



# RELIGIOUS NATURALIST ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

created by religious naturalists for religious naturalists

February 2024

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## Feature Article - February 2024

### What Happens Next by Ursula Goodenough

I'm a daily reader of Robert Hubbell's excellent [political newsletter](#), wherein he single-handedly summarizes the news and encourages a progressive activism that he himself models. This recent paragraph caught my attention:

Don't collapse the slowly evolving future into a single moment. And remember that the future is contingent. We can affect its outcome. Yesterday's developments were mile-markers or pivot points, not penstocks that channel us to a pre-ordained conclusion. We have agency and control over what happens next. What we do matters.

I juxtaposed this with my recent discovery of [Kenneth Patton](#), a minister at the Charles Street Meeting House in Boston, "a voice for a poetic, naturalistic humanism at a time when most humanists were defining a religion of reason." He launched an ambitious project to re-instate the natural world as our Source and to honor the symbolic wealth of the worlds' traditional wisdoms, and wrote two books describing this trajectory: *Man's Hidden Search: An Inquiry into Naturalistic Mysticism* (1954) and *A Religion for One World: Art and Symbols for a Universal Religion* (1964). The first has been reprinted and is [available for purchase](#); the second and more substantive is not. Both can be obtained via public libraries using Interlibrary Loan.

I've now read both books with great pleasure and have learned a lot. He was an amazing man. I've also taken in Patton's story, and Hubbell's admonition, as a guidepost for those of us seeking to move the RN orientation foreword.

It turns out that in my 40 years of exploring the orientation, the first time I heard of Kenneth Patton was last month. He is not

mentioned in the comprehensive [Routledge Handbook of Religious Naturalism \(2018\)](#) with 36 authors. Therefore, while Patton may well have mattered in his time -- many university libraries house his books (albeit they are often listed as "available from off-site storage") and he [engaged](#) many of his parishioners -- it now takes some effort to track him down. Seventy years from now, much of our writings and homilies and poetry may also be relegated to off-site storage. Our efforts to broadcast the RN trajectory may not receive attribution, now or in the future.

But Patton mattered in his time, as do we in ours. And unlike Patton, we are joined by many others who embrace [a similar vision](#) and write resonant [poetry/prose](#) and sing [resonant songs](#). We have agency and control over what happens next. Hey, we might someday be considered a movement.

Thanks, Kenneth Patton, for helping us along.

**Help Wanted!** RNA is looking for volunteers with abilities in Accounting, Volunteer Coordinating, Spotify, Google Workspace, TikTok, LinkedIn, and Grant-Writing. Do any of those sound like fun to you? [Say so here](#) and we'll get you started!

## News and Events

### Temple of Understanding

ECO JUSTICE FOR ALL Dialogue  
"The Pope and the Climate Crisis:  
Mobilizing 1.3 billion Catholics to  
address the climate emergency"

Free Live Zoom Webinar  
Thursday Feb 22, 2024, Thursday  
10-11am ET  
Join us for the live dialogue with Q & A

[Register Here](#)



**RNUU Discussion Group--God in Religious Naturalism**  
Thursday, January 25th 3:30 PT, 4:30 MT, 5:30 CT, 6:30 ET  
Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9291456582>

There are (at least) three views of God in Religious Naturalism.

- God and the Universe are synonymous.
- God is the creative force of the universe.
- God is not a useful concept.

