



Newsletter

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February 2023

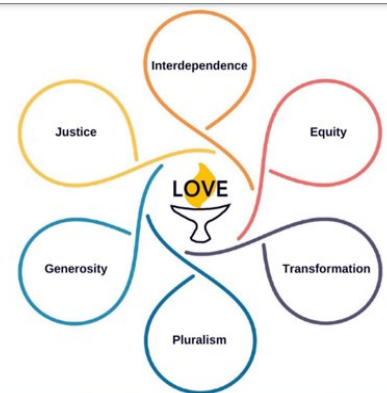
A Message from our Minister

Rev. Pam Philips

February is filled with symbols of love – red and pink heart-shaped boxes of chocolates, little conversation hearts with cute messages, bouquets of red roses, and store-bought and hand-made Valentine's Day cards. As much as I love these expressions of love, I'm mindful that their ubiquity can devalue the meaning of love in our lives. As we begin our journey down the **Path of**

Love, this month's worship theme, we're invited to explore love in all its forms – certainly romance, family, and friendship – but much more.

As Unitarian Universalists, we're invited to consider Love as the center of our faith in the long-awaited [Article II Study Report](#), which says "Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of Love." I encourage us all to read the report because it proposes a new way of expressing who we are and how we hope to act in the world as a faith. You can join the national discussion, both before and at this June's UUA General Assembly. If you want to vote on the proposal – either on-line or in Pittsburgh – apply to be one of UUC's delegates to GA with a letter to Board President Nancy Bodenhorn. (You can also see a photo of our beloved banner at a previous GA on page 22 of the report!)



We're also invited to consider the role of Love in this congregation with two adult faith development offerings starting this month. The UUA Common Read – [Mistakes and Miracles](#) – tells the story of five UU congregations' journeys toward Beloved Community. Buy and read the book in advance of the first session on **February 2nd** ([paperback](#) & [Kindle edition](#)). We're also offering [Transgender Inclusion in Congregations](#) for the third time. This 6-session workshop will meet Monday evenings in-person at UUC and on Zoom, but it can also be watched at your convenience. Created by the Transforming Hearts Collective, this course has been an eye-opener for those who have taken it, helping us understand not just trans issues but also how we might become more radically welcoming to all people.

This month we'll also have opportunities to share our love of this congregation. Join in our fundraising Auction on **February 11th**, enjoying good food, entertainment, and fellowship along with a lively auction of services and goods. Express your love for UUC by [donating](#) items for the auction or bringing [food](#). We'll also kick-off the early-bird portion of our annual stewardship pledge drive later in February so that we can all take care of this community we love.



In the month ahead, let's explore together and individually the role of Love in our lives and how we might share it with this fragile and wonderful world.

Love, Rev. Pam

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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

It's that time of year again! The board is requesting that those wishing to serve as a delegate from our congregation at this year's General Assembly (GA) contact [Nancy Bodenhorn](#), as soon as possible, so the board can approve our slate of delegates. This year, GA will be held June 21-25 in Pittsburgh, PA and both in-person and virtual attendance will be possible. Early registration (with a \$100 discount) ends February 28th. At GA this year, the proposed revision of Article II of the UUA bylaws will be discussed and a first vote on it will be taken. If it passes this first vote, a second vote will be necessary next year to adopt it. It is significantly different than the old Article II with the Principles being replaced by a series of Covenants. The revision document can be found at this [link](#).

The other thing that happens this time of year is that I, as Treasurer, and the Finance Committee are putting together a proposed budget for next fiscal year. We have gotten several requests for funding of new initiatives and we will have some new financial obligations next year. It looks like we will be asking the congregation for a nontrivial increase in the pledge total needed to keep up with our obligations and invest in our ideals.

We will need to resume contributions to retirement accounts for our Director of Lifespan Faith Development and Administrator next fiscal year as they reach their one-year anniversary of employment. Of course, we will want to give raises to our staff to try to keep up with inflation. Assuming for example 5% raises, our total payroll obligation will increase by \$16,700. (The actual level of raises requested in the proposed budget will be determined by the Board in the coming months.)

New initiatives we have been asked to fund include the Environment/Climate Change, Reproductive Justice and Voting Rights teams which were created in response to our strategic planning effort, the UU Young Adults community outreach, new initiatives of the Communications Committee, the first phase of a significant upgrade to the playground and improvements to the landscaping and grounds equipment.

