



NEWSLETTER

August 2021

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Message from Our Minister Rev. Pam Philips

Here we are, again, in a liminal time—an in-between time. Many of us have had the opportunity to get vaccinated and to reconnect with beloved people and activities. Summertime mainstays have returned. We've enjoyed music in outdoor venues around the NRV including Friday nights on Henderson Lawn and Tuesdays at Bisset Park. Many of you posted happy photographs of Floyd Fest. Next week, Blacksburg will be hosting Steppin' Out again. And several groups at UUC have been meeting in person—on the grounds and in Elarth Hall. Life is beginning to feel more "normal".



And yet . . . we are too aware that COVID has not gone away, that many of our neighbors have chosen not to get vaccinated, that many of our children cannot yet get vaccinated, and that even those who are vaccinated can expose others to the virus. The CDC has called for indoor masking for EVERYONE in hot spots—vaccinated and unvaccinated alike.

We are in between hopefulness and trepidation. What will happen next?

We do not know what will happen in the next few weeks and months--as school boards determine how local schools will reopen, as students and faculty return to universities and colleges, as the drug companies continue testing the vaccines--so we will need to approach the immediate future with care. Cautious optimism? Confident pessimism?

At UUC, we've been taking steps to allow us to come together as a spiritual community no matter what the future holds. We've already been experimenting with dual-platform meetings—in-person and on-line attendance at meetings in Elarth Hall. We hope to begin dual-platform worship by our traditional ingathering Water Service on **August 29** and have been outfitting the sanctuary with equipment that will make it possible for people to attend services in person or online, depending on their circumstances. Our guiding principle has been our mission to Create Compassionate Community. We want to make sure that everyone feels fully present and part of the service, whether they are sitting in the sanctuary or in their homes. We also want to make sure that everyone is safe.

Because we are in a time of transition, expect that things will be different—both from before and during the pandemic—and it will take us some time to get it right. In the sanctuary, the seats are spread out, air purifiers are plugged in, TV screens are on the walls, and everyone will be wearing masks. It will look and feel different, but we will be together. For those joining from home, the camera angle will be different, there will be fewer boxes of faces on your Zoom screen, and the chat will probably not be as active, but we will be together. While we're trying to think of everything we can do to make the worship experience as fulfilling as possible for everyone, we'll no doubt make mistakes, but we will be together.

I have faith in this congregation in this time of transition. We have proven our ability to roll with the punches and give each other grace this past year and a half, and we'll draw on that skill and attitude often in the coming church year.

Even though we have cause for optimism and even excitement, we will need patience and courage in the months ahead. We may need to change plans. Trust the Board and the staff to make decisions based on our Unitarian Universalist values. Ask questions and communicate concerns as they arise. As we encounter more opportunities and challenges, remember to give each other and ourselves grace.

No matter what, we will be together.

Contact Information

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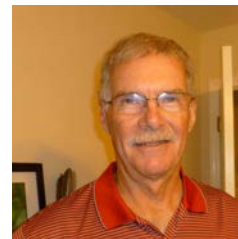
Staff Office Hours:

Minister:
Contact [Minister](#) to set up appointment. On vacation August 10-24.

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

Message from Our Board

Bob Stimson, Executive Board President



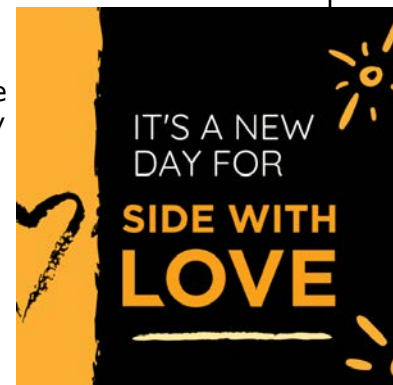
July was a low-key month for the Board. However, we look forward to exciting in-person gatherings in August. Progress has been made in the selection of audio-visual equipment for the sanctuary to use in our anticipated hybrid services. Two 75" TVs have been purchased and will be mounted on the walls of the closets on each side of the sanctuary. These TVs and a computer, along with our existing microphone and camera, will be the major components of the system for our hybrid services.

Throughout August, the Board will be paying close attention to mandates from the CDC and the Commonwealth of Virginia regarding safe openings of places of worship. Here's hoping the COVID Delta variant does not significantly impact our area.

Looking forward to seeing many of you.

A New Day for Side With Love

The UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) is proud to announce that all of the UUA's justice work will now be housed under the **Side With Love banner** through which they will continue to offer UUs regular opportunities for political education, spiritual sustenance, skills-based trainings, and mobilizations for action. They want to be more intentional in their declaration that all our prophetic justice work asks us to **Side With Love**.



