



Newsletter

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Summer 2023

A Message from our Minister

Rev. Pam Phillips

Summer
time

Here come "those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer." Back in the day, that meant a slow-down of activities in UU congregations, with some even taking the summer off. Not so anymore. While our Annual Meeting on June 4th is a kind of punctuation mark for the church year, our congregation will continue to be a lively and vibrant place throughout the summer months. (Reminder to all members, please plan to attend the meeting or arrange for a proxy so that we have a quorum of fifty percent and can vote on our budget and the slate of nominees for the Executive Board).

Our worship services on Sunday will be a little shorter this summer, as the children will be going directly to their RE classes to explore Unitarian Universalism through Legos (sounds fun, doesn't it?). While I'm on vacation and study leave in July, services will be led by our gifted worship associates and possibly some surprise guest speakers. I'll be back in the pulpit in August, and we'll observe our annual Water Communion Ingathering service at the end of the month, so remember to collect water from your summer adventures, whether it comes from your own backyard or across the country or world.

Speaking of worship, the Committee on Ministries is continuing its ongoing assessment of the ministry of worship. The feedback groups that met in April yielded wonderful conversations, but some people couldn't attend. We've created a [survey](#) using the questions that sparked those discussions. Please take a few moments to share your experience of worship. We want to hear from you!

Our ongoing groups will continue to meet throughout the summer, with opportunities for meditation, conversation, creation, support, and socializing. Check the calendar for meeting times and places.

Summertime is also the perfect opportunity to enjoy our beautiful grounds – walking the labyrinth or the meditation path, checking out the bees and the butterflies up at Peacock Meadow, enjoying a fire and s'mores at the upper firepit or a meal at the picnic tables, or simply enjoying the flowers in the Crescent Garden. As always, the Grounds Ministry can use your help with watering, mowing, and weeding. Please contact Denise Martin if you can take on a regular task or fill-in for others who are on vacation.

We'll have plenty of opportunities to gather at UUC, but this summer we also have a chance to meet with members of other faith communities. When the Blacksburg Jewish Community Center was the target of hateful graffiti this spring, the community responded with an interfaith service in support of our Jewish neighbors. Out of that service came the desire to have more interfaith gatherings. We'll be starting in July with what we hope will be the first of an ongoing book discussion group open to members of all faiths. We'll be meeting in the Fellowship Hall at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church on **July 9th at 4:00 pm** to discuss [Dangerous Religious Ideas: The Deep Roots of Self-Critical Faith in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam](#) (published by our own Beacon Press). I'm excited for the chance to broaden and deepen our understanding of religion and develop friendships across faith.

Yes, we are entering into those crazy, hazy, lazy days of summer (if you've never heard this delightful Nat King Cole song, give it a [listen](#)). How wonderful that our summers can include gathering in all kinds of ways here at UUC and beyond.



May you find rest, relaxation, joy, and fun in the months ahead,

Fall Newsletter: This will include the months of September, October, and November. Any articles or requests you'd like to see in that publication will be due to Administrator@uucnr.org by 9:00 PM August 24th.

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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

This is the last newsletter article I will write as president of the UUC Board. This has been a good year for me and for the congregation, and I am proud of what we have accomplished. I am honored to have served the congregation in this capacity.

The most lasting impact that this Board will have on the congregation is that we have completed the revision of the UUC [Policy and Procedure](#) documents (P&P). At least six years ago, UUC Boards recognized that the P&P needed to be revised and consolidated. Three years ago, Wayne Neu started the heavy lifting of incorporating the three parts and four recent policies into one document. The last two years of this work has involved asking committees to update their descriptions, and examining and voting on each section of the P&P. As of the June 2023 Board meeting, we will have completed that work. Wayne Neu, the editor-in-chief, will ensure that the compiled document has a table of contents and correct links, so material is convenient and usable. Additional revisions will always be needed for a vibrant community, but each change can be incorporated as it occurs rather than the entire document. Thank you for this meticulous work to ALL board members of the last three years, as well as the committee chairs who have contributed.

