

# Flame on the Water

---

**Celebrate Diversity**

**Question with Integrity**

**Build Justice**

**November  
2024**

Late October

By Maya Angelou

Carefully the leaves of autumn  
Sprinkle down the tinny sound of little dyings

And skies sated of ruddy sunsets  
Of roseate dawns  
Roil ceaselessly in cobweb greys  
And turn to black for comfort.

Only lovers see the fall  
A signal end to endings  
A giraffish gesture alerting  
Those who will not be alarmed  
That we begin to stop in order  
Simply to begin again.

**Soul Matters Theme: Repair**

Please help us keep going and connecting by donating at [UUFJC.org](http://UUFJC.org) or by mail

**UUFJC - Attn: Treasurer**

**PO Box 1245**

**Jefferson City, MO 65102**

## **This Issue:**

Page 1: Late October  
Maya Angelou

Page 2: Of Rising  
Rivers and Democracy  
By Karen G. Johnston

Coming Events

Page 3: Of Rising  
Rivers and Democracy  
Continued

Page 4: A Cause For  
Thanksgiving?

Bread Communion  
November 24

Page 5: A Cause For  
Thanksgiving?  
Continued

## Of Rising Rivers and Democracy

By Karen G. Johnston

October 2, 2024

“Remember to imagine and craft the worlds you cannot live without, just as you dismantle the ones you cannot live within.”  
—Ruha Benjamin

Eerily, the same date, one year later. Extreme rain. Flooding again.

After seeing a notice on social media, I joined a small and determined stream of volunteers who spent the morning emergency-harvesting at a local community farm collective. With the rising river expected to flood the fields, there were just hours left before the crops would likely be lost. Just like last year.

With wellies and heavy-duty hiking boots and galoshes (and at least one set of fluorescent crocs), this ragtag group did the needful: Pull the beets. Twist off the greens. Pile gently in a milk crate. Laugh. Leave the tiniest in the ground. Move to the next row. Offer a steady hand. Hydrate. Stop when the body says enough.

Eerily, here we are four years later. Or eight, depending on which election disaster is the point of reference.

I care about the outcome of the presidential election. Though I must admit, I am put off by small data points sensationally enlarged by pundits and memes, abandoned just as quickly as the next gaff or horror emerges. I'd rather follow the wisdom from Adrienne Maree Brown's Group Agreements for Emergent Spaces: *engage the tension; don't indulge the drama.*

I care that fascism is not just approaching, but is already here, rising, like this cresting river. Flooding all I care about with an oversaturated authoritarianism, thick with the muck of it, deepening the damage of it.

## Coming Events

Sunday  
Adult Forums  
9:30-10:30 am

11/3

Leader-Frank Rycyk  
Subject - Gerald Seib "The Bright Spots in the Doom & Gloom of our Politics

11/10

Leader-Stephen Stark  
Subject-Is Missouri still fighting the Civil War?

11/17

Leader - Maridee Edwards  
Subject-Her work as Chief Disciplinary Counsel with the Missouri Supreme Court

11/24

Leader-Dr Christine Boston  
Subject-"Monsters of the Ozark"

To schedule a forum contact  
Frank Rycyk  
@573-636-2135

I give thanks for teachers and companions who remind me that *democracy is a practice* (thank you again, Adrienne Maree Brown) and that *citizen* is a verb (thank you, Baratunde Thurston). Sooner or later (though not soon enough for those who have already paid too high a price), I believe that our “big D” Democracy will be saved. However, though such efforts have their time and place, writing postcards or from GOTV campaigns is not enough.

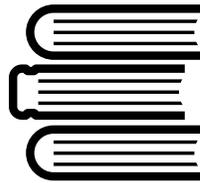
It is by acts of “small d” democracy. Ones that look like getting to know neighbors, when we might otherwise scroll endlessly. When we not only offer help, but accept it as well. It looks like creating systems of support and strategy with people who share vision and values: people whom we discern as worthy of risking trust.

And on some mornings, it looks like a socially-awkward band of strangers wearing rubber boots who heed an emergency call and harvest a field of beets.

