



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

# NEWSLETTER

## January 2022

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### Message from Our Minister

Rev. Pam Philips

Happy New Year! In this first month of 2022, we are invited to explore **living with intention** - an appropriate theme as we begin a new year. I'm not talking about making new year's resolutions which can lead to disappointment and frustration when they are abandoned after only a few weeks. Instead, living with intention suggests being thoughtful and deliberate rather than impulsive and reactive. It means choosing to be and do whatever is most important to you.

It reminds me of the concept of *sankalpa* that I've been learning about through my meditation practice. It's an invitation to set an intention, an expression of a heartfelt desire, and to state it in affirmative and present-tense terms. Instead of saying I want to stop some undesirable habit or way of being, one affirms that they are already doing or being what is most desired. Instead of saying *I will be less anxious*, one says *I am living with peace and ease*. It's not about setting goals so much as listening to who you are and manifesting it in your life.

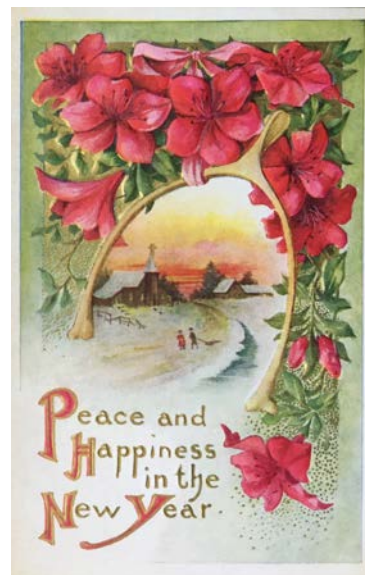
I won't pretend that I've mastered this skill, but I have become intrigued by the idea of listening more intently and intentionally to who I am and how I want to be in the world. And setting intentions feels most natural at starting moments - the start of the new year, new month, new week, or new day. Taking a moment to set an intention for the day helps bring into focus what is most important and increases the likelihood that my behavior will match my values.

Meditation is one way to set intentions. I've found receiving daily emails also helps give a lens through which to look at the day. Rev. Galen Guengerich, minister of the UU congregation All Souls New York City, sends out a First Light meditation. Taking a moment to read some words of wisdom, to consider whether they resonate or not, can help me approach the day more mindfully. I especially appreciate those messages that address what I'm wrestling with already. This morning's meditation was a quote from Anna Jameson (a 19<sup>th</sup> century Anglo-Irish art historian): "What we truly and earnestly aspire to be, that in some sense we are. The mere aspiration, by changing the frame of mind, for the moment realizes itself." Her "mere aspiration" sounds like a *sankalpa*, doesn't it?

In the month ahead, I invite you to consider how you might live with intention, to explore what is your heart's desire, and what practices might help along the way. It could be personal practices like meditation, journaling, or reading. Or it could be engaging with others at UUC, on Sunday mornings or in gatherings throughout the week. As we begin a new year, one that holds as much promise and uncertainty as the past year, let us do so with intention.

Wishing us all a happy new year,

Rev. Pam



## Contact Information

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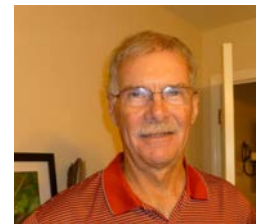


## Staff Office Hours:

Contact staff to make an appointment.

## Message from Our Board

Bob Stimson, Board President



We are all excited to be using our green electricity produced by the newly installed solar panels from Baseline Solar - with great coordination and commitment by Patrick Feucht. Such joy to be producing clean energy!

The Board is coordinating the creation of two search committees, both of which will commence work in January. The committees are charged with hiring our new Administrator, replacing the retiring Lisa Evanylo, and hiring our new DLFD (Dir. of Lifespan Faith Development). Both of these are very important positions for our congregation.

The Board is extremely appreciative of all of the events during the holiday season which our Rev. Pam planned and/or organized and/or led and/or officiated and/or participated in. What a joy it is to have Rev. Pam leading our congregation.

Happy New Year!