Additional accomplishments from this year include: worked with the Finance Committee for an audit of our financial processes; established a COVID guideline for attendance, masking, and singing; increased the amount set aside in the Maintenance Escrow which puts UUC in a strong position for future needs; enacted suggestions to continue meeting the Strategic Plan; established the Christine Brownlie memorial fund and the Isabel Berney Exceptional Service Award; devoted time during the Board meetings for Anti-Racism analysis; initiated examination and discussion of organizational structures; and funded initial actions required to meet recommendations from the Energy Audit.

Thank you to the members of the Board who have worked with me this year!

Nancy, President



Annual Meeting

Members are requested to attend our [Annual Meeting](#) on Sunday, **June 4** following the service (11:30 AM) in person or via Zoom using the service link or by proxy. (All members should have received an email about the meeting, but if not, contact [Ericka](#).) If you require a proxy, give written permission (**and email to Ericka**) to a congregant who will be attending in person OR if your proxy will be attending via Zoom, send an email to our administrator naming who will be your proxy. If you do not already have a proxy, email Ericka and request that another member serve as your proxy. No member may serve as proxy for more than ONE absent member. We will be voting on new officers of the Board and our 2023-24 UUC budget available at this [link](#).



Events & Community News



May ½-Plate Donations

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

May 7: WUVT, \$187.59

May 14: VICCC, \$294.83

May 21: NAMI, \$294.51

May 28: No One Left Behind, \$, TBD

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

UUC meeting about the UUA General Assembly

Are you planning to attend the UUA GA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in late June (either virtually or in person) OR are you interested in the business that our delegates will participate in (voting on the changes to [Article II](#))? If so, please attend a GA meeting on June 11th after the service. You can grab a plate of food from the potluck and join in the discussion in the library.



New Member Ceremony

Have you been attending UUC for a while now and perhaps feel ready to take the next step on your spiritual journey by becoming a member of the congregation? On Sunday, **June 4**, we will welcome new members into the congregation during the service. Contact [Rev. Pam](#) by June 3rd to be included in the ceremony.

The Auction Committee wants to hear from you:

As the Auction Committee starts to plan for the auction in October, they have some questions they'd like the congregation's input on. If you'd like to help them out, please [click here](#) to fill out their brief survey. Thank you so much for your consideration!

Share your thoughts with the Committee on Ministries

The COM has created a survey to gather more people's thoughts and feelings about their experience of worship services. If you did not attend one of their feedback group discussions in April, please take a few moments to fill out this [survey](#).

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.



Events & Community News



Communicating Communication Committee News

We are grateful for the 85 people who completed our survey to let us know how you prefer and most often get information from UUC and the other organizations to which you belong. We are using your responses to help us make decisions about how to get the word out as efficiently as effectively as possible.

You'll notice that this is not the regular monthly newsletter. We are experimenting with publishing a summer (three-month) newsletter. Some congregations no longer use newsletters, relying more heavily on emails and their websites, and we'd like to see if changing how often we put out newsletters makes a difference. This three-month newsletter also coincides with part of our administrator's three-month maternity leave, making it easier for staff and volunteers to cover some of her duties. If you have information that needs to be included in our email announcements, please fill out this [UUC Announcement Request Form](#).

We are also auditing the uucnrv.org website – checking for outdated, incomplete, or contradictory information. We hope to make it easier for members, friends, and newcomers to find important and helpful information. Moving forward, we will be exploring other new ways to communicate with each other and with people in the community, living into our vision of being “a beacon of liberal religion in the New River Valley.”

If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact a member of the ComCom (Communications Committee) – Ericka Kelly (chair), Rachel Craine, Ashley Dugan, Gene Gardner, Lucas Machi, Rev. Pam Philips, Arthur Snoke, and Anna Tulou.

May Board Meeting Highlights

- This year's annual meeting will be held **June 4**, after service.
- Final UUC delegates for GA were approved.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, **June 8** 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@uucnrv.org.



Reproductive Justice

At 7:00 PM on Monday, **June 26**, Kenda Sutton-El, executive director and founder of Birth in Color RVA, will be the guest speaker at the June zoom meeting of the UUC Reproductive Justice Team. Birth in Color RVA is a non-profit organization that provides programs/services/advocacy for the full spectrum of reproductive rights for women of color. Their doula program is a core component of this program as it aims to address and decrease the higher incidence of maternal mortality in Black women. The meeting is open to all and can be accessed at the following [zoom link](#). And for questions, contact [Sara Dalton](#).

