

# NUUs Letter

Volume 24, No. 7 - March/April 2021

Northwoods Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship

8625 Peggy's Lane, P.O. Box 1881,  
Woodruff, WI 54568



[www.nuuf.com](http://www.nuuf.com)

## *We are a Welcoming Congregation*

### **A virtual chalice lighting:**

#### *In This Time of Uncertainty*

Courtesy of the WorshipWeb Library.

For more information, contact  
[worshipweb@uua.org](mailto:worshipweb@uua.org).

by [Amy Williams Clark](#)

We gather in this time of uncertainty, full of unknowns, as angst closes in upon us.

We light this chalice with a flame that draws us together.

With this flame, we cut through the dankness of isolation and are warmed by the fires of our interconnection.

For this moment, this radical moment, we find a certainty within the knowable bonds of love and community.

## **UPCOMING SERVICES**



**Sunday 11:00am**  
**Discussions via**  
**zoom. Watch for**  
**weekly invitations in your email.**

**April 11**, The Rev Ms Denise D Tracy: "Women Hold Up Half the Sky" Once the figure all of humanity worshipped was the female form, God was a Goddess — a woman. How did we get to where we are now? What can we do to understand the world we wish for our sons and daughters?

**April 25**, Richard Olson: "Vonnegut Redux" Author Kurt Vonnegut Jr. was born into a family of German freethinkers, some of whom immigrated to the USA in the mid-1800s. For lack of a better word, he called himself a Unitarian. He also called himself a "Christ-worshiping agnostic."

**May 9**, NUUF Annual Meeting

**May 23**, TBA

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

For distribution of announcements between newsletters or email/address corrections, contact Candy Sorensen at [sorencan@yahoo.com](mailto:sorencan@yahoo.com)

## MILESTONES

Tom & Elinore Sommerfeld	03-02
Kas Roberts	03-06
Tony Zoars	03-09
Iris Linder	03-10
Ed Semon	03-11
Dick Fields	03-12
Nancy Junkermann	03-12
Sally Back	03-12
Ed Stoever	03-13
Walt Jones	03-14
Ginny Metzdorf	03-15
Kayla Norris Demers	03-19
Sophie Singleton	03-22
Dan Rondello	03-24
Terry Hoyt	03-27
Pat Bickner	03-29
Sophia Figueroa	03-29
Tara Woolpy	04-03
Ann Sorensen	04-12
Doris Eberlein	04-16
Stephanie Perkins & Gary Pajonk	04-22
Barbara Logan	04-23
Annamarie Beckel	04-28
Xylina Graf	04-30

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Do you see a mistake that can be corrected? If so, please contact Candy Sorensen at (715) 892-2997 or [sorencan@yahoo.com](mailto:sorencan@yahoo.com) Thanks!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Sunday Discussions**, while we are still staying safe by not meeting in person, the Care Committee is holding a zoom meeting every Sunday at 11:00am. Emails are sent each week with the zoom link. All are welcome to take part. Topics vary widely –see the Nuusletter for an interesting list of books read during the pandemic and shared in one of the Sunday Discussions.  
In April the topics include:  
April 11 – personal reflections on service by Rev. Denise Tracy (on NUUF website)  
April 18—Improvisation –how have you been improvising for your quality of life  
April 25 – personal reflections on service by Richard Olson

- **Statement About the IWC** by The Rev Denise Tracy  
I thought I knew everything there is to know about the UUA and its partner institutions. But I did not know as much as I thought I did. About a year ago a friend told me about the International Women’s Convocation. This is a group of UU Women from all over the globe. The group has been in existence for over 10 years. Their work is so respected they have been approved by the United Nations Social and Economic Council.  
I will give you an example: To be gay in Uganda is illegal. A UU family founded a church in Uganda. When it was discovered that our Church supported LGBTQ folks, this family’s lives were threatened. They went into hiding. The IWC collected \$25,000 which was what was needed for the family to emigrate to Canada. They are in the process of doing this, as I write this statement.  
In the Khasi Hills of India, In Bolivia, In Transylvania, In Romania, In Nairobi, In Uganda , if a group of UU women have a need, they can write a proposal and the IWC will consider adopting it and financially supporting these women. We have helped purchase supplies to fight COVID in one community, we have purchased sanitary supplies so teenage girls can go to school during the days they have their periods.  
Our faith is active around the world. We strengthen women so their lives will be healthier and happier.  
I am offering NUUF a \$250 grant, which you may match individually or as a congregation. I offer this so that NUUF might become a supporter of the IWC. I am not sure how your Board will be willing to do this but the offer stands.

