



Newsletter

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Autumn 2023



Message from the
Minister
Rev. Pam Philips

Welcome! Welcome to the new congregational year, which promises to offer new opportunities to deepen your connections to UUC and Unitarian Universalism.

Many of you have heard perhaps the biggest news coming out of the UUA General Assembly in June – the affirmative vote to continue consideration of a revised Article 2 of the UUA bylaws. More simply put, a change from Principles and Sources (that you'll find in the front of the gray hymnal *Singing the Living Tradition*) to [Values and Covenant](#). Some have been following this process for several years, but this may be news for many of you. Fortunately, we will spend the year ahead exploring the seven values through monthly themes in Sunday services and Soul Matters Covenant Groups. If you've never participated in a covenant group, this would be an especially good year to give it a try. You will have the chance to dig deep into the values, figuring out their importance in your own life as a Unitarian Universalist, **and** get to know other members of our spiritual community. [Read more about covenant groups here.](#)

Among the values we will explore are **Justice** and **Equity**. What better way to explore these values than action – by joining one of UUC's Social Justice initiatives. So much is happening in the world that calls for our attention and action. Read about how you can get involved this year in [Racial Justice](#), [Environmental Justice](#), [Reproductive Justice](#), [Voting Rights](#). Learning and working with others who share your concerns can lighten the load and help build a more just and equitable world.

Other values are **Pluralism** and **Transformation**. One way to explore these values is through [Lifespan Faith Development](#). This year, we are offering children and adult classes on world religions, including visits to local houses of worship. Likewise, we'll offer Our Whole Lives for adolescents, young adults, and older adults. Sunday Circles resume in September, either before or after the service, with a wide variety of topics.

Many of us practice the value of **Generosity** by participating in one of the many projects of the [Community Service Team](#) and annual LFD social action projects. This year, we're inviting all the groups within the congregation to practice generosity by [supplying after-service snacks](#) for coffee hour (except on 2nd Sunday, when we have potluck). Offering food to each other, and especially to newcomers, is one way to practice radical hospitality – which is part of the UUC vision statement. Our [annual auction](#) is another avenue for generosity and one of our most fun events.

You can also give generously of your time and energy by joining [new monthly workdays on the grounds](#). In addition to helping to maintain our beautiful outdoor spaces, this might help you explore the value of **Interdependence**, as we share the grounds with many different plants and animals.

Our central value is **Love** -- "Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values." At UUC, we aspire to "courageous love." In the months ahead, I encourage you to practice this value through any number of the ways listed in this newsletter. Find some way to participate in the life of this congregation—through learning, serving, supporting, singing, socializing, worshipping – that brings joy and meaning to your life. You can play a vital role in creating compassionate community and transforming our community and the world through courageous love.

In faith and love,

Rev. Pam



Contact Information

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Staff Office Hours

Minister:
Tues-Thurs 9:00-1:00pm
by appointment

Administrator:
Sundays 10:00-Noon
Other times by appt.

DLFD:
Hours by appt.

If you need access to the building, please give 24 hours notice by emailing Ericka

Message From Our Board President

What Are We Busy About?

"Even if you win the rat race, you are still a rat." ~Lili Tomlin

I often see Rev. Pam, her staff, and various lay leaders at UUC services, activities, and events. Maybe some are not always good at saying, "I don't need to be involved in this one. I need some down time to take care of myself." Is that acceptable? Is it acceptable for us to say this ourselves?

At the recent UUA General Assembly, in response to a question about her own self-care plan, Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, the new UUA president, stated, "I want communal care to be at the center of all we do, so hear me. I want us to stop asking people what their care plan is and start lowering our expectations of what they will do for us...What if part of our self-care plan was acknowledging that we can't do everything...I suck at doing less. That's why we have a care plan. But if we all suck a little less at doing less, maybe we would do it (better)." She also said that "we can support our religious leaders by sending them a thank you card instead of a complaint."

Do less, appreciate more, communal care -- It seems like good advice to me. It is tough to juggle everything we do. And part of the problem is what we put on ourselves. No matter what we're working on, a little voice seems to tell us that we could do a little more, or do it a little better, or work a little harder. While balancing work, church, and the rest of life may not be the hardest thing in the world, according to Dave Barry, it's probably second only to achieving world peace.

I saw an article the other day in which the author said that fear of missing out (commonly known as FOMO) is being replaced by joy of missing out (JOMO). That is, there is joy (and relief and wisdom) in not having to do it all. (I know that on the days I don't read Twitter (now X), I feel a lot happier.)

A paradox is the fact that most of us are also happier when we feel challenged. Happy people, it turns out, aren't necessarily less busy. Instead, they seem to find joy in the midst of their challenging lives. This starts making sense to me when I think of fellow Unitarian, Henry David Thoreau's words, "It is not enough to be busy, ...the important question is, what are we busy about?"

I'm proud to be part of a congregation that is "busy about" supporting a more inclusive, just, equitable, accepting, loving world, and working to build that world through our daily spiritual practices and how we treat one another. That's a world I want to live in.

