

the chalice

Published by the
Unitarian Church of Sharon
**A Welcoming Congregation
of the Unitarian
Universalist Association**
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MARCH WORSHIP SERVICES

THEME: GROWTH

10:00 am Family Service - March 6th & 13th
10:30 am Adult Service every Sunday

For Zoom information [click here](#)
For Order of Service available the Friday before the service [click here](#)

March 6 - Sustaining the Tree of Life

Today we kick off our annual Stewardship campaign with a story about the Tree of Life. When we ask, who owns the tree of life? The answer comes, none of us; rather, we belong to it. Who cares for the tree of life? The answer comes, we all do. It is this way with the Unitarian Church of Sharon. It takes all of us to sustain our church, and in so doing we create a generous and grateful community. Rev. Jolie preaching

March 13 - Growing in Spirit *UU Principles Series: Third Principle*

We continue our series on our UU Principles with the third principle: acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations. As an inherently pluralistic faith tradition, we grow our souls when we connect across different ways of understanding. Let's make some room to grow today. Bring your own beliefs and your encouragement of others' beliefs. Rev. Jolie preaching.

March 20 How to Love This World - Rev. Fred Small

In the face of intersecting crises like climate change, pandemic, and racism, it's easy to become disheartened. How do we sustain our spirits in these challenging times? How do we know what action to take? How do we love this world?

About Rev. Fred Small

A Unitarian Universalist pastor, singer-songwriter, and former environmental lawyer, Rev. Fred Small is Policy Director of Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light, which mobilizes people of faith as climate activists. He also serves as Minister for Climate Justice at Arlington Street Church, Boston.

March 27 Intergenerational Service Led by Youth

A long-standing UCS tradition, the Youth-led service is organized and led by our Senior Youth Group. It is a time when the congregation gets to learn more about who the youth are and what they care about. This is a service where youth amplify their voices in creative and meaningful ways and are witnessed by this loving community.

From the Minister



It's Stewardship time! Our theme this year is **A Generous and Grateful Community**. And we have a new logo designed for us by UCS member and designer extraordinaire, Kate Parker-O'Toole: The UCS Stewardship Tree. We plan to use this logo each year going forward for our yearly stewardship campaigns, reminding us that pledging to support our church is about growth, it's about planting seeds that will bear fruits in years to come, it's about roots that run deep and branches that stretch high.



Have you signed up for a cottage meeting yet? Our Stewardship Committee will be hosting virtual gatherings to reflect on what our church community means to us, and to dig deep into why we pledge our financial support each year. These will be rich conversations, open to all our members and friends. Attendees will be invited to answer these questions: What does abundance mean to you? What are you grateful for? And, how does generosity make you feel connected to something greater than yourself? Join us on Zoom, on Sunday 3/6 at noon, Wednesday 3/9 at 11 am, or Sunday 3/13 at noon. RSVP to Stewardship@uusharon.org.

General Assembly (GA), the annual meeting of Unitarian Universalists from all over the US and Canada, is coming up: June 22-26 2022. This year GA will be in Portland, OR and a virtual option is also available. Attending GA is a great way to dive deep into our faith movement, with workshops, keynotes, worship services, and socializing with other UUs. It's also where we get to exercise our voice as members of the Unitarian Universalist Association: members of our church can serve as one of four UCS delegates to vote on the business of our Association. If you want to be a delegate, let me or Rory know. And, I am proud to say that, having attained Full Fellowship with our UUA, I will be part of the Service of the Living Tradition this year. This is an annual worship service that honors ministerial milestones. Register and learn more on the [GA website](#).

Many of our UCS members have been considering the question: do we want to adopt an [Eighth Principle](#) which calls us to resist racism and other forms of oppression in order to build beloved community? We want to hear from everyone! Check further in this newsletter for upcoming events on the Eighth Principle and join the conversation.

Yours in faith,

Rev. Jolie

p.s. You can now book appointments with me at www.calendly.com/revjolie. I look forward to meeting with you!