Building & Grounds Use

Outside gatherings of any size are now permitted at UUC. Non-vaccinated people are strongly encouraged to wear masks and social distance.

Indoor gatherings of 25 or fewer are permitted in the building. People in the building are strongly encouraged to meet with masks and social distancing. Groups meeting in the building are encouraged to take time to listen deeply to one another's concerns and fears before making decisions about masks and distancing, even if everyone is vaccinated. Group singing is not allowed.

To schedule an event indoors or outdoors, contact our [Administrator](#).

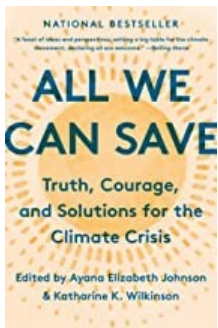
Upcoming Events

Rev. Pam is on vacation August 10-24. Please respect her time off.

Parent Covenant Group

Families with young children are invited to connect with others in the Parent Covenant Group on the 2nd Saturday of each month (next gathering on **August 14**) at 5 PM in our picnic area. Meet monthly for a potluck dinner followed by support group discussion for the parents and supervised play time for the kids. The group also has regular social gatherings. For more information or to join, contact [Deb Dickerson](#).

All We Can Save Circle



Caring about the climate crisis can be incredibly isolating. Polling tells us climate conversations are few and far between, yet we know folks are hungry for deeper, more generous dialogue on the topic and to circle up in ways that connect, nourish, and seed action. [All We Can Save](#) Circles are designed to meet those needs using the book, *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage,*

and Solutions for the Climate Crisis by Katharine K. Wilkinson, as a grounding and jumping off point. This kind of work is vital to grow and strengthen any movement for social change.

There will be 10 sessions on Monday evenings at 7:30 PM **August 9 – October 11**. UUs and folks from the broader community are welcome to join us in person at UUC or [via this Zoom link](#). Participants are encouraged (but not required) to read assigned sections of the book before each session. The reading for the first session is the "Begin" essay. If interested contact [Clyde](#).

August Food Pantry Donations



Our Community Service Team is collecting food in the bins located near the accessible entrance to UUC. Suggested donations for August are cereal, mac n' cheese, and pasta. Thanks for helping to feed the hungry in our area.

UUC Artists Exploring the Outdoors

We will be having an art show at UUC featuring our congregants' artistic works depicting nature/outdoors - no nudity or pornography please - sizes 9" x 12" up to 3' x 4', any medium.

Submitted works MUST be ready to hang (framed and wired). The number of entries is limited and will be "first come, first served." If you would like to display some of your work, contact [Jae](#) for the full list of requirements prior to our hanging the show the week of **October 11**. Entries will need to be brought to UUC at that time, although other arrangements can be made if needed.



Weekly Gatherings

Women's Breakfast

All women are invited to join together for coffee, breakfast and conversation at 7 AM each Monday at Panera in Blacksburg.

Men's Breakfast

All men are invited to join together for breakfast (bring your own) and conversation at 7 AM each Monday at UUC in the picnic area.

Women's Lunch

All women are welcome to join together for lunch every Friday at 11:30 AM at various restaurants in the area OR at noon in our picnic area - check the [online calendar](#) for the exact location and time each week. Contact [Cynthia](#) for more info.

Sages

Join us on the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 2 PM in our library for stimulating conversation on topics that affect older adults. All ages welcome.

Yoga

Weather permitting, join us outdoors on the UUC grounds on Wednesdays at 5:30 PM. To get on the email list for weekly status of class, contact [Lori](#).

Monthly Support Groups at UUC

Parent Bereavement Support

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 (**August 9**) from 6-7 PM to help one another on our journeys. For more info and the Zoom link, contact [Katherine](#) or [Lisa](#).

NAMI Support Groups

Connections Support: Persons living with a mental illness are welcome to join this NAMI support group on the 3rd Monday of each month (**August 16**) from 6-7:30 PM. Contact [Kimberley](#) for the Zoom link or for more info.

Family Support: Family and friends of persons living with a mental illness are welcome to join this NAMI support group on the 3rd Wednesday of each month (**August 18**) from 6-7:30 PM. Contact [Kristine](#) for the Zoom link or for more info.

Caregivers Support

UUC hosts a monthly support group for caregivers to share their experiences and challenges. The group meets on the 2nd Tuesdays of each month (**August 10**) from 7-8:30 PM. Join us via this [Zoom link](#). Questions or concerns - contact [Rev. Pam](#).

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 NRV in a safe, anonymous and affirming environment. Contact [Hayden](#) for more info.

