



Focus Groups on “Covenant” Take a Deep Dive

by Wayne Arnason – At-Large Board Member
for UUA/UUMA Relations

Five different focus groups of UURMaPA members met during May via Zoom as one part of a Board-initiated Study Year regarding the question of whether UURMaPA should have a covenant, or something like a covenant, in addition to our already existing mission statement and Board covenant. Each group was facilitated by a Board member, using a consistent design of questions for discussion.

Our unscientific sample of volunteers for these focus groups was inclusive of the range of initial opinions on covenant-building we have found in previous conversations during conferences. Most participants were retired parish or community ministers who are UUMA members, but the focus group volunteers also included a few partners, and a few ministers who choose not to be UUMA members. The smallest group had five participants and the largest had nine. Altogether thirty-six people participated, including facilitators.

What did we learn? After an initial Board review of these conversations at our June meeting, I would divide our learning into two categories:

Familiar Confirmations and **Growing Edges.**

“Familiar Confirmations” are things we have already heard and pretty much understand about the views of our participating UURMaPA membership that we heard voiced again in the responses to our questions in these focus groups. Growing Edges were the places this exploration

takes us that we have not explored deeply enough, but which keep coming up, and perhaps represent the more difficult implications of covenant work where our understandings and opinions diverge more sharply. Here’s a synopsis:

Familiar Confirmations:

- We like having an open membership, based on donations not dues, with participation however and whenever you like, relying on mutual respect and trust, rather than on any defined process for beginning, ending, or suspending membership.

- We see ourselves primarily as a social and support group, with representational functions around our interests within the UUA. We are not so sure whether and how UURMaPA could offer services for dispute resolutions for our members beyond existing Good Offices roles and processes defined by the UUMA.

- A minority among us, perhaps one in ten, have experienced covenant work as a circle that “drew them out” rather than “drawing them in.” They are hesitant or opposed to this conversation going forward. A large majority of participants had different views about how a covenant or something like it might be affirmed by UURMaPA, but still believe that this conversation and covenant work in general is healthy and should go forward.

- We are all great wordsmiths!! There were many well-considered suggestions offered for improving some draft language given to these groups (based on our Board covenant), some of them running off in different directions!

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Janice Marie Johnson (right)
brings greetings from the
UUMA to UURMaPA members
at General Assembly.



Photo: Jaco ten Hove

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Growing Edges:

- What is the meaning and value of covenant work? Is it to arrive at a final written product? Or is the meaning found in having the conversation about what we collectively value and promise each other? Is this process intended to produce a set of rules, or is it to mark and move forward an evolution in UURMaPA's culture?
- Does being retired from active ministry (and possibly refraining from participating in similar conversations in the congregations we are part of) mean that we don't want to engage any more with questions of mutual commitments, accountability and cultural assumptions? That was hard work! And we don't have to work anymore if we don't want to!
- An underlying concern behind this initiative is the UURMaPA Board's recognition that our conferences and Zooms are “white spaces.” That's just a demographic and cultural reality. How much do “we” care about how retired or soon-to-retire colleagues of color experience our spaces? Can affirmations in a covenant or something like it make a difference in how our spaces feel to all of us? What would it say if we declined to engage in this conversation or declined to make any statement of aspiration regarding the spaces we create?

At our August meeting, the Board plans to consider next steps, which could include a workshop forum at the Fall Conference, possibly another round of focus groups, and different approaches to drafting statements. The Year of Study continues!

One final note: Several of us who attended the Berry Street Lecture by Rev. Mykal Slack in person or on-line at the UUMA program preceding GA were moved and engaged by the challenges he offered and found them relevant to our conversations about covenant. Check it out at a 2.5 hour Facebook video found at www.facebook.com/uuministers/videos/358930106353845. He starts speaking 23 minutes in!



During General Assembly in Portland, OR, a quintet of colleagues took time out to visit and honor the gravesite of Judy Welles, noted UURMaPA leader who died of cancer in September 2020. The marker portrays her chosen quote (from Howard Thurman): “What the world needs is people who have come alive.”

Also note Mt. Hood in the background, the view of which was a requirement of Judy's for her resting place. L-R: Barbara ten Hove, Sarah Lammert, Howard Dana, Duane Fickeisen (Judy's widower). Photo by Jaco ten Hove.

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Contact information for most people can be found on the UURMaPA website (www.uurmapa.org) under "Governance."

We welcome contributions to Elderberries. Please email elderberries@uurmapa.org.



Greetings from the incoming editor. Many thanks to Jaco ten Hove for serving as editor and to Duane Fickeisen for serving as webmaster. We benefited greatly from your talents and dedication! Jaco will step into the webmaster position.

After I retired, I moved from southern California back to my home, Wisconsin. I still have family members here, and I support them in various ways. I do little in-person socializing out of a desire to protect family members from possible infection if I were to contract Covid-19.

However, gardening, birding, amateur radio, and UURMaPA provide avenues for enjoyment and meaning. I became licensed as an amateur radio operator in California as I worked on preparing myself and my community for possible earthquakes. I have maintained an interest in preparedness and resilience. I like to respond and adapt instead of reacting, wherever possible.

We live in a difficult time given the pandemic, political extremism, economic uncertainty, and brittle tensions everywhere we look. It's not too big a stretch to say we need to find new ways to be human.

My small Elderberries vision toward that goal is to transition the online publication into a longer journal, with room for even more personal expression. The paper edition will remain its current size to fit our budget. I welcome poetry, art, photographs, analysis, musings, and ideas. Thank you.

-- Ann

Welcome to newly retired ministers and partners (July 2022 or earlier)

Elizabeth Banks
Meg Barnhouse and Kiya Heartwood
Margaret Beard and Rick Eddy
Jan Christian
Peter Friedrichs
Claudia Frost and David Frost
Barbara Gadon and Robert Gadon
Thomas Goldsmith and Mary Tull
Jennifer Hamlin-Navias
Alyson Jacks
Regina Largent
Nancy Palmer Jones
Hilary Krivchenia and Mark Krivchenia
Laurel Liefert and Francey Liefert
Kent McKusick and James Perrin
David Morris
Duffy Peet and Sandy Kindt
Patti Pomerantz and Toni Tortorilla
Deborah Raible and Kevin Clark
Ken Read-Brown and Susan Read-Brown
Tracey Robinson-Harris
Terry Sims
Sonya Sukalski and Mitch Sukalski
Lynda Sutherland
Felicia Urbanski and Larry Squire
Wayne Walder and Joan Walder



Photos: Susan V. Rak (above)
Ann Schranz (below)

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President's Ponderings

To say that we live in a world that is challenging, disturbing and dangerous may feel like understatement some days. The past two years have been difficult. Yet for those of us who have made it through, hope and beauty remain.

With preparing for UURMaPA presence at UUA General Assembly and our virtual "welcome" event in July, I've been thinking a lot about the purpose of UURMaPA and why it matters. And I've come to see how being part of UURMaPA has a role to play in helping us survive and maybe thrive in the midst of these challenges, and even to bring more good into the world.

There are so many ways one can be part of this organization. You usually don't have to officially "join" UURMaPA - one becomes a member by virtue of a minister's retirement status. And how you choose to participate varies from person to person. As a part of UURMaPA, you have the option of attending every conference and event, getting to know folks from all over the US and Canada. Or you can do social meet-ups with fellow UURMaPAns living near you.

There are a variety of support groups where we connect with one another based on different affinities or needs. You can meet virtually with fellow UURMaPAns every month, forging close bonds - some groups have been going for years. You can simply read our newsletter, *Elderberries*, every quarter and read the emails that are sent out periodically. You can take note of the passing of our compatriots, whether known to you or not, in that way honoring our collective ministry to one another and our place in the great stream of life. All from the comfort of your home, without much commitment or effort.

