



# NEWSLETTER

August 2020

Year 55, Issue 67

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## Message from Our Minister Rev. Pam Philips

Three years ago, Jamie and I were unpacking boxes and getting settled into our house in Blacksburg, and I was settling into my office at UUC. I was full of anticipation and a little trepidation as we began our adventure in shared ministry. I had high hopes for what we would do together but wasn't completely sure what to expect.

As summer begins to wane and we look toward the upcoming year, our fourth together, we know what we *should* be expecting. The start of another school year, with students and teachers returning to classrooms. The start of another church year, with our Water Communion and backpack blessings. New themes to explore in worship and small groups. Opportunities to meet new people through committees and classes and Circle Suppers. In any other year, we would *know* what to expect.

But this year, we look through a completely different lens than in years past. We look through a lens of uncertainty. We don't know what students and teachers can expect—will they gather in person, on-line, or some combination? And for how long? We don't know how the return of students to Virginia Tech and Radford University will impact our lives. We're not yet sure whether or how we'll celebrate time-honored traditions. We have yet to discover how we will continue inspiring spiritual and ethical growth, creating compassionate community, and transforming our community and the world through courageous love.

And yet, I feel confident that we will find our way together. It will require patience and flexibility and good humor. It will require sacrificing old ways and opening up to new ones. And while we will experience sadness—missing being together for fun events like the annual auction—we may find new opportunities to more fully live into our mission and vision as a spiritual community.

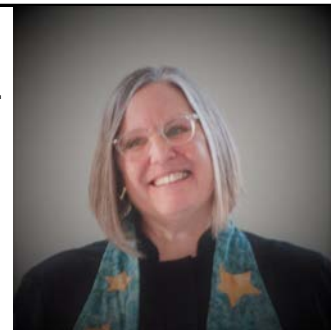
Already, the Strategic Planning Committee has been surveying the congregation to discover who we want to be together and how we might best proceed (remember to fill out the [survey](#) for a chance to win a prize!). The Lifespan Faith Development Committee is exploring new ways to support and expand our individual and communal spiritual growth (which include exciting new curricula and participating in offerings with other UU congregations). The new Executive Board will be retreating this month to prepare for the year ahead.

This past month of rest and relaxation has helped prepare me for the work ahead. I've especially enjoyed reading novels by a favorite author and practicing piano (relearning a skill I had long ago as a child). It's been good to revisit beloved parts from my past that I can in a time when other parts (like vacations on the west coast) are inaccessible.

In this time of uncertainty, when we don't know what to expect and we miss the expected—I encourage us all to ground ourselves in what we can from our past as we look ahead to new possibilities.

In faith,  
Rev. Pam

Note: I did break up my vacation with a hip replacement surgery, so I will be taking a couple weeks to fully recover before being fully back. Thanks to the Worship Team, the Lay Pastoral Care Ministry, the Board, and the staff for making it possible for me to take this time to heal. Thanks to all for your expressions of love and support.



## Contact Information

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**Choir Director:**  
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choirdirector@uucnr.org

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LPCM@uucnr.org

**UUC Website:** uucnr.org

**UUC Office Phone:**  
540-552-9716



## Staff Office Hours:

**Minister:**  
Tuesdays - Fridays, 9-1  
Contact [Minister](#) for appointment or use this [link](#) to set one up online.

**Administrator or DLFD:**  
Contact [Administrator](#) or [Director of Lifespan Faith Development](#) to set up appointments.

## Message from Our Board

Nancy Bodenhorn, Board Secretary



I doubt that I am alone in my new Love-Hate relationship with Zoom.

Mostly I hate that I am so darned dependent on Zoom – I pride myself on being an independent woman, and then THIS happens!

I love that Zoom allows me to attend meetings as I am. I have not attended anything without pants on yet, as is the common theme joke, but I have attended a meeting in my pajamas, and most meetings in my slippers.

I hate that my eyes get tired and that working on my screen is not disrupted when I have a call or a meeting.