And I agree with Rev. Dr. Betancourt. We should be more compassionate with ourselves and each other and not expect anyone to do it all. Doing less is just fine. But we don't want to lose the passion for what we do, either. According to Diane Fassel, an expert on work stress, "The cure for exhaustion is not (only) rest. It is wholeheartedness." Life without passion is exhausting. When we embrace what we do actively, with a caring and open heart, we naturally feel happier, more alive. We shouldn't try to win the rat race, but instead to find our own pace as we chop wood, carry water, spread love, shed light, laugh, and be kind.

Postscript: I asked Pam Knox, my fiancé and a psychologist by training, to read an earlier copy of this column. She informed me that I was essentially describing the Yerkes-Dodson law, which is an empirical relationship between stress and performance. That is, performance increases with physiological or mental arousal, but only up to a point, and then it decreases. The original paper on this law was a study of Japanese dancing mice. Really. Who knew?

Fred Piercy, President of the UUC Board



Events and Community News

Community Service Team Update

We participate in local projects, large and small, to serve our larger community. If you'd like to join any of our existing projects or nominate a new one, please be in touch. It's a great way to get to know other UUs! We regularly serve:

- To Our House
- Interfaith Food Pantry
- Adopt a Highway
- Fairview Adult Home
- Montgomery County Christmas Store
- Women's Resource Center
- Habitat for Humanity
- Blacksburg Refugee Partnership

Additionally, we are hoping to initiate projects with Literacy Volunteers and the Southpaw Cafe. The Women's Resource Center has an Adopt-an-Apartment opportunity and the health department needs volunteers for mobile tailgate health fairs. Each of these needs a leader from UUC.

Are you interested?

Summer ½-Plate Donations

Thanks to your generosity, UUC continued its practice of helping others in both our community and beyond.

June 4: Blacksburg Refugee Partnership \$299.53
June 11: Race for ACCE \$222.36
June 18: FPM Trans Fund \$268.75
June 25: NRV Cares (ACT fund) \$196.83
July 2: Church of the Larger Fellowship \$209.49
July 9: Interfaith Food Pantry \$218.32
July 16: Wonder Universe \$214.50
July 23: YARN \$186.35
July 30: Instill Mindfulness \$198.45
August 6: Side with Love \$284.95
August 13: June Bug Center \$249.24
August 20: Micah's Backpack \$246.87
August 27: UU Disaster Relief TBD

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



Debunking the Top Five UUC Choir Myths

1. Being in the choir is a huge time commitment.

False! You can be in the choir even if you can only come for a few months at a time, or you take a long break over the holidays, or you come for fall semester but not spring, etc. If you're an experienced singer, you can learn the music at home and attend only for performances. We sing on the first and third Sundays, but you can choose to sing only on the Sundays that work for you.



2. I can't read music, so I can't be in the choir.

False! Ella and Jared will send you a recording of the music to practice at home. You can also come to rehearsal a little early for extra help. The only requirement is that you try your best.

3. People will notice if I mess up.

False! Most congregants deeply appreciate the efforts of the choir. Your presence in the choir, just as you are, will add to the joy, reverence, and beauty of the service.

4. Only serious musicians can be in the choir.

False! The thing that unites the choir is that we all love singing with other people. Some of us are musically gifted. Some of us just bring enthusiasm!

5. Choir people are a little weird/dorky.

Okay, this is actually true. We are UUs after all.

So come out and join the choir on Wednesday evenings at 7:00!

Events and Community News

Soul Matters Covenant Group Sign-Ups Starting Now!

Participating in a Soul Matters covenant group is one of the best ways to get to know other people *and* yourself. Groups of 6-10 people meet once a month, September through June, to discuss themes using packets full of resources, including spiritual exercises, questions, quotations, and suggestions for reading, listening, and watching about each theme.

This year's overarching frame is **The Gifts of Our Faith**. We will focus on the UU values of Welcome, Heritage, Generosity, Mystery, Love, Justice & Equity, Transformation, Interdependence, Plurality, and Renewal. How do these values offer us both challenge and comfort? What promise do they hold for us individually as well as collectively?

We will have groups meeting in the morning, afternoon, or evening – some in-person and some on Zoom. Meetings last approximately 90 minutes.

[Sign up here](#) to be placed in a group. If you have questions, especially if you've never participated in a covenant group, please contact [Rev. Pam](#).

2023-2024 Circle Supper Sign-Ups Starting Now!

Circle Suppers are monthly social gatherings of 6-10 people who share a potluck meal. It's a great way to get to know folks in the congregation! Groups typically meet October-May. If you'd like to participate, fill out the [online form](#) **by the last Sunday in September (9/24)**. Groups will be formed based on the information you provide.

Interested in Circle Suppers but can't commit to a monthly group at this time? The substitute list may be a great option for you! See the online form for more information. Questions? Contact [Kim Feucht](#).

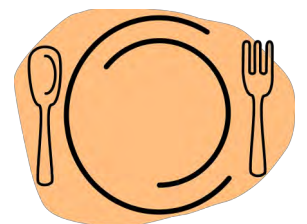
Newcomers' Orientation

New or not so new to UUC and interested in learning more about our congregation and Unitarian Universalism in general? Want to meet other newcomers?