And all of that is why we are here. Because what is foundational to UURMaPA is community. We offer space and encouragement to live through our elder years and to face the challenges of the changing world around us, and perhaps find encouragement to make a difference for the better.

Our compatriots at the UUMA have a motto they've used widely for the past few years: "*Because we need one another.*" And I think that statement is at the root of UURMaPA's purpose, too - why we're here.

It's how we recognize and celebrate that we've made it thus far. It's how we learn from one another to thrive as best we can in these years. And it's how we appreciate our various legacies and find ways to give back to the generations who will follow.

UURMaPA keeps evolving as the world changes around us. We keep growing into the best representation of who we are as elders, as Unitarian Universalists, as a community. So as things change, for good or ill, in society and our nation, we continue to evolve in our community as well; we continue to explore what UURMaPA can be in the next generation.

I hope you'll find a way to be part of this, and forge strong connections to this community. For indeed, we need one another.

---- Susan



Do you know about the MCCS?

The Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society (MCCS) was founded in 1786 to provide financial support to families of retired persons who have served as Unitarian Universalist and United Church of Christ ministers in Massachusetts and Maine. The organization was initially founded to serve “widows and children of deceased Ministers,” but it has evolved mostly to assist living retired clergy themselves, as well as surviving spouses and children. The key requirement is that the minister must have served a congregation in Maine or Massachusetts. This special fund was organized by a group of ministers from the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers, which was organized in 1691.

We are seeking eligible individuals whom we can help with living needs, but we also provide emergency grants for medical or material crises. We give out over \$200,000 in mostly ongoing grants. We know there may be individuals who are reluctant to ask for assistance, but we hope you will take advantage of the resources we have and make an inquiry. Please take a look at our website, where you will find application forms. Any questions can be made to Mark W. Harris, Secretary (Administrator), Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society (MCCS), 11 Waters Edge Lane, Owls Head, ME 04854. Phone: 207-347-9741 ; Website: www.massccs.org.

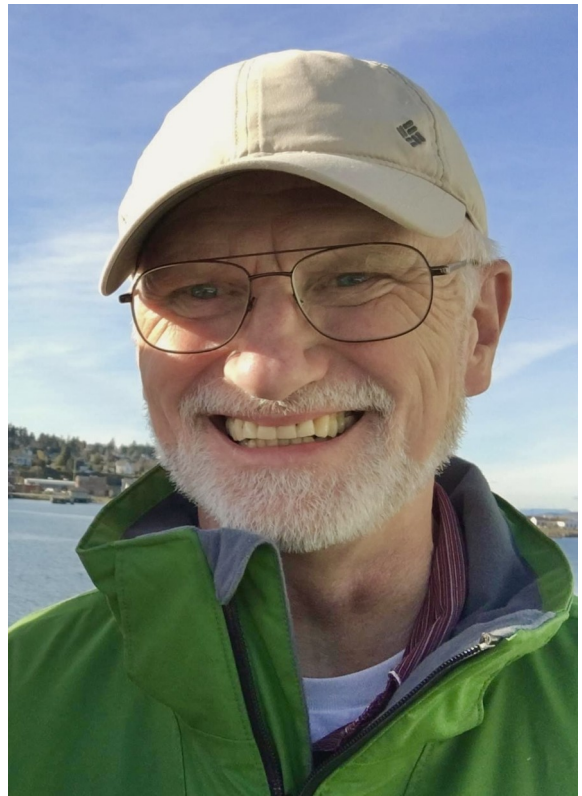
UUA Retirement Plan News

Gloria Guldager joined the UUA staff in May 2021 as the Retirement Plan Employer Liaison and now serves as Retirement Plan Director.

Gloria will take on the challenges presented to the UU Retirement Plan as the UUA conducts a search for and transitions to a new recordkeeper in place of TIAA. Four vendors submitted proposals, and a decision on the vendor is expected by the end of July.

Gloria began her career in non-profit professional theater and performing arts management. After taking a pause to raise her young children, Gloria served as the Business Administrator for the Unitarian Society of Germantown in Philadelphia (USG) for 10 years, where she is also a member.

She may be reached at retirementplan@uua.org.



Our Hero, Duane Fickeisen

Each year, the Board of UURMaPA honors a volunteer who has made an extraordinary contribution to our organization, working behind the scenes during their retirement years. This year's deserving honoree is Duane Fickeisen.

Duane retired from settled parish ministry in 2011 and has served UURMaPA as webmaster since the fall of 2012. With characteristic grace, patience, and good humor, Duane has kept the site's information portal current through transitions over the years.

In addition, responding to the evolving personal needs of both ministers and partners, Duane founded two much-appreciated peer groups – one supporting caregivers and another for those experiencing grief.

Congratulations to Duane Fickeisen, recipient of the UURMaPA Unsung Hero Award for 2022.

From Stefanie Etzbach-Dale to *All of You*

Twenty-two years ago I was ordained into Interfaith ministry, and this year marks the 17th anniversary of being ordained to Unitarian Universalist ministry.

Along the way I've learned so much about human hearts and minds, about the relationships that form and repel us, about the creative and destructive power of social norms, and the transformative potential arising through the cultivation of a sense of individual worth, common purpose, and mutual empowerment, through expressions of compassion, curiosity, humility, and awe.

I've learned about the complex intersectionality of organizational systems and even more about my limitations and inclinations in the face of them. So much more than I thought at times I could even bear.

Along the way I've borne witness to moments hopeful, disheartening, outrageous, and astoundingly precious. I've shown up with hubris and humility, with strength and vulnerability, with doubt and trepidation at times, but also always with commitment and deep gratitude. And with faith that these matter.

All these years I have managed to sustain awe and gratitude and curiosity about why we are here and what we're supposed to be doing, and what it might take to find out, or to live fully with "not knowing."

More recently I have learned to ask myself those questions more often than I ask others. And I have found my way into the nourishing waters of a delightfully ancient well, sparkling with sacred presence and potential.

Today I think with gratitude of all those who have been part of this amazing journey - all the teachers and mentors and fellow students, the artists and poets and philosophers, the story-weavers and drummers and dancers and magicians and healers and activists; all the congregations, friends, neighbors, and family members; those who welcomed and encouraged

me, as well as those who challenged me; those who called me beyond my perceived capabilities and those who advocated for a sound and "sacred no"; those who inspired me to creative service and those who led me with kindness to healing I was often too slow to recognize was needed.

So many have been part of this journey, some accompanying me along inclines and others over ravines, some stopping to marvel with me at the landscape.

A few carried me through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Others I carried. Too many were laid to rest there.

That I am, and am who and where I am, is in large part because you are who and where you are. All of you.

Thank you.

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You are invited to
visit TendingSpirit.com and to
follow the TendingSpirit Page
on FaceBook.

2022 “Creative Sageing” Award Presented to Jaco B. ten Hove

UURMaPA is delighted to honor Jaco B. ten Hove with its 2022 Creative Sageing Award in recognition of the new forms of ministry that he has embraced since his retirement in 2017 from 30 years of parish ministry in Washington, Maryland, and Colorado.

After Jaco and his co-minister spouse Barbara retired from leadership at Cedars UU Church on Bainbridge Island, WA, in January 2017, Jaco had his hip replaced in February and they then moved to Bellingham, WA, just 30 miles south of the Canadian border, to join Bellingham Co-Housing, a community of 33 homes with around 75 people. They loved the Pacific Northwest and wanted a new congregation—Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship—where they could easily fit in.

While Jaco chose to stop doing the traditional ministry in which he had been immersed for 30 years, he pivoted to a different focus of care and concern: the “Ministry of Waste Diversion.” Concerned with environmental issues since he was a child picking up trash in his New Jersey neighborhood, Jaco took a course through Washington State University that led him to be certified as a Master Composter and Recycler. In that role he began to educate and support his Co-Housing community in doing a better job of diverting waste from the dumpster into various recycling and composting stations. At community meetings, he would lead an educational moment to enable people to create less trash. He was so good at this that he saved the community almost \$900 a year!