## Upcoming Events and Updates

### Invitation from the Peacemakers



The Peacemakers is a quilting and fiber craft group and a committee of UUC. We continue the tradition of congregant-made paraments (those colorful pieces which cover the podium and the candle table), and endeavor to create quilts for any congregant in need of a tangible item of comfort. We also

welcome those who crochet and knit. We would be happy to include anyone (including gentlemen!) of any degree of skill and beginners as well. We meet at UUC on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of each month at 6:30 PM and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month at 10 AM. If interested or for more information, contact [Polly Stimson](#) or [Marilyn DuPont](#),

### UUC's Lay Pastoral Care Ministry (LPCM)

Do you have something on your heart that is weighing you down? Maybe you don't want to burden your loved ones with one more thing to worry about? LPCM offers experienced, non-judgmental listeners to talk with in a confidential, one-on-one setting. Whether it is a one-time stressor or an ongoing concern, we're here for you. Please contact [Jane Mahone](#).

### Coffee Returns to UUC!

Beginning **January 9**, we are tentatively planning to serve coffee once again at UUC but only at the conclusion of the service. Head to the back door to get a cup.

As masks are still required in the building, get your coffee and take it outside to drink and chat with friends. Paper cups will be provided, but if possible, please bring your own thermos or mug.



**Volunteer needed** to send cards from the entire congregation to congregants undergoing great joys or sorrows such as a birth, marriage, graduation, loss of a loved one, illness, etc. Cards and stamps provided. Contact [Lisa](#) for more info and/or to volunteer.

## UUC Anti-Racism Group Update

by Katherine Allen

We invite you to join us in our work to inform ourselves about and take action to address systemic racism and the implications of white privilege in our community and nation. We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4th Sundays from 1-2 PM on Zoom. Barbara Taylor coordinates our group, and we all appreciate her dedication to this mission.

Our activities include attending community meetings, writing letters to newspapers, and reading and discussing books about anti-racism and white privilege. Lately, we have attended sessions sponsored by activist groups such as Justice Advocates, about Virginia's criminal justice and prison reform movement. Many of us are moved to do something to contribute to advocating for people who are in jails and prisons. For example, the UUA's [Church of the Larger Fellowship](#) (CLF) has a program where you can sign up to send cards or letters to incarcerated UU members. Use this [website](#) to find out about this effort called, *Worthy Now: Prison Ministry Network*.

At our last meeting, several of us spoke about our experiences with prison work and ministry, and we found that letter writing is a part of what we can do. For example, since the pandemic began in March 2020, I have written to a young man in a Virginia prison once a week. This young man is the son of one of my friends, and for several years before the pandemic, I visited him once every few months. I saw firsthand the toll of incarceration on individuals and their families, from the lengthy car ride to get to the prison, to the restrictions around visitation and contact, and much more. Once the pandemic began, and the prisons were closed to visitors, I wanted to keep up our connection, so I began a letter-writing exchange that I have engaged in now for nearly two years. At first, I just sent cards I had on hand and wrote about the weather, my garden, and taking walks with my dog, Hank. I also asked questions about my friend's life experiences and activities. Soon, I found myself looking forward to starting each Monday morning with a letter to my friend, and I was thrilled when he wrote back. I've worried that we had little in common—me a recently retired older woman and him, a young man in his 20s, but the very real human exchange of "how's your day going" and "I just read a book I think you will like" between two people isolated by the pandemic has led to a friendship that is very important and humbling to me. As I reflect on this process of writing to a young person who has been shut away by society, I realize how much he has given me in this connection, and how developing a friendship across vast differences of privilege, life experience, and circumstances can invite profound changes in our lives. Visitations are starting up again, and I have recently been to the prison to see him. But we will continue our weekly correspondence. I am grateful for this life-changing connection.

## Anti-Racist Practice Group

Join us for this session on Tuesday, **February 22** from 7–8:30 PM on Zoom. Sponsored by Blacksburg Presbyterian Church and UUC. Register [here](#).

As we work to dismantle oppression in our lives and congregations, we need to come alongside others who are practicing anti-racism in order to gain new insights, offer support, and receive feedback on our efforts. During this 90-minute workshop, our congregations will come together with the common goal of identifying, reflecting on, and ultimately, interrupting racism in ourselves and our organizations.

This will be a brave space to reflect, discuss, learn, grow, and most importantly, keep ourselves and our congregations accountable as we continue to work towards dismantling white supremacy in all the spaces that it lives, even (and especially) when that space is inside of us.