The Rev Ms Denise D Tracy

All donations for the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women

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should be sent to Mary Ann Fields at P. O. Box 256 Boulder Junction, Wi 54512. The checks will be forwarded to Rev Denise Tracy. The initials IWC may be used on the check. Any questions please call Mary Ann.

- Frederick Place in Rhinelander has a sizeable number of dates open for meals. If you can help out with one of these dates you can either call Frederick Place at 715-369-9777 or email Tammy Modic at [tammymodic.frederickplace@gmail.com](mailto:tammymodic.frederickplace@gmail.com)
- **Spirituality Meeting** April 13 at 11:30 a.m. by Zoom. Jason will be joining us to discuss ways to have virtual services. Please contact Nancy Johnson if interested in attending.
- **The Membership Committee** at our last meeting talked about how we miss getting together with our Fellowship friends. Recent CDC guidelines set out that people fully vaccinated can get together without masks with other fully vaccinated people in small groups. To facilitate this, we are conducting a survey of members. If you are willing to share this information with us, we will then compile a list to share with our members.

The Fellowship Board is in charge of when we reopen and there is an Ad Hoc Committee considering what needs to happen to reopen. In the meantime, we hope this may give you an opportunity to increase your ability to get together with other members. Our results will be shared with the reopening committee for their consideration.

If you are willing please share your vaccination status by responding to [thoyt@newnorth.net](mailto:thoyt@newnorth.net). Just state that you are fully vaccinated. Thanks and stay safe.

- **Women's Group** – The NUUF women's Group meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, 10:00am, currently on zoom (emails will be sent a few days before with a link). All women of the Fellowship are invited to take part—it's fun. April's topic is transitions in your life—like the transition from winter to spring, but yours, not the seasons.
- **Social Justice Corner**  
Every year on April 22, Earth Day marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement that began in 1970. Even for those of us who were alive in 1970 it's hard to remember how different our world was then. Automobiles used leaded gas, massive pollution with little regulation streamed from our factories. Air pollution was the price we paid for our prosperity and America remained largely oblivious to environmental concerns and how it threatened our health.

Sen. Gaylord Nelson was a junior senator of our Wisconsin at the time and was concerned about the deteriorating environment. In January 1969, Senator Nelson

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was inspired by the effect of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California and by the student anti-war movement, to infuse the energy of student anti-war protests with an emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution. Senator Nelson announced the idea for a teach-in on college campuses to the national media, and persuaded Pete McCloskey, a conservation-minded Republican Congressman, to serve as his co-chair. They recruited Denis Hayes, a young activist, to organize the campus teach-ins and they choose April 22, a weekday falling between Spring Break and Final Exams.

Hayes recognized the potential to inspire all Americans and built a national staff to promote events across the country and this effort broadened to include a wide range of organizations. They changed the name to Earth Day and gained national media attention. Twenty million Americans took to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate against the impacts of 150 years of industrial development and a legacy of serious human health impacts. Thousands of colleges and universities organized protests against the deterioration of the environment and held massive coast-to-coast rallies in cities, towns, and communities. Environmental Groups that had been fighting individually united on Earth Day around their shared common values.

Earth Day 1970 achieved a rare political alignment, enlisting support from Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, urban dwellers and farmers, business and labor leaders. By the end of 1970, the first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of other first of their kind environmental laws, including the National Environmental Education Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Clean Air Act. Two years later Congress passed the Clean Water Act. A year after that, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act and soon after the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act. These laws have protected millions of men, women and children from disease and death and have protected hundreds of species from extinction. Earth Day 1970 gave a voice to an emerging public consciousness about the state of our planet.