Beyond his Co-Housing community, Jaco led recycling workshops at the local UU Fellowship, UU Eliot Institute Camps, and in wider Bellingham. Using his artistic and editing skills, he created slide shows and Zoom presentations that proved to be both popular and persuasive.

During the pandemic, he became more knowledgeable about and experienced in building compost piles, both hot and cold. He continues to provide the Co-housing landscape with much needed nutrients to keep things growing—and divert considerable waste from landfills.

Expanding his environmental reach, he collaborated with others at Bellingham Co-Housing to found their Climate Action Group, which has endeavored to lessen reliance on fossil fuels. This has resulted in the installation of EV chargers for fully electric cars and replacing a common space gas furnace with electric heat pumps. He also helped lead the charge to replace asphalt roofs with more environmentally friendly metal ones.

Rounding out his environmental commitments are classes, programs, workshops and political gatherings (many online) about issues and pathways related to mitigating the impact of Climate Change, including the growing challenge to reduce plastic pollution, a particular passion of his. Though Jaco can, at times, despair at the slow pace of change, he continues to offer his perspective to inspire others to become better stewards of their environment, and then does what he can to model hands-on leadership (including still picking up trash in the neighborhood).

UURMaPA
Vice
President Ned
Wight
presents the
Creative
Sageing
Award to Jaco
ten Hove.



In retirement, Jaco has also continued service to his fellow UUs as a regional retreat leader and an active musician. Having determined upon retirement that he would take a “permanent sabbatical from the sacraments,” he has nevertheless found joy and a creative outlet by singing in two congregational choirs and providing regular musical accompaniment with his drums, other percussion instruments and harmonicas. Congregants delight in the lovely ways his music supports and enhances fellow musicians in his church community.

While this award is mainly for all Jaco’s environmental work, we’d be remiss if we didn’t also mention the extraordinary creativity he brought to his recently completed four years as editor of Elderberries, our own UURMaPA quarterly.

This combination of hands-on environmental activism in his residential community, his congregation, and wider community, as well as his creative enterprise in service to his congregation and to UURMaPA, demonstrate Jaco ten Hove’s continuing commitment to creative engagement and sharing his skills and wisdom to “work toward a planet transformed by our care.” We are pleased to honor him with this 2022 Creative Sageing Award.

*Presented by his UURMaPA colleagues
at the UURMaPA Lunch in Portland, Oregon
on June 24, 2022.*

Ned Wight, UURMaPA Vice President, served as Chair of the Award Selection Committee. Wendy Fish and Marni Harmony are the other members of the committee.



**Jaco in “Comptown,”
sitting on a worm bin,
with two hot compost
piles in front and
three cold compost
bins behind.**

WHAT BRINGS ME JOY

by Alicia McNary Forsey

I experience joy in the moments when I feel that I am doing what I was born to do: When I realize that my life fits together like a string of pearls. Each pearl represents something I have lived, loved, studied, and shared with others. And, when I notice how good it feels to see my life come together in one whole piece, I also recognize that I am connected in some way to the lives of people who made what I hold dear possible.

The most compelling subject to me is the history of Unitarian Universalism and the individuals who are responsible for shaping the tradition and protecting it during times of oppression. Nothing gets me going full steam more than a lively conversation about meeting up with a little-known queen (Isabella Sforza Szapolyai) in a closet, taking her out, witnessing her genius and making all the connections to her place in our history. She was the first ruler in the West to issue an edict of universal toleration.

Avoiding pressure from advisors who wanted her son, John II to have military training, she insisted on a well-rounded education. John II is the only Unitarian King in history—thus far.

History is not boring or irrelevant. We can't know who we are unless we know what shaped us. We are working for justice in today's world, and many of our forebears are standing beside us. When I sign a petition against racism in voting rights, Theodore Parker is guiding the pen.

When I interrupt a conversation that is blaming the homeless for not having shelter or medical care, I let the Anabaptists of the 16th Century guide me. And the fact that our country is so divided says to me that we might turn to Michael Servetus or Isabella Sforza Szapolyai, who could teach us how to allow freedom of conscience.

I have read about actors who became so engaged with their role that they carried it into their everyday lives. I have done that to some extent, especially with Queen Isabella. She moved into my brain. I began posing questions to her, wondering how she was managing during her exile, wishing I had a guardian like Sultan Süleyman who wrote a letter to Ferdinand the Hapsburg (who forced Isabella into exile) telling him: Bring her back, or I will wipe you off the face of the earth.

My enthusiasm about getting to know more about those whose lives shaped Unitarian Universalism is what led to my writing *Queen Isabella Sforza Szapolyai of Transylvania and Sultan Süleyman of the Ottoman Empire*, 2009, The Edwin Mellen Press. This book contains documents from the Prime Minister's Ottoman Archives in Istanbul, as well as documents in Latin, Hungarian, Polish, English, and Modern Turkish. Proof of the exchange between the Muslims and the Christians is undeniable in this book, which makes it helpful to Unitarian Universalists who want to include Islam as a tradition that offers us inspiration. (See an example on the next page.)

After the book was published, I continued to feel like I was in Isabella's company. I decided to have some fun and write a screenplay with her as the central character. Same woman but living in this century and on the faculty (History Professor) of an Ivy League college in New England. Her name is Uma and she is infatuated with Isabella. With a generous grant she goes to Transylvania to be close to Isabella. You will be surprised by what happens next!





You are welcome to email revforsey@gmail.com if you would like to purchase a copy of the book at a reasonable price.

Here is an example of the exchange between the Muslims and the Christians. Painter A, bound by the strict rules kept by Persian artists, documented the life of Sultan Süleyman in paintings. The Sultan and his army had marched from Constantinople to Pest in order to lift the siege of Buda by Ferdinand the Habsburg. This move by Ferdinand was expected because King John I of Hungary had died, leaving Isabella vulnerable to attack.

With the arrival of the Sultan's army, the battle was soon a victory. Süleyman turned to other business, which included decisions about Isabella and her son. He was close to her father, the King of Poland, and called him "Brother." He was also the Guardian of her departed husband. At the reception depicted by Painter A, the Sultan informed Isabella that she would be moving to Transylvania and he would be the Guardian of her and her son.

Legend has it that Isabella wrote *Sic Fata Volant* (as fate wills it) on the wall of her private quarters as she left Buda Castle. In the Spring of 1542, Isabella, her son and her court were escorted by 150 Janissaries to the Palace of Gyulafehévár in Transylvania. Sultan Süleyman kept his promise to watch out for Isabella, and when she died, he protected her son, the Unitarian King of Transylvania.



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Book Bench – New books by UURMaPA members



Lillie Mae Henley published a self-help book at Amazon's Kindle Self Publishing in May. *The Healing Way: A Path to Recovery After Abuse* is grounded in the organic environment of pastoral care, chaplaincy, and ministry as a liberal religious minister. It talks about family dynamics and specific ways to intentionally heal from abuse. It is a practical, down-to-earth book which offers hope to survivors.

She notes, "In this book, I write about behaviors and attitudes which will help you become a better person. I am not writing about being a good person. Nor am I saying you will become a person who meets others' expectations. Becoming a better person means to me, and I hope it begins to mean to you, a person who is willing to learn new behaviors, become more self-aware, and see other perspectives of the pain deep within."

Senior Moments: Poems by **Betty Jo**

Middleton is now available at amazon.com as a paperback book or an eBook.

Senior Moments

If you have a senior moment
and it bothers you a lot
just remember
what
you remember
and forget
what
you forgot.





Sarah Voss and her two daughters, Sonna Voss (left) and Melinda Cocolas (right).