Come to our Newcomers' Orientation at UUC on **Saturday, November 11 at 9:30** a.m. for conversation, coffee and refreshments followed by the orientation from 10 – noon and get your questions answered. Members of our Connections Committee and Rev. Pam will be there with much information and fun activities. Email [Pauletta Copenheaver](#) by November 8 if you can attend. Need childcare – let Pauletta know by November 6.

Second Sunday Potlucks

Everyone is invited to stay and enjoy a potluck after the service on Second Sundays. Bring your family and friends, and a dish to share (enough for eight), to enjoy a delicious meal together. Please include a small card with the ingredients for those with allergies. Contact [Franklyn](#) for additional information.



Sign Up to Provide Sunday Morning Snacks!

See which team, committee, group at UUC can provide the most delicious snacks for us to enjoy during coffee hour after the service. Will it be cookies, brownies, fruit, crackers and cheese, or some other delectable offering? We hope that every group in the congregation will take up this challenge so that every Sunday (except for 2nd Sunday potlucks) we can gather for food and fellowship. [Sign up your group here](#).

Events and Community News

UUC Caring Network

What is it and Why is it Important?

For years now, the UUC has maintained a listserv of volunteers to assist congregants in need by providing meals, rides, and other services. When a need is identified, volunteers are contacted to see if they can help. They respond, depending on their schedule and availability. Almost without exception, however, one or more people typically come forward to help out.

People can self-refer for help or be identified by our minister or someone else in the congregation by contacting Polly Stimson, the coordinator. She sends out an email to volunteers and connects them with the congregant in need. There are people who are unable to drive to a doctor's appointment or have been ill (or had a baby!) and could use a few meals. It's not always easy to accept help, but it's a great resource to have people available who care and can reach out to others when needed.

Currently, we have about 15 active volunteers in the Network, but we could use more, especially those able to provide rides for people. Things are quiet for relatively long periods of time, but at times there are several needs at once. If you are available to help out with this important UUC ministry, please contact [Polly](#) and she will add you to the list.

Receiving the grateful responses and appreciation from people that have benefitted from this service is very rewarding. Thanks for your consideration.

Lay Pastoral Care Ministry

Sometimes, each of us needs more than words of encouragement or a hug from a friend. Lay Pastoral Care Associates are volunteers from our congregation who are selected, trained, and supervised by our minister.

Trained in compassionate listening, LPCM Associates are available for those who are experiencing difficult circumstances or a time of transition in which they could use some confidential support. The LPCM associate is a listener – someone with whom one can share their grief or worry. Someone who can listen without judgment to whatever one needs to say.

Please contact LPCM coordinator [Jane Mahone](#) or [Rev. Pam](#) if you could benefit from this ministry of presence. And if you know someone at UUC is who is going through a hard time, encourage them to contact us for support. No one need feel alone.

Internship News

The Internship Committee is pleased to welcome our intern, Anna Tulou, back to the UUC for the second half of her internship with us. Please look for her around the church and, especially, watch for her in the pulpit. The committee welcomes any and all input on Anna's work with us. That may take place directly to Anna or committee members, but may not be anonymous. Our role as a Teaching Church is an important one, and we are all involved.

Members of the committee are Kendra McAllister, Dick Luke, Mindy Quigley, Akiko Nakata, David Warner and Marilyn DuPont, Chair.

Summer Board Highlights

- Approved 12 weeks of paid parental leave for our administrator.
- Completed the [Policy Manual](#) revision (thanks to all, but especially Wayne Neu).
- Appointed Margo Walter to the board, Don Philyaw to Personnel Committee, George Lally to the Committee on Ministries, and Nancy Bodenhorn to the Conflict Transformation Team.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, September 14th offsite, with a “retreat” at 5:30 followed by business. 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.

The UUC Auction is Fast Approaching!

Arrr, me hearties! The time be fast approaching for the UUC's Fall fundraising Auction, which will be on **Saturday, October 28th**. The winds be shifting our auctions back to the fall, so this be the only time we will have two auctions in one year. Our theme for this auction is **Pirates**, but you won't be forced to walk the plank if you decide to use this as an opportunity to show off your non-pirate (and family friendly) Halloween costume. Anyone in our community, whether they are a full crewmate of the UUC or a fresh-faced scallywag friend of yours, is welcome to join us for this fun, exciting event.

If you have any interesting items, engaging events, or superb services you would like to donate, please fill out this [Google form](#), and feel free to reach out to auktion@uucnr.org with any questions. The donation form for this auction will be open until **October 14th**, with item dropoff happening at a later time. If you would like assistance with filling out a donation form, please find a member of the Auction Committee after any Sunday Service and we'd love to help you out!

As we did last year, we will be hosting an online auction with some hand picked items from **October 21st - 27th**, which will be hosted through our auction website (keep an eye on the weekly newsletter for a link in the coming weeks). In addition to our online auction, we will have a separate silent auction in the library on the day of the event. A selection of these items will be open for viewing in the week leading up to the auction.

Our doors will open at 5 pm with the silent auction being available for you to peruse and bid on whatever catches your eye. **Childcare will be provided** at no cost, but our DLFDD has requested that you preregister [here](#) so she has time to prepare. Kids will be supervised downstairs with their own costume party and food. This auction will not be a potluck, but food and drink will be provided for free. Both alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages will be available.