All of this information came from [earthday.org](http://earthday.org). I would encourage all of you to check it out. They have a list of 51 things you can do to celebrate Earth Day 2021. How do you plan to celebrate Earth Day this year?

## Matt Watroba and Robert Jones present Music that Matters

On Zoom for Tara and Jerry, April 10, 2021 at 6PM CDT



We invited Matt and Robert to present a program that reflects the place of African Americans in American culture. A program that delivers a powerful message of love, friendship, and tolerance. One that tells a past, a present, and a hopeful future. It's a walk through the roots and history of American music that educates and entertains. Matt has done several exciting sing-long home concerts at Piney Ridge, but this is the first time we've been able to get him here with his celebrated musical partner of more than thirty years.

The webpage adds: *For Matt and Robert, American Roots Music (Folk, Blues, Spirituals, Work Songs, Chants, etc.) is music that matters. This is the music that America and the world have in common. It is music that reflects history, social change, migration, hopes and dreams. It is music that is rich and diverse, direct and powerful. As talented as they are individually, Matt and Robert together form a synergy that hard to describe.* <https://www.mattwatroba.net/with-robert-jones>

**Requested donation, \$10 per person sharing your screen. Send donations to Venmo [@Matt Watroba](#) or Paypal: [kimwatroba8314@gmail.com](mailto:kimwatroba8314@gmail.com)**

**Or send checks to [Matt Watroba, 28645 Briar Hill Dr, Farmington Hills, MI 48336](#)**

Please join us for the zoom. **Let us know that you will attend ([woolpy@gmail.com](mailto:woolpy@gmail.com))**. Here's the link:

*Tara and Jerry invite you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.*

*Topic: Matt Watroba and Robert Jones*

*Time: Apr 10, 2021 06:00 PM Central Daylight Time (US and Canada)*

*Join Zoom Meeting*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89026952198?pwd=ek5mNXE4cWJZOHpSMXNQaGdSWXVRZz09>

- **New Day Rising UUA Conference**

Several members of the Social Justice Committee attended the UUA Conference in February. We were impressed with the conference and with the material

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presented. We thought it was well organized considering there were 1,300 + participants from across the country. The moderators did a great job with general sessions, including fantastic musicians, then breaking down to the workshops, and from there, down even further to small group discussions where you got individuals' perspectives from their congregations. We all agreed that most of the attendees were from larger churches and had active social justice programs that would not be possible for a church our size to maintain. Connie speaks for us all in saying: "All participants from NUUF felt that it was an enlightening and worthwhile conference to attend. Everyone got something positive out of whichever sessions they attended."

More details of attendees' impressions will appear in the Social Justice Corner in the newsletter.

**Randy:** I felt the conference was very worthwhile by bringing a variety of congregations together to share what they are doing and to their deep commitments that promote our values of inclusion, the environment and social justice. One thing that stood out to me was Richmond, Virginia's Pledge to End Racism, based on The Birmingham Pledge, to engage more of their congregation in making a commitment to confront systemic racism by real life actions. I hope we as a Fellowship can explore adopting this type of pledge in the future. It would make a strong statement of commitment from each one of us that chooses to sign the pledge. For more information on signing this pledge you can go to <http://birminghampledgefoundation.org/>

**Connie:** I certainly learned much from the conference. One important point was that many, many UU congregations across the country DO already have signs, banners, even billboards saying "Black Lives Matter" at their buildings or roadsides so our proposal for having a sign is not out of the mainstream. A wide variety of congregations were there and it seemed that NUUF is pretty unique in its small size with no paid staff or minister. I am proud of what our Social Justice Committee does with MLK Day events every year.

**Nancy:** I found the knowledge base of all presenters was incredible. It was inspiring to hear how other congregations are working on the social justice and climate justice issues and what our UUA is doing to assist in the efforts with the Organizing Strategy Team and Green Sanctuary 2030. I was encouraged that even our small, white, rural congregation can do small things that make a big impact on social justice and climate justice.

**Joan:** Having Difficult Conversations, the title of the session I participated in.

Zoom was smoothly handled by presenters. We even broke up into groups of three to discuss some posed questions. That went smoothly, to my surprise.