I love that I am still able to see and connect with people even in these times when I am not comfortable visiting in person.

I hate that I experience a counter-intuitive ambiguity of wanting to pick up the phone to connect with my friends and have a good, personal chat. Why does the phone feel more like a personal connection than a screen when I could see your face? – Oh yea, of course, because Zoom is like WORK.

I love the ways that people are using Zoom – I get to visit with my grandkids, play Battleship with one of them in Chicago, play Bridge, meet with friends, AND I get to still attend congregational services with the extra excitement of serendipity to see who I get connected to in break-out rooms after the service.

I hate that I frequently spend more time with Zoom than I do with any given person.

I could go on.....

Such is life these days. I am glad that most of us seem to be following the guidelines and recommendations that are grounded in science. I know all of us are nervous about college students returning and what that is going to mean to our exposure to COVID, and even more nervous about decisions being made regarding our PreK-12 students and what those decisions will mean to them and us as both families and workers.

As all of this swarms around us, we on the Board are trying to move us in a direction of increased options. The grounds are being well used and appreciated, with women's lunches, men's breakfasts, Quarterlifers, covenant groups, and other small groups gathering in the picnic area. We are moving toward opening the building with strict parameters for small groups starting on **August 1**. Watching much of the country try to open up too early and unsuccessfully, I am glad and proud of the way that we are approaching this. First, we have utilized the wisdom and experience of the members of the Safety Committee to recommend guidelines that will keep us safe as we return to the indoor environment. We also have conferred with Linsey Marr, an expert on bioaerosols who we are fortunate to have as a member. Secondly, we are embedding our values in our practice. We want to be respectful and inclusive, so have indicated that if you do not yet feel comfortable attending a small group event in Elarth, then you should not! To maintain welcome and inclusivity, a group that is meeting in the building that has a member not comfortable joining in person, must offer a Zoom connection so that no one is excluded based on their personal comfort with the situation.

As we move into this new phase, I hope that we all will maintain respect and flexibility with each other to honor the different ways that we choose to rejoin the community, as well as the different ways that we choose to live other aspects of our lives.

# Upcoming Events

## Update on Building Use

In person gatherings of 10 or fewer people will be permitted in Elarth Hall only beginning **August 1** (provided there is not an upward trend in Montgomery Co. during the previous 7 days) but with many guidelines in place to insure everyone's safety. Follow this [link](#) for the protocol that must be followed in the building. Worship services and many groups and committees continue to meet via Zoom or on our grounds. **Be sure to contact [Lisa](#) to schedule an event on our grounds or in the building.** Continually check the [online calendar](#) and [website](#) for updates about activities as well as our twice-weekly email announcements.

## UUC's Fundraiser 2020 (formerly known as the Auction)

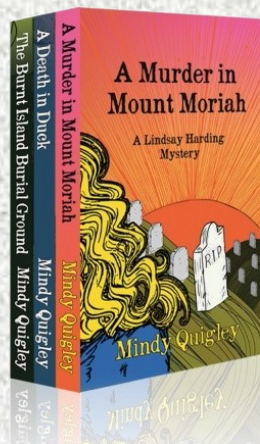
Our auction date has been set for **October 24**. Of course, we don't know if we'll be able to make this an in-person event yet, but we have our [auction website](#), using Auctria software, up and running which allows us to post items and events immediately, and enables bidder registration, bidding, and buying to take place NOW! It's easy to donate items by contacting the Auction Committee with the details of your offer along with a picture of the item. Items in the online auction may vary from month to month, with some items having a limited offer time so check the site often.

The website allows bidders to register a credit card and easily check your balance and items you have won. It also lets you know if you have been outbid and allows you to set a proxy amount for rebidding.

We have some exciting items already posted: a chance to win a quilt made by UUC's *Piecemakers*, delicious fresh egg delivery, and a chance to have a character named after you in one of Mindy Quigley's upcoming murder mysteries, plus many more with wonderful, creative ideas yet to come!