The live auction will begin promptly at 6pm. If you are unable to attend this event in person, you will be able to bid by proxy. While the Auction Committee cannot guarantee that they can help you find a proxy, the auction website will provide you with everything you'll need to tell your proxy. As with anything else in this announcement, if you have any questions, please reach out to auktion@uucnr.org.

While our ship's crew is well-staffed with leadership, we are still looking for people to help man the ship and volunteer their time to ensure this auction is a success. Whether you'd like to help us solicit donations, set up the night before, or fulfill a role on the night of the event, we'd love to have you join our crew! Reach out to any of the members of the Auction Committee (Ally Dehoff, Cynthia Baute, Chris Long, Carol Kern, Gretchen Luke, Jane Keppel-Bensen, Jim Kern, George Lally) or send an email to auktion@uucnr.org, and we'll make sure to get you started without taking all of your time. Regardless of whether or not you decide to volunteer your time with us, we hope to see you there!



Events and Community News

Making UUC Beautiful

If you have ever admired the quilted art (called Paraments) on the pulpit and the candle table on Sunday, perhaps you have wondered from whence they came!

They are the work of the **Piecemakers Group** most recently, and before that, contributions from individual quilters. Less known is that this group also makes comfort quilts for members of the congregation when needed. The patterns are simple and the fabric colorful, making it both creative and fun.

The group is open to anyone (men included!), beginners are welcome, and you are invited to give us a look to see if this might appeal to you, with no obligation. We meet on the first Thursday of the month, at 6:30, and the third Saturday of the month, at 10:00 a.m., at the UUC. Rarely, we have to cancel a meeting, so if you are coming for the first time, check with Polly Stimson or Marilyn DuPont beforehand to be sure the meeting is on.



Grounds Ministry News

The Grounds Ministry welcomes the co-leadership of Amanda Morgan and Valerie Bidwell for the next six months as we experiment with ways to maintain our beloved grounds. We will continue to rely on six zone stewards who will oversee assigned areas, and we will have our annual "Put the Grounds to Bed" Fall Work Day on November 4th, from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon (followed by a pizza lunch).

We will also be holding more regular Sunday after – services work days so that everyone will have more opportunities to gather on the grounds. The first Sunday workday will be October 8th. That way, people will have a choice to eat at the 2nd Sunday Potluck first or go straight outside. Either way, everyone will have a chance to get their hands dirty and enjoy working together.

If you are interested in getting more involved with the grounds, fill out this [interest survey](#).

UUC Member Honored

On August 4, David and Annette Burr, Katherine Allen and friends joined Michael Cusato and Dabney Park for lunch. The occasion marked the publication of a very special collection of essays designed to honor David Burr, who has "delved deeply into the dynamics of the mystery of evangelical poverty" through his writing about St. Francis and his followers, such as Peter of John Olivi.

David's many achievements include the Franciscan Institute Medal of Scholarship as well as his magnum opus, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis* (Penn State Univ Press, 1990). David was presented with this commemorative book, edited by fellow medieval scholars, Cusato and Park, and entitled, *Poverty, Eschatology and the Medieval Church: Studies in Honor of David Burr* (Brill, 2023). As the authors of these essays reveal, David's analysis of heretics, poverty, "the Spirituals", the Book of Revelations, among many other topics, is riveting and inspiring.



Monthly Support Groups at UUC

Surviving Spouses Support Group

Surviving Spouses will meet at 2:00 pm in the UUC Library on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the Month. If you have lost a spouse or partner and would appreciate a group with whom you can share and learn, please join us. Contact [Rev. Pam](#) 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 from 7-8:30 PM via this [Zoom link](#). Questions or concerns - contact [Rev. Pam](#).

NAMI Support

Connections Support: Persons living with a mental illness are welcome to join this NAMI support group on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month 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 from 6-7:30 pm. Contact [Kristine](#) for the Zoom link or for more info.



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

Weekly Gatherings

Women's Lunch

All who identify as women are welcome to join together for lunch on Fridays at 11:30 AM at local restaurants or noon at UUC. Contact [Cynthia Luke](#) for times and places.

UUYAs

If you're between the ages of 18 and 25, the UUYAs (Unitarian Universalist Young Adults) meet every Tuesday in Elarth Hall from 7:00 to 9:00 PM to play games, engage with the community, and support our congregation. Once a month they hope to have an event away from UUC. For more information, contact uuya@uucnrv.org.

Women's & Men's Breakfasts

All are invited each Monday at UUC for coffee, breakfast (bring your own), and conversation with the men gathering from 7-9 AM and women from 7:30-9:30 AM. The two groups meet separately. Join in when you are able.

UUC Choir

UUC Choir: All are welcome to join every Wednesday in the sanctuary from 7 to 8:30 pm. No experience is necessary. Please contact director [Ella Kromin](#) to find out more.

Sages

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

Yoga

Join this free weekly group at UUC on Wednesdays at 5:30 PM. Bring a mat if you have one. To get on the email list for the weekly status of class, contact [Lori](#).

