



2022 MAY Newsletter

Monthly Newsletter

MAY 2022

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FROM THE MINISTER

Rev. Bob Janis-Dillon

May's theme is "Nurturing Beauty." May is a beautiful month in this part of the world, and nurturing beauty may be a theme of immediate appeal to nature lovers and gardeners. I am not myself a green thumb, but I am proud to report that a friend gave me parsley seeds in February, and now there are tiny green shoots coming up in my kitchen.

Gardening is one obvious way we nurture beauty, but there are other ways, as well. On Membership Sunday in April – **welcome, new members!** – we talked about how the congregation is a place where we help each other grow. We do this, first of all, by recognizing and honoring each other's beauty as human beings. This may seem obvious, but remember, we live in a society that doesn't always recognize beauty, much less nurture it. UU Catskills is a **Welcoming Congregation**, meaning we commit ourselves to affirming the beauty of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, and the beauty of the love between people of any and all genders. In our often-homophobic society, we should not take this for granted; that sense of commitment is an ongoing promise and needs to be affirmed with the way we are together. Another way that congregations can be countercultural is that it is one of the places that doesn't idolize youth – we are delighted to have people of all ages here, of course, but it is also significant that congregations are places where we can celebrate our elders (as we will do in May) and recognize their great beauty.

We recognize each other's beauty as human beings – and we also nurture the beauty of human actions. We know that, sadly, human beings are capable of actions that have little or no moral beauty. We can commit war, harm one another through abuse and neglect, ignore and dehumanize one another. We can make our earth a less beautiful place, through environmental degradation and mass production without forethought. But we are also capable of nurturing moral beauty. In just about any moment of the day, we can commit a kindness. We can perform a mitzvah: mitzvah is the Jewish word for the 613 commandments in the Torah, but it's much more than just an obligation. A mitzvah is an opportunity to connect with the holy and with one another. 613 mitzvot may seem overwhelming! But that's part of the point: there are so many opportunities to commit kindnesses in this world. We don't really have the opportunity to say, "I didn't see a way I could do any good." Throughout our day there are opportunities for kindnesses, large and small. Part of the rabbinic tradition holds that the 613 commandments may hold to the number of days in the year (365) plus the number of bones in the body (248, or "limbs" in the old reckoning as it uses a slightly different measure than the 206 of modern biology). In other words, for every little pinky on your body, for every day you're walking on the earth, there's something you can do to nurture beauty.

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I want to recommend to you this congregation as a place to try out a kindness or two. Say something nice to a stranger, or an old friend. Look squarely at the injustices of the world – don't shirk away from them – and ask yourself honestly if there is not somewhere you can plant a few seeds of hope, even if you don't know what they will grow into. Look squarely at your own faults, as well. I can honestly say, as your minister, that there hasn't been a day on the job where I haven't made at least a small mistake in the realm of kindness – wrote the wrong thing, didn't say the right thing when I could have spoken up, misjudged a situation, took something the wrong way. Some days, I've made larger mistakes than that: not out of any ill intention, but badly got it wrong and my words or action caused hurt. But I am lucky to have learned a counterintuitive lesson in my forty-five years: although getting it right the first time is the easiest thing (and still the goal I tend to strive for), it is not always, in actuality, the best thing. Sometimes it's better – at least in the long run – to get it wrong now and again, but learn how to apologize (really apologize!), to take stock, and to listen. Because, in the long run, perfection isn't really a growth opportunity.

I'm getting a little serious here, so I want to be sure to tell you what I hope you already know: congregational life is frequently extremely fun. For this, I make no apologies: the congregation is a place where we affirm that life is beautiful, marvelous, hilarious and wild. It's a petri dish of all the good stuff in life: compassion, inspiration, community, and personal growth. It's a delight seeing all the growth and joy happening in our little garden, then flowering into the larger pot of the world. And our world is an abundantly beautiful place.

Yours faithfully,
Rev. Bob

Rev. Bob's
First Thursday Hangout (on Zoom)

Thursday, May 5
11 am

<https://zoom.us/j/97469875728?pwd=cXNzWGZUaTJtc1NtSGs4ZmNNN040QT09>
+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
Meeting ID: 974 6987 5728

Find Your Local **COMMUNITY CIRCLE**

Did you know there is a **Community Circle** near you? UU Catskills' Community Circles were set up to help connect those who live in similar areas. There are nine Community Circles throughout the region. Many meet about once a month or so. It's a fun opportunity to get to know your neighbors!

To find out who leads your local Community Circle, please email Christie Billeci at Christie.w.bee@gmail.com.