For donating items, please contact: [Irene Peterson](#) or [Molly McClintock](#).

**Donation ideas: Could you host a social distance party this summer? Offer food delivery or an artistic creation? Provide a needed service for someone or need a chore done yourself? Be creative!**





## Women's Breakfast

All women are invited to meet for breakfast, coffee and conversation at 7 AM each Monday via Zoom until we can once again gather at Panera. Use this [link](#) to join. If 7 AM is too early, join when you are able.

## Men's Breakfast

All men are invited to enjoy breakfast, coffee and conversation each Monday morning at 7 AM at the UUC picnic area. Bring your own coffee and nourishment.

## Women's Lunch

All women are welcome to join together for lunch **every** Friday at noon on our UUC grounds to picnic together at a distance. Bring your own lunch and please wear a mask when not eating. If raining, we'll meet via Zoom at this [link](#). Contact [Cynthia Luke](#) for more info.

## Mid-Week Gatherings

Join us each Wednesday at 5:30 PM for an opportunity to share some words, music, and conversation via this Zoom [link](#). Gather together for a while and then go to small breakout groups for further conversation.

## Sages Meeting Weekly

Join us each Tuesday at 2 PM for stimulating conversation via this Zoom [link](#). This group focuses on topics facing older adults as well as general conversation. All ages are welcome.

## Yoga

Join us for Yoga outdoors on UUC's grounds each Wednesday at 5:30 PM. To participate in our weekly Yoga gatherings, meet near the UUC entrance. We'll walk as a (distanced) group to our chosen spot for those unfamiliar with the grounds. Bring your own mat and whatever else you will need. All are welcome to this free class.

## Monthly Support Groups at UUC

### Parent Bereavement

We are a community-wide support group for bereaved parents and grandparents who have lost an adult or adolescent child. We come together once a month on 2nd Mondays from 6-7 PM to help one another on our journeys. The next meeting is on Monday, **August 10**. Join the group via Zoom. For more info and the Zoom link, contact [Katherine](#) or [Lisa](#).

### Mental Illness Peer Support

If you've been missing the NAMI NRV peer support group, or had difficulty getting there, we offer a temporary alternative. If you are someone who has experienced mental illness and would appreciate the support of peers, join our online meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of each month at 6 PM with the next meeting on Monday, **August 17**. Contact [Kimberley](#) for the Zoom link or for more info.

### Transgender Support

NRV Trans\* Support is a peer-led organization whose mission is to offer support, resources, and social activities to all transgender and gender non-conforming individuals in the New River Valley in a safe, anonymous and affirming environment. To learn more about NRV Trans\* Support, visit their [website](#).

The Adult Group meets on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of each month (**August 13 & 27**) via Zoom from 6:30-8 PM and welcomes all adults who identify under the trans umbrella or are questioning their gender. Contact [nrvtrans@gmail.com](mailto:nrvtrans@gmail.com) for the Zoom link.

### Caregivers

UUC hosts a monthly support group for caregivers to share their experiences and challenges. The group meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays of each month—next meeting **August 11** at 7-8:30 PM. Join us via this [Zoom link](#). Questions or concerns - contact [Rev. Pam](#).

# Lifespan Faith Development

## Summer RE

### Summer RE—Grades K-5

*Books and Cooks Volume II* introduces UU kids to cultural cooking through books from around the world. Blessings, great stories and delicious food guarantee a great time for our budding sous chefs as they learn to make food from around the world! This summer's program is a brand new collection of recipes!


*Lessons will be emailed home each Sunday.*

### Books and Cooks VOLUME II



Date	Book / Recipe	Blessing
Aug 2	<i>Carob Pudding</i>	Argentinian
Aug 9	<i>Vegetable Biryani</i>	Hindu
Aug 16	<i>Irio: A Kenyan Mashed Potato Dish</i>	African

No Summer RE August 23 & 30



**Wednesdays**  
**10-11 AM**  
[Zoom link](#)

## Children's Story Time



**BLESSING OF  
THE BACKPACKS**

August 30

## Fall Registration

Returning families: links sent via email

New families: register [here](#)

Please register today!

