

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

NEWSLETTER

January 2021

1301 Gladewood Drive Blacksburg, VA 24060 Website: <u>www.uucnrv.org</u> E-mail: <u>info@uucnrv.org</u> Phone: (540) 552-9716

Message from Our Minister Rev. Pam Philips

Who would have imagined, who could have imagined, this past year?

During coffee hour after the Sunday service, someone shared that *last* December they had been in a group talking about the year ahead—2020. People made all kinds of predictions, mostly optimistic. But no one came close to imagining what would actually happen. Why would they?

Looking back over the past year, I'm filled with wonder at all that we've experienced. It's hard to imagine how much our understanding of the world has changed in one year. Do you remember when you first heard about the coronavirus? How you thought it might impact your life? At first it was something



far away—in China—and then closer to home—in Washington state and Italy, where I have many family members. But soon it came home to us in Blacksburg, first with the stay-at-home order, and then with the realization of what that would mean for us. I think especially of not being able to be together--to celebrate holidays, to mark important milestones, but especially to grieve our losses. That has been hard.

And looking back over the past year, I'm filled with awe at how we've been able to adapt and survive, and sometimes even thrive, in this new world. Last year, could you imagine doing what you've done?

Looking ahead to the new year, we have reason for optimism. We know that we are more resilient, more adaptable, more creative than we might have imagined. The vaccines are on their way. Surely, we can take whatever 2021 throws our way. And yet, I've learned never to say, "It cannot get worse than this", because it seems to invite another curve ball.

In the month ahead, as we explore what it means to be people of **imagination**, our challenge will be to imagine the lives we want to live, the world we want to create—no matter what 2021 sends our way. At UUC, we'll continue to connect in the ways we've learned to over the past year—with Sunday Morning Worship, Monday Meet-ups, Mid-Week Gatherings—and add to the mix some adult faith development offerings (see page 6 for more info). We'll also have the opportunity to welcome UUs from other Virginia congregations and the Heritage Universalist Unitarian Congregation in Cincinnati. If you haven't yet, now may be the time to join a *Soul Matters Covenant Group*. You can also help make more connections by filling out our "Let's Make Connections" survey. (See page 3 for more info.)

We'll continue to imagine new ways to live into our mission—inspiring spiritual and ethical growth, creating compassionate community, and transforming our community and the world through courageous love. In the words of Henry David Thoreau, "This world is but a canvas to our imagination." What might we create together?

With love and hope,

Rev. Pam



Contact Information

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Staff Office Hours:

Minister:

Tuesdays - Fridays, 9-1

Contact <u>Minister</u> for appointment or use this <u>link</u> to set one up online.

Administrator or DLFD:

Contact <u>Administrator</u> or <u>Director of Lifespan Faith</u> <u>Development</u> to set up appointments.

Message from Our Board

Wayne Neu, President

Welcome to 2021! May it be better than 2020. (I'll give an amen to that!)





even three) different COVID vaccines. Unfortunately, we have a long way to go until it's safe to go back to our old ways. Currently the 7-day average of new COVID-19 cases in Montgomery has climbed to a new peak bested only by the peak we saw at the end of August when the students came back. What is most concerning, however, is the extreme spike we are seeing in new hospitalizations. It has risen more than 5-fold since then, and our hospitals are having trouble handling all the patients. Many people are out of work as small businesses, especially restaurants, are closing or cutting way back on their workforce. I sure hope there is a light at the end of this tunnel, because it's getting awfully dark in here!

Also, as I write this, Congress and our President are at odds over the terms of a major economic relief bill. Likely, by the time you read this, we will all be waiting for another stimulus check that will be way too small for those who really need it. It's likely not to do enough for the struggling small businesses, either. For those who are fortunate enough to count themselves among those who really don't need it, consider sending the money where it is most needed. Good choices are our own Community Assistance Fund administered by Rev. Pam to help those in need, the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry, Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program (MCEAP), NRCA Emergency Assistance Food Pantries, Radford-Fairlawn Daily Bread, Plenty!, and so many more local agencies trying to help people in our area. Also, please try to support your favorite small businesses and local restaurants through take-out or delivery orders, so we don't lose them.

In UUC administrative matters, believe it or not, it is time to start thinking about what our budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year will look like. (Anybody have a crystal ball?) The Board began the discussion at our December meeting. We envision that we will be back to in-person services for a major part of the year, but we also anticipate the need to continue broadcasting them online for those who choose not to attend in person and for the new folks who are joining us but are too far away to attend. How to budget for an unknown amount of utilization of our facilities, however, is anyone's guess. How many people will have had enough of screen time and can't wait to be back, and how many will be leery of meeting in person is unknown. Can we hold services outside before people are willing to gather indoors?

