



The USNF Beacon

Weekly Newsletter of The
Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence

Committee Reports & Happenings
October 12, 2021 Vol. 2, Issue 10.3

Fall Share the Plate Groups Selected

At the October 4th Coordinating Council meeting, attendees selected five organizations as recipients of USNF's *Share the Plate* collections from September through January. The ranked choice voting process began with a list of ten, nominated by committees, members, and friends of the congregation, all reflecting the concerns and actions of USNF, including refugee assistance, Native American support, voting rights, climate action, COVID relief in developing countries, and racial justice.

For the next several months, we will split our weekly donations 50/50 with one of the following 5 organizations:

- Catholic Charities of Springfield's Afghan Humanitarian Support (<http://diospringfield.org/Ministries/cca/>)
- First Nations COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund (<https://www.firstnations.org/covid-19-emergency-response-fund/>) to help Native American communities respond and recover from COVID-19
- The Movement Voter Project (<https://movement.vote/>) supports grassroots organizations in key election states
- EmbraceRace (<https://www.embracerace.org/>) is a locally-based organization with a national reach that educates parents and teachers about important racial justice issues
- ARISE for Social Justice (<https://www.arisespringfield.org/>) a Springfield based group which educates, advocates, and organizes to take action against oppression



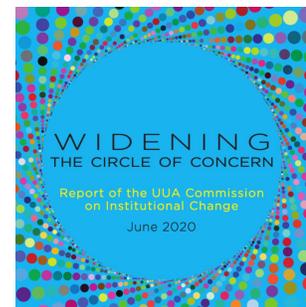
The Coordinating Council will once again collect nominations in January for organizations that align with the focus and principles of USNF. You can email organizations to council@uunorthampton.org. The Coordinating Council meets on the first Monday of the month from 6:30-8 and everyone is welcome to attend.

Widening the Circle Discussion Groups

In September, USNF held two Widening the Circle listening groups, looking at the [introductory chapter of the report](#). We had some wonderful discussions with many trends identified about what brings people to our congregation and what changes we might like to see.

For example, answers to the question: *What Brings You to USNF?* included:

- *social justice~ faith in action*
- *spiritual exploration in a community*
- *sense of connection to others with shared values*
- *beliefs and principles*
- *community where my kids can explore their values*



- opportunities for kids to begin forming foundational beliefs

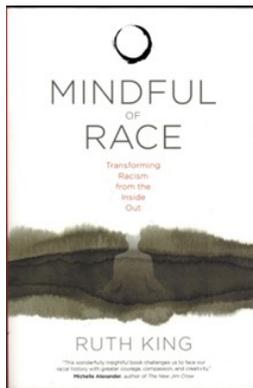
Additional observations about our congregation included:

- *the importance of diversity and inclusion*
- *we are predominantly a community of older white people*
- *what steps do we take to address the above?*
- *appreciation for the hybrid services & opportunity to meet so many people over Zoom*
- *a strong sense of encouragement to keep learning and move forward*

This is but a small sampling of what we discussed. If you would like to learn more about what we are talking about, join us either on Sunday, October 24th at 4 pm or Thursday, October 28th at 7 pm on Zoom as we discuss and explore the chapter on Theology. Read or listen here: [Theology | Widening the Circle of Concern | UUA.org](#)

If you cannot join us for our Zoom gatherings, we welcome you to share your thoughts after you have read the chapter on Theology. This is a year of listening and exploring and we encourage you all to join in and have your voice heard. Please email: wtc@uunorthampton.org

Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out by Ruth King New Discussion/Meditation Group Starting Oct 13 thru Dec 1, 2021



If we want to change the world, we must change ourselves. The author, Ruth King, offers a prayer, *“May our thoughts and actions reflect the world we want to live in and leave behind...May we meet the racial cries of the world with as much wisdom and grace as we can muster.”*

Save the dates and consider joining our discussion of the book, *Mindful of Race*. We'll meet to discuss the book via Zoom every other Wednesday, 7 to 8:30 pm, starting October 13 and concluding December 1. On the alternate three weeks, we'll offer silent, sitting meditation - with instruction for those new to practice - and a brief period of meditation for all.

