heroes of the poor and dispossessed and thorns in the side of those who oppressed? We will look at how their profound imagination, intense compassion, and poetic existence contrasted with the harsh empires of their time, and how the dreams and challenges of the prophets are still alive and real today.

Rabbi Pollack grew up in Rockville, Maryland. During his last year of rabbinical school in Philadelphia, he co-founded March on Harrisburg, a group dedicated to making corruption illegal and taking our democracy where it's never been before by passing anti-corruption, pro-democracy bills in Pennsylvania. Michael lives in Philadelphia, and his hobbies include convincing politicians to not be corrupt, long marches through the Pennsylvania countryside, and sitting down in inconvenient places in the State Capitol.

### **February 28th "Carry On, Be Happy"**



Is there a science of happiness? Are there formulas hidden in nature that, understood and deciphered, hold the clues to happiness? How can happiness become a spiritual practice? This Sunday Rev. Terry will reflect on the elements of happiness and how we might find them for ourselves in a chaotic and often unhappy world.



# STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

## P L E D G E D R I V E



It is a very special time at UUCY. This is the time each of us gets to think about how much UUCY means to them personally, to their family, to the York community and to our nation and world.

Pledge forms were mailed to all members and pledging friends on January 11<sup>th</sup>. If you did not receive yours by now please email Diane Kearney at [dkearney51@gmail.com](mailto:dkearney51@gmail.com).

The pledge drive runs through February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Please take time before then to complete your pledge form and send it back to UUCY in the pre-addressed and postage paid envelope provided in your mailing. We encourage everyone who can to have their pledge paid by auto withdrawal since it is simple and ensures receipt of the pledge especially in these times we cannot meet in person on Sundays. Auto withdrawal forms are included in the mailing.

**Our pledge drive goal is \$270,000.** We came very close to achieving that goal last year so let's **MAKE IT HAPPEN THIS YEAR!**

We are hoping to be back together in person by September. Robust pledge drive results will ensure we will be in a strong position to achieve our dreams of maintaining a liberal and welcoming worship community in York and a formidable voice for social justice.

**LET IT BE SO!**

**Diane and Tom Kearney – Stewardship Committee Co-Chairs**



## BUILDING & GROUNDS –



### **New Heating / Air Conditioning Units**

During the January board meeting, the Board approved a request from the Building and Grounds Committee to replace four heating / air conditioning units in RE classrooms. These units were installed when the building was constructed, and they served us well for many years. More recently, various repairs were needed, and one other unit was replaced with a newer model. The old units are no longer supported by the manufacturer, and replacement parts are difficult to find. This winter, a 7 Tribe class was left without heat for over a week.

There is a reduced price for replacing four units, rather than doing them individually. The new units will match the one already replaced, simplifying future maintenance. The \$15,000 cost will be paid for with funds on hand, not requiring a withdrawal from the Weiss trust. Although such capital expenditures are never fun, they are a necessary investment for our present and our future.

# Staff & Board Reflections

“Many centuries ago, Saint Augustine, a saint of my church, wrote that a people was a multitude defined by the common objects of their love. What are the common objects we love that define us as Americans? I think I know. Opportunity. Security. Liberty. Dignity. Respect. Honor. And, yes, the truth.” - Joseph Biden, 46th President of the United States, Inaugural Address on January 20, 2021

“But one thing is certain, if we merge mercy with might, and might with right, then love becomes our legacy, and change our children’s birthright. So let us leave behind a country better than the one we were left with.” - Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate, The Hill We Climb

Love. As I sit here and ponder the topic for February’s reflections I cannot help but be drawn to the events of recent days and weeks in our nation - specifically the inauguration of Joe Biden as the 46th President of the United States. Love caught my attention in multiple ways that day and stuck with me in the form of the quotes featured above. As UUs I think the objects of our collective love are well summed up with our Principles. We make a spiritual habit out of professing our love through our actions although we may not think of it that way.

For many, when we think of February and Valentine’s Day the idea of love is pigeonholed into one specific expression of love: romance. Our society has capitalized on the idea of celebrating romantic love with this holiday by giving gifts of sweets and flowers to our romantic partners, spending money on expensive jewelry, dining in fancy restaurants, and traveling to exotic locales. In our hyperfocusing on this single form of love, we have left out a whole slew of other expressions of love that are just as important and worthy of celebration.