Sunday Service

10:30 am

Live and on Zoom **May 8** and **May 30**. Other dates are Zoom only.

Zoom connection: <https://tinyurl.com/UUCC-SundayWorship>

Or call: 301 715 8592, Meeting ID: 612 724 145, Password: 342554

Nurturing

May 1 *Potholes and Praise* (Zoom only) **Catherine Cattabiani**

A celebration of our volunteers in story and music.

May 8 *Kindness* (Live at UUCS and on Zoom) **Rev. Bob**

Kindness is one of the great gifts of life, and one of the great virtues available to human beings. A celebration of kindnesses, from mothers and caregivers (for Mother's Day) to all who practice the art of bestowing kindness.

May 15 *Elder Wisdom of UU Catskills* (Zoom only) **Vickie O'Dougherty**

Join us to hear what some of our most senior members have to say about why they sought out Unitarian Universalism and what it means to them.

May 22 *Soul Matters: Nurturing Beauty* (Zoom only) **Jenny O'Grady Giddy**

These are indeed difficult times. They require courage, commitment, hope and self-love. And all of these are sustained by beauty. We find the courage to fight after falling in love with a beautiful vision to fight for. We maintain our commitment only by finding the beauty that nourishes us. We hold on to hope because experiences of beauty remind us that something in the universe is on our side. We withstand dehumanization when rooted deeply in the beauty of our own dignity.

May 29 *Serious Play* (Live at UUCS and on Zoom) **Rev. Bob**

I've been a board game and sports fan for all my life. But life is more than a game, surely? A thought-provoking sermon invoking (possibly) game theory, stoic philosophy, infinite games, just war theory, life & death matters, virtue ethics, cooperative gaming, and of course, Apples to Apples.

Half-plate donations May 2022 will go to **Rise Up Kingston**.

Rise Up Kingston is a grassroots organization led by those experiencing racism, classism, and gender oppression on a daily basis. We organize to win, with our collective power, a Kingston economy that meets all of our social and environmental needs. <https://riseupkingston.org>.

Donate online at <https://www.uucatskills.org/donate> or send your check payable to UUCatskills to UUCS, 320 Sawkill Road, Kingston, NY 12401.

Please write "half-plate" in the memo line. Please combine donations into one monthly donation.

President's Column

May 2022

Mark S. Howenstein

We have completed our pledge drive and the results are encouraging, yet mixed. We managed to secure \$109,319 in pledges from 81 pledge units without a pledge committee or any type of pledge kick-off. Yet, we fell short of our goal of \$137,465, which we had anticipated we would need to accomplish our ends. In the process, we gained 8 new pledgers, yet lost 4 pledgers from last year. And in this uneasy financial time, 35 members managed to raise their pledges from last year, while 20 needed to decrease theirs.

Though we collected \$6000 less in pledges than last year, and have fallen short a staggering \$28,000 from our intended goal, there is some hope on the horizon. We have found money to cover our ministerial search for next year which alleviates \$8000 from the shortfall, leaving a \$20,000 shortfall. With some creative accounting (all realistic to be sure), we will need to dig into our savings to the tune of \$13,367 next year. While that sounds like dismal news, it is similar to the \$15,000 shortfall that we had anticipated for this year, and yet it now appears that we will not need to dig into savings at all, or very little.

What has challenged our budgetary process for the past two years is the dearth of fundraising due to the Covid pandemic and the skyrocketing expenses that we have incurred to maintain our buildings and grounds, as well as the costs of transitioning to hybrid services. The Chalice Lighters Grant will cover some of these transitional expenses, and our rental to Play Haven has helped to offset some of the building expenses, while the waning of Covid should allow us to reengage in some of our fundraising activities that we have all missed (and that we do so well). So the bottom line is that we will struggle once again to balance our budget, but that we have plenty of reserves for the time being to keep this UUCC train on track. And with the help of volunteers in future fundraising, we may even be able to avoid digging deeply into those reserves as well.

Thank you to all who supported our pledge campaign. Needless to say, if you find that you can increase your pledge at all, please do so knowing that it is fully appreciated and will be used for the good of your congregation.

Please mark the following dates on your UUCC calendar: **May 8 and May 29 Budget meetings**, and **June 5th for the Annual Meeting**—all following our Sunday Services. These are important events in the life of our congregation. Please plan to attend as many as you can.

Religious Exploration ~ Jane Podell, Director of R.E.



Ibram X. Kendi
*UUA Ware Lecturer 2022

Dr. Kendi is author of five #1 New York Times bestsellers, including *How to be an Antiracist*, *Stamped From the Beginning* AND the book our kids have used for the past few months as their antiracist guide ~

Antiracist Baby!