Actually, we anticipate having hybrid in-person and online services for some time to come. We will need to budget for the equipment and services needed to make that happen, but we don't really know yet what that will be. Between the Board and the Finance Committee, we need to finalize a budget by our February meeting, so it can go to the Stewardship Committee who will kickoff our stewardship drive in March. Yes, it is that time of year again already. Before you know it, we will be voting on a budget and a slate of new Board members at the annual meeting that we don't yet know how will be run.

One thing I know for sure is that this congregation will make it through whatever we need to do to get through this together. We are strong together. Decisions will be made. Actions will be taken. We WILL get through this tunnel! It's only a matter of time – and wearing of masks and washing our hands and social distancing and

Upcoming Events

Preparing to Talk and to Listen about Anti-Racism

The Anti-racism Discussion Group is helping to plan our **January 17** Sunday service in honor of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This will be a time not only to learn but to share. To that end, we want people to feel prepared and ask that you spend a little time thinking about **your experiences with racism**. What would you like others to know that you could share with a small group?

Everyone is encouraged to attend this special service, whether you think you have something to share or not, because we know that bearing witness, listening to others' stories, has power, too.

Let's Make Connections



The Connections Committee wants to help

members and friends of UUC increase their connections with each other. Please fill out this <u>survey</u> to let us know about hobbies, games, activities, and other





interests that you have and might share with others in the congregation. We'll do our best to connect those who have shared interests. This is not a commitment to lead a group but an

opportunity to connect with others.

SOUL MATTERS Covenant Groups

We're holding a mid-year sign up for those who would like to participate in a **Soul Matters Covenant Group**. These groups meet monthly on Zoom to explore the worship themes and to form deeper relationships with others in the congregation. You can find more <u>information</u> about the program and access <u>packets</u> with spiritual exercises, questions, and a plethora of resources which participants use (packets are password protected—the password is gotsoul).

If enough people sign up, we will form a new group. Otherwise, we'll try to find people a spot in one of the existing groups.

Sign up <u>here</u> or contact <u>Marilyn DuPont</u> or <u>Rev.</u> <u>Pam</u> if you have questions or concerns.



To Our House



In this strange and stressful pandemic time, <u>To Our House</u> is adapting and still providing overnight shelter and food for homeless guests this winter. UUC will be providing food for guests staying at Glade Church **January 20 – 29**, and your help will be needed! Details coming soon. Contact <u>Kimberley</u> <u>Homer</u> for more info.

Women's Breakfast

All women are invited to meet for breakfast, coffee and conversation at 7 AM each Monday via this Zoom link. If 7 AM is too early, join when able.

Men's Breakfast

All men are invited to meet for breakfast, coffee and conversation at 7 AM each Monday via this Zoom link. If 7 AM is too early, join when able.

Women's Lunch

All women are welcome to join together for lunch every Friday at noon on our UUC grounds to picnic together at a distance. Bring your own lunch and please wear a mask when not eating. If raining or too cold, we'll meet via this Zoom <u>link</u>. Contact <u>Cynthia Luke</u> for more info.

Sages

Join us each Tuesday at 2 PM for stimulating conversation via this Zoom <u>link</u>. Focus on topics facing older adults as well as general conversation.

Mid-Week Worship Gatherings

Since March congregants have been gathering each Wednesday evening at 5:30 PM via this <u>Zoom link</u> for an opportunity to pause our busy weeks and full lives in a worshipful space. Worship themes are topical and have included such inquiries as: "Stillness: Space to Dream", "Possibilities and Promises of Winter", and "Black Lives Matter". The 30-minute gatherings include inspirational words and music as well as an opportunity for everyone to share. Watch for the email announcement each Wednesday for the topic and facilitator.

Monday Meet-up

Join us each Monday at 7 PM via this <u>Zoom link</u> for socializing with no agenda, no questions you need to think about – simply join in for fun conversation. Each week, a member or two of the Connections Committee will be in the session, so you'll always have a friend to talk to.

Yoga

Yoga is canceled until the weather warms, or we can once again meet in the building.

Monthly Support Groups at UUC

Parent Bereavement Support

We are a community-wide support group for bereaved parents and grandparents who have lost an adult or adolescent child. We come together once a month on 2nd Mondays from 6-7 PM to help one another on our journeys. The next meeting is on Monday, **January 11**. Join the group via Zoom. For more info and the Zoom link, contact <u>Katherine</u> or <u>Lisa</u>.