Sarah's new book is *Poems from the Gravel Road*. This is an excerpt from a conversation between Sarah (author) and Sonna (illustrator and cover designer). The book is available through Finishing Line Press (www.finishinglinepress.com).

Elderberries editor Ann Schranz was curious about what the process was like for mother and daughter to work together on the book. Sarah and Sonna were kind enough to provide details.

Sonna:

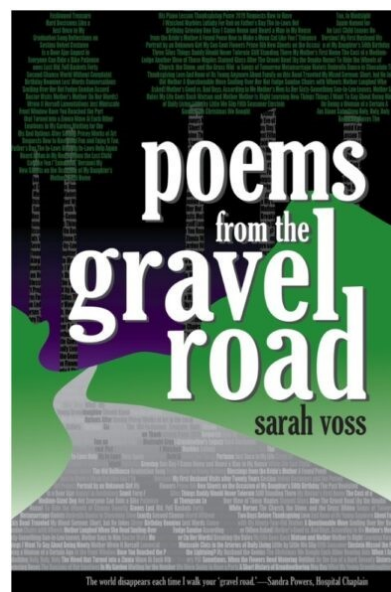
As for the cover design... that came out of the final title for the book. Once we had decided on the title, the image of the gravel road was a pretty strong one for me... so I could definitely see a gravel road on the cover in my mind. I started doing some rough sketches of covers with gravel roads on them... and I think I just felt the cover didn't have anything that made it stand out or feel special. I'm not sure exactly when I got the brainstorm to create the cover out of words... that would have come more organically... I was likely working on cover ideas and thinking about covers... and probably saw an image made from words around that time and all those things were tumbling around in my head... and then voila! the idea to use the titles of your actual poems to add texture and interest and to literally be a gravel road made from poems... poems from the gravel road... seemed perfect and so I worked with that concept until I had a design that I felt good about.

I admit, the words I carry make me feel a cut above the ordinary. I love my trees, too, the way they intentionally blend into the background rather than foreground so they're there, but don't compete with other elements or detract from the other details. And the road, too, with its footprints leading us all into the future. That makes me feel like I am preparing my readers for the adventure inside.

Sarah:

We spent years of labor pains choosing the final title, or so it seemed. Eventually, I started thinking about the poem titled "The Gravel Road," which I'd put in the "Past Revisited" section of the book. That was the one I'd written at the invitation of *Omaha Magazine* to be included in an article about some of Omaha's poets.

I purposefully left the locations off the title because I liked that it could be either gravel road... the one at the beginning of your life, or in your fifth season.



Sarah:

What was your favorite part about doing the artwork?

Sonna:

The artwork was a bit stressful at first. For some of the poems, I had really clear images that came to mind... but, for others, not a lot. So, when I agreed to do the inside illustrations, I was stressed until I limited the scope of the artwork to just trying to do an illustration for each section. After that, it was a lot easier, less stressful, and more fun. Each section of poems had *something* that evoked an image for me, even if all the poems didn't... and so I just took the strongest of the images that the poems evoked and worked to turn them into a section illustration.

Another thing that can be stressful with artwork is that I'm not great at drawing stuff out of thin air... I require something to look at. But, you have to be careful about taking too much inspiration from other people's illustrations and photos for copyright reasons. So, I ended up taking a lot of my own photos and buying a light board and some really nice pens to help me create line drawings I was happy with. I ended up buying a fair amount of props to create some of these photos... one was a set of tall ice cream sundae glasses that I used to make ice cream sundaes for the ice cream sundae illustration.

Occasionally, Wil and I will make fancy sundaes and eat them out of those glasses and now whenever I see that illustration, I am reminded of that... so, that would be one of my favorite parts of making the artwork. I also now have a ball jar with marbles and another one with daffodils, bittersweet, and cattails sitting in my room that make me think of you/grandma/my childhood and that makes me smile when I see it. So, that's another favorite thing that came out of creating the artwork.

Sarah:

If you could, what would you have done differently over the past few years in getting to this stage?

Sonna:

I think the only thing I wish could have been different about getting to this stage would have been having the process of getting a publisher been smoother and less trying. I also have a little bit of regret that we didn't try to actually do the publishing ourselves, because I am still slightly concerned about even working with the current publisher to get this over the finishing line. That said, I really didn't want to become an expert in self-publishing, so I guess I could say that's something I learned (that I don't want to do this full-time at least not right now).

Sarah:

Were there other learning things for you?

Sonna:

I also learned a lot about vanity presses, ISBNs and how to tell whether books are self-published or not... some of which was kind of interesting... but, also told me a lot about how many amateurs are out there doing this now... and I guess I'd have to say that's what most surprised me.... the sheer variety and volume of people who have gone into the self-publishing world... either to publish themselves, or to make money... and the number of "side" industries that have come out of the growth in self-publishing... from books on how to self-publish to how to design your own covers or hire someone to do it for you, etc. And I guess I learned that given some of the people I've seen doing this... that I probably could start a self-publishing business, if I ever wanted to.

Sarah:

What's been the best part?

Sonna:

I think the best part was getting the opportunity to do this with you. I think it gave us both something fun to collaborate on during a time that wasn't really fun for much of anyone... and also gave us something to do when there wasn't a lot to do. It also gave us a reason to connect frequently during a time [Covid] when there wasn't much connection. In the end, though, I think the best part will end up being the reason I suggested this project in the first place: having so many of your poems showcased in one really nice place that I feel proud to have helped you with. A nice memory on several fronts.

Eleanor Motley Richardson has resided in Rockland, ME, with her husband, The Rev. Peter Tufts Richardson, since 2002. She is a retired organist, choir director, and organ builder. In addition, she has published five books of local history: *Hurricane Island*, *North Haven Summers*, *Andover: A Century of Change*, *Mechanic Street: Uncovering the History of a Maine Neighborhood*, and a history of the Motley family.

For ten years she and Peter transcribed and edited 80 years of family diaries, written by his ancestors, father and son Joseph and Henry Ingraham, on their early farm in Rockland. *The Ingraham Diaries, 1795-1875*, was published in 2018.

Following a minister around makes for a varied career. During Peter's time at the First Parish in Kennebunk, ME, Eleanor was Community News Editor for the *Journal Tribune* in Biddeford, where her duties included writing daily obituaries for three years. So she's had a lot of practice. In addition, she was editor of *Elderberries* from 2004-2008, and wrote all the minister and partner obituaries in those years.

Eleanor and Peter live in an 1882 house built by Peter's great-grandparents, on a fragment of the 200-acre farm cleared by his 4th great-grandfather in 1781. The house has never been for sale. They spend six months per year in Naples, FL, (except during COVID in 2020, when they stayed 18 months!) Their combined families include four children, 13 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren.



Introducing
Eleanor
Motley Richardson,
Partner Obituary
Editor



Thank you to Roger Rochester, who served as Partner Obituary Editor through Spring, 2022. Roger's care and talent are greatly appreciated.

Losing Hearing

The world becomes a mostly silent movie.
Breezes and hieroglyphs,
the smell of thyme underfoot
and a bird seeming to sing.
The trees move their leaves
turning green and silver silent sides.

Walkers in the distance with moving
mouths. One waves. You figure out
by where the hand or eye is aimed
whether or not to wave back.

Company dissolves, a sounding soup.
Unfenced vowels, partially
possible consonants.
Stretching and testing, you fall in.
Lost at sea, you dog paddle in clashing currents.
Little waves slap you silly
one by one by one.

Karen Lewis Foley
March 14, 2011

© Lewis Foley 2022



Photo: Susan V. Rak

A request regarding Ed Lane

My husband. Ed Lane, was a devoted member of UURMAPA. He looked forward to the fall conference every year. It fed his soul.

Now our local TV station, with a volunteer from our First Parish in Needham, is doing a short documentary of Ed's life focusing on his social action specifically with the the Selma march and the Pentagon Papers when he was on the board of Beacon Press. I missed out on this part of his life having married him in 1988. I know these were moments for which he was most proud as were all Uus.