It is important to note that a significant focus of this space will be to:

- Raise white consciousness
- Uncover internalized white supremacy
- Learn how one shows up in whiteness
- Identify microaggressions and practice micro interventions
- Work to interrupt racism in ourselves and our communities

We hope you'll mark your calendars now and plan to join us (for what we hope will be the first of many joint practice sessions).

## Building & Grounds Use

**Sunday services are offered in a dual-platform format** with those attending in person required to wear masks, encouragement to attend only if vaccinated, and social distancing measures in place.

**Other groups** can meet inside the building in designated meeting rooms within the COVID capacity for that room. All in the building are strongly encouraged to meet with masks and social distancing.

**Outside gatherings** of any size are permitted. Non-vaccinated people are strongly encouraged to wear masks and/or social distance. Masks must be worn near children.

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



## Festival of Lights Walk the Labyrinth at UUC

On Friday, **December 31** or Saturday, **January 1** from 5:30-7:30 PM, bring the family and walk our labyrinth which will be lit with luminaries and lighting in the trees for a magical experience. Warm yourself by the fire and enjoy a hot drink and sweet treat.

Bring a flashlight and dress warmly. Rain or ice cancels for that date.

**Help needed** each night to set out luminaries, to build and tend fire in firepits (one at each firepit), and to retrieve luminaries. Sign up [here](#) to help. If you can provide hot cocoa pouches, cider, or cookies, contact [Lisa](#).



## Weekly Gatherings

### 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.

### Women's Lunch

All women are welcome to join together for lunch on Fridays at noon at UUC Bring your own food.

### 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. If you choose not to meet in person, you can still join us on Zoom via this [link](#). 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 (**January 10**) 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays of each month (**January 11**) 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 3rd Monday of each month (**January 17**) 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 (**January 19**) 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 different support groups meet monthly, and both groups are sponsored by UUC.

The **NRV Trans Adult Group** meets on 1st Thursdays (**January 6**) from 7-8:30 PM and 3rd Saturdays (**January 15**) 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](mailto:nrvtrans@gmail.com).

The **Youth & Families Group** meets on the 4th Tuesdays (**January 25**) from 7-8:30 PM and is for anyone under 18 who identifies under the trans umbrella or who is questioning their gender. The group is also for parents who have trans or gender non-conforming children. Parents are welcome with or without their children. The group provides resources, advice, and support for children and their families. For more information about these meetings, contact [correspondence-nrvtransfamily@gmail.com](mailto:correspondence-nrvtransfamily@gmail.com).

# UUC Community News

## Update on ½-Plate Donations

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

**December 5:** Church of the Larger Fellowship/Worthy Now Prison Ministry, \$235

**December 12:** Monacan Children Gift Program, \$148

**December 19:** Valley Interfaith Childcare Center, \$255

**December 26:** Post Partum Virginia, \$277.75

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

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

## Follow Our UUC Instagram Account at @uucnrv.

If you have a picture of a UUC event or activity and want it posted to our Instagram account, do so yourself or send to [Ashley Dugan](mailto:Ashley Dugan), and she'll post it. No identifiable pics of minors, and adults must ok having their pic posted.

## January Food Pantry Donations



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

## Join Our UUC Facebook Groups

To facilitate more conversation among us, join our private Facebook group - **UUC New River Valley**. To make this a positive experience, we ask that you honor our Congregational Covenant. Ask to join the [group](#) today!

We also have a public Facebook page — **Unitarian Universalist Congregation New River Valley** which can be found at this [link](#). Information on upcoming services, events, articles from the UUA, and more can be found here. Check it out.