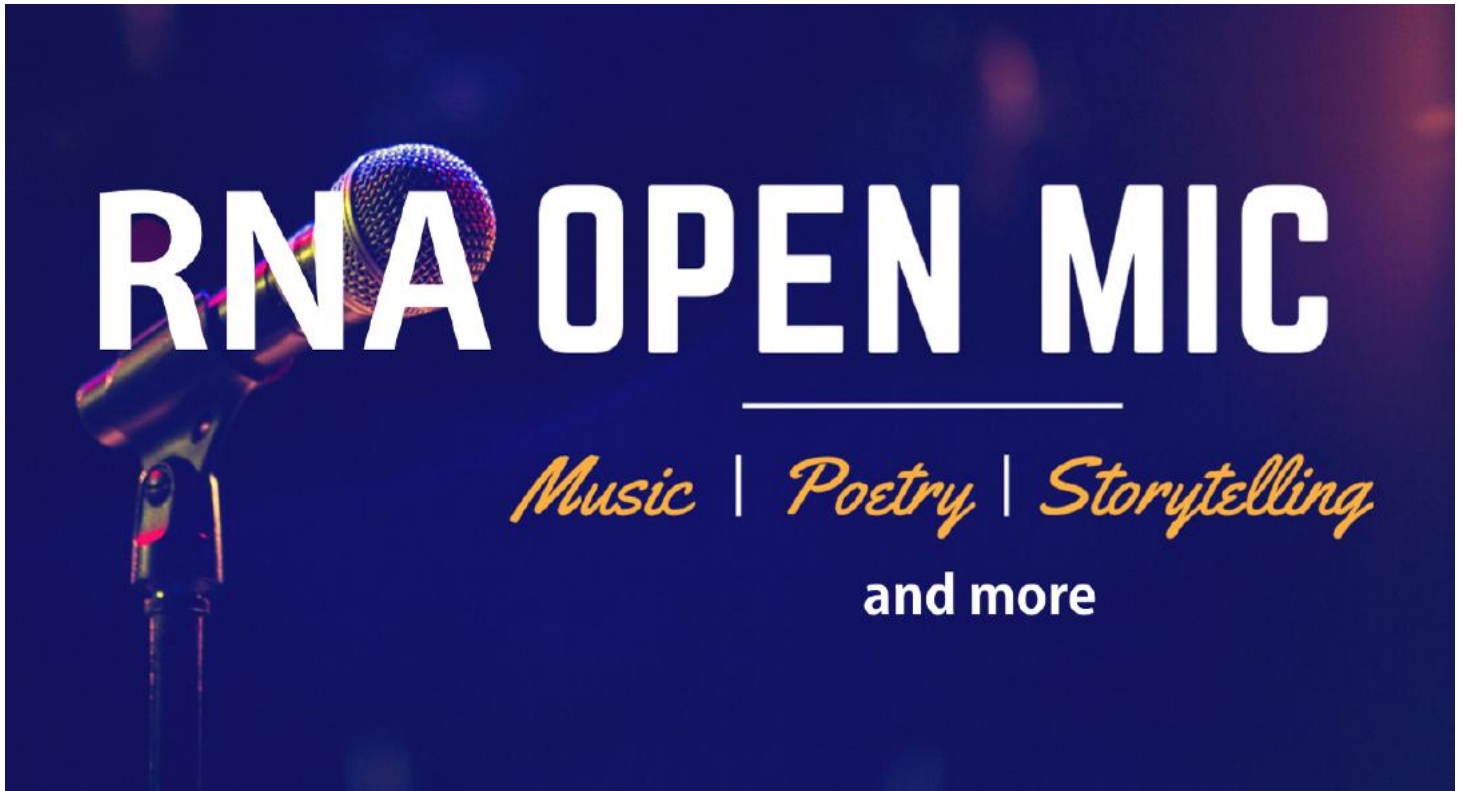
Lately, I have been thinking about Immanent theology. God within. A quick survey of my mind suggests that could mean we are within God, that God is within us or that we are God. There is something that tugs at me about being stardust and Immanent theology. I hope you will help me tease that out and explore the idea of divinity in Religious Naturalism. We don't need to talk about the God you don't believe in, but let's see if we can uncouple our thinking from the old man in the sky and play with the concept a little bit.

To get your thoughts flowing, our reading will be a selection on Divinity from the book, *If Not Now, When?: Theology for Liberal Religion and its Fellow Travelers* by W. Frederick Wooden. You can read it [here](#). I believe we are in a fair use situation, but it is an engaging read and if you want to support the author by buying his book, that would be great.

Elizabeth

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## The First RNA Online Open Mic



On February 24 starting at 8:30 pm EST, the RNA music group will be hosting the first RNA Online Open Mic (and that's a full moon so we could also call it our full moon howl). Our idea starting out is to allot 5 minutes per person. We will make a place to sign up ahead of time. One won't have to have signed up for a slot to attend.

The content could be just about anything: songs, instrumentals, poetry, comedy sketches, dramatic readings, lectures, visual arts, etc. What's shared could be from a recording or done live (or both if you say want to sing to a backing track). It could be one's own work or someone else's (properly credited). It doesn't have to be directly related to the religious naturalist outlook, though keep in mind who the audience is.

Importantly, like in-person open mikes, this will be a very casual experimental setting. There will be no expectations of professional skill or polished works, and we should all be respectful of everyone's sharings.

This is a new thing for us, so there surely will be glitches, but if it has promise, we'll do it again. Join in!

[1st RNA Online Open Mike sign-up form](#)  
[1st RNA Online Open Mike video call link](#)



## RNA Store

### RNA "Swag" Now Available!

We are now offering RNA branded merchandise on our website. Get yours here: <https://religious-naturalist-association.org/shop/>

NEW



Classic Tote Bag  
\$24.36



Flexi case  
\$12.73 - \$18.18



Heavyweight  
Unisex Crewneck T-  
shirt  
\$15.93 - \$26.96



White 11oz Ceramic  
Mug  
\$12.60 - \$16.04

## News and Events continued...

### IRAS Webinar - Worried about climate change and our future? Take action!

Thursday, February 22, 2024, 5 PM Eastern Time

Please join IRAS for another session of our monthly webinar series, featuring:

**Dr. Sara Via**, Professor & Climate Extension Specialist, University of Maryland, College Park

[Register for February 2024 Webinar](#)

#### Regular Events:

##### Deep Transformation Network Monthly Meeting

Attend the live monthly network meeting on the **first Tuesday of every month at 1:00 pm Pacific** (check your time zones carefully!) <https://deeptransformation.network/spaces/10286307/feed>

##### Sacred Depths of Nature Presentations and Podcasts

Follow this link for the latest presentations and podcasts on *The Sacred Depths of Nature* with Ursula Goodenough. <http://sacreddepthsofnature.com/conferences/>

A calendar of JD Stillwater's upcoming events can be found at <https://www.jdstillwater.earth/events/>

#### Membership Map:

Who are we and where do we live? JD Stillwater has created a map showing where our worldwide members reside. You can zoom in and out on the map. Click on a markers for info about that location.

