

# Flame on the Water

Celebrate Diversity



Question with Integrity



Build Justice



## September 2025 Building Belonging

Page 1: September Adult Forums

Page 2: Belonging & How to Create More Belonging for Yourself and Others

Page 3: How to Create More Belonging for Yourself and Others, continued, Building Belonging

Pages 4 & 5: Other announcements

## September Adult Forums

9/7/25-Our own, Betty Cooper, on “Revolutionary Love” based on the book by Michael Lerner.

9/14/25-Shawn D’Abreu on the dangers of Christian Nationalism.

9/21/25-Our own, Betty Cooper, will speak on International Day of Peace; discussion will focus on the meaning and significance of that day.

9/28/25-Darius Watson will speak on “National Politics, a long-term perspective.”

**If you would like to schedule a forum, please see Frank Rycyk @ 573-636-2135**

Meditation group  
meets every  
Wednesday at 7 pm

## Belonging

By Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

And if it's true we are alone,  
we are alone together,  
the way blades of grass  
are alone, but exist as a field.  
Sometimes I feel it,  
the green fuse that ignites us,  
the wild thrum that unites us,  
an inner hum that reminds us  
of our shared humanity.  
Just as thirty-five trillion  
red blood cells join in one body  
to become one blood.  
Just as one hundred thirty-six thousand  
notes make up one symphony.  
Alone as we are, our small voices  
weave into the one big conversation.  
Our actions are essential  
to the one infinite story of what it is  
to be alive. When we feel alone,  
we belong to the grand communion  
of those who sometimes feel alone—  
we are the dust, the dust that hopes,  
a rising of dust, a thrill of dust,  
the dust that dances in the light  
with all other dust, the dust  
that makes the world.

## How to Create More Belonging for Yourself and Others

By Geoffrey Cohen

The way we treat each other can help us feel like we belong—or not. Belonging is the sense that we're part of a larger group that accepts and values us for who we are, to which we can contribute; we feel like we have roots, maybe even a home.

As humans, we evolved to move through the world together, and there can be destructive consequences when belonging is missing, including for our health. Amid the pain of not belonging, we feel more threatened and stressed in the world, and sometimes we'll seek out belonging wherever we can get it—even in extremist, violent ideological groups. But there are small things we can do, day in and day out, to feel that we belong and help others feel the same. Based on research by myself and others, here are a few.

**Reach out.** There is so much we can do to help one another, and small actions matter. It could be just a word from a mentor, or a well-timed pat on the back, that is just what we need at the right time.

Even talking to your barista in a way that conveys you want to get to know them, or making eye contact with people, has benefits for your sense of meaning, connection, and purpose. So does turning your phone off when you're with friends or family. The ability to connect in the smallest corners of social life is almost like a superpower that we all have.

**Don't be so quick to judge others.** The fundamental attribution error refers to our tendency to over-blame people—their personality, abilities, and virtues—and to under-blame situations and context. We fail to imagine how the things in their circumstances, even the ones right in front of our face, may be affecting them.

## How to Create More Belonging for Yourself and Others, continued

**Reflect on your values.** In numerous studies, researchers have asked individuals—like students, employees, and professional athletes—to take some time before a stressful moment and reflect or [write about their core values](#). They look at a list of values, such as relationships with friends and family or community, and they select their most important ones. Then, they write about why these values are important to them.

**Be welcoming at the beginning.** If you wait too long to plant the seed of belonging, it's often too late. We have a lot of leverage at those early moments when we're opening the door and welcoming a person in. It's like arriving at a party: That moment when you're greeted and welcomed can really shape the tone of the whole experience.

**Listen to other people's perspectives.** Too seldom do we take the time to ask people questions about what's standing in the way of their belonging and how we can help. For many people in our society, systems of exclusion make them de facto outsiders in so many situations, and systemic change in many of our institutions is necessary. At the same time, all these brief practices can have lasting benefits for people's sense of belonging, performance, and achievement if we offer them to our mentees, friends, students, or strangers, especially at timely moments.

While these acts may be brief, they aren't small. In fact, they are often psychologically very big from the perspective of a kid or a new employee who feels unseen or like an outsider. These acts can occasion a change in identity and trajectory by sending the message *I see you, I believe in you, or You're not alone.*

## Building Belonging By Frank Rycyk

Some people build belonging through protest. They “know” what is “right”. Some people build belonging through a “quest for truth”. Are these two approaches compatible? Sometimes, yes, sometimes no.

Another approach to building belonging is a covenant. Do we need this? Some UU leaders seem to think so. UU tradition is cited.

What about congregational polity? We do not answer to UUA. UUA answers to us. This might be difficult to comprehend for those raised in top-down traditions.

Building belonging can be a complex matter. Let us proceed cautiously.

Chair Yoga with Alberta  
Every Tuesday  
@ 11 am  
by donation

**Caring Committee**

Contact Mary Jo LaCorte at: [uufjc1@gmail.com](mailto:uufjc1@gmail.com) for assistance

**Please submit your Joys & Concerns to our website:**

**<http://uufjc.org/joys--concerns.html>** by noon on Friday or on paper forms for in-person contributions as early as possible on Sunday mornings.

The membership committee invites you to please join us on Friday evening, September 19, at 6:30 pm for an informal gathering. Bring food or drinks, friends, a spouse or significant other. We can play games or just sit around and chat. These gatherings will be ongoing!!

Drum Circle  
will meet the 2nd  
Monday of the month  
from 7-8 pm  
Next meeting is  
September 8.

**Lunch - after services-**

If you would like to join other members and friends for lunch, watch for postings and announcements, or ask about each week's lunch location. If you have a particular place you'd like to recommend, please let us know.

**Contact us online on our  
homepage:  
UUFJC.org  
or on Facebook**

Unitarian Universal Fellowship of  
Jefferson City  
1221 Northeast Dr, Jefferson City,  
MO

**UUFJC Board of Directors**

President: Rich Burdge

Vice President: Lisa Sanning

Secretary: Amanda Landrum

Treasurer: Bob Antweiler

Director of Religious Education: Dr Samantha Porter

Administrator/Membership/Caring: Mary Jo LaCorte

Social Action: Joan Kurtzeborn