The NRV Trans group welcomes all adults who identify under the trans umbrella or are questioning their gender. The group meets 1st Thursdays (**August 5**) from 7-8:30 PM and 3rd Saturdays (**August 21**) from 1-2:30 PM. For more info and the location, contact transsupportinfo@uucnr.org.

The **Youth & Families Group** meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month (**August 24**) at 6:30 PM and is for anyone under 18 that falls under the trans umbrella, whether they have started their transition or are just questioning their gender. The group provides resources, advice, and support. Parents are welcome with or without their children. Contact secretary@heshezewe.org for location/info.

UUC Community News

July Board Mtg. Highlights

- ◆ UUC ended the 2020-21 fiscal year in excellent financial shape in spite of Covid. The use of our [online donation site](#), Vanco, has been very successful.
- ◆ Funds not spent in 2020-21 will be allocated to the 2021-22 budget at the August Board meeting.
- ◆ In regards to EJT's *MVP Pipeline Public Witness Request*, the Board will ask the petitioners to rewrite their petition, prior to it being sent to indicated politicians, to represent the individuals who desire to sign the petition as members of UUC, allowing for a period of additional members to sign the petition if they so choose rather than it coming from the Board representing the entire congregation.
- ◆ The Board will hold their annual retreat on **August 26**.
- ◆ The Board discussed working on renewal of our *Welcoming Congregation Certification* and the *Growth through Service Program*. Watch for more info.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, **August 12** at 7 PM. The [minutes and reports](#) of meetings for the past two calendar years are available.

Questions, Ideas, Complaints for the Board:
Send an email to adresstheBoard@uucnr.org.

Update on ½-Plate Donations

Thanks to your generosity, UUC continued its practice of helping others in both our community and beyond. The July recipients were:

July 4: ACCE (Access to Community College Education), \$121

July 11: BRP-STARS (Blacksburg Refugee Partnership Scholarship to Advance former Refugee Students), \$185

July 18: UU Trauma Response Team, \$109

July 25: Appalachian Campaign of RIP Medical Debt, \$196.

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

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

Lifespan Faith Development

2021-22 Registration is now open

Families registered in 2020-21 have been sent a pre-filled registration link via email to make registering easier. New families can register at <https://forms.gle/ohdNqVGQJUFdd5eu8>.

Please register ASAP to help with fall planning.

Fall RE starts September 12!

Adult Programs

Anti-Racism Group

Meets second and fourth Sundays, 1-2 PM

All are welcome to join our ongoing group addressing white privilege and racism via this [Zoom link](#). Contact [Barbara Taylor](#) for meeting topics. Contact [Karen Hager](#) to join the listserv for group announcements.

Meditation Group

Meets Tuesdays, 5-6 PM

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. Join via this [Zoom link](#).

Conversations on Our Faith

Meets Wednesdays, 12-1 PM

Join our conversation as we read the book, *Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell. All are welcome, even if you have not read the chapters of the book under discussion. Join via this [Zoom link](#). To learn more, contact [Tim Pickering](#).

Round the Grounds

by Susan Baker, chair

We thought July was going to be a quiet month for UUC's grounds keepers, but the 3" rainfall in a short period of time created havoc. The gravel in the ditch along our driveway decided to "take a hike" into the dip and on down the driveway toward the street. Removing the displaced gravel required a lot of shoveling and relocation of the "pesky" gravel. For the time being, there's a gully in the ditch that is about 12" deep. Traffic cones have been placed near the gully to warn drivers. The plan is to remove all the small gravel in the ditch, replace the landscape fabric, and put in erosion-control stone measuring 4"-8" in diameter.

The heavy rainfall also caused the drains in the primary detention pond to become clogged with debris.



Denise Martin with one foot in the ditch gully



Outlet pipes clogged with debris after storm



Outlet pipes with debris cleared off, but sediment still clogging the lower pipe which has since been removed

The bio-detention pond (a secondary detention pond) overflowed, resulting in water gushing into our neighbor's yard. Joe Powers has put considerable research and effort into understanding our storm water system. He has done "a ton" of clearing the bio-detention pond to increase our understanding of the purpose of this "mystery pond". Angela Parrish, a hydrology engineer and UUC member, met with Joe and provided professional recommendations for the steps we will have to take to make the storm water system 100% effective. This will likely require the use of a contractor with heavy equipment as well as help from UUC volunteers. Thanks so much to Joe and Angela or we'd still be at square one.