Mental Illness Peer Support

If you are someone who has experienced mental illness and would appreciate the support of peers, join our online meetings on the 3rd Mondays of each month at 6 PM. Next meeting on Monday, **January 18**. Contact <u>Kimberley</u> for the Zoom link or for more info.

NAMI Family Support

All are welcome on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6 PM to attend our community-wide mental health support group for friends and family of those with a mental illness. Next meeting on **January 20.** Contact <u>Kristine</u> for the Zoom link.

Transgender Support

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

Due to Covid, they are currently not meeting, but please contact <u>nrvtrans@gmail.com</u> for info and resources.

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 next meeting **January 12** at 7-8:30 PM. Join us via this <u>Zoom link</u>. Questions or concerns - contact <u>Rev. Pam</u>.

Lifespan Faith Development

Children's RE

CARTUUNS-Grades K-5-9:30-10:00 AM

Unitarian Universalist values through the animated short films of Pixar and Disney. Available as an online class on zoom or as a homeschool class. Award-winning short films, great discussion, and a wide variety of activities combine to make this a fun class for kids! Supply bags are delivered monthly. Children must be registered to participate. <u>Register</u>.

Date	Class
Jan 10	The Legend of Mor'du
Jan 17	Partly Cloudy
Jan 24	Dug's Special Mission
Jan 31	Piper

Sunday Funday—PreK—9:00-9:20 AM

Story time, coloring and crafts available as an online class on zoom or as a homeschool class. Supply bags are delivered monthly. Children must be registered to participate. <u>Register</u>.

Jan 10	The Pigeon Needs a Bath
Jan 17	Sneezy the Snowman
Jan 24	Llama Llama Home with Mama
Jan 31	Scaredy Squirrel at Night

Coming next month: Stuffed Animal Sleepover

Story Time with Rev. Pam

Wednesdays at 3:00 PM

<u>Zoom link</u>







The Fifth Dimension

for adults

Begins Tuesday, January 26, 7-8 PM

Why should middle schoolers have all the fun? By popular demand, *The Fifth Dimension* will be held for adults on the 4th Tuesday of each month, January through May. Watch a classic episode of *The Twilight Zone* and discuss its surprisingly still-relevant message in light of our world in 2021.

January's episode is "The Obsolete Man" with a discussion on the dangers of totalitarianism. No registration necessary.

Zoom link: https://zoom.us/j/99626799081



Transgender Inclusion

in the Congregation

Gain the context and skills to help us transform into a fully welcoming congregation. Participants may attend this 6-session course in person online during class times or on demand on your own schedule. Whenever possible, we recommend attending discussions during class time, as listening to others will greatly enhance your class experience. You are welcome and encouraged to join this class, even if you attended part or all 2019's class. Open to adults and high school youth.



Class dates are February 4 & 18; March 4 & 18; and April 1 & 15, from 7-9 PM.

Registration is required for both Zoom and on-demand participation. Register at <u>https://forms.gle/y3AHeLeHudqtEGFv6</u>.

MSYG

Sunday evenings 6-7 PM (except Jan. 3)

Middle school youth meet monthly, alternating RE classes with Middle School Youth Group (MSYG). RE class will cover the original *D'Oh*, *God!* curriculum which uses episodes of The *Simpsons* as the basis for in-depth discussions of a wide variety of religious topics. MSYG will meet for socialization—the emphasis is on fun, with social activities and social action projects that encourage bonding among participants. Youth must be registered to participate.

Register.

YRUU

Sunday evenings 7-8 PM (except Jan. 3)

Our high school youth group, YRUU, meets weekly for check-ins, games, and more. Youth will determine the meeting content. As safety allows, YRUU may also meet outside in person, following UUC safety guidelines.

YRUU is open to youth in grades 9-12 and meets on Sunday evenings. Teens participate in conferences, fundraisers, and fun activities while forming bonds with other teens. Youth must be registered to participate.

Register.

Spiritual Aging

Meets the first Sunday of the month (**January 3**), 3-5 PM

Join Rev. Pam for a workshop that intentionally explores the process of aging. While aging can provide us with free time and the ability to focus on what is important, it can also present us with challenges and losses. Perfect for those who consider themselves spiritual but not religious and are looking to delve deeper into these real human challenges. Join via this <u>Zoom link</u>.



Meets first and third Sundays, 8:30-9:30 AM

January 3: Carl Hansen will discuss the results of a 15-year study on the nesting patterns of four bird species. Join via this <u>Zoom link</u>.

January 17: Fred Piercy will discuss UN Family Therapy. Fred will summarize and reflect on his experiences in the development, current status, and future directions of *Treatnet Family*, a capacity building program including elements of family therapy developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). *Treatnet Family* integrates common elements of evidence-based family therapies for adolescent substance use disorders and makes them available in the public domain to low- and middle-income countries. Join via this <u>Zoom link</u>.