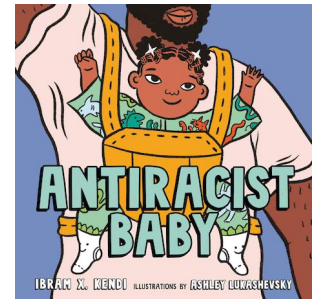
In 2020, *Time* magazine named Ibram X. Kendi one of the 100 most influential people in the world. Dr. Kendi will deliver the **Ware Lecture** at **1 pm EST on Saturday, June 25**.

Virtual [registration](#) is required to live-stream the event on June 25, or access the video on-demand when it is posted.

** The UUA President, in consultation with the General Assembly Planning Committee, invites a distinguished guest each year to address the General Assembly as the Ware Lecturer. Previous Ware Lecturers have included the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Kurt Vonnegut, and poet Mary Oliver.*

Our children continue to learn about antiracism through Ibram X. Kendi's teachings and through his book *Antiracist Baby*. He helps us learn how to uproot racism in our society and in ourselves by taking these nine steps:

1. Open your eyes to all skin colors. If you claim to be color-blind, you deny what's right in front of you.
2. Use your words to talk about race. No one will see racism if we stay silent.
3. Point at policies as the problem, not people. Some people get more, while others get less because policies don't always grant equal access.
4. Shout, "There's nothing wrong with the people!" Although all races are not treated the same, we are all human, **Antiracist Baby** can proclaim.
5. Celebrate all our differences. **Antiracist Baby** doesn't see certain groups as better or worse. **Antiracist Baby** loves a world that's truly diverse.
6. Knock down the stack of cultural blocks. **Antiracist Baby** appreciates how groups speak, dance and create as they choose. **Antiracist Baby** welcomes all groups voicing their unique views.
7. Confess when being racist. Nothing disrupts racism more than when we confess the racist ideas that we sometimes express.
8. Grow to be an antiracist. **Antiracist Baby** is always learning, changing and growing. **Antiracist Baby** stays curious about all people and isn't all-knowing.
9. Believe we shall overcome racism. **Antiracist Baby** is filled with the power to transcend, my friend.



Caring Updates

The obituary for **Judy Chang**, who passed away suddenly in March and was a part time Kingston resident and UUCatskills friend, can be viewed here:

https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/new-york-ny/judy-hang10639479#services?utm_source=obit_alerts&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=obit_detail&utm_content=view_service

Caring Committee: Christie Billeci, chair, Judith Chase, Vic Melville, Don Peck, Ellen Herrington, Joanne Steele, and Mary Jo Brightly. Contact Christie Billeci: 845.757.2556 or caring@UUCatskills.org.

Happy May Birthday!



May 3
Christine Bates

May 17
Karen Miller

For contact information, please see your Member Directory
If you would like to have your birthday listed in the newsletter,
contact uuccoffice@gmail.com

Members can contact the uuccoffice@gmail.com if they can't locate their **directory** for an address or for addresses of new members until a revision is available. All members have access to the **UUC online registry** which contains names and contacts for all members. E-mail Tom Hackett (secretary@uucatskills.org) to get personal information to allow you to access it. New member information will be added in May.

UUCC Updates

Monday Night Bible and Other Books

Monday, May 30 Bhagavad Gita
7 pm – 9 pm on Zoom

Come experience the great books of different sacred traditions. Led by Rev. Bob, we'll explore a few short passages from some of the world's best-known sacred texts. No advance reading is required. No prior knowledge is assumed; we will just read the text aloud and talk about it. Skepticism and scrutiny are welcome. We'll look at the texts rationally, emotionally, spiritually, theologically and from the standpoint of literature.

May's session is the third and last of three books in this series. Those interested will meet on the **last Monday of this month, May 30, at 7 pm on Zoom**. You can come to this session regardless of whether you attended the last two.

Monday, May 30 7 pm Bhagavad Gita, from the Hindu Mahabharata

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/98310087922?pwd=UGlBanhsTFFLTmxib200eU5Gb3Vqdzo>

Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience

Are you interested in joining other UUCC congregants for a daytrip to see the new *Van Gogh* experience near Albany this summer? For more information:

https://feverup.com/m/111819?utm_source=secretmedianetwork&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=111819_smn&utm_content=van-gogh-albany-tickets&utm_term=cta4&cp_landing=cta-hero&goe_d1rdK9zjS22BxMA4uyiNPQ=1&ga=2.117647625.186532314.1649039230-134157520.1649039230

Please contact Erin Hilgart at erin.hilgart@gmail.com if you are interested in joining by **May 5th** so we can include you in the planning / date selection. We will buy tickets for a date to be determined this summer.