'Round the Grounds...

By Susan Baker

This has been a successful summer for the gardens at UUC. Mother Nature always seemed to supply rain in the nick of time so there were no “deaths by drought”. There are five primary gardens in the main lawn area. These have been managed by Susan Baker with the help of the “water maids” – Jill Kiecolt, Linda Pfeiffer, and Cynthia Luke – and assistance from Denise Martin. I’d love to introduce you to four of the five gardens.



The **Crescent Garden** gets its name from its crescent shape. It is the largest and oldest garden and is closest to the meeting house. The garden is home to a variety of perennials, many of which have been donated over a period of 12 years. Butterflies and bees are frequently searching for pollen in the garden.

The plan is to put more native species in the crescent garden.



Three columbariums are found in the **Memorial Garden** which has a multi-language peace pole at its entrance (the peace pole is a story in itself). Engraved pavers honoring individuals and/or featuring thoughtful expressions are located in a fine gravel circle within the Memorial Garden. Spaces in the columbariums and pavers in the gravel can be purchased.



The **Sculpture Garden** features a variety of plant materials as well as varied sculptures made from rocks, wood, tree stumps, and other materials. Two native Serviceberry Trees anchor the Sculpture Garden.



Iris’s and three native Fringe Trees set the **Iris Garden** apart from the other gardens. All five gardens are easily accessible. Well placed benches enable one to amble; stop to take in the sounds, sights, and smells; and acknowledge the beauty of the natural world.

Have you noticed how attractive and welcoming the UUC driveway entrance is? Thanks go to Josh Dugan for the mowing and trimming!

Grounds Wish List:

1. Large, used yogurt containers (The containers are cut into strips and used as plant identification markers.)
2. Iris tubers from reliable iris bloomers (any color) These items can be left by the planting table located near the side entrance door (i.e. the handicap entrance).



Thank you very much for your support and encouragement during this growing season.

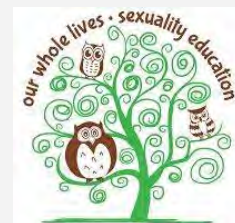
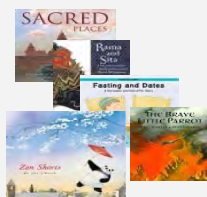
Lifespan Faith Development

This Fall in Religious Education

This year we began our fall RE program in August for the first time, and it is off to a good start!

Our preschoolers are learning about our congregation and what it means to be Unitarian Universalists with the curriculum *Chalice Children*.

Our older youth are learning about different world religions, with *Picture Book World Religions* (K-1,) *Books and Cooks* (Gr. 2-3,) *Holidays and Holy Days* (Gr.4-5) and *Building Bridges*—(Gr. 6-8)



For youth in grades 8-10, OWL (Our Whole Lives) sexuality education is running most Sundays throughout the year.

Still need to register? [Click Here](#)

Middle School Youth Group

MSYG meets once a month, usually on the 3rd Friday of the month, for fun activities for youth in grades 6-8. Upcoming meetings:

September 15—MSYG kick-off meeting
Pizza and games at UUC
6:30- 8:30pm

October 20—MSYG at Sinkland Farms
Hayride, Corn Maze and more.
6:00-8:00pm

November 17— MSYG Friendsgiving
Share a holiday meal & games at UUC.
6:30-8:30pm

December 1—MSYG @ Holiday Parade
Walk in the parade with the UUC float!
Timing and details TBD

High School Youth Group

YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) meets weekly.

Sundays from 6-8pm.

The first meeting will be on **September 10** and is a family pizza & potluck kick-off, with a separate parent meeting to follow.



The group is overseen by the YAC (Youth-Adult Committee) which determines the group's activities for each month, ensuring a balance of social activities and outings, as well as a focus on spiritual practices and social justice issues. Any youth interested in leadership is encouraged to attend the monthly YAC meetings. The next meeting will be September 17 from 5-6pm, before YRUU meets.

Social Action Projects

It's Scary to be Hungry!

Help feed local families with a food donation drive!

It's that time of year again. Time for the ghoulies and goblins to make their annual visit to scare us in exchange for candy. And while we totally support trick-or-treating, here's an opportunity to turn Halloween fun into something meaningful to others!

Sunday, October 29 is our annual It's Scary To Be Hungry event. That Sunday, kids should come to church in costume, and adults should bring lots of canned goods and other non-perishable food. During *For All Ages*, the kids will trick or treat for the food!

After church, LFD will be running a donation drive at the S. Main Kroger from 12:00-4:00 p.m. This is an ideal social action project for the whole family! Cute kids in costume get big donations! Sign up for a 1-hour shift online at

<https://signup.com/go/XmZvyEM>

Those interested can also go to the Interfaith Food Pantry after the event to help stock the warehouse shelves.

All donations help support the Interfaith Food Pantry, an all-volunteer organization which helps provide food to those in need in our community. Learn more about IFP at <http://interfaithfoodpantry.acciai.us/>



Mitten Tree

November 1-19

Kick off the holiday season with a fun social action project for the whole family! Come experience the real meaning of the holidays by giving to others and help keep our neighbors in the NRV warm this winter.