I have been asked to give these people names of persons who may have been a part of these crowning moments with Ed. Unfortunately all the people I know of are no longer alive.

If you or others have any thoughts about who the Needham Channel people could contact I would be overjoyed. I thought that a small column in the newsletter asking for this information might also be possible.

Thank you for any help you can give.

Helen (helenblane@gmail.com)



DID YOU KNOW...

...that we have a Universalist National Cemetery?

Yes, we do! It's on the grounds of Murray Grove Retreat and Renewal Center in Lanoka Harbor, NJ. Founded August 18, 1924, it is almost as old as Murray Grove itself. There was a time when Murray Grove was barely surviving and the cemetery got very overgrown and forgotten. But during her tenure in the 1990s, Murray Grove Executive Director Ellen Chulak cleared the brambles and brought it back to life.

There are some significant Universalists from our past buried there:

Rev. Edwin C. Sweetser (1847-1949)

Mary Sweetser (1853-1931)

Rev. Frederick A. Bisbee (1855-1923)

Matty Gally Bisbee (1857-1921)

Margaret B. Peace & son John Bisbee (interred)

Harry Greenwood Grover (1881-1976)

Vanessa Firman Grover (1886-1970)

James R. Weakley (1/28/67)

And more recently:

Rev. Clinton Lee Scott (1887-1985)

plus a former member of the congregation that meets at Murray Grove

There are 64 plots, at least 50 of which are yet to be used. The cemetery requires that ashes be buried with either a ground level plaque or a standup stone for identification purposes. The cemetery is very near the Potter Chapel where Rev. John Murray preached his first sermon on our American shores and went on to build our Universalist faith in America.

If you are planning on cremation, you may want to consider having your ashes buried in our Universalist National Cemetery. I'm considering it myself. Think about it.

Fondly, Carol Taylor

We Remember Bob Doughty (1930 - 2022)

Robert E. (Bob) Doughty, 91, husband of the Rev. Nancy Doughty, died April 10, 2022 following a stroke. He was born May 10, 1930, in Columbus, MS.

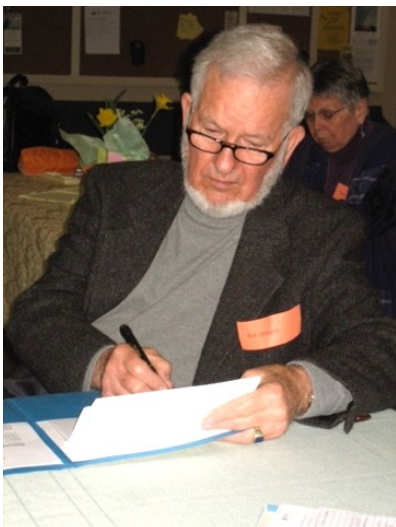
Bob married Jean Weeks in 1950 and they had four daughters. Bob and Nancy were married in December 1966 after his first wife died, and in 1970 another daughter was born. Together they spent many summers sailing on the Great Lakes and camped with UU's on holiday weekends. Bob was a member of First UU Church, Detroit, active in religious education and social action.

Later he and Nancy joined Northwest UU Church in Southfield, MI, where Bob took many leadership roles including Church Moderator. Once Nancy became minister at Emerson UU Church in 1989, Bob of necessity retreated to be the minister's partner.

As a teen, Bob achieved Eagle Scout in 1947. He was an electrical engineer at Chrysler for more than 30 years, retiring as an engineering manager in 1992. Bob was the consummate do-it-yourselfer, and after moving to Traverse City, MI in 1998, Bob turned his building interests to researching and building models of ships, lighthouses and antique airplanes.

Bob and Nancy celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary in 2021. He and Nancy were each other's best friends, supporters and loved each other deeply. Bob is survived by Nancy, four daughters, and four grandchildren.

A celebration of life was held May 14, at the UU Congregation of Grand Traverse, MI. Messages of condolence can be sent to Nancy Doughty, 12055 S. Woodwinds Cir., #13, Traverse City, MI 49684.



We Remember Sue Male (1933 - 2022)

Sue (Anderson) Male, 89, died May 14, 2022. Her husband was the Rev. Donald W. Male, who predeceased her in 2008.

Sue was born Jan. 27, 1933, in Knoxville, TN, the daughter of Marie and Carl Anderson. In 1952, she married John S.G. Williams, and had two children. Divorced in 1967, Sue remarried in 1971 "the love of her life," Donald W. Male, and moved to Manchester, TN.

Sue was the "first white woman to join the local NAACP in the county." She helped establish the first chapter of National Organization for Women there. She helped found the first Multi-County Mental Health Center. In 1985 at age 52, Sue completed her B.A. and worked as a city planner for Rutherford County, including speaking on television.

Sue played a major role in establishing the UU Church of Tullahoma, TN. She and Don also aided in financing the Mountain Retreat (UU), in Highlands, NC. In the late 1980s-1990s, Sue served as a UUA trustee representing the Southeast (TJ District).

During her final years, Sue moved to Richmond, VA, near her daughter, Jennifer. Despite declining health, Sue was still able to calculate arithmetic problems and work her daily crossword puzzles up until the last weeks of her life. Sue will be remembered for her kind heart, her determination and intelligence, and her love of family and friends.

She is survived by two children, three stepchildren, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held in Knoxville at the UU Church on June 4, where her remains will be interred next to her husband, Donald Warren Male.

Notes of condolence can be sent online here: <https://www.blileys.com/obituaries/Sue-A-Male?obId=24896854#/obituaryInfo>.

We Remember Dennis G. Kuby (1934 – 2019)

The Reverend Dennis Kuby—who left 10 years of parish ministry to pursue a passionate 40-year “ministry of ecology”—died on 23 April 2019, aged 84.

Dennis Giles Kuby was born on 1 June 1934 in Cleveland, Ohio. After earning a B.A. at Bethany College (WV) in 1957, he took theological training at Oxford University (England, 1960–61) and was then graduated with a B.D. from St. Lawrence University (NY) in 1962.

Mr. Kuby was ordained on 16 December 1962 by the Unitarian Society of Cleveland OH, where he served for five years (1962–1967). After two years (1967–69) as a vice-president at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley CA, he returned to parish ministry at the UU Church of Studio City CA (1969–71).

Church members vividly recall his public “burial” of an internal combustion engine to dramatize the need to curb polluting uses of fossil fuel. He arranged for a “grave” to be dug in the church’s front lawn and invited the press and public to witness as the offending device was interred and laid to rest.

In 1973 the Rev’d Mr. Kuby was granted preliminary UUA ministerial fellowship for a specialized ministry in ecology. He moved to Berkeley CA, where he founded the Ministry of Ecology, Inc., promoting environmental theology, ethics, and liturgies. An essay, “Ecology Is Religion,” appeared in the *UU World*.

Dennis’s son Scott said that his father “preferred to be remembered as a Unitarian minister committed to the philosophy of Universalism—that what truly connects and unites us is our common humanity.”

Dennis is survived by his wife Jeanne Kuby and his son Paul “Scott” Kuby. A pre-planned celebration of his life, attended by friends and family, took place on his 60th birthday in the Ohio village of Bratenahl on the south shore of Lake Erie. No other memorial service was planned.

Notes of condolences may be sent to Jeanne Kuby or Scott Kuby, at 1250 Queens Rd, Berkeley, CA 94708.



We Remember Jean Zoerheide (1919 – 2018)

Jean Zoerheide, age 99, the surviving spouse of Reverend Robert Zoerheide, died 11 August 2018 in Baltimore, Maryland. She was born Jean Kenyon Spaulding on 1 April 1919 and married Robert in 1937. They remained together until his death in 2003.