On the income side, Amazon has announced that they will be terminating their AmazonSmile program. That will be only a small reduction of income for us – a couple hundred dollars. On the plus side, our rental income has picked up significantly and we anticipate that trend continuing as we exit COVID restrictions. Of course, all other sources of income are small compared to the support we receive through pledges.

Including those items and price increases for our regular expenses, I'm estimating that the Stewardship Campaign will be asking for an increase in pledges of close to 10% over last year's pledge total. If we can achieve that, it would put our pledge total back to near the total amount received in pledges last fiscal year (2021-2022). This congregation has shown the ability to reach the level of funding needed to support these investments. I'm sure we can do it again.

With confidence in our community, Wayne Neu, Treasurer



Events & Community News

January ½-Plate Donations

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

January 1: Interfaith Food Pantry, \$129.14

January 8: NRV Agency on Aging , \$101.82

January 15: DRUUMM, \$239.85

January 22: Ronald McDonald House, \$215.88

January 29: Daily Bread, \$196.77

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

Second Sunday Potluck

February 12 at 11:30 AM

Everyone is invited to stay following the service on Sunday, if Montgomery County is not in the red zone for Covid, to enjoy a delicious meal together plus meet and greet old and new friends. Bring the family, bring your friends – and bring a dish to share, twice the amount for your family unit. Please include a small card with the ingredients for those with allergies.

February Food Pantry Donations

UUC's Community Service Team's January suggested food donations for the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry to the following items: canned soups -regular and creamed mushroom or creamed chicken.



Calling Lifelong Learners!

Interested in keeping your mind active? learning new skills? meeting like-minded locals? Join the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech (<https://www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning/>).

Registration for the winter/spring term begins February 6. Course offerings include literature, science, technology, music, hands-on experiences, field trips, and more. UUC will be hosting the Wednesday mid-day foreign affairs program and discussion called Great Decisions. Come join us!

Participants must be 50 or older. Scholarships are available if cost is a barrier.

Interested in being a GA Delegate?

June 21-25 in Pittsburgh, PA

Can't make it in person?

virtual attendance will be possible as well.

Contact Nancy Bodenhorn if interested in representing UUC this year.

Join the UUC Choir!

They meet every Wednesday in the sanctuary from 7:00-8:30PM. No experience necessary; our fun-loving group is seeking both new and returning voices. Please contact [Jennifer Thomas](#) to RSVP or to find out more!

Events & Community News

January Board Meeting Highlights

- Proposal is that we establish the **Isabel Berney Award for Exceptional Service**.
- Current Policies and procedures are still being updated.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, **February 9** 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 addresstheBoard@uucnr.org.

Join UUC's Community Service Team!

We'll meet in the UUC library on Sunday, Feb. 5 at 11:30am. We'll discuss on-going projects and entertain new ideas. If you want to participate but can't be there, please drop me a line (mollymcclintock235@gmail.com). We volunteer together at:

- 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
- and more!

Rainbow Ribbons

If you would like a rainbow ribbon on your UUC name tag to show solidarity with LGBTQ,? ribbons and tape are available in a box on the name tag holder. Join in.

Anti-Racism at UUC

The Anti-Racism Group is discussing 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 and caste that defines America. We meet on the second and fourth Sunday of the month from 1:00 to 2:00 pm via this Zoom [link](#).

We keep the reading manageable, only one chapter at a time, which gives a chance for all to contribute and dig deep into this incredible resource and share our thoughts, experiences, and emotions associated with the history of racial oppression and resistance. Our February conversations are co-facilitated by Katherine Allen and Annette Burr. All are welcome to attend! Please join us, even if you haven't had a chance to read the chapters. We are learning from each other.

Each section of the book contains a main essay (e.g., Fear), written by a renowned scholar, educator, or journalist. Then, each essay is followed by two literary works (e.g., a poem, memoir, or fictional account) that brings an historical experience associated with the legacy of enslavement to life.

For February, we are discussing Chapter 4, "Fear" on February 12. We are discussing Chapter 5, "Dispossession" on **February 26**. We hope you will join us!

The UUC Auction is Right Around the Corner!

Come one, come all! Please mark your calendars for **Saturday, February 11th**, when the UUC will host its Spring fundraising Auction. Our theme for the Auction is **Legacy**, reflecting our rich history as a congregation, as well as everyone who's come before us to contribute their creativity, spirit, and dedication towards making UUC the thriving community it is. We're excited to honor both our past legacy and to build our continuing legacy, creating new memories together to carry into our shared future. Participants are invited to dress up as their favorite decade and bring friends to join in on the fun.