We expect the book discussions to be valuable for everyone. We'll explore how Buddhist-inspired mindfulness can help us understand the harmful habits of racism and cultivate a culture of care and healing. We'll read and discuss the book and encourage meditation practice as we awaken to, and engage with the challenging experiences arising from racism. We'll plan to meet by Zoom until we know if it's safe to meet in person in the parlor.

Discussion leaders are David Caruso, Chris Spicer, and Craig Dreeszen. Broadside Books has or can order the book. FMI and to sign up, contact Craig Dreeszen; craig@dreeszen.com

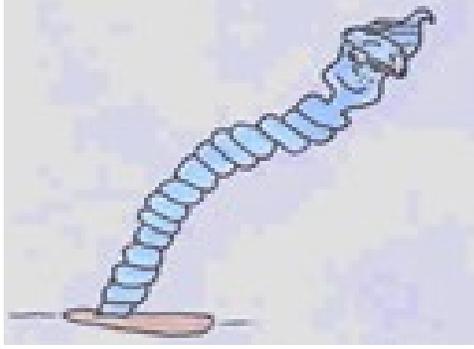
Climate Action Group "Camp Awesome" Coming Soon!

The Climate Action Group (CAG) will be introducing **"Camp Awesome"** to the congregation.

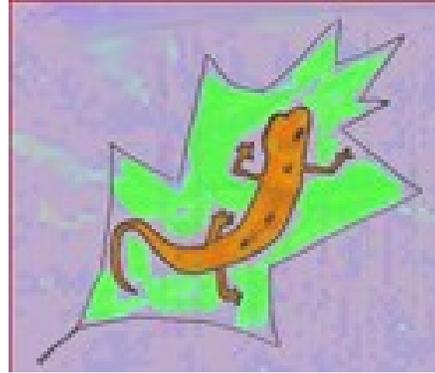
It's a game for kids and adults.

You start out as a humble earthworm.

If you complete a few fun challenges, you advance to the next level and become a red eft!



You might win a prize,
or have an epic poem written about you!



But no matter what, you will enjoy your progress from level to level and the skills you will learn along the way. The game is cooperative and will make you smile. And it has a noble purpose. Come play with us!

For more information contact Bill Diamond: diamondwd59@gmail.com

Keep the Flame Burning ~ October 15th 5:30 - 6:30 pm



Our monthly Friday Flame meetings are a time to share hopes and fears, plus ideas and plans related to social justice. We'll have time to share what's in our hearts and on our minds, plus each social justice group will provide updates. This is a time for learning, reflection, and cross-pollination about social justice, adding to our efforts to mobilize for the 2022 election, reverse climate change, and achieve racial justice. Join Zoom

Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3757958488>.

Inter-Faith Shelter Meals

The USNF Youth Group will be cooking for the Inter-Faith Shelter again this year. Their season runs from Nov.- May. Donations of grocery gift cards for food shopping are needed and appreciated. You can drop them off in the Youth Director Johnny's mailbox at USNF or give them to Cathie Brown.

FMI: youthfulusnf@gmail.com.

Thanks for your continued support!



USNF Beacon Publication Schedule

The USNF Beacon is published on Tuesdays with featured articles appearing each week as follows:

Week 1 - Minister's Notes

Week 2 - Board Report

Week 3 - Committee Reports and Articles

Week 4 - Religious Education and Faith Development

Week 5 - Editor's choice for month's that have 5 Tuesdays

Articles/photos are due in the Friday before the week they are to be published. Please limit your article to 250 words or contact Beacon Editor.

Send submissions to: newsletter@uunorthampton.org

Contact

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Us

The Reverend Janet C. Bush, Minister
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Partner of the Unitarian Congregation in Homoródkarácsonyfalva, Transylvania (Romania)