During their 66 years, while he owned a butcher shop with his brother, earned a Bachelor’s degree from Western Michigan College and an M.Div. from Meadville Lombard, Jean maintained the home and raised their four children, including when Bob worked for the Unitarian Service Committee with Japanese American internees during WWII and with Czechoslovakian Unitarians after the war. They returned to the US, where he served churches in Peterborough NH, Syracuse NY, and Bethesda MD, before being called to First Unitarian Church in Baltimore in 1978.

Jean became active with the UU Women’s Federation and helped to draft and promote the Women and Religion Resolution which was passed by the UUA General Assembly in 1977. In 1978, Jean was appointed to the Continental Women and Religion Committee, and in 1979 she was one of the organizers of the first conference, titled “Beyond This Time,” which produced manuals of worship services, workshop ideas, and educational sessions to work on implementing the 1977 resolution within Unitarian Universalism. At the Women and Religion Convocation on Feminist Theology in 1980, she was one of the eight women who brought water to the first Water Ritual.

After their retirement, Jean and Bob became Caring Contact for UURMaPA members in the Joseph Priestley district. Jean continued in that role for a couple years after Bob’s death in 2003.

In addition to her husband, Jean was predeceased by their daughter, Robyn Reklitis, who died in 1996. She was survived by three of her children: Todd K. Zoerheide of Brewer ME; Mark E. Zoerheide of Alum Bank PA; and Vickie J. Dykes, who has since also died (in December 2020). She was also survived by several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

We Remember Denis G. Meacham (1943 – 2019)

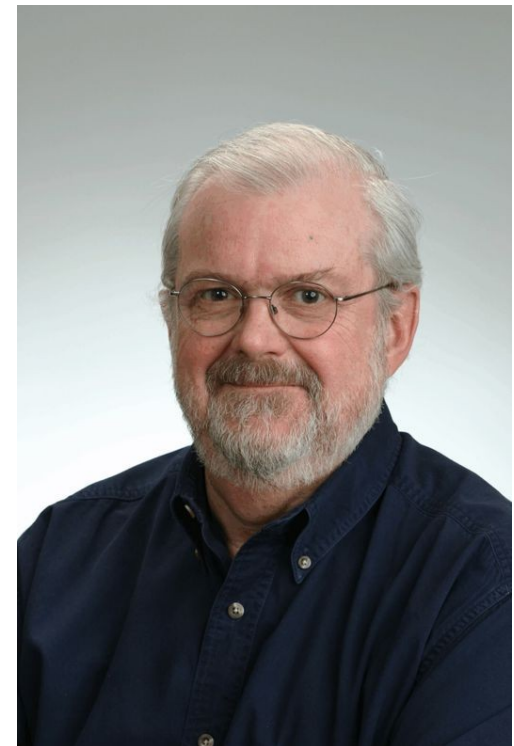
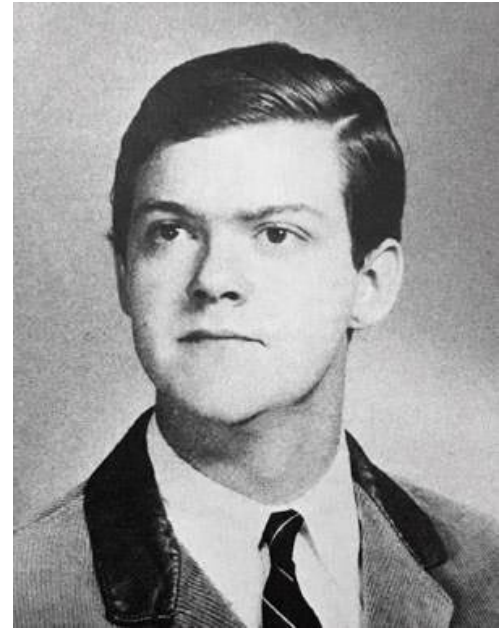
The Reverend Denis Meacham, who found his way from alcoholism to an influential and widely admired addiction ministry in mid-life, died on 20 March 2019, aged 76.

Denis G. Meacham was born into an Irish Catholic family in New York City on 5 January 1943. In high school he wrote music and played for parties, often with his sister. After graduation as valedictorian, he went on to Princeton University, earned a B.A. in English Literature, and supported himself as a musician before going on to a thirty-year career in publishing and communications, as an editor of the *American Heritage Dictionary*, and almost 10 years as a professor of communications at Boston University, having earned an M.A. in public administration along the way.

Meanwhile, after marriage in 1969, Denis and his wife Janet, seeking religious education for their children, found that their path led to the First Unitarian Society of Newton MA in 1979, where Denis became active in church life. After reaching a crisis point with his alcoholism in the late 1980s, Denis used his completion of a rehab program to embark on a life commitment to addiction counseling. He served as a lay minister at the Newton church for 12 years in preaching and pastoral outreach. Eventually seeing a new career for himself in this, Mr. Meacham earned a D.Min. at Andover Newton Theological School in 2002 and was ordained the same year by First Parish Brewster (MA) UU.

The Rev'd Dr. Meacham founded the Brewster church's Center for Addictions Ministry in 2002 and served as its director until 2019. His book *The Addiction Ministry Handbook: A Guide for Faith Communities* (Skinner House, 2004) became a widely used congregational resource and his addiction ministry was the subject of a feature article in the *UU World* in 2004.

At his death, Denis was survived by his daughter Kate Langevin, son Sam Meacham, grandsons Ethan and Brandon Langevin, and sister Pam Hutcherson. His wife, Janet Harper, had died earlier. A celebration of Denis's life was held on 11 May 2019 at the UU Meeting House in Chatham MA.



We Remember Judith A. Walker-Riggs (1939- 2019)

The Reverend Dr. Judith Walker-Riggs, a much-praised preacher, whose career crisscrossed the Atlantic to serve pulpits in the UK, US, Belgium, and Paris, died on 8 July 2019, one month short of her 80th birthday.

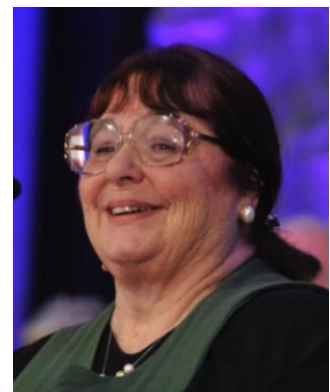
Judith is widely remembered as “a progressive, courageous woman who was not afraid to speak her mind [or to] stand up for others.” With her hearty laugh, she was “wise, loving, fierce, up-beat, witty, gracious, brilliant, courageous, and a pioneer in female ministry.” Of his mother, Judith’s son James wrote:

“The thing I remember the most (and that people often mention first when remembering her services) was her ‘Freddy the Frog’ stories. The way in which they brought children into adult service, and the opportunity for her to use her voice performance skills was legendary. Personally, her drive for justice in the world around her really affected my brother and me. She was committed to understanding the ways in which UUs could help drive fundamental change. She influenced countless others in her congregations and in the [UU movement] as a whole.”

Judith Ann Walker was born on 4 August 1939 in Baltimore MD to Charles and Marjorie Louise Walker. When she was 11, the family moved to Melrose MA where Judy was active in the Unitarian church as a local and regional LRY leader (1954-57). In her mid-teens she thought of a career in ministry, but with no women as role models, dropped the idea. Encouraged by her church’s youth advisor, Charles Stephen (then a student at Crane, later a long-time minister in Lincoln Neb.), Judy spent a church-sponsored summer in Europe, then returned to what she called a “very stultifying” senior year. With her good grades, she was released from classes three afternoons a week for independent study, which she used to travel into Cambridge and attend lectures by Paul Tillich, among others. Her high-school yearbook called her “effervescent, witty” and a “born traveler.”