If you have an item, event, or service you would like to donate, of any size, please fill out this [Google form](#), and feel free to contact [Lucas Machi](#) with any questions. Donations for the Auction are due by **February 5th**. To make it easy to donate, UUYA members will also be staffing an **Auction booth** after Sunday services. We'll be accepting donations there through paper forms for those who would prefer that option over the online Google form.

There will also be an online silent Auction running from **February 5th-11th**, hosted on our [auction website](#). You can view the item catalog and donate items at any time through this site. Please check it out!

The auction will start at 6pm with a silent auction opportunity during the main event. Participants who are unable to attend in-person will have the option to bid by proxy, by selecting another person who will be present to bid in their place. The Auction website can provide resources of what information your proxy will need and the steps required, if you would like to use this feature.

Childcare will be provided from 6-9pm! Kids will be supervised downstairs with crafts, a movie, and a pizza party. Additionally, the Auction will be a potluck, so please bring a dish or snacks to share as you're able, please sign up for that [here](#). Alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages will be available.

Please reach out to UUYA if you have any questions about the Auction or donations or if you would like to join our volunteer team. All are welcome to contribute. We hope to see you there at this fun and exciting event!



Saying Goodbye to Amazon Smile

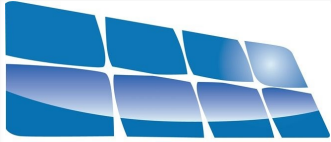
By Gene Gardener

The Amazon Smile charity donation program is ending February 20. Amazon will provide a final one-time donation equivalent to 3 months of what was earned in 2022. Spreading the donations over more than 1 million eligible organizations reduced the impact.

UUC was earning \$150 annually at best.

The Kroger Community Rewards program continues and brings in around \$1800 per year. To find out how to designate UUC as the organization linked to your Kroger Plus Card go to the [fundraising page](#) of our website.





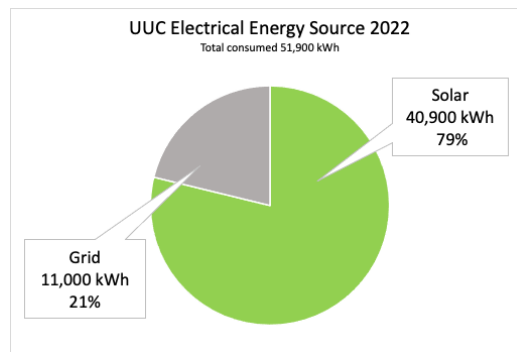
2022 Solar Energy Report From Patrick Feucht

BASELINE SOLAR Greetings fellow UUCNRV congregants! I write to you this month as both a congregant and as your solar energy provider! I have prepared a few details about how the solar panels have performed since they were first installed in late 2021. With the solar panels we've been able to use renewable energy for most of our electrical energy needs, and we've saved money on our power bills, too! See below for some charts and discussion.

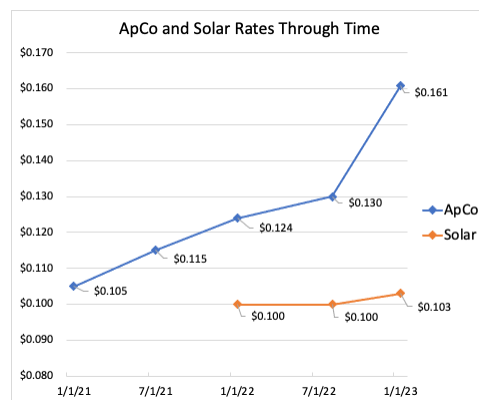
In related news, the Building Committee and some others are currently pursuing building energy reduction measures including lighting upgrades, insulating and air sealing, and other improvements. Stay tuned for updates! If you should ever have any questions about the solar panels, the solar purchase agreement, or any other energy related matters, I invite you to contact me to discuss! patrick@baselinesolar.com or 540-239-0280.

Summary:

In 2022, UUC used 51,900 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity with 79% of that coming from the solar panels! The original solar design aimed to produce 80% of the 45,000 kWh that UUC had been historically using annually, or about 36,000 kWh per year. The solar produced more energy than expected, and UUC also used more energy than in the past. Overall, we still ended close to the original 80% solar offset target!



Appalachian Power (ApCo) has raised electricity rates significantly in the past few years. The rate paid for the solar energy is predetermined by the purchase agreement and is significantly lower than the current ApCo rates. In 2022, UUC saved approximately \$1,100 by purchasing solar energy instead of grid energy.