Donate new mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves to be donated to the Montgomery County Christmas Store. Hang your donations on our Mitten Tree in the lower level as you attend RE classes or the service. A collection box will be outside of UUC as well. Leave your donations any time, and we'll put them on the tree. Gently used winter coats are also appreciated!

Learn more about the Montgomery County Christmas Store at <http://www.mcchristmasstore.org/>.



Adult Religious Education Programs

Building Bridges for Adults

This class will explore world religions including Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and more. Classes will be offered throughout the year to align with our middle school program, which includes offsite visits to seven different houses of worship. Classes are held at UUC from 12:30-2pm on select Sundays. Attend all the classes, or just a few.



This Fall: *Judaism—September 10 and 24*
 Buddhism—October 1 and 22
 Hinduism—October 29 and November 12

[Register Here](#)

Adult OWL—Using values, communication skills and spirituality as starting points, this program explores sexuality issues for adults of all ages. Adult OWL builds an understanding of healthy sexual relationships, affirms diversity and helps participants accept and affirm their own sexuality throughout their lives.

OWL for Young Adults (18-35+)

Sundays, September 10 through
December 17, from 2-4pm

[REGISTER](#)



OWL for Older Adults (50+)

Sundays, January 14 through
April 21, from 2-4pm

[REGISTER](#)

Populism and Authoritarianism - Threats to Democracy—Discussion led by Jim Bohland.

In the past two decades the world has witnessed an erosion of democracy in many heretofore nations with strong liberal democratic traditions, particularly in Europe and Asia. Many scholars and public officials have raised concerns that similar trends are happening in the United States, and worry whether our democracy can weather the storm of anti-democratic tides. In most of the recent transitions from democracy to authoritarian regimes, the anti-democratic forces have had a right-wing populist flavor about them. In the discussion group, we will focus on the nature of populist movements, primarily in the United States, and examine how these movements take on an authoritarian bent as they gain strength. We will close the discussion with thoughts on how best to restrain the populist trend that seems to dominate politics in countries thought to be immune to authoritarianism. **Sundays from 11:30-1pm. Tentative dates: 9/24, 10/1 and 10/8.** [Register here](#) for more information.

The Buddy Project Returns!

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to become buddies with a member of another generation! Registered children and adults will be paired and will exchange short notes and small gifts, without knowing each other's names. On December 17, they will meet in person at our Holiday Multi-generational Service! Perhaps everyone in your family can make a new Buddy!

You must register by **October 29** to participate, so don't delay! [Register HERE](#)



Parent Covenant Group—Meets second Saturdays from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Join other parents for a potluck followed by guided discussion. Discussion topics are loosely based on the *Soul Matters* theme, but with emphasis on topics relevant to parents. Childcare provided, with requested donation of \$5-10 per family. [Please register your family here.](#)

On-Going Adult Programs

Anti-Racism Discussion Groups—Meets the second and fourth Sunday 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Topics are announced via email. Email dlfd@uucnrva.org to join the listserv to receive links to the discussion articles. [Zoom link](#).

Meditation Group—Meets Tuesday 5:00-6:00 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. [Zoom link](#).

Conversations on Our Faith—Meets Wednesdays 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Bring your lunch and join the conversation, as we discuss a book that deepens our spiritual journey. All are welcome, even if you have not read the chapters being discussed. Group members share their insights and personal experiences and all thoughts and opinions are welcome. Meets Wednesdays at noon, in person or on zoom. To learn more, contact [Tim Pickering](#). [Zoom Link](#)



Sunday Circle—Meets 1st and 3rd Sundays, 8:30 or 11:30 AM, in Library and on [Zoom](#)

September 17: Social Media and Teens 11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Rose Wesche, Virginia Tech. Rose researches adolescent development at Virginia Tech. She will discuss how social media provides opportunities and risks for teenagers. This presentation's purpose is to empower families to make safe and healthy choices about social media use.

October 1: Supporting Transgender Youth and Families 8:30-9:30 AM

Shannon McKay, Executive Director of He She Ze and We. In 2012, Shannon co-founded HSZW as a peer to peer support group during her own search for a better understanding of gender diversity, specifically in youth.

October 15: Voting Rights in Virginia: History, Present, and What's Next? 11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Carolyn Rude, Communications Coordinator with Montgomery Co. League of Women Voters. Virginia has a long history of limiting voting rights. In 2020, the General Assembly made it easier to vote by such means as expanding early and absentee voting and enabling Election Day voter registration. Will the 2024 General Assembly expand or restrict voting rights?

November 5: Springhouse: Building Culture that Takes Care of Life 8:30-9:30 AM

Sarah Merfeld Stabler, Associate Director, Springhouse. Sarah will be discussing the history and philosophy behind Springhouse and Sourced Design, and their offerings for youth, adults and the community.

November 19: The History of Thanksgiving 11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Paul Quigley, Virginia Tech. Paul will discuss the origins of Thanksgiving.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Sunday Services

September 2024

Services are in person at UUC and virtual via [Zoom](#) each Sunday at 10 AM.
We welcome you to join us.