From the President



MASQUERADE by Rory McGregor

My wife Beth and I met in college when singing in our respective Glee Clubs to put on a combined concert at Mount Holyoke College. This shared love for singing has continued to the present thanks to Neponset Choral Society, a local group that performs three times a year. Our upcoming concert scheduled for the last weekend in March draw upon songs taken from Broadway musicals that speak to the challenges and hardships presented by the Covid pandemic. Our talented music director, Chris Martin, recognizes that masked singers (in observance of the state-mandated safety protocol) are stymied to show passion and expression while the audience is equally at a loss because they cannot see half of your face. His choice to sing “Masquerade” from “Phantom of the Opera” has words that make you think about what it's like to hide behind a mask and not be easily recognized or understood. For singers this is a frustrating experience.

are starting the return to “normal”. This single action eliminates the need to have members and friends sign up to attend worship services or to submit attendance lists after RE classes and group meetings. The timing couldn't be better as we have just reopened our church buildings for resumption of in-person events. It's a first ray of welcome daylight in what has been a dark winter for all. The solace that I take from the contagious Omicron variant is the large percentage of members and friends who caught Covid and came through unharmed.

Public demand for “normalcy” is moving toward the elimination of the mask mandate. I will not be surprised if the Commonwealth considers and implements this new direction sometime later this month. Masking will likely become an optional practice for those who need to ensure their own safety in public. Our Task Force for Safe Reopening will review the state's guidance when this happens and recommend policy changes that are appropriate for our congregation. Social distancing will likely be modified as well or done away with altogether.



Rory & Beth in Concert Dress

Thinking ahead to my choral concert, I am hopeful that “Masquerade” will be performed without masks and that the facial expressions of the singers will reveal the true story of what lies behind these barriers.

Rory McGregor

The recent notice from Sharon's Public Health nurse relaxing the requirement for Covid contact tracing has given hope that we

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

"By March, the worst of the winter would be over", wrote Neil Gaiman in Odd and the Frost Giants, a Nordic tale. March is known in New England as an unpredictable month, when spring is in working its way in, but winter still has a bit of a grip. At this point, we well know about unpredictability and cycles that ebb and flow, so bring March on! We will step into the month with religious education programming in the building for all children in Kindergarten and up. This will be the first time since March of 2020, two full years. In that time, the RE Committee has been preparing for a shift in programming that reflects some congregational visioning that took place last winter around religious education. This includes a new Montessori-style classroom and a gradual unveiling of a multi-age UU program called SpiritPlay and a toe into Makerspace. OWL classes will resume in the building as will the Senior Youth Group and Junior Youth Fellowship group. This spring we also look forward to continuing to foster faith formation in the great outdoors and will be updating the RE calendar weekly as the unpredictable early spring weather moves in.

While the indoor nursery remains closed to protect the youngest unvaccinated members of our community, we will - as in the fall- continue to offer outdoor care, by reservation, when weather permits.

Let us hope that Neil Gaiman's words can be a metaphor for the times and that indeed the worst is behind us, and that by the end of March we will continue to step into an unfolding "spring", full of fresh possibility.

In Faith,
Christine Bulman
Interim Director of Religious Education

Religious Education Calendar

March 6

Family Service 10am
RE Grades K- 6 10:30am
OWL Grade 7 12:30 - 3:30 FUSF
OWL Grade 8/9 10:00 - 12:30am
SYG

March 13

Family Service 10am
RE Grades K-6 10:30am
Father Bill's Lunch Making
OWL Grades 8/9 10 - 12:30
JYFG 1:00pm - 2:30pm
SYG

March 20

Family Service 10am
OWL Grades 8/9 10 - 12:30
OWL Grade 7 (either this date or 3/27, tba)
SYG

March 27

Intergenerational Youth-led Service 10:30am
(children in grades 4 and under will go to RE after the first part of the service)
Children's RE
OWL Grade 7 tba (watch your email!)

Youth Programing

SYG is getting ready to kick off our planning for the Youth Led Worship Service! The Youth Led Worship is scheduled for March 27th from 10:30-11:30 am, so be sure to mark your calendars now! The Youth Led Service is an incredibly important SYG tradition. It's a time for youth to both lead and experience being seen and heard in that leadership! It is also a time for us as adults to bear witness to and follow the guide of some of the youngest members of our congregation. We are so looking forward to starting the planning process in SYG:

Youth Led Service Schedule:

Sundays 5:00-6:30pm at UCS

2/27 - Launch- Topic Brainstorm and Consensus Decision
3/6 - Diving into the topic
3/13- Order of Service + Choosing Roles
3/20- Rehearsal!
3/27- Youth Led Service (in the morning) and Coffee Hour

We are also very excited to be able to gather back in person both for SYG and for JYF! Junior Youth Fellowship will be meeting March 13th from 1:00-2:30pm. Stay tuned for more information on that event!