UUCC Updates

Social Action Updates

from the **Social Action Committee**

Donna Schlachman

This Fall, our congregation will be considering and then voting on the adoption of the proposed **8th UU Principle**. Leading up to the vote, we will be engaged in information sharing, sermons by Rev. Bob, and conversations in groups both large and small. During the Spring and Summer months, we will continue to offer suggested readings, films, podcasts, etc. to ready ourselves to engage in the substance of the 8th Principle.

The need for the 8th Principle came to one of its co-drafters, Paula Cole Jones, after 15 years of working with congregations on issues of race and racism. Over time she understood that a person can live by our 7 Principles and never come to terms with or address racism—in themselves and in our institutions. The 8th Principle is the only one that will directly and actively hold us accountable for addressing racism and oppressions.

To date, over 150 congregations have voted to be guided by this 8th Principle. You can find more information at our UUCatskills.org website and at UUA.org. The Anti-Racism Task Force looks forward to partnering with our congregation so we may add our name to the list of 8th Principle congregations.

The proposed 8th Principle reads:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, 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.

The Proposed 8th UU Principle: Beloved Community
 As expressed in *Last Message to the Country* by John Lewis
 And read by Morgan Freeman
<https://youtu.be/VXa7Vn8Ar6M>

Anti-Racism Task Force (formerly Racial Justice Working Group) - Donna Schlachman

The Racial Justice Working Group, has elected to change its name to the **Anti-Racism Task Force** to better reflect our purpose which is:

*To confront the impact of systemic racism in ourselves and our institutions
and help our UU congregation live into our faith.*

At May's monthly meeting, we will revisit and share our thoughts and understanding of "White Privilege" and "White Fragility." If you have explored or want to refresh yourself on the subject, below are some ideas/short cuts.

1. Google **Robin DiAngelo - YouTube** for talks/interviews of varying lengths
 2. Google **criticisms of DiAngelo's work** and read those who take issue with her work.
- (continued next page)

UUCC Updates

Social Action Updates

3. *How White Privilege Works/Unpack That* on YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4I84jxCNsmo> (4 minutes)
4. <https://onwardwoman.com/how-to-confront-your-white-privilege/>

NEXT Anti-Racism Task Force Meeting May 10th 5 pm - 6 pm

<https://zoom.us/j/98688698406?pwd=UFNRMmdGUKJxNHpxenBMZWFlSUJmdz09>

Phone: 1 646 558 8656 Meeting ID: 986 8869 8406 Passcode: 227897

Climate Action Team – Kathy Kassner

In May, we are focusing on two plastic initiatives:

First, we encourage you to submit a letter to your local grocer asking them to reduce non-recyclable single-use plastic. Lisa Garay has put together a wonderful letter to Hannaford for you to use and modify to meet your needs depending on where you shop. It can be found on our webpage <https://www.uucatskills.org/climate-action-team>.

Second, **Everyday Plastic** and **Greenpeace** are partnering for **The Big Plastic Count, May 16 – May 22**: Collect your plastic waste for a week and tabulate your results to provide evidence of the plastic problem we face. Sign up here <https://www.everydayplastic.org/>

Saturday, May 14 - Visit Kingston's **Earth Fair** and stop by Citizens' Climate Lobby's table where you may see some familiar faces. See the flier with details on the opening panels of this newsletter.

Opportunities to be an Environmental Steward

Educate yourself by watching this You-Tube video *We Will Fix Climate Change* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxgMdjyw8uw>. Then take the suggested actions.

Consider composting: The towns of Red Hook and Rhinebeck are both starting community recycling programs. Check with your town to see if there is a program or help get one started. This is a great option if you don't have space to make your own compost.

OR

Bring your food scraps and Terracycle items for composting, to containers behind the Sanctuary. See a list of accepted items on the **Climate Action Team** Bulletin Board, and on the containers behind the Sanctuary. Contact Karen 845.399.2805

Next Climate Action Team meeting Tuesday, May 17 5 pm

<https://zoom.us/j/96954354063?pwd=STVOVENNVmJZMCtCN250TWRnam54dz09>

Meeting ID: 969 5435 4063 Passcode: 096367

One tap mobile 16465588656,,96954354063#,,, *096367# US (New York)

Ulster Immigrant Defense Network (UIDN) – Kathy Eberlein

Appreciation and gratitude from UIDN to all who contributed toiletries, personal care items and laundry supplies to our UIDN collection in February through March. We are continuing this collection and items may be brought to the Sanctuary where you will find collection boxes. Thank you to Karen Howenstein who will be taking the items to UIDN.