The presenters were well grounded in the UUA; one a minister, the other a consultant to congregations.

The focus was on individual discussions, how to handle uncomfortable situations. They stressed the basic principle of being totally present to the person one is engaged with. The framework, since we as UU's are not credal, are the Covenant and Principles; acknowledging our individual search for truth, respect for all living things, and willingness to serve. The importance of asking the person's permission when one is talking about sensitive issues; race, gender, was stressed. Not just forging ahead and assuming the other persons' comfort and willingness to share information.

The two women in my group were from very different settings. One was from Sante Fe, a fellowship that is mainly white, lots of retirees. They have tried to engage with the dominant Native American population. The other participant was from a well established congregation in Peoria, which is more concerned with welcoming biracial and queer members.

Unfortunately, the time was limited; it would have been great to have more time to really dig into the issues.

It was great to have a chance to meet people from the larger congregation, even in a limited way.

- **The Care committee** provides support and comfort to members and friends during times of bereavement, provides support to people who are ill or disabled and, as appropriate, alerts the fellowship to services that might be needed by others and arrange for them to be performed.

During the pandemic the care committee has organized the Sunday discussion, BYOT, and the women's meeting via zoom. At the beginning of March the Sunday discussion was on favorite books read during the covid stay at home year!

Here is a the list:

#### **History, Politics and Nonfiction**

1. Abe: Abraham Lincoln in His Times, David Reynolds
2. Kindred, Neanderthal...Rebecca Wragg Sykes
3. Up Swing, How America came together....Robert Putman
4. The Person You Mean to Be: How good people fight bias, Dolly Chugh
5. Homeland Elegies, Ayad Akhtar
6. The Room Where it Happened, John Bolton
7. Rage, Bob Woodward
8. Sapiens, Harari
9. Tipping Point the end is near, Jimmy Evans
10. Magic of Reality, How we Know what is Really True, Dawkins
- 11, Keeping Sharp, Gupta



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12. The Code Breaker, Isaacson
  13. A Promised Land, Barack Obama
  14. Becoming, Michelle Obama

**Novels:**

1. Gentleman in Moscow, Towles
2. Where the Crawdads Sing, Owens
3. The Dutch House, Patchett
4. Death of Gossip, Book 1 Mystery, MC Beaton
5. Alaskan Mysteries - Kate Shugak, Dana Stabenow
6. The Cat who Could Read Backwards, book 1, Liliam Braun
7. Dead Angler, book 1, Victoria Houston
8. Mysteries, Lee Child
9. Year of Wonders, A novel of the plague, Geraldine Brooks
10. Darkover series, Marian Zimmer Bradley
11. Maisie Dobbs series, Winspear
12. Alexander McCall Smith books

Joan Hauer - Co-Chair, Mary Beth O'Halloran - Co-Chair, Toni Lieppert Polfus, Mary Ann Fields, Judi Maloney and Connie Lefebvre, Cheryl Hanson

- **Friends of Fair Trade,**

In need of some more energy? Looking for some sweetness? Of course you are! And you can help small farmers in the process. Order some Fair Trade coffee, chocolate, or tea. We need to get enough special orders to receive free shipping. Attached is the list of items. In ordering coffee,

>> Be sure to specify ground/drip or whole bean.

>> Note the difference between a BOX of six 10-12 oz. bags, and a CASE of five 2-pound bags (or it may be two 5-pound bags)

Let me know what you'd like. When I get enough orders, I'll let you know that I will be submitting it. When the order arrives, we can arrange for safe pick up and payment.

Thanks for supporting Fair Trade for small farmers.

David and Phyllis

[david.barnhill.925@gmail.com](mailto:david.barnhill.925@gmail.com)

- **Caritas-Minocqua** is a charitable organization established by local churches and civic groups in the Lakeland area. We assist people with paying small bills in emergency situations. We are closed for all face-to-face sessions with clients; however, we are now conducting interviews by telephone on Thursday mornings from 9-noon.

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You must first leave a message on our voicemail at 715-356-9989. Your message should contain the following information. Please speak clearly and slowly. We need your first and last name, your phone number, whether you are a new client or a returning client, and a very brief statement of your urgent need or how we can help you. Please be patient and we will call you to arrange an interview. Stay safe.