September 3: For All Who Labor— *Rev. Pam and Worship Associate Cynthia Baute.*
Many see Labor Day weekend as the unofficial end of summer, but to others it acknowledges the worth and dignity of those who work. What can we as Unitarian Universalists learn from considering the origins and current relevance of Labor Day? Join us for this Multigenerational Service, as the children will be joining us for the whole service.

September 10: Welcoming Change — *Rev. Pam and Worship Associate TBA .*
We know that the only constant is change, so what might it mean to welcome change in all its guises? In ourselves, our loved ones, our institutions, and our world.

September 17: Radical Welcome — *Rev. Pam and Worship Associate Victoria Taylor.*
What does it mean to truly welcome all? Does it require more than just a ready smile and an open heart? What are we willing to risk changing as a community to ensure that others don't have to change who they are?

September 24: Lessons from Langar — *Ministerial Intern, Anna Tulou, and Worship Associate Denise Martin*
Continuing to explore themes of welcome, change, and radical hospitality, we will reflect upon the Sikh practice of langar (rhymes with "hunger") and what lessons it can teach us about ministry within and beyond our walls.

Worship service themes for October and November had not been determined by the newsletter deadline, but we look forward to services exploring the themes of the **Gift of Heritage** and the **Gift of Generosity**. Check our [Upcoming Services](#) page on the website for more details as they become available.



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.



Social Justice at UUC

Environmental Justice / Climate Change

The environmental justice/climate change team, a sub committee of the congregation's social justice initiatives, is addressing pressing environmental justice and climate change issues from two general directions: (1) establishing collaborations with other environmental or climate change organizations or groups; and (2) initiating its own projects or activities, such as those that serve the goals of Unitarian Universalists more generally. Among its actions and activities are

*We are Involved with the Mountain Valley Pipeline protests and legal fight. The outcome of the MVP has not been fully determined in the courts as yet.

*Members of the team are submitting an application for the UUC to be designated a COOL CONGREGATION. This process provides feedback for our congregation and information for other UU congregations in ways to help the environment. More information will follow.

*Some of us will participate in a large #END FOSSIL FUEL march in New York City on Sept 17. See one of the team's co-chairs for more information if interested.

*We are suggesting several ideas to the congregation and others for ways to start the phase out of fossil fuel. These are, among others, by buying electric appliances, fireplaces, and outdoor tools instead of those powered by gas/propane/natural gas. Congregants should also divest, as much as possible, from investments in fossil fuel companies. Instead, we should invest in any investment companies, and there are many, that have mutual funds invested only in socially aware, environmentally aware organizations. Many of the larger banks are still heavily investing in fossil fuel companies. Four of the biggest five investors in the world are JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, and CitiGroup. A way to make a statement is to not use their credit cards, thus keeping some of your money from going into the fossil fuel industry.

*A tenet of UUism is to fulfill our mission through our actions. We recommend that anyone who cares about the future of the earth's environment join our team and become an active participant in an environmental group of your choice. There are many good groups in which you can participate, such as the Sierra Club NRV, MVP Watch, Virginia Organizing, Third Act, Appalachian Voices, Climate Change Network (CCN), and Protect Our Water, Heritage, and Rights (POWHR).

Furthermore, instead of wondering what you can do as an *individual*, *become an active member of an active group which can make a difference. Assume a stance that you will BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD.*

The team meets once a month on Thursdays at 5:00. Congregation members who are interested in contributing to the team's activities in any way should contact either [Bob Stimson](#) or [Anita Puckett](#) by email, or corner either of them after services on Sundays.

Social Justice at UUC

Voting Rights Team

With all 140 seats in the Virginia General Assembly up for election in November, as well as numerous local offices, the UUC Voting Rights team is focused on sharing useful, non-partisan sources of information, including the following:

- ◆ Voter Information table periodically following Sunday services at UUC
- ◆ 2023 Candidate Forums sponsored by the Montgomery County League of Women Voters and the MRF Branch of the NAACP. ([See schedule and other voter information here](#))
- ◆ UUC Sunday Circle, October 15 at 11:30 with Carolyn Rude, Communications Coordinator for Montgomery County League of Women Voters. The topic is Voting Rights in Virginia: History, Present, and What's Next?
- ◆ Virginia Public Access Project's (VPAP) user-friendly [link](#) that shows what's on your ballot and your voting location
- ◆ Visits with our local legislators

The Voting Rights Team invites all to join us, whether for a one-time activity or ongoing involvement. For more information, stop by the voter information table after the service on September 10th or contact the team leader, [Sara Dalton](#).



Reproductive Justice Team

The purpose of the Reproductive Justice Team, formed in January 2023, is to promote reproductive justice defined by SisterSong as *"the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities."* Our purpose derives from our 1st UU principle.

We strive to fulfill our purpose through education and advocacy. This fall the team is focusing on maternal health. As part of our education focus, we will be sponsoring a film dealing with maternal health and the racial disparity that has resulted in higher maternal mortality among women of color. We will also be continuing our emphasis on collaborating with other community organizations that support reproductive justice. As advocates we will initiate contact with our Virginia Senators and Delegates in this region to encourage support of legislation favorable to reproductive justice. Likewise, we will support such legislation on the federal level.