Legacy and Stewardship

By Mary Ann Hanson

During the stewardship committee's conversations last year, we lamented the recent passing of some of our beloved UUC members. As we talked about the many things these members had given to the congregation over the years and what their presence had meant to us, we decided to make, **Legacy** the theme for this year's campaign.

Here are the definitions of *Legacy* from my dictionary: 1. "An amount of money left to someone in a will" 2. "The long-lasting impact of particular events, actions, etc. that took place in the past or of a person's life"

The first definition definitely relates to the Stewardship Campaign's goal, which is to raise enough money to continue the good works and mission of the UUC, but the second definition really resonated with me. I often think of the passed UUC members I knew personally and what their legacy has been for me – *Chris Brownlie*, who welcomed my family to membership in the UUC; *Carl Pfeiffer* and the lovely sound of his tenor voice during choir practice; *Bill Patterson's* resonant solos; *Dean Mook's* patience in helping me learn Spanish; *Stephanie Gilmore*, who led the middle school youth group with my husband, *Andy*; *Bob Underwood*, whose enthusiastic welcome to the UUC was one of the reasons we came back again and again; *Ethel-Marie Underwood*, who broadened my perspective by sharing with the congregation her experiences raising a lesbian daughter; *Mike Montgomery*, who spent so much of his time teaching our youth; and *Isabel Berney*, who helped many of us prepare for our own deaths, and whose infectious and welcoming smile attracted so many to the UUC over the years. There are many others not mentioned here who I didn't know as well who have also been so important to the congregation and those of you who are reading this article may be thinking of them and the many ways they have positively affected your lives.

The long-lasting effect of our own actions is not something we actively plan, it is usually left to others to determine what our legacy is. I am reminded of a comment from my brother's childhood friend, whom we hadn't seen for decades, at my mother's funeral. He said, "The thing I will always remember about your mother was that she was so kind." A wonderful legacy, indeed. What struck me was that this adult man, who had only known my mother as a child, had captured her personality in a word. We may never know what impressions our own actions are having right now on the youth of our congregation.

By our actions, our involvement, and our financial contributions to the UUC, each of us is creating our own legacy for others. We have a vibrant, active community here at the UUC, with an amazing variety of opportunities for spiritual growth. THIS is the great legacy of the UUC members who have gone before. Let us continue this legacy for future generations by supporting the UUC during the 2023 Legacy Stewardship Campaign. Early Bird pledging will begin on **February 12**, with the main pledge drive beginning in March. Remember to sign up for one or more of the fun social activities planned for the duration of the pledge drive – line dancing, hiking, and deck parties to name a few – with more details to come.



WEEKLY GATHERINGS

Women's Lunch

All women are welcome to join together for lunch on Fridays at 11:30 AM at local restaurants or noon at UUC. Check [online calendar](#) for locations and times for the following weeks.

UUYAs

If you're between the ages of 18 and 25, the UUYAs (Unitarian Universalist Young Adults) meets 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 women and men 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.

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](#).

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 (**February 13**) from 6-7 PM to help one another on our journeys. For more info and the Zoom link, contact [Katherine](#) or [Lisa](#).

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 (**February 14**) 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 (**February 6**) and 3rd Monday (**February 20**) 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 (**February 18**) from 6-7:30 PM. Contact [Kristine](#) 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 NRV in a supportive, anonymous and affirming environment. To learn more, visit their [website](#). Two support groups meet monthly, and both groups are sponsored by UUC.

The **NRV Trans Adult Group** meets on 1st Thursdays (**February 2**) from 7-8:30 PM and 3rd Saturdays (**February 18**) from 1-2:30 PM and welcomes all adults who identify under the trans umbrella or are questioning their gender. For more information about these meetings, contact nrvtrans@gmail.com.

The **Families Group** meets on the 4th Tuesday (**February 28**) from 6:30-8 PM and is for parents and/or caregivers who have trans or gender non-conforming children. The group is also for anyone under 18 who identifies under the trans umbrella or who is questioning their gender. Parents are welcome with or without their children, but children must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. The group provides resources, advice, and support for families. For more information about these meetings, contact nrvtransfamily@gmail.com. To ensure the safety and privacy of families, all interested families must meet with one of the facilitators.

Lifespan Faith Development

Family Fun and Movie Night

Gnomeo and Juliet—Friday, February 24, 6-9pm

Come to UUC for a fun Valentine's-themed evening. The fun starts at 6pm with food and crafts. The movie *Gnomeo and Juliet* starts at 7pm.