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 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) 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@uucnr.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 Jennifer Thomas to RSVP or to find out more. The first rehearsal after summer break will be on **Wednesday, August 23**

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](#).

Lifespan Faith Development

Summer Religious Education

This summer our Kindergarten through 5th graders will be learning about UU sources and principles and using LEGOs to build what they have learned. Topics explored each week are listed below.

June 4—Our UU Sources

June 11—1st Source: Wonder

June 18—2nd Source: People

June 25—3rd Source: World Religions

July 2—4th Source: Jewish and Christian Heritage

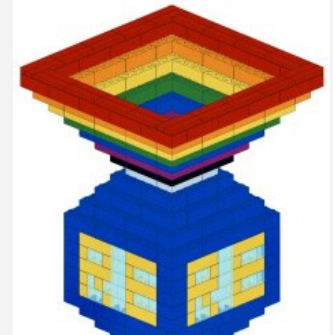
July 9—5th Source: Science and Reason

July 16—6th Source: Earth-Centered Traditions

July 23—The 8 Principles

July 30—Article 2—Our Living Tradition

August 6—The Flaming Chalice



Sunday Fundays: Our Summer Pre-K Program

Our preschoolers will enjoy a story, coloring, and outdoor play this summer.

[Sign up here](#) to help out.



Coming Soon in Fall RE—Starts August 13

PreK—Chalice Children

Grades K-1—Picture Book World Religions

Grades 2-3—Books and Cooks

Grades 4-5—Holidays and Holy Days

Middle School—Building Bridges

Middle School Youth Group (Friday nights, monthly)

YRUU—High School Youth Group (Sunday nights, weekly)

OWL—Sexuality Education for grades 8-10



[Sign up to teach here!](#)

Still need to register?

[Click Here](#)

Adult RE Programs —Coming in 2023-2024

Our Whole Lives: 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. Dates and times TBD.

[Sign up here for more information.](#)



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. Attend all the classes, or just a few. Dates and times TBD.

[Sign up here for more information.](#)

On-Going Adult Programs

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

We will be taking a break for the summer, but will resume our discussion of *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*, on Sunday, August 27 at 2pm. 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.*

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](#)

Parent Covenant Groups

Parent covenant groups are taking a break for the summer, but will be forming again in September. If you are interested in being in a group, please contact Rachel at dlfd.uuc@gmail.com for more information.

Want to get together with other families this summer? Let's gather at the UUC for a family picnic/potluck, with fun and games for all. Save the dates! Watch email and Facebook for details.

Summer Family Fun

Sunday, June 18, noon-3pm (Potluck)

Saturday, July 15, noon-3pm (BYO Picnic)

Friday, August 11, 5-8pm (Potluck)



‘Round the Grounds...

By Denise Martin

“We are here to abet creation and to witness it, to notice each thing so each thing gets noticed. Together we notice not only each mountain shadow and each stone on the beach but we notice each other's beautiful face and complex nature so that creation need not play to an empty house.”

This quote by Annie Dillard perfectly sums up the magnificence of our gardens. Not only are we given the opportunity to breathe in the beauty of the grounds but we are also given the chance to experience the beautiful nature that resides in ourselves and others.

Summer is a time of growth and provides us with a constantly changing landscape. It is the perfect time to slow down; to walk with intention, and to invite your spirit to be present. A garden needs more than just observation. It must be nurtured and cultivated. It demands that we get our hands dirty, our shoes a little muddy. Susan Baker will be out of commission for a while this summer and we need volunteers to help maintain the beauty she has so lovingly created.

Specifically, we need people who can water the potted plants either on a regular basis or as a fill-in. We also need people who are knowledgeable about pruning and deadheading as the season progresses. If you're available either for an on-going project or on an as-needed basis, please email [Denise Martin](#). I will be attempting to fill the very big shoes of Susan while she recuperates.

On July 8th, the UUC grounds will be one of the Points of Interest in the Friends of the Library Garden Tour. Preparation for this event will require a few people to help ensure the grounds are at their finest. More information will be sent out at a later date.

Please come and spend time in the garden this summer. The flowers, trees, birds and bees love an audience. Your soul will thank you for the respite.



Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Sunday Services

June 2023

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

June 4: Time for Delight— *Rev. Pam and Worship Associate, Laurence McGee.* After a year of work and worry, let us find time for discovering and reveling in the delights and rewards of our labor. We'll celebrate the end of the congregational year by recognizing new members before our annual meeting.

June 11: In Defense of Pollyanna— *Ministerial Intern, Anna Tulou, and Worship Associate, Victoria Taylor.* The Urban Dictionary (www.urbandictionary.com) defines a "pollyanna" as "an excessively or blindly optimistic person", or a person who is "unreasonably or illogically optimistic." It's not generally used as a compliment. Join us this Sunday as we examine the children's story of Pollyanna - alongside the psychological theory of unconditional positive regard and the first principle of Unitarian Universalism - and consider whether being a "pollyanna" is actually such a bad thing.

June 18: Taking Delight in Pride— *Rev. Pam.* In light of the recent attacks against LGBTQ+ folks, particularly in the political arena, we'll explore how to be allies and accomplices through joyful celebration.

June 25: A Delightful Surprise— *Worship Associates, Denise Martin & Cynthia Baute.* Join our worship as we finish our explorations of the month's theme of Delight.

Worship service themes for July and August had not been determined by the newsletter deadline, but we look forward to services led by some of our gifted worship associates, members of the UUYA's (UU Young Adults), and guest preachers in July. August services will include UUC delegates sharing their experiences of the UUA General Assembly, the modern folk duo Friction Farm, and the traditional rituals of Backpack Blessing and Water Communion Ingathering. 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.

Welcome the Newest Members of UUC



The newly married Burton family, Angie, Andrew, Lainie, and Stella, began attending UUC in November. Angie and Andrew both work at Virginia Tech, Angie as a Marketing Manager, and Andrew as an ICU Veterinary Technician at the vet school. The family enjoys all things outdoors: riding their bikes, kayaking, hiking, and camping. Angie hails from the DC-metro area while Andrew grew up in South Africa before moving to the US twenty years ago. Stella and Lainie are wrapping up first grade and are excited for summer break.



Britton Gildersleeve moved here from Tulsa, OK 6 years ago, but only recently was able to attend UUC. Britton & her late husband moved to be closer to her son & daughter-in-law, who teach at VTech, and her two grandsons. She grew up in SE Asia, graduating from HS there, and lived with her husband in the Middle East for years. Britton taught at Oklahoma State University, where she also directed a national grant working with teachers k-university (the OSU National Writing Project). Her background is in writing, teaching, and working for social justice through grants. She now works with willing adults – not freshmen & grad students! – at VTech Life Long Learning Institute. Britton loves birds, light gardening, reading, and walking. She's excited about the community of free thinkers at UUC!



Pam Knox relocated to Blacksburg following her daughter and granddaughter upon retiring from thirty years in senior leadership within Tennessee higher education. Tenured at multiple universities, she held faculty and staff positions at five public research universities, as well as working for the Department of Energy in Colorado as a Psychologist and Corporate Trainer, and as a consultant for numerous organizations nationally. She culminated her professional career at the Tennessee Board of Regents with primary responsibility for new graduate program development, international education, and researcher development for 6 public universities, 13 community colleges, and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. She was raised as a Unitarian and introduced to the UUC family by Fred Piercy, her fiancé. She has two daughters, three grandchildren, loves to travel, and is an avid knitter.

Cont...

Welcome the Newest Members of UUC



The King Family - Patricia Wheaton, Shane Thompson King, Osiris King and Tobias King. Patricia and Shane met in Shane's home state of Oregon. They relocated back to the NRV one year ago to Allisonia, where Patricia's maternal family roots run deep. They enjoy exploring in nature as a family and are always looking forward to their next road trip. They are happy to be joining UUC and to have found a spiritual home for their family.



Dave and Brenda Roberts moved to Blacksburg with their children, Molly, Evan, and Andrew from Rochester, New York in 2000. Dave worked as an OB/GYN until 2018 when he went to work for the Community Health Center. He found a spiritual home at the UUC. He has been practicing mindfulness for years and was recently part of a Buddhist Sangha in Roanoke. He has been active with the refugee community in Blacksburg, and with the To Our House program for the unhoused. He enjoys getting outdoors, especially on his bicycle.

Welcome