We invite you to join us as we share ideas about ways that together we can work for reproductive justice. We welcome participation from all whether the involvement is a one-time activity or ongoing participation.

Our next meeting will be via zoom on Oct. 2 at 7PM. For more information or to join the team, contact [Sara Dalton](#).

Social Justice at UUC

Anti-Racism Group

Discussion of the *1619 Project* resumes on September 10

The Anti-Racism Group was meeting twice a month (second and fourth Sunday) to discuss the award-winning book, *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*, edited by Nikole Hannah-Jones, Caitlin Roper, Ilena Silverman, and Jake Silverstein, which is about the inheritance of race, caste, enslavement, privilege, and hierarchy that defines America. So far, we have read 9 chapters: (1) Democracy, (2) Race, (3) Sugar, (4) Fear, (5) Dispossession, (6) Capitalism, (7) Politics, (8) Citizenship, and (9) Self-Defense, taking one chapter at a time, in order to read, think about, feel deeply, and share with one another these history lessons--most of which we did not learn in school--that resonate in all of our lives today. We took a break over the summer and we are now ready to meet again. Our next meeting is Sunday, September 10, from 1:00 to 2:00 pm on Zoom. We will discuss Chapter 10, Punishment.

Learning about our nation's history from the perspective of racial oppression, resistance, and strength is equipping us with more informed ways of showing up for local and national dialogues and activism regarding race and caste. Our conversations have been co-facilitated by Katherine Allen and Annette Burr. All are welcome to attend! We hope you get a chance to read the book and to join us on September 10. Please join us, even if you haven't had a chance to read the chapters. We are learning from each other and the scholars, educators, and journalists who have authored the chapters and accompanying literary works.

Postcarding for November 7 Election

The Anti-Racism Group also will work with the Voting Rights Team to send nonpartisan postcards to encourage infrequent Virginia voters to participate in the Virginia General Election on November 7. As in our previous postcarding effort, we will provide opportunities for congregants to write scripted postcards before and after services in September and early October. Working through the Center for Common Ground, we hope to assist in achieving greater turnout for the Virginia General Assembly and House of Delegates elections as well as local elections.

UUA General Assembly Highlights

#UUC2023—folks from UUC who attended GA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in June, shared their experiences in a Sunday service on August, 6th.

In addition to voting to continue consideration of the revisions to Article II of the UUA bylaws, delegates voted to

- elect a new president, Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt
- reject a business resolution to divest from fossil fuels and pay reparations
- passed three Actions of Immediate Witness
 - Rise Up to Stop Copy City
 - Organizing for Health Equity
 - Protect the Dreamers, the Recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) with a Pathway to Permanent Residence

Read more about these items and more in the [UU World article recapping General Assembly](#)

The UUC Endowment Fund

With the approval of the UUC Board, the UUC Endowment Fund was established in September 2016 as part of a “planned giving” program. The initial members of what is now called the Endowment Committee were the late Johnny McCord and Dennis Moody CPA, Linda Powers and Bill Baker. One of the initial tasks of the UUC Endowment Fund committee was to decide whether to invest monies in funds that the Endowment Committee would control (e.g., Vanguard or Fidelity) or to invest with the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF). The committee unanimously decided that it would be best to invest in the UUCEF because the UUCEF invests in socially responsible funds consistent with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) values and it would relieve committee members’ responsibility for selecting and monitoring specific investments. Seed monies were provided by several members of the congregation and paperwork was completed to establish our involvement with UUCEF shortly thereafter.

During the 2023 General Assembly, attended by UUC delegates and other UUC members, a vote was cast in response to a resolution put forward by the UU Young Adult Divestment Caucus to promote the complete divestment of fossil fuel industry stocks with subsequent reparations. However, the resolution was defeated. The Board of Trustees and the UUCEF Investment Committee and Social Responsible Investing Committee (SRI), now merged, have responded to the caucus by divesting from 200 major fossil fuel companies over the past year and UUCEF investment committee members are attending and making their voices heard at shareholder meetings with companies that deviate from UUA principles (read the [UUA Board Statement](#) regarding the resolution).

The purpose of the UUC Endowment Fund is to support the programming of UUC activities and outreach that fits within the UUC vision that “*The UUC will be a beacon of liberal religion in the New River Valley.*” Once the fund has accumulated \$250,000.00, the investment earnings will help to support the UUC programs and the earnings will be disbursed subject to UUC Board and Finance Committee determination.

Gifts to the UUC Endowment Fund is separate from the annual pledge. The annual pledge exists to support current operating expenses such as salaries, paying down the UUC mortgage, building and grounds upkeep, unexpected expense payments, and existing programs.

Currently, the UUC portion of the UUCEF is valued at \$44,130. Bill Baker or James Bohland can supply anyone with details about the investments and would be happy to meet with you personally. The Endowment Committee will be having an after-the-service discussion with time for questions on the 29th of October.

If you wish to consider donating to the UUC Endowment Fund or would like to include the fund in your estate plan, do not hesitate to contact Bill Baker or James Bohland. More information can be found on the [UUC website](#).

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James Bohland jayjon@vt.edu, 703-717-1439