If you can be an empathic listener and want to make a difference in our community and the lives of our residents, this may be the volunteer opportunity for you! If interested, please contact our director, Beth Jacobson at [bjgraphic2@gmail.com](mailto:bjgraphic2@gmail.com).

- Jennifer LaPorte, St. Kate Hospice Chaplain, has presented services at our Fellowship in the past. She informed us that she is “available for pastoral care/meeting with any folks who may be in need of a chaplain during this time.” To set up a meeting with her call 715-240-0120.
- **The Membership Committee** that oversees communications is making the following request of committee chairs. We would ask that you be responsible for sending communications directly to your committee members rather than sending them through Candy. We would also like to ask you to submit any committee news to our NUUSLetter editor, Carly Ratliff [carly.j.ratliff@gmail.com](mailto:carly.j.ratliff@gmail.com). When submitting things to the NUUSLetter please use a font that is easier to read. And we would also like you to send notice of your meetings so they can be placed on the NUUF.COM calendar. These should go to Jason Hoff [ic\\_boy@yahoo.com](mailto:ic_boy@yahoo.com). If you have any questions, please call me at 715-614-0088. Thanks for your help in improving communication.

## Social Justice Corner

Don't be surprised it's this close. Don't be shocked. Don't be amazed. Let in, all the way in, that there's a serious fundamental foundational issue at play. It's not bad people. It's not even hate actually, although that's a thing in some cases. It's a cultural norm so pervasive it's running through blood, it's sitting easy in the bones. It's believing so much that this is “just the way it is” that millions of people aren't just feeling it, they're defending it, and that the experience of folks of European descent walking through life without the complication of response to their skin tone is a norm that anyone can have—if they work hard enough to unite on an ethos of economics that says hard work will get you everywhere if you stick to it. It doesn't matter that statistically this doesn't hold to be remotely true or that many of these same folks are often struggling to make ends meet. What matters is there's a norm inhabited and perpetuated by folks of European descent and some folks of color who've internalized this premise and added to

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it the notion that success is a sign of divine approval and good character, and that “good” people that subscribe to this philosophy are inherently better, more trustworthy, reliable and blessed. That any violence, rancor, hostility folks may display isn’t hate or prejudice or bias favoring their perspective or preserving their position but a defense against another way of life—one that seems dangerous, maladaptive, self-serving, immoral and out of alignment with “how things work” according to this singular program.

This thing is so deep and so pervasive and so widely held as “normal” because it preserves several fantasies: 1) that the economic system and success we have was not after all founded on free labor of enslaved people and genocide of the country’s original people 2) that this premise for America is somehow does not inform the way the laws that govern labor and resources work even today 3) that identifying with self-preservation and economic security at the expense of someone else’s access to clean water, safe shelter or freedom to move without damage or injury is not inherently immoral and problematic 4) that failing to understand those connections is an example of parallel thinking of the kind that’s essential in the propagation of cults and genocidal philosophies that become homicidal realities at first in the specific and then in the politic of whole as the practice of harm becomes an expected norm. I could go on, but these are just a few to start.

All of this is critical because today, the morning after an undecided election, they point to a fifth fantasy, which is that the will of individual people who care can override and overcome an internalized culture that negates and undermines caring on an unconscious level. What am I saying? The issue is not that there aren’t enough people who care to behave or think differently personally. It is that those same people have not yet created a CULTURE that runs counter to this kind of pervasive harm and those of us who feel this way have still failed to understand that this is not about getting more individual people to get with a program of equity, inclusion, caring. It’s about creating cultures of care, concern, mutual aid, consent, accountability, empathy. It’s about undermining the power and influence and efficacy of the current culture that thinks the only way it can survive is to remain dominant and in charge of everyone else.