Anti-Racism Discussion Groups

Meets second and fourth Sundays, 1-2 PM

All are welcome to join our ongoing discussion group on white privilege and racism. Topics are announced via email. <u>Email Karen Hager</u> to join the listserv to receive links to the discussion articles. Join via this <u>Zoom link</u>.

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 <u>Zoom link</u>.



Conversations on Our Faith

Meets Wednesdays, 12-12 PM

Join our conversation as we read the book, *CASTE: The Origins of Our Discontents,* by Isabel Wilkerson. All are welcome, even if you have not read the chapters of the book under discussion. To learn more, contact <u>Tim Pickering</u>. Join via this <u>Zoom link</u>.

Community Conversations

Sunday, January 17, 11:30-1 PM

Join us for a conversation about **Unity**. We are caught in giant social and political arguments about the symptoms of our dis-unity that ignore our heart-felt desire for harmony and peace with one another and the earth. Our challenge is to trust in unity, even when we have a history of experiences that lead us to distrust and feel separate from others. Join via this <u>Zoom link</u>. Led by <u>Rev. Jamie McReynolds</u>.



UUC Community News

Update on 1/2-Plate Donations

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

December 6: Interfaith Food Pantry, \$265

December 13: SEEDS, \$142

December 20: UUC's Community Assistance Fund, \$1155

December 27: InStill Mindfulness, TBA

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

Check out our <u>Give webpage</u> for information on donating options.

January Food Pantry Donations



A sincere thank you to our very generous UUC congregants who participated in the Children's RE, congregation-wide, *Reverse Advent Calendar*

activity during December. The food donations to the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry were greatly appreciated by the IFP clients.

The Community Service Team will resume the monthly food collections during January. Since we are now in the winter season and will be having freezing temperatures, there is a concern about donated foods freezing, especially foods in glass jars. Thus, the suggested foods for this month will be dry foods. Please consider donating boxes of mac & cheese, cereal, or boxes of Jello or instant pudding. The collection bins are located near the main entrance to UUC and near the accessible entrance in the back. Thank you.



December Board Mtg. Highlights

- Linda Powers will serve as Assistant Treasurer during Meredith Hundley's maternity leave.
- Per Finance Committee's recommendation, investments will be shifted to Vanguard funds that are categorized as Environmental Social and Governance (ESG).
- Jim Flowers, Isabel Berney, Dan Brown, Alison Armstrong, Steve Keighton, and Bob Stimson will serve on the Leadership Development Committee.
- The Board approved \$6000 of Rev. Pam's compensation as a housing allowance for 2021.
- Big picture ideas were discussed for guiding the congregation into the next fiscal year.

The next Board meeting will be held via Zoom on Thursday, **January 14** at 7 PM. The <u>minutes and</u> <u>reports</u> of meetings for the past two calendar years are available.

Questions, Ideas, Complaints for the Board: Send an email to <u>addresstheBoard@uucnrv.org</u>.



UU World, the magazine of the <u>Unitarian</u> <u>Universalist Association</u>, celebrates liberal religion and the people it inspires. Meet extraordinary individuals, see how UU communities put their values into action, and explore the ideas and traditions that ground them.

UUC members receive print copies of *UU World* quarterly, but the online version is available free to all at <u>uuworld.org</u>. You can also sign up to receive the free email newsletter via this <u>link</u>.

Round the Grounds

There is interesting history regarding UUC's grounds. A case in point is the presence of the Peace Pole located at the entrance to the Memorial Garden. Backing up a bit, UUC contributed funds to 4 UU congregations in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. They were grateful for the caring and financial assistance. When, in April 2007, VA Tech suffered the shooting deaths of 32 students, the New Orleans UU churches, (First UU Church of New Orleans, North Shore UU Society of Louisiana, Community UU Church, and the Metzger-Price Fund), reached out to us and provided funds to be used however we wished to help with the healing process. We chose to erect a Peace Pole on our property in memory of those who died in the events of April 19, 2007. UUC members Bonnie Moreno designed the pole and its multi-dimensional base; master craftsman, Dick Luke, constructed the base using timbers saved when we built our addition in 2008. The message on the pole, "May Peace Prevail Upon Earth", is written in the 8 languages spoken by the students who died -Korean, English, Spanish, Hebrew, Chinese, French, Hindi, and Farsi. It's fitting that the Peace Pole is at the entrance to the Memorial Garden, a place of peace and memories.



