



## *The Beacon*

### Weekly Newsletter of The Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence

May 9, 2023 Vol. 4, Issue 5.2

#### *In This Issue:*

- Board Report: Beloved Community
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- Poetry from our Community: Infinity by Arjuna Greist
- Our Shared Community: Update on Rev. Karen G. Johnston

### Board Report Beloved Community



Your Board of Trustees has been looking toward the **Annual Meeting on May 21st** where the congregation will elect new members to the Board, the Nominating Committee, the Coordinating Council, and vote on the Budget for the coming church year. Additionally, the BoT strongly supported the proposal by the Racial Justice Team to vote on adopting the 8th Principle as follows:

*"We, the members of the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence, covenant to affirm and promote:  
journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build  
a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that  
accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions  
in ourselves and our institutions."*

We discussed what is meant by Beloved Community as defined on the UUA website:

*"Beloved Community happens when people of diverse racial, ethnic, educational, class, gender, abilities, sexual orientation backgrounds/identities come together in an interdependent relationship of love, mutual respect, and care that seeks to realize justice within the community and in the broader world."*

The Board also appointed delegates to the General Assembly for this June. USNF delegates are Emily Quintana, Cathy Lilly, Sarah Metcalf, Corky Klimczak, and myself (Ed Olmstead). GA's main focus this year will be on proposed changes to the UUA bylaw section that includes the Principles and Purposes. If approved by a majority vote, congregations will have another year of discussion before a final vote at the GA in June 2024. The delegates are all actively working to understand

and fully engage with this important process of change. We are and will be reaching out to hear from and converse with those of you who wish to share your perspectives or learn more.

Ed Olmstead, President  
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## In Our Thoughts

Please join us in offering your condolences to Gil and Evelyn Billings and their daughter Julie, whose husband Erik Jernstrom died on April 29 at Baystate Hospital.

## Creating Community Can You Help?

### Looking for more fun at USNF?

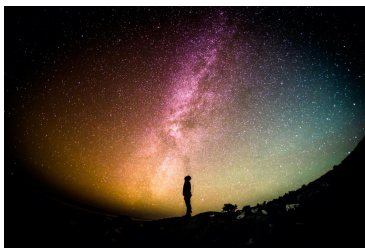
Prior to Covid, the USNF Web Weavers and other hospitality teams spearheaded efforts to organize gatherings to build community, connect people with each other, and have fun together. With social



events opening up more now, the Coordinating Council would like to reconstitute a small and fluid hospitality team to help make social activities happen, such as an end of year picnic, social hour, and other potential events. If you like organizing events, hosting and bringing people together, this may be the volunteer opportunity for you.

You might be new or new-ish, or have been around for a while and are looking for a way to get more involved with the activities of the society. Please consider joining. Email the Coordinating Council to sign up or to ask questions at [council@uunorthampton.org](mailto:council@uunorthampton.org) or to [laurieloisel@gmail.com](mailto:laurieloisel@gmail.com).

## *Infinity* by Arjuna Greist



During this past Sunday's *Celebration of Identity* service, USNF member Arjuna Greist read their powerful poem *Infinity*. Many requested a copy, so here is an excerpt, with a link to the full poem [here](#). Click the link and read to the end, you won't be sorry!

*37 trillion.*

*Is that the number of stars in the Milky Way galaxy?*

*No, not even close, that's a paltry 100 billion.*

*Is it the US national debt?*

*Closer, but not quite.*

*This unfathomable figure is the average number of cells in a human body.  
All sprung forth from one...*

[Read Full Poem Here](#)

## Our Shared Community Rev. Karen G. Johnston called as Head Minister in Burlington Vermont



Long time former USNF member, the Reverend Karen G. Johnston was called this past Sunday as Minister of the First UU Society of Burlington, VT. Karen was ordained jointly by our congregation and First Parish Groton in 2016.

Karen has served as the Minister of the Unitarian Society (TUS) of East Brunswick New Jersey since 2017, where she spearheaded the *Lost Souls Public Memorial Project*, a grassroots movement dedicated to honoring the 137 African Americans sold into slavery in 1818 by Jacob Van Wickle, a corrupt Middlesex County judge. An in-depth curriculum based on New Jersey and other northern states' role in slavery is being developed by Kristal Langford, Adjunct Professor of Psychology & Africana Studies at William Paterson University. A New York Times 1619 Project article focused on the slave trade in the north, including quotes from Karen on the *Lost Souls Project* history, can be found [here](#). Karen is also the founder of *Date with Death*, a secular curriculum to explore mortality openly and with curiosity.

We at USNF congratulate Karen on her new Ministry in neighboring Vermont!

## Submit to The Beacon

***We welcome submissions!***

The Publication Schedule is as follows:

- Week 1: Minister's Edition
- Week 2: Board Updates & Social Justice
- Week 3: Committee, Team, & Activity Reports
- Week 4: Faith Development & Religious Education
- Week 5: Special Edition, Topics Vary - chosen by you perhaps?

To submit an article, use this link: [Beacon Submission Form](#)

For questions, please email [newsletter@uunorthampton.org](mailto:newsletter@uunorthampton.org)

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