Scenes from the new multi-age SpiritPlay classroom -Opening in March!

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



The Social Justice Committee encourages you to visit the UCS website (uusharon.org) for all the latest news and updates on what's happening for social justice at church. The Social Justice pages are a great source for the most up to date information on

events, opportunities to engage, resources, and for links to partner organizations and groups that we collaborate with in our work.

Brown Envelope Collections



The Brown Envelope recipient for December was **NeighborWorks Housing Solutions** (www.nhsmass.org), and we were able to send them our donation of \$464.

During our Christmas Eve services this year, we once again devoted the entire collection to **Father Bill's & MainSpring House** in Brockton (<https://helpfbms.org>) to support their work on behalf of the homeless population in our region. The final tally for this effort was \$648, which has been matched one-to-one by a FB&MSH donor for a combined gift of \$1,296.

In January 2022, the Brown E recipient was the **Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund** (emafund.org). EMA Fund envisions a world where every person has the right to bodily self determination, including the means to access an abortion or carry a pregnancy to term without social or economic barriers. The B.E. donations came to \$727 for the month.

During February, our Brown E collections supported **Families for Justice as Healing** (justiceashealing.org), which is led by incarcerated women, formerly incarcerated women, and women with incarcerated loved ones. Their mission is to end the incarceration of women and girls. Their work includes the campaign for the **Building up People not Prisons Coalition**.

Families for Justice as Healing leads advocacy to decarcerate women and girls in Massachusetts.

For the March Brown E recipient, the SJC has chosen the program called UTEC, which was founded in 1999 as the United Teen Equality Center (UTECinc.org). UTEC's mission is to ignite and nurture the ambition of our most disconnected young people to trade violence and poverty for social and economic success. They serve Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill, and are nationally recognized as a model agency serving justice-involved young adults. Your donations are greatly appreciated.

Food Pantry Donations:

Our ongoing special collection for the Sharon/Stoughton Food Pantry, and 4 other local pantries in adjacent towns, has raised over \$49,800 to date. As the Covid pandemic continues to evolve, the needs at our local food pantries continue to expand, and they are grateful for our support. Donations by check to the church are converted to Shopping for Justice grocery cards (and that means that we can increase your donation by the 5% discount that we get from the stores), which the pantries then distribute to their guests. As we approach the end of the 2nd year of the Covid pandemic, this ongoing effort by our community is making a real difference in the lives of our neighbors.

UCS Bakers support the Pantries too!

Several of our fabulous UCS bakers have resumed an occasional offer of fine baked goods in exchange for donations to the Food Pantry Project. As a means to highlight the need, and to build connections within our own congregation, Elaine Price, Elizabeth Siftar and others are offering baked goods on a "claim it and it's yours for a Food Pantry donation" basis; look for email notices in the UCS Social list and make your commitment asap. We have also seen offers of high-quality household items being offered in exchange for donations to the Pantries - what a creative bunch we are! Missed out on your chance for a cake or a loaf? Go ahead and donate anyway (checks mailed to the church, online portal donation, or actual food stuffs in the outdoor collection bin at the church entrance are all easy options) and try again in the weeks to come. Not on the email list? Simply send an email to Social-subscribe@lists.uusharon.org and you will receive a confirmation e-mail and instructions for what to do to join this fun effort to support our community members in need.



Earl Grey Yogurt Loaf - A recent offer in exchange for a Food Pantry donation - Coming from a Kitchen near you!

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued

UCS Restroom label changes now in place:



As we resume use of the church building this month, please be aware of a modest change in our facilities:

A recent unanimous vote by the Board of Trustees has approved the change of the use and signage for our bathrooms, and we now have new gender-neutral signage for all of our restroom facilities.

In the past, there were two identical but separated 2-stall restrooms upstairs, one labeled for 'women', the other for 'men', along with two single stalls restrooms for anyone to use at the lower level. The new plan designates all restrooms "Gender Neutral." The 2 bathrooms downstairs can also be used for people who prefer a totally private space, or aren't ready yet for sharing facilities.