The Labyrinth Lighting Celebration/Walk had magic in the many lights and luminaries that graced the grounds. Applause to those who braved the weather to partake in the event. In addition to the UUC crowd, some of our neighbors also showed up to take in the lights, fire and hot cider. The labyrinth lighting was designed by George Lally with the assistance of Patrick Feucht, Kris Hite, and Bob Stimson. Lighting in the crescent garden and the luminaries was done by Denise Martin and Susan Baker. Executing events requires the behind-the-scenes efforts of "invisible workers" – Barbara Taylor, Jim & Carol Kern, Dan Brown, Greg & Lisa Evanylo, Pam Phillips & Jamie McReynolds, Amanda Haynes, Joe Sapienza, Jennifer Bailey, and Kim & Patrick Feucht. Thanks to those who loaned hundreds of feet of extension cords! Thank you to all!!



Setting out the luminaries



Welcoming fire by crescent garden







Unitarian Universalist Congregation Sunday Services January 2021

Virtual Services at 10:00 AM via <u>Zoom</u> Religious Education Classes via Zoom prior to the service All are invited to share conversation in small groups following the service by staying on the Zoom link.

January's Theme: IMAGINATION

Join us at 10 AM each Sunday at this Zoom link.

January 3: *In the Beginning,* Victoria Taylor and Worship Associate Ellen Plummer. Origin stories are one way humans have used their imaginations for millennia. During this all-family service, we will listen to several and be encouraged to examine our own. Where did we come from?



January 10: *Connecting Across Difference: Imagining Others*, Dr. Carolyn J. Kroehler and Worship Associate Kimberley Homer. Dr. Carolyn J. Kroehler, Associate Director of the Center for Communicating Science at Virginia Tech, helps researchers develop and practice their communication skills. Carrie will introduce some exercises that can help us imagine and understand the lives of others in this interactive service.

January 17: *Imagining a World with Racial Equity*, Rev. Pam Philips and members of the Anti-Racism Discussion Group. We'll observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday by imagining a world with racial equity, considering our own experiences with racism, and exploring what we might do as individuals and a congregation to move from imagination to reality.

Get to Know UUC: Newcomers are invited to an informal Q&A session with members of our Connections Committee and Board after the third Sunday service each month. Simply stay in the service Zoom session.

January 24: *Reimagining Community,* Rev. Pam Philips and Worship Associate Stephen Henninger. This past year has helped us open to new ways of being together, but how might we imagine widening our circle of concern?

January 31: *Celebration of Imagination.* Join Rev. Pam Philips, Tommy Iafrate, and Alyssa Short as we celebrate the creativity of UUC members and friends, exploring how imagination and creative expression can lead to growth, healing, and transformation.





Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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CALENDAR: January 2021

Staff Virtual Office Hours:

Minister: 9-1 Tu - F; <u>Contact for appointment</u> Administrator: <u>Contact for appointment</u> DLFD: <u>Contact for appointment</u> All times are PM unless noted otherwise

 $\boldsymbol{\varkappa}$ indicates that there is a write-up in the newsletter

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
(January 10, 17, 24, 31) N 9:00 AM Prek RE N 9:30 Grades K-5 RE N 10:00 Worship Service N 6:00 Middle School RE/Youth Group X 7:00 YRUU	(All Mondays) × 7:00 AM Women's Breakfast × 7:00 AM Men's Breakfast × 7:00 PM Monday Meet-Up	(All Tuesdays) א 2:00 Sages א 5:00 Meditation	(All Wednesdays) N Noon Conversations on Our Faith X 3:00 PM Story Time with Rev. Pam X 5:30 Mid-week Gathering		(All Fridays) N Noon Women's Lunch Bunch (UUC picnic area or Zoom) 1 5:30 Walk the Labyrinth	2
3 x 8:30 AM Sunday Circle x 10:00 All-Family Worship Service 11:30 Men's Group x 3:00 Spiritual Aging	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 x 1:00 Anti-Racism Discussion Group	11 א 6:00 Parent Bereavement Support Group	12 4:00 Committee on Ministries א 7:00 Caregivers' Support Group	13 6:00 Finance Committee 7:00 Worship Team	14 x 7:00 Board Meeting	15	16
17 x 8:30 AM Sunday Circle x 11:15 Get to Know UUC 11:30 Men's Group 11:30 AM Stewardship x 11:30 Community Conversations: Unity	18 × 6:00 Mental Illness Peer Support Group	19	20 κ 6:00 NAMI Family Support Group	21	22	23
24 x 1:00 Anti-Racism Discussion Group	25	26 א 7:00 Adult RE: The Fifth Dimension	27	28 9:00 February Newsletter Deadline	29	30
31				ed above will be held via Zoom ur lendar will have the Zoom url. Th		