**Prayer - Spirit of Life and Love and Resistance: may we find within us and around us, the resources, inspiration, and insistent invitations to be the ones we have been waiting for. May there be joy. May there be justice. May there be amiable companionship. May there be more joy. So be it. See to it. Amen.**

**About the Author** -Rev Karen G. Johnston (she/her/hers) is the Senior Minister at First Unitarian Universalist Society Burlington in Vermont. Before becoming a minister, she spent 20+ years as a clinical social worker.

Children's  
Religious  
Services Theme  
for November  
Repair



**The Intergenerational Book Study** will meet November 10 at 2:00 pm. The selected book is *Dracula* by Bram Stoker and the location this month will be at Betty Cooper's house. If anyone has questions, they can contact Emma Regnier at [imaginedoggies@gmail.com](mailto:imaginedoggies@gmail.com).



## **We will be having a Bread Communion on November 24th**

**In bread communion, people bring different kinds of bread to share. Some bring breads that are part of their cultural heritage, like pita bread from the Middle East, or Irish soda bread.**

Breads around the world are very different, but every civilization that has ever lived on the earth has made some type of bread. This communion reminds us that we all need food to live, that we must share our one earth which feeds us all. It also reminds us to share our unique gifts with one another, so all can be fed.

If you have a bread that's special to your family/heritage, plan to bring some to share, homemade or store bought. Or, if you just have a favorite style of bread you would like to share, bring that. Interpret "bread" as loosely as you would like.

We'll have toppings such as butter, honey and jam available but feel free to bring anything that you especially like with your bread. We also traditionally serve apple cider with the bread so that will be available as well.

---

## **A Cause for Thanksgiving?**

By [Daniel Gregoire](#)

November 21, 2018

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots.”

—Marcus Garvey

Living in the beautiful hill country of central Massachusetts, in the very heart of New England, it feels like history is very close to the surface: ever present and alive.

History is very present with me now, as we approach an anniversary in our national and religious history: 2020 will mark the 400th anniversary of the landing of the Mayflower at Provincetown, and then Plymouth, here in Massachusetts.

The mythos attached to that fateful day serves as the basis for the Thanksgiving holiday many of us will celebrate this week — although others will rightfully mark the holiday with mourning, and with tributes to the peoples who were nearly wiped out by imperialism.

All of this converges into history that is still present and impossible to escape. Most of us are not Pilgrims, Puritans, Colonists or even Christian, yet the legacy of those traditions are still with us. They compose the roots of the institutions we have built up and sustain.

Still, too many would prefer to ignore certain aspects of Thanksgiving. Why mar the image we have of ourselves as blameless, as good people, by bringing up this complex and tragic chapter — one of far too many — in our history?

This intersection of history and culture leaves me with ambivalence and discomfort, but it feels generative. I'm strangely excited about this particular moment of discomfort, because something new could come out of it; something like healing. This is our opportunity to reimagine what Thanksgiving could be — and by extension, who *we* could be.

What would it mean to mourn with those who are mourning? What would it mean to jettison the mythos of Thanksgiving, and even replace the traditional meal with a vigil in Plymouth led by the [United American Indians of New England](#)? (If you can't join me in Plymouth, perhaps you'll join me in spirit by asking these questions.)

Our knowledge of the wrongs of the past, and the knowledge of the unearned benefits that inevitably come from those wrongs, might help us to build true, lasting, and more authentic relationships both today and in the future... and that will be a cause for thanksgiving.

### **Prayer**

**Spirit of Life, God of roots and branches, we don't know how we've come to this place, but here we are. Help us to be wise as well as compassionate, persevering, and courageous in this moment, so that we might be worthy of the challenges that lay before us, and grateful for the communities we are called to restore. Amen.**

**About the Author** - Rev. Daniel Gregoire is the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton and Upton in Grafton, MA. He loves being a guide to those on spiritual journeys and a companion to all in life transitions.



**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.

Insight Meditation, 7 pm

A meditation group led by Joe McCormack meets weekly in our building, when possible. Zoom may also be available. Contact Bob Antweiler.

---

UUFJC Board of Directors

President: Logan White

Vice President: Lisa Sanning

Secretary: Amanda Landrum

Treasurer: Bob Antweiler

Director of Religious Education: Samantha Porter

Administrator: Mary Jo LaCorte

**Contact us online on our homepage:**

**[UUFJC.org](http://UUFJC.org)**  
**or on Facebook**