We understand that this change may be challenging for many of us, as it raises some issues and concerns. We hope to hear from congregants about their reactions as we move into this next phase of inclusivity. These changes are challenging the binary gender assumptions that so many of us have grown up with, and they assert the respect for each individual to use our facilities equally. One more step on our journey toward Widening the Circle and becoming a truly Welcoming Congregation.

FT Marketplace – Wednesday, 16 March, 3-5pm (24 months and counting...!)

Until Covid allows us to return to the Vestry for after-service Coffee Hour on a regular basis, the SJC will continue to offer our monthly Fair Trade Marketplace for pre-ordered coffee, chocolates, other special food items, as well as Shopping for Justice (S4J) grocery cards. Look for an email to the congregation in early February for details about what, when and how to order, and then stop by the church on 16 March between 3 & 5pm to gather your goods. Thanks for your patronage – all profits support various Social Justice projects and programs, and our S4J program funds the bag lunches that we assemble and send to the MainSpring House homeless shelter in Brockton each month.

Mother's Day Walk for Peace 2022 Save the date:

This year the Mother's Day Walk for Peace is currently planned to be an in-person event on Sunday, May 8th. Depending on the progress of our recovery from the Covid crisis, we hope to send a contingent of Peace Walkers into Boston to be a part of this effort. A lay led service will happen in Sharon for those unable to travel to Boston that morning. Save the date - details to follow.

Stoughton hosts a Common Read Series on 'Defunding Fear'; all 5 Point Cluster Church members are welcome to register and participate.

2022 Common Read Discussions

Defund Fear:

Safety without Policing, Prisons, and Punishment – by Zach Norris

Community Conversations Open to All

Hosted by First Parish Stoughton

Online all at 7:00pm

- Sat. March 12: Part 1 -- The Unsafe World
- Sat. April 9: Part 2 -- A Vision of Safety
- Sat. May 7: Part 3 -- Reimagined Realities

Register at: www.FirstParishStoughton.org/Common-Read

SJC Meeting for March: the monthly SJC meeting will be on Sunday, March 6th at 12:15pm; look in for the zoom link in the UCS Calendar for a **different virtual room** this month.

The Not Boring Book Group along with the SJC:

Wednesday, [March 2nd](#), 7-8:30pm: The UCS Not Boring Book Group discusses *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake* by Alicia Miles; zoom details in the UCS calendar.

CHURCH NEWS

The 8th Principle - A challenge for our times

Below is the introduction to an article by Takiyah Nur Amin entitled *The Call of Our Faith*, found on the UUA website at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/homily/call-our-faith>, or read aloud by Takiyah as part of a Side With Love online service at [Side With Love Sunday worship service](#). Please take a few minutes to absorb the full reflection, as it gives us a thoughtful framework for entering the challenge of addressing racial justice as Unitarian Universalists.

In every moment, life is giving us an invitation. I really believe that; I really believe that in every moment, life is giving us an invitation to do the things that are the most loving and life-affirming; and that doing the loving and life affirming thing is always the answer when you don't know what to do, or if you're feeling unsure.

There's always a moment of invitation to rethink or reevaluate. We're being invited into this cosmic dance of renewal and joy and justice. But you have to make the justice; it doesn't just show up without our participation, or our effort. Things don't get better just by us waiting for them to happen. We all have to engage in the better-making from wherever we are, and each moment presents an invitation for us to do that....

What do you know about the 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism?

JOIN THE 5 POINTS CLUSTER CONGREGATIONS FOR AN ONLINE WORKSHOP TO LEARN MORE.

Saturday March 5, 2022

9:00am to 10:15am:

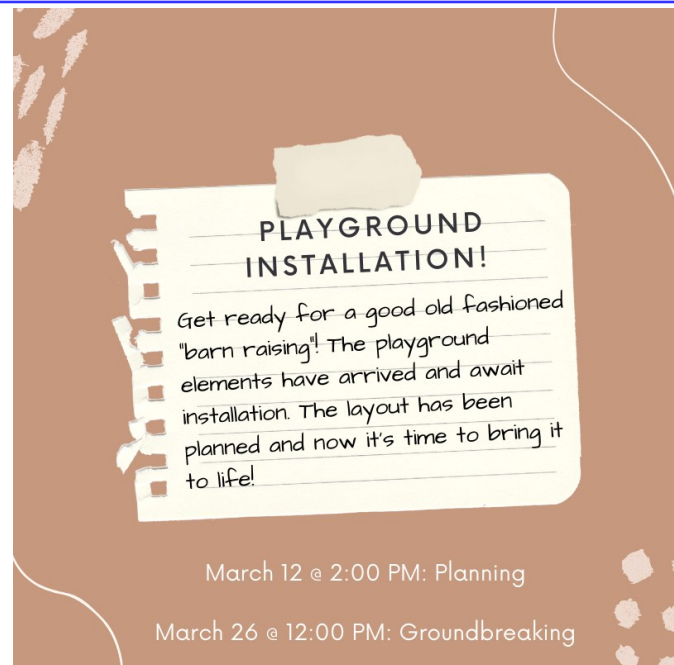
- WHAT IS THE 8TH PRINCIPLE?
- WHO HAS BEEN WORKING ON IT?
- HOW DID THOSE OTHER 7 PRINCIPLES COME TO BE?