In Stratford-Upon-Avon, birthplace of William Shakespeare, Miss Capulet and Mr. Montague feud over whose garden is the better. Garden gnomes that decorate each neighbor's flower beds continue the rivalry when the humans aren't looking, and gnomes from the Red Gardens don't get along with those of the Blue Gardens. Then Gnomeo, a Blue, and Juliet, a Red, fall in love, leaving many obstacles to overcome.

All are welcome! Bring a friend!



Children's RE continues to meet for children in preschool through middle school. Children spend the first 15 minutes in the service and then are sung down to their classes.

[Register Here](#)

Thank You!

The Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) would like to thank you for the amazing turnout at the January Coffee House. Over \$500 was raised. They are planning to send 6-8 youth to General Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA this summer.

Opportunities for Parents

New parent groups are forming. Which one is right for you—a parent covenant group, a parent support group, or both? What is the difference?

A Parent Covenant Group is a part of Small Group Ministry. Also known as "covenant groups" and "chalice circles," Small Group Ministry is a vital part of many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Groups of 6-12 people meet regularly, usually monthly, to reflect on and discuss significant life topics. Small groups are great places to get to know other people and to get to know yourself. Over time, participants build deep connections with one another, with the congregation, and with the sacred.

A Parent Support Group provides a space for parents to share and discuss the joys and challenges of parenting, and to give each other support.

Our PCG will meet once a month on a Saturday evening. Our PSG will meet once a month after church on Sunday. Both groups require an RSVP and a small donation to pay for childcare. Need more information? Contact Rachel at dlfd.uuc@gmail.com

Spring Adult Faith Formation Offerings

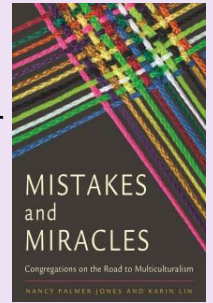
UUA Common Read Discussion Group

Authors Nancy Palmer Jones and Karin Lin—a white minister and a lay person of color—explored five UU congregations' journeys toward Beloved Community. In *Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on the Road to Multiculturalism* (Skinner House Books, 2019), they shared the joy, disappointment, and growth these congregations found.

Thursdays at 7pm, library/zoom

February 2 and 16, March 2

[Register Here](#)



Transgender Inclusion in the Congregation: 6-session workshop by Transforming Hearts Collective, focused on helping our congregation to be fully inclusive, and affirming of, the full breadth of gender diversity. Gain the context and skills to help us transform into a fully welcoming congregation.

Mondays at 7pm, library/zoom

February 13, 20, 27



[Register Here](#)

What Moves Us: A 10-session course by Thandeka, "What Moves Us" is a course in both Unitarian Universalist history and theology, exploring the voices and spiritual experiences of historical and contemporary UU theologians, and how their experiences resonate within our own lives and theological understandings. Come to learn more about those who have shaped and are shaping our UU faith tradition, as well as to deepen our own beliefs and learn more about one another's. Led by Anna Tulou and Rev. Pam Philips.

Wednesdays on Zoom

March 22—George de Benneville

March 29—Charles Chauncy

April 5—Hosea Ballou

April 19—William Ellery Channing

April 26—Margaret Fuller

May 3—Sophia Lyon Fahs

May 17—James Luther Adams

May 24—Forrest Church

May 31—William F. Schulz

June 2—Thandeka

[Sign up here](#) for any or all sessions.

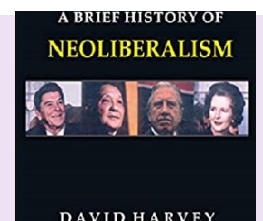
Neoliberalism Book Discussion: Jim Bohland will lead a discussion of the book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, by David Harvey.

Sunday March 5 and 12

11:30 am-12:30 pm

Room 5 (downstairs) and on Zoom

[Sign up here](#)



Spiritual Practice—Lectio Divina

Sunday, February 19 at 1 pm

Lectio Divina means "divine reading" in Latin. It's a meditative way of reading a passage of text (traditionally Christian) in which we let go of our own agendas and open ourselves to what the Universe (God, Sacred...) is trying to say to us. [Register Here](#)

Social Justice Film Series: February 3— 7 pm

Mossville: When Great Trees Fall. As a centuries-old black community, contaminated and uprooted by petrochemical plants, comes to terms with the loss of its ancestral home, one man standing in the way of a plant's expansion refuses to give up. A powerful and heart-wrenching documentary on environmental racism. Join us **February 3 at 7pm** for a viewing of the film with discussion to follow.