First supply bag delivery August 24.





### Join our conversation on Sunday, August 30!

Bridging Conversations are a conversational bridge across issues that divide and separate us. They provide an easy structure for engaging in friendly yet meaningful conversation with those with whom we may not agree. These conversations increase understanding, reveal common ground, and sometimes even allow us to discuss possible solutions.

Join us on Sunday, **August 30** at 11:30 AM via this [Zoom link](#) for our conversation on **American Creed**. American political leaders of all kinds throughout history have pointed out that American identity revolves around a set of ideals – life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In his most famous speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. described America’s creed as an unfulfilled “promissory note” based on the idea that everyone deserves freedom, fairness, and equal opportunity to pursue happiness and advancement. People of good will often fundamentally agree, yet we struggle to find ways to effectively work together. The conversation is led by [Rev. Jamie McReynolds](#).

## On-Going Adult RE Programs

### Anti-Racism Discussion Group

*Meets the second and fourth Sundays, 1-2 PM AM via [Zoom](#)*

All are welcome to join our ongoing discussion group on white privilege and racism. Topics are announced via email. Email [Karen](#) to join the listserv to receive links to the discussion articles.

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### Meditation Group

*Meets Tuesdays, 5-6 PM via [Zoom](#) (NOTE: this is a new link)*

Our meditation group meets weekly for those interested in starting or deepening their meditation practice. Our format is drop-in, so you need not attend all sessions. Open with centering words and basic instruction, followed by sitting practice. Meditators from all traditions and all levels of experience are welcome.



### Conversations on Our Faith

*Meets Wednesdays, 12-1 PM via [Zoom](#)*

Join our conversation as we continue to read the book, *A Hidden Wholeness* by Parker Palmer. All are welcome, even if you have not read the chapters of the book under discussion. To learn more, contact [Tim Pickering](#).

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## New in the UUC Library

*Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice* by Marianne Celano, PhD; Marietta Collins, PhD; and Ann Hazzard, PhD follows two families — one White, one Black — as they discuss a police shooting of a Black man in their community. The story aims to answer children's questions about such traumatic events and to help children identify and counter racial injustice in their own lives. Borrow the book from UUC (book delivery available with monthly supply bag deliveries for registered children) or watch a reading online at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcOhOFGcWm8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcOhOFGcWm8).



# UUC Community News

## Update on ½-Plate Donations

Thanks to your generosity (see next article on how to donate), UUC continued its practice of helping others in both our community and beyond. The July recipients were:

**July 5:** Millstone Kitchen Blacksburg, \$123

**July 12:** Equality Virginia, \$156

**July 19:** Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad, \$66

**July 26:** Virginia Interfaith Power & Light, TBA

Watch the weekly announcements and website for the coming weeks' ½-plate recipients. Have a suggestion—email [Lisa](mailto:Lisa).

Check out our [Give webpage](#) for information on donating options.

## Kitchen Update

There is some truth to “while the cat’s away, the mice will play”. While our building has been closed, Karen Holstein has been doing a “super deep” cleaning of the kitchen. Her husband, Don Philyaw, got recruited by default. Karen brought her training as an industrial engineer to the kitchen cleaning task. Hmm... you may not find things where they used to be because she used her experience with efficiency process improvement and facilities layout to make the kitchen better organized for use, especially for potlucks. Everything has been washed and sanitized; junk replaced with her thrift store finds, new “gizmos” added to create more counter space and accessibility. Any health inspector would have to give her work an A+. Thank you, Karen, for your Covid contribution.



