



November 2017 Report to the Board of Trustees
First Unitarian Society of Westchester
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The 2017 – 2018 RE calendar, class schedules and FUSW curriculum maps are listed online. You are welcome to view them at any time. [Click here.](#)

Meetings, Training & Outreach

Weekly and Monthly

- Weekly with the Minister
- Weekly with Staff
- Monthly Religious Education Ministry Team
- Monthly Board of Trustees
- Monthly Metro NY LREDA Chapter (Liberal Religious Educators Association)
- Monthly [PrideWorks Board](#)

Others

- Twice Monthly *Death of Sunday School* Webinar Series
- *Adaptive Leadership* webinar series
- UUA Multicultural RE Renaissance Module
- Bimonthly Meeting of Religious Educators Serving Multiple Congregations

Highlights from the Past Month at FUSW

I continue supporting the youth group advisors, encouraging them to set a regular meeting schedule and plan discussion topics or activities so youth find deeper meaning in youth group. Moving forward, the youth group will meet on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month.

The youth advisor training we scheduled for Metro NY was canceled for low enrollment so I will be offering the material to our youth advisors on my own. It is important that adults working with youth have a clear understanding of healthy boundaries in youth ministry and a vision of youth group that helps youth connect with Unitarian Universalism so that when they bridge out of high school and leave youth group they have deeper and broader connections to faith community.

I scheduled NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, to offer their [Ending the Silence](#) program to our youth and parents. It will be offered three times at the Hastings, Mt Kisco and Croton congregations. We are hosting it Sunday, December 17th at 1:00pm and it is open to the community.

I am coordinating Children's Chapel for the 2nd to 5th grade class with Vicky Nunez, and prepared worship materials for the first Chapel. This is an opportunity for the children to experience the elements of worship we share in the sanctuary, in a way that is tailored to their ages and needs.

I continue supporting the RE classes focused on neighboring faiths and world religions. I led the October 29th class and invited a 3rd grade child who is Muslim and attends an all-Islamic school to visit the class via Zoom and talk about his religion. It was a rich discussion for the class.

I am in conversation with the Central East Region about scheduling Our Whole Lives (OWL) facilitator training in Westchester. This year at FUSW, only two trained OWL facilitators were available, which meant we could not offer OWL. We hope to offer OWL next year so will send adults for training.

As a Board member of the [PrideWorks Conference for LGBTQ Youth and Allies](#), I reached out to Westchester UUs to join the conference planning committee. I am delighted that five UUs (one from FUSW) will participate, which furthers our support for this important youth outreach.

Highlights from the Past Month in Professional Development Preparing for Conversations about the Future of Faith Formation

In preparation for upcoming conversations about the future of faith formation at FUSW, I have been participating in the *Death of Sunday School* webinars with Kimberly Sweeney, which are based on her article, "[The Death of Sunday School and the Future of Faith Formation](#)." I am also participating in the *Leading Adaptively* course with Rev. Renee Ruchotzke. Tuesday, November 14th, I will begin the *Sequel to Sunday School* webinar series which Kimberley Sweeney is offering for religious professionals so we have opportunities to share learning about how others are approaching adaptive challenges in congregations.

November 5-9, I was in Denver, CO attending the *Multicultural Religious Education Renaissance Module*. [Renaissance Modules](#) are trainings for religious educators in core aspects of UU faith formation. Multicultural RE focuses on establishing a culture in our RE ministries that makes space for multiple perspectives. It's a way of asking questions and developing a lens so that we might bring groups that have been on the margins into the center of society and encourage those in the dominant culture to make a commitment to resist and challenge systems of marginalization and oppression. Multicultural education calls us more fully in to the spirit of Unitarian Universalist beloved community by rising to adaptive challenges and being open to change.

Congregations across our denomination are at different places in the journey of grappling with inconsistencies in the way we practice our faith that keep us from fully realizing multicultural, multiracial beloved community inside our walls. I am deeply interested in ongoing conversations about the future of faith formation that take into account ways in which our policies and practices, institutionally and spiritually, reflect and prioritize white centric culture. I was grateful to connect with more religious educators and ministers in the Renaissance Module who are also committed to these conversations and finding our way forward together.

October 25th, I was a guest speaker via Zoom in Dr. Mark Hicks' Meadville Lombard seminary class, *Multi-Racial Congregations as Faith Formation*. He invited me to talk about faith formation with children and youth in the context of race and ethnicity. It was a rich conversation. Dr. Hicks has also invited me to participate on a [Fahs Collaborative](#) panel at the 2018 General Assembly related to the same topic as well as serving multiple congregations.

Denominational Service

- I started a group for religious educators serving multiple congregations so we can share practices for managing this type of work. There is increasing interest at the UUA about multisite professionals as a model for small congregations, and a UUA staff member participates regularly in our discussions.
- I serve as a [Good Officer for LREDA Continental](#) and provided support for one colleague last month, as well as supporting another Good Officer who was stuck with a religious educator they were working with.

Upcoming Schedule

- November 14th, I begin the "Sequel to Sunday School" series in the future of faith formation with Kimberley Sweeney and will, therefore, not attend the November Board meeting in person.