10:30am to Noon:

- WHAT COMES NEXT?
- MAKING PLANS FOR MORE CONVERSATIONS
- PREPARING FOR CONGREGATIONAL VOTES
- PREPARING FOR A UU GENERAL ASSEMBLY VOTE

Save the date. Registration Coming Soon!

Stay tuned: Look in the weeks ahead for personal stories from congregational members about our individual experiences as we each work to dismantle white supremacy in our lives, our church, and our community.



UCS Room Reservation Procedure for Events and Meetings

Submit room reservation request on the church calendar. Person who submits the request will be responsible for compliance with the following guidelines.

Occupancy limits for rooms are listed here and posted outside the entrance to each room. At the time of your event, you will pick up a form to track event attendees and contact info.

Program Room A – 14

Program Room B – 12

Program Room A & B – 22

Program Room C – 12

Vestry – 30

Nursery - 9

Library – 10

Sanctuary – 50

Masks are required.

Social distancing at 6 feet is required.

Window (s) open at least half-way. This is still under review by Buildings & Grounds.

No food or drink allowed, except bottled water.

CHURCH NEWS, continued

What is General Assembly, and Why Should We Be Part of It?

General Assembly, held every June, is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association, where delegates from congregations across the country democratically determine the policies our Association will follow. And it's much more—a four-day gathering for intensive learning, networking, worshipping, and just plain celebrating together. It's a total UU immersion experience! Normally it gathers each year in a different city around the country. For the past two Covid years, it's been held entirely online, but this year it will be 'multi-platform,' equally available online and in person in Portland, Oregon on June 22-26. To learn more about all the things that General Assembly offers, registration, and volunteering at GA, visit <https://www.uua.org/ga>

I can testify from past experience both that GA is powerful and enriching, whether experienced in person or online, and that Portland is a spectacular place to visit. (The municipal rose gardens are my personal favorite spot.) If you can work it into your vacation plans to include attending GA in person, I'd say go for it! But if cross-country travel isn't on your horizon, you can save time and money while still getting fantastic exposure to UUism by participating virtually. If you're interested in serving as a delegate from our congregation, please let the Board and minister know. But you don't have to be a delegate to participate in all the multiple GA activities, and if you can't spare the full time you can register for just one day or the weekend.

There are some particularly important and exciting things happening at General Assembly this year and the next two years. Because we're a 'living tradition,' based on covenant rather than creed, we periodically review the basic foundations of our Association; the Principles, Purposes and other foundational statements of who we are, as defined in Article II of our UUA Bylaws, looking at how they've held up to changing times and new insights, and how they might be revised. (The 7 Principles we're all familiar with were essentially forged in General Assemblies in the 1980's.) The Article II Study Commission (<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission>), a group of UU volunteers appointed by the UUA Board, is in a three year process of gathering congregational input as we collectively look at who we are, what our mission is in the world, what we aspire to be, and how we will govern our Association. The consideration of new insights and language begins in earnest at this General Assembly and will culminate in a final vote on revisions to Article II at General Assembly 2024. One of the things that has emerged so far is a movement for a so-called 'eighth principle' that speaks to our calling to overcome white supremacy, racism and other oppressions. So this is a good time to

get in on the ground floor.

Members of our congregation will be a part of this discussion of the core tenets of our faith and practice at this year's GA. But we can all play a role. The Article II Study Commission has designed a thought-provoking, open-ended survey about basic UU values and identity, and is inviting all UUs to participate. You can find it at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScYfdvPAnUGHU60U5UZ4AHB5m9IXTG0t9kVAiyfYGcQ0A238w/viewform>,

If we all fill it out and send it in, we will contribute actively to shaping the UUism of the future. And we'll have some fascinating fodder for discussion amongst ourselves, provoked by the questions it asks and our responses to them.