UUCC Updates

Sacred Ally Quilts Travel to Kingston

As part of Kingston's 2022 **Juneteenth Celebration**, ten powerful Quilts memorializing George Floyd's last pleas, including his most recognized utterance, "*I can't breathe*", will be on display. You can visit them **June 13–June 22** in gallery space at the Pine Street Burial Ground. Exhibit hours are **4 pm to 7 pm** weekdays, and **noon to 6 pm** on Saturday and Sunday. The documentary, *Stitch, Breathe, Speak*, will also be shown during their visit here. The Sacred Ally Quilts project, which comes out of New Hampshire, has been touring the Northeast this year. If you would like to volunteer to "sit" with the quilts, please contact **Donna Schlachman** at 603-686-1063 or donna.schlachman@gmail.com

from the Thirty Plus Group (formerly Young Adults Group) _____

Erin Hilgart

Did you know that the Thirty Plus group (formerly "Young Adults" group) has been meeting (via Zoom and in person!) for a full year?

Two families attended the *Forsyth Park Easter Egg Hunt* in April, but due to heavy rain, we crossed paths and departed quickly.

Save the Date for our May 22nd Meetup

We look forward to another outdoor meetup next month. We hope to meet **Sunday, May 22, at 1 pm** for a walk at *Zabriskie's Waterfall*, Annandale-On-Hudson, NY. Please contact erin.hilgart@gmail.com if you are interested in joining us.

from the Women's Conversation Circle _____

Joanne Steele

We meet via Zoom the **fourth Tuesday, 7:30 pm to 9 pm**, of every month

Tuesday, May 24

Join Zoom meeting; <https://zoom.us/j/98539336771> Meeting ID: 985 3933 6771
One tap mobile +16465588656,,98539336771# US (New York)

Dates to Gather

Page numbers listed with events refer to where you can find more information and links in this newsletter

Sundays

Grief Support Group 7 pm

If you would like to know more about this group, email uuccoffice@gmail.com.

Thursday evenings

Bedtime Story and More! 7 pm

It's a peaceful, joyful time of connection.

Children and youth of all ages are welcome.

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/99249467998>

Wednesday, May 4

Writing Group 5 pm on Zoom Elisa elwin12@icloud.com

Thursday, May 5

First Thursday Hangout with Rev. Bob 11 am (p. 2)

Friday, May 6

Soul Matters Friday Group 12 pm

Sunday, May 8

UUC Budget Meeting (following services) (p. 4)

Monday, May 9

Soul Matters Monday Group 7 pm

Tuesday, May 10

Anti-Racism Action Group 5 pm (p. 8)

Tuesday, May 17

Climate Action Team 5 pm (p. 9)

Sunday, May 22

Thirty-plus Meetup 1 pm (p. 10)

Tuesday, May 24

Women's Conversation Circle 7:30 pm – 9 pm (p. 10)

Thursday, May 26

Board of Trustees Meeting 10 am – 1 pm
Contact uuccpres@gmail.com

Sunday, May 29

UUC Budget Meeting (following services) (p. 4)

Monday, May 30

Monday Night Bible 7 pm (p. 7)

Sunday, June 5
UUC Annual Meeting
 following Sunday Service

MAY 2022

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>10:30 am Service on Zoom only</p> <p>7 pm Grief Support Group</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>5 pm Writing Group</p>	<p>5</p> <p>11 am First Thursday Hangout</p> <p>7 pm Bedtime Story And More!</p>	<p>6</p> <p>12 noon <i>Soul Matters</i></p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8</p> <p>10:30 am Service LIVE at UCC plus on Zoom</p> <p>Budget Meeting</p> <p>7 pm Grief Support Group</p>	<p>9</p> <p>7 pm <i>Soul Matters</i></p>	<p>10</p> <p>5 pm Anti-Racism Task Force</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7 pm Bedtime Story And More!</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>10:30 am Service on Zoom only</p> <p>7 pm Grief Support Group</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>5pm Climate Action Team Meeting</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>7 pm Bedtime Story And More!</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>10:30 am Service on Zoom only</p> <p>1 pm Thirty-Plus Meetup</p> <p>7 pm Grief Support Group</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7:30 pm Women's Conversation Circle</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>10 am Board of Trustees Meeting</p> <p>7 pm Bedtime Story And More!</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>10:30 am Service LIVE at UCC plus on Zoom</p> <p>Budget Meeting</p> <p>7 pm Grief Support Group</p>	<p>30</p> <p>7 pm Monday Night Bible</p>	<p>31</p>				