Platonic love of friends and acquaintances is worthy of celebration. Holding your friend’s hand as they grieve the passing of a loved one, helping new parents with household chores, and sharing in the physical labor of moving your friend’s possessions to a new home are all examples of love. Familial love of relatives is worthy of praise. Taking care of young children and aging parents, opening your home and heart to people in need of family, and sharing your life experiences as wisdom are all expressions of love. Agape, what some would call divine love and others may view as selfless and unconditional love of others, is also worthy of honor during this holiday. Volunteering to make and serve food to those experiencing homelessness, working on solutions to ease the effects of climate change, seeking justice for those who the world treats unfairly, and caring for oneself are all forms of love.

Expressions of love are not always grand gestures, nor should they be, in my opinion. Often, it is in the simple everyday actions of ordinary people that love is shown and how it grows. Make space for that vehicle to merge into traffic with a smile and a wave: that is love. Pick up that fast food wrapper blowing across the parking lot at work or school: that is love. Create something like a drawing, poem, card, origami figure, or other art for someone you care about: that is love. Wash the dishes, make or order a meal, mow the grass, clean the toilet: that is love. Donate money, march in a protest, sign a petition, vote: that is love. Teaching a new skill with patience, speaking truth with kindness, listening without preconceptions: that is love. Enforcing your boundaries, speaking your truth, doing things that make you happy: that is love. Going on a date with your partner(s), exchanging gifts of chocolate and flowers, lighting candles and spreading flower petals: yes, that is also love.



My hope for all of us this Valentine’s Day is that we give and receive love in all the ways that fill our hearts and spark our spirits. May you celebrate knowing that you are already so loved by this community of people who have been brought together by the power of love itself. Let us remember what the common objects of our love are as a people and make sure that love truly does become our legacy not only as UUs, but as Americans.

—Jenn Potts  
Vice Chair of the Board, UUCY

# Staff & Board Reflections

As February gets under way, our thoughts anticipating the coming of Spring become more and more. And February is famous for its celebration of love in the annual Valentine's Day gift-giving tradition.

It is hard to believe that seventeen months have gone by since my first sermon as UUCY's minister.

I remember that Sunday well, including sharing the different words that the ancient Greeks had for the different concepts of love – *agape*, *philia*, *eros*, and so on. Some of these words have crossed over into everyday use in the English language. The word *eros*, for example, is the word for love that is most (but not the only word) associated with Valentine's Day.

The indigenous peoples who live near the Arctic Circle have several words for snow, depending on the variety (but not dozens, as our popular mythology would have it).

Something that impacts civilization dramatically, it seems, commands special treatment in our vernacular.

Our Anglo/American culture rarely uses more than one word for love, which I guess is symptomatic of the one-size-fits-all-ness that is a feature of our modern lives. As our culture gets more and more complex with ever more machines, one might think that language would follow, by increasing in complexity. In some ways, I'm sure it has, but the word love in the English language has pretty much stayed the same for centuries. (Spanish, the language of the first significant number of European settlers in the Americas, also has more words for love than English. Perhaps that is why it is called a "romance" language.....)

Does the relative paucity of words for love in English mean that love is not as important to English speakers as others? I don't think so. Love, in all of its forms, is the foundation of what makes us human. It is central to what has helped our species to survive.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose birthday our nation just celebrated as a public holiday, knew full well the political, economic, and sociological power of that simple word, *love*. For it was in that word that he saw the answer to his famous question, whether mankind should choose between chaos and community.

"This call for worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class and nation," he wrote, "is in reality a call for an all-embracing and unconditional love for all [humanity]. This often misunderstood and misinterpreted concept has now become an absolute necessity for the survival of [humankind]. When I speak of love, I am speaking of that force which all the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality."

Dr. King was by no means a misty-eyed romantic. His idea of love was clear and practical, a way of bringing order to a chaotic world. Through love, we live.

Personally, I think I'm a lot more mushy about love than Dr. King was. I can't help using the word love in my everyday language. I tell people I love them all the time. Sometimes, I receive an odd look in return, but for me, telling a person I love them is a way to convey to them that they bring me joy. And they do.