It’s about acknowledging that this is actually what whiteness is: stepping into a dream of prosperity and security where you will not be called into account for who you are or what you did to secure that insulated untouchable freedom. It’s about maintaining the gap in that parallel thinking that says you can still be a good person and be okay if you have more security, independence and comfort than someone else. It’s about thinking what you’ve achieved is divorced from the systems that handed you invisible ideal conditions. It’s about maintaining the disconnect between using the same ‘power over’ mindset to help someone else as long as you still retain control and inoculation from the forces of privilege that are complicating the lives of everyone else who hasn’t yet been helped. It’s about being able to feel good about what you’re personally doing or bad about what

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you're not doing without being in total breakdown over the weight of what we have collectively unconsciously and automatically preserved for decades before we read books that made us consider any of this.

Here's the thing: it matters deeply today who wins the election, but what matters more is if millions of us who say we want a different world decide to actively betray the whiteness we were raised in. What matters more is if we organize the way mothers and grandmothers did around women's rights—to learn together in groups how to actively disrupt the transfer of this culture in our families and communities. What matters is if we take active responsibility for how our families perpetuated these fantasies and name the ways we have cooperated and colluded. What matters is if we stop doing that no matter what it takes. What matters is if we reject the economic standards and ideals that favor individual families over everyone's children.

Black, brown and indigenous people have been trying to explain to us for forever that this is our work but it's been easier to think this is about changing our ideas, beliefs, ideologies and political viewpoints than it is to change the very fabric of how we live.

To take this journey is harrowing really. Because it's going to disrupt the way our nervous systems understand security—which is as connected and preserved by advantage and power. But *\*not\** doing this work aggressively and actively means that whiteness as we have known has no other place to grow than aggressive deep denial and delusion—the kind that justifies the right to be and thrive at the expense of anyone and everyone not exactly aligned with its most impossible and narrow definition of self.

Let's do this work, beloveds. Let's feel every feeling it surfaces and wail every storm of grief and sorrow it raises. Let's do it. Let's say enough is enough. No more means no more. And let's wreck ourselves on every definition of safety that means it's normal for millions of our fellow white Americans to think the way it is is absolutely the way it should be. These are the things that only we can do, no matter who holds the Oval Office. These are the things that will isolate whiteness as we have always known it until it's named for what it is—a historical, emotional, spiritual force undermining our humanity, the integrity of the country and the wellbeing of the planet. And this is what it will continue to do until we decide it's over. Until we create ways of living and being together that make it completely and wholly mean something else.

— Author Jen Lemen

## Our NUUF Community

If you know someone who is interested in joining the *Northwoods Unitarian Universalist*

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Fellowship, Terry Hoyt at [thoyt@newnorth.net](mailto:thoyt@newnorth.net) or call 715-3563908,

Check out our website <http://nuuf.com>. Also take time to "LIKE" us on Facebook. Click here on [Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Fellowship](#) for direct access if you already have a Facebook account. We're posting pics, reminders about events and more.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Newsletter

Hello everyone, I will be compiling the newsletter for the foreseeable future! Please send announcements and updates to me, Carly Ratliff, at [carly.j.ratliff@gmail.com](mailto:carly.j.ratliff@gmail.com) or to Candy Sorensen at [sorencan@yahoo.com](mailto:sorencan@yahoo.com) by April 28 for the May newsletter. It is very helpful if your copy is written exactly the way you want it to read so that it can be copied and pasted. Thank you!

## President's Note

From the President.

Although the Ad Hoc Committee on when to open is still saying "not yet." I am very hopeful we will be again in our Fellowship Hall by June or early July. I really want to see your faces and have some hugs. I'm very curious how all of you have survived these past months. What new hobbies and interests have you found?

I hope you have been enjoying our Sunday services on our website. These have been excellent presentations by the ministers and other speakers we have had in the past. They are still available for listening to.

It makes me very happy when I hear of one of our members getting the vaccine.

Mary Ann

## A virtual chalice extinguishing:

### We Are One

*Courtesy of the WorshipWeb Library.*

*For more information, contact [worshipweb@uua.org](mailto:worshipweb@uua.org).*

by Amy Zucker Morganstern

Never has it been more true than now:

We extinguish this flame,

But the sparks within us remain alight.

From each of us, in our supposed solitude,

The signals buzz and hum, sparkling through space one to the other,

Connecting us invisibly

But palpably.

We are one.

And from every window,

Our light shines.