## July Board Mtg. Highlights

- ◆ The Board accepted the Safety Committee’s recommendation to begin opening the building for small (10 or less) groups **if** there is no upward trend in new Covid cases for 7 prior days on **August 1**. (See page 3 for more information.)
- ◆ The Board reviewed a draft policy on allowing animals in the building and will vote in August.
- ◆ The Board gave Wayne Neu permission to make necessary changes to the Policy & Procedures document for organization and clarity and to bring substantial issues to the Board for a vote.
- ◆ The Board voted to accept the anonymous donation of up to \$3000 for a new shed for Grounds Ministry.
- ◆ The Board approved the rental of a parking space in our lot for parking a members’ small camper until such time as services resume. The rent is \$60/month.

The next Board meeting will be held via Zoom on Thursday, **August 13** at 7 PM. The [minutes and reports](#) of meetings for the past two calendar years are available.

**Questions, Ideas, Complaints for the Board:** Simply send an email to [adresstheBoard@uucnr.org](mailto:adresstheBoard@uucnr.org).

## Join Our UUC Facebook Group

To facilitate more conversation among us, we have set up a Facebook group -- **UUC New River Valley** -- where everyone can post. To make this a positive experience, we'll continue to honor our Congregational Covenant. This is a private group (only members can see who's in the group and what they post) but it is visible (anyone can find the group). Ask to join the [group](#) today!



# Round the Grounds

Thirty grounds workers were "armed" with paint brushes, paint, pruners, shovels, rakes, hay forks, wheelbarrows, drills, and sledge hammers. You name it, these intrepid volunteers probably used it. In just 2 hours, the to-do list went from 11 tasks to 1! These volunteers didn't win the lottery, but they win our appreciation and applause:

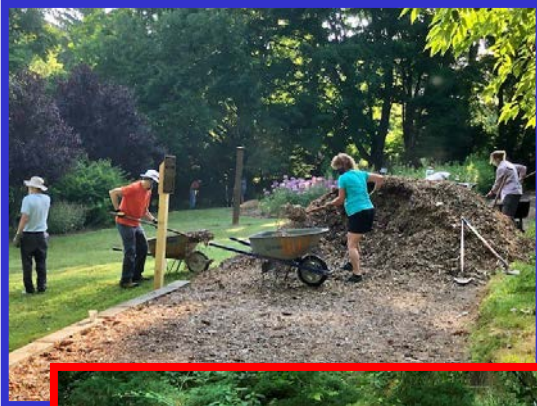
Crosby Houston  
Danielle (a neighbor)  
Adam Short  
Chrissy Teets  
Tom Bube  
Patrick Feucht  
Greg Evanylo  
Susan Baker

Sharon Day  
Brigitte Flowers  
Alyssa Short  
Clyde Bink  
Valerie Bidwell  
Kim Feucht  
Joe Powers

Isabel Berney  
Jim Flowers  
Tim Pickering  
Jill Kiecolt  
McKenzie  
George Lally  
Rebecca White

Denise Martin  
Laura Robertson  
Patti Bass  
Rich Gandour  
Bill Patterson  
Dick Luke (builder)  
Walter Pirie

Amanda Haynes supplied coffee and delicious donuts. There is nothing glamorous about maintaining our 5+ acres of grounds, but the work gets one outdoors and brings satisfaction from being part of keeping the grounds welcoming, attractive, peaceful, and home to wildlife and insects. Be a part of this by contacting [Susan Baker](#).







## Unitarian Universalist Congregation Sunday Services August 2020

Virtual Services at 10:00 AM via [Zoom](#)  
Religious Education Classes at home  
All are invited to share conversation in small groups following the service by staying on the Zoom link.

Join us at 10 AM each Sunday at this Zoom [link](#). Why not bookmark it?

**August 2:** Ellen Brix & Stephen Henninger, *Zen & the Mystery of Life*. Ellen and Stephen will present the Zen experience of nonduality and the inconceivable mystery of life from which love arises. It will include ways Zen meditation is helpful during these times of pandemic and division.

**August 9:** Alyssa Short & Ellen Plummer, *Poetry Service*. Today we will be celebrating the power of poetry and invite you to send us your favorite poem. Please submit a poem, created by you or someone else, that you find powerful, moving, or meaningful in some way by emailing it to [Alyssa](#) by Monday, **August 3**. Include whether you would like to read the poem aloud at the service or have someone else read it for you. If necessary, pre-recorded videos can be included, but we encourage live readings if possible.