After a freshman year (1957-58) studying comparative religion at the University of Rochester (NY), Judith took advantage of the university’s “junior year abroad” program (a year earlier than the norm), headed off to England, and found the educational climate there so much more to her liking that she stayed. Her interest in ministry was revived, and after a period of mundane work and “secretarial training,” she began study at Manchester College, Oxford (MCO). While there (1962-64), she edited news for the UK Unitarian periodical, *The Inquirer*. In 1964, Ms. Walker earned a Certificate in Theology and was forthwith ordained on June 24th by the UK’s General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

The day after her ordination, celebrating at a theatre performance in Reading, Judith met Gordon Urquhart, a Scots agricultural economist on the Reading University faculty who worked evenings as a musician at the theatre. It was “love at first sight,” she later said, though neither of them believed in it. With Judith already committed to serving the Cairo Street Unitarian Chapel in Warrington, 170 miles to the north, the couple began a long-distance engagement. They married a year later (1965) and that autumn the Rev’d Judith Urquhart was able to secure a settlement near Gordon’s university at Reading’s First Unitarian Church.



But Gordon was increasingly restive with limited job prospects, and in late 1967 he took a career move to the U.S. with Judith and their newborn son James in tow. Judith worked night jobs until she heard that the UU pulpit in nearby Stoneham MA was open. She began preaching there in late 1968 and was formally settled in the spring of 1969. A temporary assignment for Gordon took the family to the Netherlands in 1970, where their son Iain was born. Judith eventually made contact with the UU Fellowship in Brussels and took the train three hours each way as a part-time minister for them until the family returned to the U.S. in 1972. The Stoneham pulpit being once again vacant, Judith was fortuitously able to resume her ministry with them for another four years.

In 1976, Judith and Gordon arranged a joint move to Cedar Rapids IA, where Gordon returned to teaching and began long-delayed study for a Ph.D. while Judith accepted a call to the city's historic Peoples Church UU, serving until 1983. Their marriage failed during those years, and by the end of her time there she had married David Riggs. Now, as the Rev'd Judith Walker-Riggs, she was more independently in control of her professional career; she headed east for a two-year interim ministry (1984-86) at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church in Alexandria VA.

That was followed by longer settlements at All Souls Unitarian Church in Kansas City, MO (1986-1991) and Rosslyn Hill Unitarian Chapel, London (1991-1998). Meanwhile, in 1987, she received a D.D. honoris causa from Meadville Lombard Theological School, where she taught on the adjunct faculty. While in London, she was twice (1993 and 1996) the keynote speaker for retreats of the European UUs.

Returning to the U.S. in 1998, Judith turned to a series of interim ministries at the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset NY (1998-2000), Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon PA (2000-2001), Fountain Street Church, Grand Rapids MI (2002-

2004), and finally at the UU Community of El Paso TX (2006-2008).

The Rev'd Ms. Walker-Riggs was widely sought out for service in both the US and the UK. While settled in Stoneham, she was president of the Mass Bay UUMA chapter (1975-76). Later she served on the UUA Board of Trustees (1981-89) and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (1979-86). She was active in the UU Women's Federation and chaired the UUA Long-Range Planning Committee (1982-1984). Back in the UK, she served on the governing body of British Unitarians (1993-1998) and on the British Unitarian Finance and Administration Committee (1995-98). Beginning in 1998, she sat on the board of Starr King School for the Ministry and co-authored "Liberal Religion: Our Mission for the Future."

Beyond the parish, Judith was active with many community organizations. She served on the boards of the League of Women Voters, United Way, Red Cross, Planned Parenthood, Council of Churches, Council on Aging, Emergency Shelter, Camden Ecumenical Refugee Network, and many more. She was appointed to a civil rights commission (1979-1983) and to the Eighth Circuit Court Desegregation Monitoring Committee (1987-1990). She was instrumental in setting legally required religious education in Schools for the London Borough of Camden. In her spare time, Judith enjoyed theatre, music, reading, walking, swimming, and crossword puzzles.

At her death, Judith was survived by sons Iain and James Urquhart and stepson Steven Riggs. Her beloved second husband had died earlier, in 2011. A celebration of Judith's life was held on 13 July 2019 at the Northwest UU Congregation in Sandy Springs, Georgia.

Notes of condolences may be sent to James Urquhart at 3208 Fairview Avenue, Alameda, CA 94501.



Ancestors I Dig:

REV. JOHN THOMAS 6th Great Grandfather

by Rev. Dee Graham

© Graham 2022

Ask any Southern Universalist and you'll hear about the grassroots of our faith in North Carolina. Here religion historically tended to be less formal and to spread across neighborhoods in the more rural, agricultural countryside.

Although my own family didn't join a Unitarian Universalist congregation until 1979, when I decided to go to seminary my genealogical mother pulled out her family history book (documenting her pilgrim lineage back to Noah) and pointed out the Unitarian scholars and clergy. That was a surprise to me then.

My father's side, however, was a story they were just beginning to research. Mostly Southern Baptist and Methodist, there were still plenty of clergy, until the trail led back to Spanish Florida and Catholicism. Understanding my ancestry can be a family systems marathon!

One ancestral home my parents visited was that of the Rev. John Thomas, my paternal 6th great grandfather, in Wilson, NC. My connection to him comes from his daughter Teresa, who left when she married.

Back in the 1980s, my parents went to Wilson while researching his family tree and found my dad's 6th cousin Hugh Buckner Johnston still living on the farm. That's 200 years of family living in one place, complete with the highway marker and original building of Toisnot Baptist Church, founded in 1756. Some yards behind the church and school building is the Thomas cemetery, and beyond that still stands, barely, the family home and the large pond where the good reverend and his clergy sons baptized all those who came.

The day one of my living cousins and I showed up on the property, we surprised a lively woman who currently lives there and is the caretaker. Without much compensation, she cares for this historic treasure where things have been falling apart since the death of Johnston and his son not long after.

With my travel trailer parked nearby for the week, I got to know the local library, genealogical society members and the land where my roots and maybe even my religious rebellious nature drew from four centuries ago. At least, that's the sense of mystery that tapped my awareness when I first stood with the highway marker that signified something of significance happened there.

Not all we seekers of ancestors find is good. In fact, some of it can be downright scary. Yet, as my preaching forefather might admit, "and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32 NRSV)

Here was a man who left the Church of England in 1748 while holding a patent for land in the British Colony of Carolina. He became a religious dissenter, first through contact with the Dunkers¹, as an anabaptist, and licensed the meeting house built with the support of the Arminian General Baptists. In fact, his was the first church founded in what is now Wilson County, where Rev. John Thomas was also a justice of the peace, judge, militia captain and planter.

What's more, Toisnot Baptist Church was officially constituted in 1756. On Sept. 24, 1759, it became one of the few non-conforming churches legally licensed in the Colony of North Carolina. My 6th great grandfather went on to help establish other churches and, along with his sons, evolved theologically away from what we today call Universalism.

His legacy testifies to a man of conscience and wisdom. His wife, Christenater Roberts, must have carried unending responsibility for their dozen or so children along with everything that goes with being a clergy partner, educator and on-site farm manager.

Yet, somehow, their Christian hearts failed to awaken to his greatest sin, that of claiming ownership of nine humans who lived their entire lives serving this family. Their names were Mary, Cloe, Emmanuel, Jacob, Jim, Rachel, Miles, Jim, and George.

Mary must have been the oldest, and likely a mother to several, as when he died Rev. John Thomas willed her to his granddaughter, who had the means to support her. But the others were left to his sons, children with their mothers to the same enslaver. What were they all thinking?

¹Eddy, R. (1884). *Universalism in America: A History* (Vol. 1). Universalist publishing house.

Toisnot Church, Thomas Home, and Thomas Cemetery

(all photos courtesy of Dee Graham)



The area around Wilson and extending toward New Bern, North Carolina's first capital, offers interesting racial history. Before the Revolutionary War, racial lines were more blurred among free and less privileged people. Yet Thomas kept these nine women, men and children enslaved even after his death.