On-Going Adult RE Programs

Sunday Circle

Meets Sunday 8:30-9:30 AM. In Library and on Zoom

February 5—"The ideology of Christian nationalism: the teachings of Jesus, religious pluralism, and world peace" - Mark Benson.

What specifically is the ideology of Christian-nationalism? What explains its rising appeal? How do the teachings of Jesus relate to the ideology of Christian-nationalism? What themes in the gospels provide light about the message of Jesus concerning greed, power, and change? Beyond its unfounded theology, how does Christian-nationalism contradict democratic ideals, undermine individual sovereignty, promote state control, enable domestic violence, and threaten peace around the world. Who are the people of influence who can counteract the ideology of Christian-nationalism? What strategies can UUs use to promote religious pluralism and activate faith leaders toward goals based in equality and inclusion to make a better world?

February 19—"Searching for Birds and Roots in Nova Scotia" - Doug & Sally Pfeiffer.

Last June, Doug and Sally Pfeiffer made a return trip to Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, in search of birds and family roots. This trip included following the Cabot Trail around Cape Breton, and exploring central Nova Scotia. Come and hear Doug talk about Birds of Nova Scotia, and finding his grandmother's origins!

Anti-Racism Discussion Groups

Meets the second and fourth Sunday 1:00-2:00 p.m.

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

Meditation Group

Meets Tuesday 5:00-6:00 PM

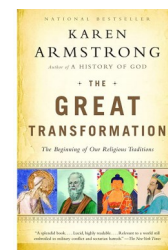
Our meditation group meets weekly for those interested in starting or deepening their meditation practice. Our format is drop-in, so you need not attend all sessions. Open with centering words and basic instruction, followed by sitting practice. Meditators from all traditions and all levels of experience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



Conversations on Our Faith

Meets Wednesdays 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Join our conversation as we finish reading the book, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*, by Thomas King. Later this month we start *The Great Transformation*, by Karen Armstrong. All are welcome, even if you have not read the chapters of the book under discussion. To learn more, contact Tim Pickering.



'ROUND THE GROUNDS

By Jim Flowers

As I write this note, none of us knows for sure how much serious winter remain, Punxsutawney Phil won't be consulted till next week. This is that crazy time of year when you might see crocuses popping up, only to be frozen the next day. But every time of year can be viewed for the blessing that it is, a vital part of the grand scheme that renews every living thing on an annual basis.

This notion can make it a good time to walk, observe carefully, and envision the next chapter in the life of each small part of the multiple ecosystems that combine to make our Grounds a special place.

Have you ever watched for the mosses to bloom? The tendrils are beautiful little "flowers" whose purpose it us to spread their spores. Did you know that most common mosses are only one cell thick. They have no roots. They live on water and the nutrients that float their way through the air. And a fully dehydrated piece of moss can be brought back to life by simply wetting it - even after many years in dry storage.

Have you ever watched fungi of various sorts pop out smoky showers of spores? And the fiddle heads on the re-awakening ferns are magnificent.

Which shrubs and trees show the earliest signs of budding? You must be there in order to smile at them. Which rain will drive the worms to the surface for the convenience of the first robins traveling north? Are you watching?

When will you chuckle to see the overwintering birds begin their billing, cooing, and nesting?

Visit the Grounds and wait for them. Here are are some lovely lines of encouragement from our very dear Mary Oliver -

... I am thinking: maybe just looking and listening
is the real work.

Maybe the world, without us,
is the real poem.



Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Sunday Services February 2023

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

February 5: *Love is...*, Rev. Pam and Worship Associate, Earle Irwin. We'll begin our journey down the *Path of Love* by exploring the many different kinds and ways we may experience love – especially those that may not be as valued as others in our society.

February 12: *Love Letters and Languages*, Rev. Pam and Worship Associate, Cynthia Baute. Just in time for Valentine's Day, we'll explore to whom and how might we express our love.

February 19: *After the Honeymoon*, Rev. Pam and Worship Associate, Gretchen Luke. Popular culture celebrates the giddiness of new love, but what happens after the initial excitement ends and we settle into more long-term relationships – with people, with places, with institutions (like a congregation)? What is the real work of love?

February 26: *Is Love the Doctrine of this Church?* Ellen Plummer and Worship Associate, Victoria Taylor. Many UU congregations affirm the covenant, "Love is the doctrine of this church, The quest of truth is its sacrament, And service is its prayer." What might it mean for Love to be our doctrine?



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.