**August 16:** Rev. Pam Philips, Rev. Jaimie McReynolds, Wayne Neu, *Report from General Assembly*. As we begin a new year together as a congregation, let us look back to the June 2020 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association – our larger faith - to learn how we can be 'rooted, inspired, and ready' in the coming year.

**August 23:** Kimberley Homer & Victoria Taylor, *Radical Hospitality in a Hunker-down Age*. What if radical hospitality is more than bestowing charity on the less fortunate, or bestowing inclusion on the marginalized? How do we open up our tribe? Can you remember when you first felt welcome here?

**August 30:** Rev. Pam Philips, *Annual Water Service/Communion*. Each new year as a congregation we come together and celebrate a Water Communion. Join us this year as we celebrate our interconnected congregation through a virtual water service. For the service, please send photos of scenes of water to [Stephen Henninger](#).



### Our Mission

***Inspire. Create. Transform.***

**Inspire** spiritual and ethical growth. **Create** compassionate community.  
**Transform** our community and the world through courageous love.

### Our Vision

UUC will be a beacon of liberal religion in the New River Valley. We will join with other organizations and faiths to work for just causes.

We will practice generosity and radical hospitality. We will be known as a place of beauty, welcome, joy, and celebration.



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation

1301 Gladewood Drive, Blacksburg, VA 24060

Phone: (540) 552-9716 E-mail: [info@uucnr.org](mailto:info@uucnr.org):

P.O. Box 10116, Bburg 24062-0116 URL: [uucnr.org](http://uucnr.org)

# CALENDAR: August 2020

## Staff Virtual Office Hours:

**Minister:** 9-1 Tu - F; [Contact for appointment](#)

**Administrator:** [Contact for appointment](#)

**DLFD:** [Contact for appointment](#)

All times are PM unless noted otherwise

⌘ indicates that there is a write-up in the newsletter

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>(All Sundays)</b> 10:00-11:15 AM Worship Service	<b>(All Mondays)</b> ⌘ 7:00 AM Women's Breakfast ⌘ 7:00 AM Men's Breakfast (UUC picnic area — weather permitting)	<b>(All Tuesdays)</b> ⌘ 2:00 Sages ⌘ 5:00 Meditation	<b>(All Wednesdays)</b> ⌘ 10:00 AM Children's Story Time ⌘ Noon Conversations on Our Faith ⌘ 5:30 Mid-week Congregational Gathering 5:30 Yoga (outdoors on UUC grounds)		<b>(All Fridays)</b> ⌘ Noon Women's Lunch Bunch (UUC picnic area — weather permitting)	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> 11:30 AM Men's Group	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 6:00 Connection Committee	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> ⌘ 1:00 Anti-Racism Discussion Group	<b>10</b> ⌘ 6:00 Parent Bereavement Support Group	<b>11</b> 4:00 Committee on Ministries ⌘ 7:00 Caregivers' Support Group	<b>12</b> 5:45 Finance Committee 7:00 Worship Team	<b>13</b> ⌘ 6:30 Transgender Support Group 7:00 Board Meeting	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 11:30 AM Men's Group	<b>17</b> ⌘ 6:00 Mental Illness Peer Support Group	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> ⌘ 1:00 Anti-Racism Discussion Group	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> ⌘ 6:30 Transgender Support Group 9:00 September Newsletter Deadline	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> ⌘ 11:30 AM Bridging Conversations: <i>American Creed</i>	<b>31</b>					

**NOTE:** Elarth Hall is conditionally open for small groups. See Page 3 above for details. To schedule an event, [contact administrator](#) Events listed above will be held via ZOOM unless otherwise noted. See the write-ups in the pages above for more information. For ZOOM gatherings, the [Online Calendar](#) will have the ZOOM url. That calendar will be updated as conditions change.