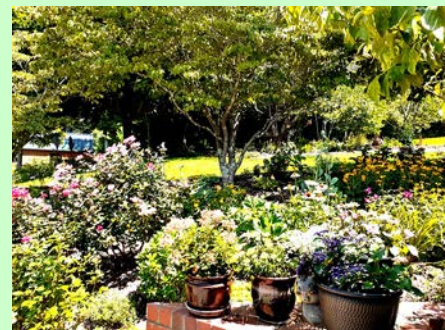
Cleared bio-detention pond with pile of brush

Happy news!! Daniel Vogler has joined the cast of UUC grounds workers. He did some of the mowing while David Warner was on vacation and will continue making weekly appearances to do "whatever". Daniel's sense of humor adds to the good times being on the grounds.



There are two new "critters" hanging around on the grounds. Visit the grounds and see if you can find this Blue Heron.

It's not too early to think about the **fall workday** to put the grounds to bed for the winter. Please save the date, **October 23**, 9:30-noon to do your part. All hands on deck!





Unitarian Universalist Congregation Sunday Services August 2021

Virtual Services at 10:00 AM via [Zoom](#). August 29 will be in person and via Zoom.

There are no monthly worship themes during August.

Join us at 10 AM each Sunday via this [Zoom link](#) noting that on August 29, the service will also be in person. Stay following each service for small group conversation with others in our UUC community.

August 1: *To Err is Human; To Forgive . . . ?* Rev. Pam with Worship Associate TBA. People of faith have long been encouraged to seek and give forgiveness. What is the role of forgiveness in our lives, particularly as people of covenant and accountability?

August 8: *Learn Some UU History*, Rev. Doug McCusker and Victoria Taylor. Rev. Doug McCusker of Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fredericksburg and Victoria Taylor will be sharing *The Humanist Manifesto* of 1933. How did this inflection point in Unitarian history impact our denomination and the world?

August 15: *Observing Sabbath*, Ellen Plummer and Kimberley Homer. Is Sabbath a practice reserved for the religious? Do we dare rest from our labor? Does our faith differ from others with regard to productivity? Join Ellen Plummer and Kimberley Homer as we celebrate rest and delight in the midst of our busy lives.

August 22: *At the Threshold*, Victoria Taylor, Stephen Henninger, and Alyssa Short. As we prepare for our first hybrid (in person and online) service, congregants will reflect on the ways that our UUC community has supported us through the pandemic thus far. If you feel called to share during the service, please email [Alyssa](#).

August 29: *In-Gathering in Two Spaces*, Rev. Pam Philips and Worship Associate Stephen Henninger. This year's Water Service, a beloved Unitarian Universalist tradition, will be even more special as we gather in the sanctuary and on Zoom at the same time for the first time. All are invited to share special water from our time apart—[sending](#) a photograph of a beloved body of water and/or bringing a small container of actual water. We will gather safely by wearing masks and distancing in the sanctuary or attending virtually based on individuals' comfort and needs.

Depending on the weather, we hope to have a fun celebration of water AFTER the service on the grounds for everyone.

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

P.O. Box 10116, Bburg 24062-0116 URL: uucnr.org

CALENDAR: August 2021

Staff Office Hours: See below

All times are PM unless noted otherwise

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
(All Sundays) x 10:00 Worship Service On August 29, the Worship Service will be a hybrid service: both in the Sanctuary and on Zoom.	(All Mondays) x 7:00 AM Women's Breakfast (Blacksburg Panera) x 7:00 AM Men's Breakfast (picnic area) (August 9,16,23,30) x 7:30 "All We Can Save" Circle/book discussion	(All Tuesdays) x 5:00 Meditation	(All Wednesdays) x Noon Conversations on Our Faith x 5:30 Yoga Outdoors (UUC grounds)		(All Fridays) x 11:30 Women's Lunch Bunch (local restaurants: Check Online Calendar)	
1	2	3 x 2:00 Sages	4	5 6:30 Piecemakers x 7:00 Transgender Support Group	6	7
8 x 1:00 Anti-Racism Group	9 x 6:00 Parent Bereavement Support Group	10 x 7:00 Caregivers' Support Group	11 6:00 Finance Committee 7:00 Worship Team	12 x 7:00 Board Meeting	13	14 x 5:00 Parents' Covenant Group
15	16 x 6:00 NAMI Connections Support Group	17 x 2:00 Sages	18 x 6:00 NAMI Family Support Group	19	20	21 x 1:00 Transgender Support Group
22 x 1:00 Anti-Racism Group	23	24 x 6:30 Trans Support Group for Youth & Families	25 6:00 Connections Committee	26 9:00 September Newsletter Deadline	27	28 8:00 AM RE Teacher Training
29 Noon Memorial Service for Bill Patterson	30	31				

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UUC Staff office hours: **Minister:** On Vacation August 10-24. Otherwise, [Contact for appointment](#)
Administrator: [Contact for appointment](#) **DLFD:** [Contact for appointment](#)