**Rev. Terry Cummings**

Perhaps, after all, it isn't such a bad thing that the meaning of the word *love* in the language I have spoken since my birth is ambiguous. Perhaps, in trying to discern the meaning of a vague term like love in a particular context, we get a glimpse of the ultimate mystery that lies behind the creation of our universe. For in thinking about love, we must think theologically about the key to the door about which Dr. King was speaking when he wrote his words above.

I hope that all of our beLOVED UUCY community finds joy, peace and comfort this Valentine's Day and beyond.

# Staff & Board Reflections

***“In English we must use adjectives to distinguish the different kinds of love for which the ancients had distinct names.” - Mortimer Adler***

## **Developments in Faith—**

I love my wife. I love my children. I love the people of this congregation. I love York. I love the United States. I love the world. The list of people, places, and things that I love could go on forever. Perhaps we overuse the word and thus render it less meaningful. Or, perhaps, we have limited ourselves by trying to fit the multitude of ways we experience love into one single word. Maybe the Greeks had it right by proscribing different words for different kinds of love.

If you are unfamiliar with the different Greek words, here is a quick primer: 1) Eros, or passion/desire; 2) Philia, or deep friendship; 3) Storge, or familial love; 4) Ludus, or playful love; 5) Mania, or obsessive love; 6) Pragma, or enduring love; 7) Philautia, or self love; and lastly, 8) Agape, or selfless love. As this shows, we experience love in a variety of ways and I find it limiting to just say “love” as if that fully describes my emotions - especially when it comes to my religious and spiritual life.

As your Director of Lifespan Faith Development, it is my goal to help you fall in “love” - with others, with yourself, and with a lifetime of growth. It is my goal to help you find, experience, and treasure many of the forms of love listed above. As always, they all fall into one of the three B categories of Belong, Believe, Become.

## **BELONG** - philia, storge, pragma

Aristotle described philia as “dispassionate virtuous love.” It is here at UUCY that I hope you find relationships that involve loyalty, camaraderie, and teamwork. With storge, I hope that children and adults can find mentors and mentees that are like trusted family. Saying that this community is your faith family is more than just a cute moniker; it is a deeply held spiritual value. With pragma, I hope you can find relationships that endure. It can be easy to find different forms of love but it is much harder to maintain it. With pragma, there must be continuous effort to remain in love. This is the love of people who have come together, demonstrated patience and acceptance of one another, and have compromised with each other in order to make the relationship maintain its love. Sounds a bit like a covenant of right relations, no?

## **BELIEVE** - philautia

Philautia is self-love in its healthiest form. You cannot reach out to the world until you have taken the time to look inward. Taking the time to explore your faith, to figure out what you believe, and find the spiritual practices that sustain you are extremely important religious values. Once you have learned to love and support yourself, only then will you be able to provide love and support to others. Without it, you will burnout. There is an oft-quoted phrase shared about this particular practice of self-love: “You cannot pour from an empty cup.” Whatever you wish to sow out in the world must first be cultivated in your own heart.

## **BECOME** - agape

Finally, we arrive at the most infamous of all Greek loves, agape. It is widely considered to be the highest and most radical form of love - selfless love. Agape is how we put our faith into action, by practicing unconditional love with boundless compassion. This is the type of love in which we deeply feel the presence of the divine where we move beyond our own interests to see the greater good for all.

For me, the point of coming to church is deeper than just finding friends and family (belonging), it is deeper than just intellectually stimulating or spiritually sustaining myself (believing), and it is deeper than just practicing compassion for and towards others (becoming). It is a beautiful combination of all three - a transformation through love in its many forms.



**Grace and Blessings,  
Matthew Shineman  
Director of Lifespan Faith Development**

# Staff & Board Reflections

“Love is all you need.” – The Beatles

I ❤️ music! It’s been true since I was a toddler, curiously reaching up above my 2-year old eye level to touch the keys of our old family spinet. I loved the sound of the piano from the beginning of my remembered listening.