Teresa, my 5th great grandmother, eventually ended up in Spanish Florida where her family became mixed race and multicultural. The issue of slavery there grew even more complex, as Spain freed those enslaved Americans who converted to Catholicism yet maintained its own European version of slavery among its residents. Even some of those who were freed upon conversion later ended up as enslavers themselves.

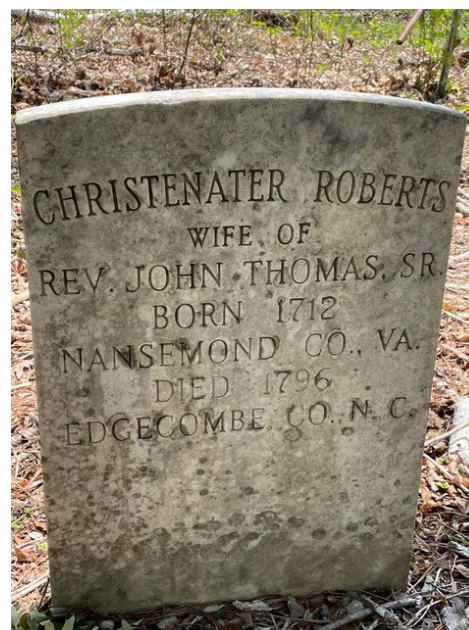
As far as Mary and her family, I looked to a Wilson native for some help even conceiving how a somewhat universalist pastor could reconcile enslaving another family while preaching a gospel of love.

Lisa Y. Henderson, author of the blog "Black Wide-Awake," explained how through time the racial history of Wilson area has grown complicated. Slavery, she reiterated, was endorsed in the Bible. And then there have always been freedmen living in the countryside, including times after Emancipation when interracial families coexisted without incident.

One of the themes of my journey through my family history and the hidden history of interracial complexities returns time and again to speaking the truth. As I discover non-white, atypical ancestors, I name them. My ministry today is writing about these pioneers who truly put their whole lives into surviving changing times and governments.

This week I published the names of my ancestor's enslaved people on his genealogy page of my family tree, connecting them so that anyone seeking their roots might find the connection. Cousin Hugh Johnston began this practice in his lifetime, finding evidence that at least one of Rev. John Thomas' sons did produce children with enslaved women, children whose descendants today are my cousins.²

For me, genealogy and history have come to life with this unearthing of sins and scars, opening relationships with cousins I might never have known and hoping to empower voices of those who survived even harder times than ours. Then, it becomes incumbent to find ways to speak these truths into the chaos of today.



² <https://afamwilsonnc.com/2019/06/20/johnny-thomas-forefathers/>

Fall 2022 Conference October 24-27

Our Fall 2022 UURMaPA gathering will be offered as a multi-platform event (see next page for multi-platform details). It will feature the Reverend Dr. Tom Owen-Towle as theme speaker on the topic "Preparing for Our Own Farewell."

Tom writes, "Clearly, we ministers, as well as partners, have been personally engaged in tending to life's end over our entire careers, but facing our own death is a tougher challenge, especially while still dwelling in a death-defying culture and being adherents of a liberal religion, which has failed to 'embrace mortality' in our primary documents."

"During two supportive sessions, we will share personal notes on pressing fears and regrets, as well as desired elements of a 'good death.' We will address our post-death theologies or 'What happens to us after we die?' and 'How do we wish to be remembered?' Conference attendees will begin outlining wishes and plans for their own memorial services.

The Rev. Dr. Tom Owen-Towle was ordained in 1967 and served for 24 years with his life-mate, Carolyn, as co-ministers of First UU Church of San Diego. Tom is still preaching hither and yon, singing in nursing homes, volunteering at the homeless center he co-founded in 1984, and mentoring youth-at-risk. He regularly conducts workshops on the themes of conscious aging and mindful dying. Dr. Owen-Towle has published two dozen books; the latest is titled *Making Peace With Our Own Death* (2021) and is available at the UUA. On the dust jacket of the book, he quotes Epicurus: "When we can liberate ourselves from our fear of death, we free ourselves to live."

In addition to the relevant theme presentation, the conference will include the commemorative and celebratory Service of Remembrance honoring ministers and partners who have died over this last half year. Rev. Dan King and Nina Benedetto will lead that service. There will also be the much-anticipated Odysseys by a minister and a partner of a minister. The conference will begin and end with worship. We will hear from our attentive UURMaPA and UUA leadership on issues that affect our membership and our denomination. There will be music and a time to hang out and connect with colleagues, near and far away, in large groups and in intimate small groups.

We hope you will be joining your colleagues and partners in this stimulating conference.

Details of the conference will be communicated as the Planning Committee firms them up. Look for these on our Facebook pages, our website, and in UURMaPA-Announce emails which will be sent directly to you.

Online registration is available in early August at uurmapa.org. The registration fee is \$40 for each attendee.

With anticipation,

Your Planning Team

Convener: Barbro Hansson

Scribe: Johanna Nichols

Public Relations & Publicity: Rosemarie Smurzynski

Worship Coordinator: Christine Robinson

Odyssey Coordinator: Wayne Arnason

Small Group Coordinator: Terry Ellen

Topics of Interest Coordinator: Beth Miller

Pod Liaison: Cynthia Cain

Music Coordinators for Slide Show:

Arthur and Andrea Berman

Virtual Choir Director & Internet Liaison:

Richard Speck

Zoom Master & Technology Professional:

Jon Claney

*Deep human connection is . . .
the purpose and the result of a meaningful life,
and it will inspire the most amazing acts of love,
generosity, and humanity.*

-Melinda Gates

Condensed Program Schedule

The conference offers three sessions each day for a total of nine sessions. Each session is 1 ½ hours long. Sessions begin at the same time on each day.

1 p.m. Eastern / 12 p.m. Central / 10 a.m. Pacific
4 p.m. Eastern / 3 p.m. Central / 1 p.m. Pacific
7 p.m. Eastern 6 p.m. Central / 4 p.m. Pacific

Monday, October 24

Session I Opening Worship and Small Group Check In
Session II [To Be Announced] and Small Group Deep Check In
Session III In Memoriam / Service of Remembrance

Tuesday, October 25

Session IV Theme Presentation
Session V Theme Presentation continuation
Session VI Odyssey Presentation

Wednesday, October 26

Session VII Odyssey Presentation
Session VIII Topics of Interest Breakout Groups
Session IX [To Be Announced] and Closing Worship

The slide show "Greetings from Around the World," with photos of all attendees and an accompanying soundtrack, will begin 15 minutes before each session.

Multi-platform Innovation: Fall Conference "Pods"

A trio of sites (Mid-Atlantic, Pacific Northwest, and San Francisco Bay Area) will host in-person gatherings ("pods") of UURMaPAns during the next event as it unfolds online on October 24 - 26.

Please contact the conveners of these "pods" listed below to find out specifics, including separate registration procedures. You may want to make plans soon, especially for option #3 below, where overnight rooms are limited.

Three "Pod" Sites:

1. UU Congregation of Wilmington, DE (Contact Richard Speck: rgspeck@comcast.net)
2. UU Congregation of Marin, San Rafael, CA (Contact Anne Spatola: amspatola@comcast.net)

Participants will make their own arrangements to stay (or commute) and eat in a variety of settings near each of these churches, which will host conference programming segments shared on a large screen. (Some joint meals are likely.)

3. Seabeck Conference Center, Seabeck, WA (Contact Jaco ten Hove: jbthishere@gmail.com)

Participants will arrive Sunday afternoon, October 23, and stay through lunch Wednesday for nine provided meals together and lovely accommodations, sharing conference programming segments on a large screen.

NOTE: Anyone wishing to host a pod of any size, even just a few local folks, can contact Richard Speck to learn more about the particulars of this innovation.