[View the map](#)

If you see that there are members near you and would like to connect with them send a request for their contact information to our membership manager, [Ursula Goodenough](#). If they are willing to share their contact information It will be sent to you. No one's contact information will be shared without their consent.



## Religious Naturalist Association

@ReligiousNaturalistAssociation · 4 subscribers

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[religious-naturalist-association.org](https://religious-naturalist-association.org)

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Playlists



### Voices of Religious Naturalism

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JD Stillwater

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Thomas Berry

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We now have our very own YouTube channel! Check it out.

Be sure to click the **Subscribe** button to be notified when new videos are added.

<https://www.youtube.com/@ReligiousNaturalistAssociation>

We hope to build up a library of quality videos covering a variety of topics related to the religious naturalist orientation.

If you know of any videos that might be suitable please send email to  
[andrewhoward@religious-naturalist-association.org](mailto:andrewhoward@religious-naturalist-association.org)





## Music of the Month

### The Earth is Home



For an annual Earth Day Sunday service, the PBUUC Choir did a special performance of "The Earth is Home" (music by William Albright and words by Kenneth Patton) with a visiting drumming circle.

[watch and listen on YouTube](#)

## Suggest Music

### Help Build Our RNA Songbook

Do you know of a song or poem that we could add to our songbook? Click this link to nominate your item.

[Song Nomination Form](#)

[View Songbook](#)

## Video of the Month

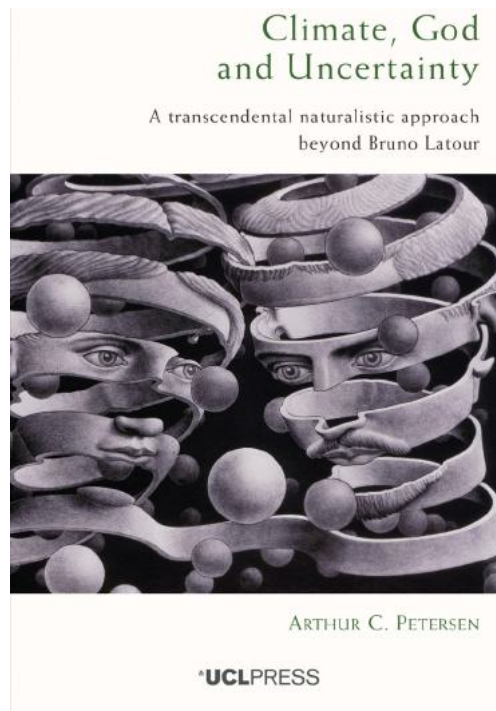
### Transcendental Naturalism



Gregg Henriques & John Vervaeke discuss the idea of transcendental naturalism. (Not to be confused with the view expressed in our Book of the Month, *Climate, God, and Uncertainty*.) [Watch on YouTube](#)

## Book of the Month

### Climate, God, and Uncertainty: A Transcendental Naturalistic Approach Beyond Bruno Latour by Arthur C. Petersen



*Climate, God and Uncertainty* brings together the philosophical approaches of pragmatism and (neo-) Kantianism in **transcendental naturalism**. The new approach is based on combining an expansive concept of "nature" with an emphasis on the separate ontological status of transcendental values. [View on Amazon](#)

## Living Wonder of the Month

### The Most Poisonous Fish in the World



The Stonefish. Find out more [here](#).





## Website of the Month



In this age of mass extinctions, we feel compelled to invite people into intimate relationship with some of the most vulnerable victims of our destructive culture: the land, waters, and creatures with whom we share our homes.

New Wild Churches are emerging all the time, offering invitations to reconnect with the natural world. As kin. As sacred. As beloved co-participants in a larger story of grace and inter-being.

<https://www.wildchurchnetwork.com>

## RN Links

**Members Contributions:** Our members contribute sermons, articles, videos, music and other material related to the Religious Naturalist orientation. Go to <https://religious-naturalist-association.org/members-contributions/> to check them out. Please consider contributing your own material. There is a link on the page for submitting items.

### Members' Projects:

The RNA website has a section called [Members' Projects](#). This page provides links to projects of RNA members. If you have a project related to RN that you would like included on this webpage please email a description to [projects@religious-naturalist-association.org](mailto:projects@religious-naturalist-association.org).

### RNA Forum:

Visit and participate in the RNA Discussion Forums. [Click HERE](#)