But it turns out that love is not actually all you need as a music student. In fact, sometimes “love” gets in the way of what you need to do. Non-musical passions sap time and energy that must be given to mastering the physics of playing the piano. Discovering, let alone learning, even a fraction of the repertoire for the instrument takes years of exclusive, immersive work. There are some days that I am pretty sure that not only do I not [heart] music, I think I might actually hate the piano. My ebony and ivory companion refuses to respond, turning on me like a spurned lover. In frustration I have hurled print scores to the floor, swatted metronomes from the music rack, and slammed down the key covers. It’s a good thing that the piano is so solid: it absorbs my tantrums gracefully, waiting for me to regain control and return, ever faithful, to playing.

In spite of the frustration, what keeps me coming back over and over again to my first and most enduring fascination? It must be true love – nothing else could possibly explain it. My mom told me that while love is the foundation of a relationship, any worthwhile relationship takes long, hard work to sustain it. That’s certainly been true of my love of music.

The early rush of introduction, the fresh bloom of infatuation, and the giddy pace of youthful discovery all had to develop, in time, into something broader, deeper and more lasting. It’s no coincidence that playing slow pieces is one of the hardest things for a young pianist to do. I once asked a student why he was having so much difficulty playing slowly, and he said, “because there’s too much time in between the notes to forget what I’m doing!”

As this pandemic wears on, I am trying hard not to forget what I am doing, and to remember that I really do love what I do. Being a musician now is like having a long-distance relationship: it’s hard work to recall the electricity of that first encounter, to hold fast the memory of desire when the dreary day-to-day threatens to undermine fidelity. There are times when it’s difficult: Zoom lessons are sterile, recording a “click track” is an expressive straightjacket, and the lack of in-person connection with people – the congregation, an audience, a choir – is so disheartening. And yet. “All you need is love”. I have an endless passion for sound and an abiding love for the piano (my first crush).

Now I need to continue the hard work of sustaining my long-distance relationship through this season of slowness because truly, I ❤️ music.

**Music Director,  
Gretchen Dekker**



# Staff & Board Reflections

*"Children are the anchors that hold a mother to life."—Sophocles*

Someone once told me “you’ll never truly understand unconditional love in the truest form until you have children”. After hearing this (pre-children), I was slightly offended. I thought, that’s rather opinionated. How could someone make a statement like that when they have no knowledge of the love I have for various people in my life; or the value, and importance I hold near and dear to my heart.

That said, now with two children of my own, I can completely understand the underlying truth to that statement once shared with me. I thought I was capable of true unconditional love, but it wasn’t until becoming a mother, LOVE took on an entirely new meaning. I’m not saying someone is incapable of true love without having children, not at all. There’s all types of varying forms of love. Love you have for your closest friends, love you have for your family members, love you have for your significant other, love you have for a dear pet, love you have for various places, hobbies, etc.

However, the love I personally held instantly and continuously for my children is indescribable and truly “unconditional”. The definition of unconditional is: not subject to any conditions. One definition for love is: an intense feeling of deep affection. That said, the “unconditional love” of a mother (and father) is immutable and unique to any other form of love I’ve ever experienced.

The type of love I’m speaking of is purely selfless, never changing, and unconditional. A type of love that regardless of any circumstance, decision, or event that could occur, it can not be relinquished. I may not agree or support every decision either of my children make, but there’s nothing they could ever do, or no situation that would ever change my everlasting love for them.

After having my first child I thought, I will never love anyone to this extent. When I was found out I was expecting my second child, I had this deep almost shameful guilty concern of “what if I don’t love this baby as much as I do my first?”, or “what if my oldest thinks I no longer love them as much as I did because now so much of my attention is on the new baby?”

I’m not sure if all expecting parents have those concerns, but I’d bet it’s more common than I believed it to be at the time. One beautiful characteristic of love is it can be experienced in abundance. It’s boundless, and limitless.

After having my second child, I felt foolish for the concerns I previously held. It was natural, simple and effortless. Unconditional love can’t be contained; it deepens and overflows. I didn’t love one child more than the other. It was just more love to hold and share.

Of all the various relationships and aspects that make me, me—my children take precedence above all else. Being a mother and having the love I have for them is by far the biggest blessing of my life; which I’m eternally grateful.

**Communications Coordinator,  
Rachel Schmidt**