If you'd like to know more about General Assemblies in particular and UUA governance in general, you can find plenty of material on the UUA's website and publications. But if you'd like a more personal take on them, please feel free to ask me, as a loyal lay veteran of these institutions and processes, or Rev. Jolie, as a minister trained and steeped in UU values, practices and history.

And do please check out the survey! Let's venture beyond our walls.

Beth McGregor

DID YOU KNOW?

There are TWO church email notification systems you can sign up for? The first is for official business and is only used by church administrators for important announcements, snow days, etc.

The OTHER is the Social List, where you get notified - or can notify others - of opportunities and fun events coming up sooner than you might have thought, so they don't pass you by in the crazy hubbub of life!

It's easy to join! Check it out here!

How do I sign up for the Social Discussion list?

Simply send an email to Social-subscribe@lists.uusharon.org or [click this link](#). You will receive a confirmation e-mail and instructions for what to do.

Why would I want to do this?

Share party invitations, recipes, news of social justice events, personal or family crises, requests for information, offers of zucchini, carpooling ... anything in short which might be of interest to the beloved community which is not "official" enough to go out on the congregation announcement list.

CHURCH NEWS, continued

The Not Boring Book Group

Wednesday, 2 March, at 7pm in the Virtual Library. We are pleased to co-host this meeting with the Social Justice Committee, and look forward to a robust discussion."

Our read will be *All That She Carried*, by Tiya Miles. In this National Book Award winner, a renowned historian traces the life of a single object handed down through three generations of Black women to craft an extraordinary testament to people who are left out of the archives.

As always, you're welcome to join us even if you haven't finished or even read the book; the themes will provoke lively discussion

The link to the virtual library session is <https://zoom.us/j/6525468701?pwd=b2JuMlI5TVJzWTNHZ2ZyUzVYcFh1dz09>

Stewardship Campaign Cottage Meetings March 6 (Noon), 9 (11 am) and 13 (Noon)

Stewardship is about taking care of something we value and enabling it to grow. When we become stewards, we take responsibility and contribute our time, talent, and treasure. No doubt, the Unitarian Church of Sharon is a generous and grateful community. There is joy in giving and it enables us to put our faith in action. There is joy in working together to make our community a more loving place. There is joy in sharing our dreams and our visions, planting seeds for stronger and more resilient tomorrows. Over time, your generosity will nurture our community so "our roots are deep, and our branches grow tall."

An important part of this year's stewardship campaign will be three small group meetings hosted by the Stewardship Committee so members and friends can share their values and their vision for our community. We hope you consider joining one of the sessions. Our community consists of amazing people with giant hearts. It is our belief that you will be inspired to hear from the members and friends of the Unitarian Church of Sharon.

We will ask the following questions:

- What does generosity mean to you?
- What does abundance mean to you?
- What are you grateful for?
- How does generosity make you feel connected to something greater than yourself?

We'll also review the UUAs FairShare Contribution Guide, which may help you determine an appropriate level of giving.

Please RSVP to Peter Raskin at Stewardship@uusharon.org.

Visit the calendar at www.UUSharon.org for the links to these meetings or join the Zoom Meeting using the browser in your computer:

<https://zoom.us/j/6525468701?pwd=b2JuMlI5TVJzWTNHZ2ZyUzVYcFh1dz09>

Meeting ID: 652 546 8701

Password: 3652

Conversations at the Meetinghouse

There will be NO Conversations at the Meetinghouse for March 2022. There will be Conversations in April, May and June.

Hosted by: Unitarian Church of Sharon

Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/6525468701?pwd=b2JuMlI5TVJzWTNHZ2ZyUzVYcFh1dz09>

Meeting ID: 652 546 8701

Password: 3652

Conversations at the Meetinghouse is a monthly program held on the first Friday of each month (October to June) at 7PM where members of the community share their expertise and experience about important issues of the day.

Please join the **Fellowship Committee for an Open Mic Night**. Whether this is an exciting opportunity for you to perform or you prefer to be a member of the audience, it is sure to be an enjoyable evening of music and entertainment. We hope you can join us on Saturday