## December Board Mtg. Highlights

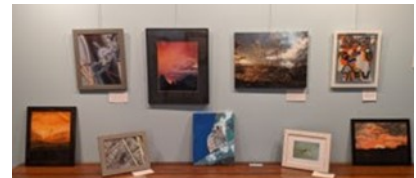
- ♦ The Board approved \$950 to remove the maple close to the building just outside the sanctuary, to trim the second maple, and to remove a dead willow.
- ♦ Singing is still not permitted during gatherings in the building, but responsive readings are permitted.
- ♦ The Board approved serving coffee following services beginning in January. The coffee will be served by the back door but will need to be taken outside (for mask removal). See page 2 for more information.
- ♦ The Personnel Committee is finalizing position descriptions for the DLFD and the Administrator. Potential members for both searches were suggested with a vote in January.
- ♦ Carol Kern, Stewardship Chair, provided an update on the committee. The theme of the upcoming pledge drive will be **Cultivating Our Community**. The committee is planning fun activities which will each include a short talk on pledging.
- ♦ Budget priorities for 2022-23 were discussed including the hiring of an intern minister, increasing the new DLFD's hours to 40, and making building maintenance escrow a priority.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, **January 13** 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](mailto:addresstheBoard@uucnrv.org).

## View Our Art Exhibit, Exploring the Outdoors:

Extended through March with additional pieces. Come to UUC and see the wonderful and varied artwork by our very own congregants on display throughout the building. As the building is locked much of the time, contact [Lisa](mailto:Lisa) for entry.



# Lifespan Faith Development

## Children's RE

There will be no RE the week of January. **We will resume RE classes on Sunday, January 9.** Looking forward to seeing you then!

We will continue meeting in person on Sunday mornings. Due to colder weather, classes will be mostly indoors with mitigation. Masking and distancing are required, and we will continue to use air purifiers in every classroom. Parents should stop at the sign-in table (located in the downstairs lobby) between 9:45-10:00 AM to sign in children for class.



**PreK:** Our preschool friends will enjoy a story and playtime together. Coloring sheets, activity pages, and simple crafts will also be available for creative times.

**Grades K-5:** Our elementary children will be grouped into two classes: K-2 and grades 3-5. Both groups will begin each class with a story followed by an engaging and thoughtful activity based on the story.

**Grades 6-8:** Our middle school class will continue to meet for game playing and socialization plus opportunities for social action and creativity.

*Please note that children do NOT go into the sanctuary first on Sunday mornings.*

## Winter Updates

### Stuffed Animal Sleepover

Save the date! The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Stuffed Animal Sleepover will be the weekend of **February 11**. Children of ALL ages will be invited to bring their favorite stuffed animal to UUC to enjoy a special Stuffed Animal Sleepover. Stuffies will enjoy a wide range of activities together. More details to follow!

### Our Whole Lives (OWL)

Due to current COVID restrictions and anticipated curriculum updates, the interim LFD team has decided to postpone OWL until Spring 2023. *However, keep your eyes open for helpful family resources that will be available to our congregation throughout this year.*



# On-Going Adult RE Programs

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## Sunday Circle

*Meets first and third Sundays, 8:30-9:30 AM via this [Zoom link](#).*

**January 2:** Not meeting

**January 16:** Doug Pfeiffer will discuss *Birding in Arizona: Why August is the best time to visit the Sonoran Desert*.

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## Anti-Racism Group

*Meets second and fourth Sundays, 1-2 PM via this [Zoom link](#).*

All are welcome to join our ongoing group addressing white privilege and racism. Contact [Barbara Taylor](#) for meeting topics. Email [administrator@uucnrv.org](mailto:administrator@uucnrv.org) to join the listserv to receive links to the discussion articles.

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## Meditation Group

*Meets Tuesdays, 5-6 PM via this [Zoom link](#).*

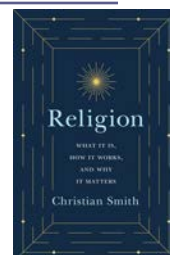
Our meditation group meets weekly for those interested in starting or deepening their meditation practice. Our format is drop-in, so you need not attend all sessions. Open with centering words and basic instruction followed by sitting practice. Meditators from all traditions and all levels of experience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



## Conversations on Our Faith

*Meets Wednesdays, 12-1 PM via this [Zoom link](#).*

Join our conversation as we begin reading the book, *Religion, What It Is, How It Works, and Why It Is Important* by Christian Smith. All are welcome, even if you have not read the chapters of the book under discussion. To learn more, contact [Tim Pickering](#).



## Exploring the Hebrew Scriptures: Let's Start at the Very Beginning

All are welcome to participate in this workshop offered by Anna Tulou, a seminarian from Roanoke, via this [Zoom link](#) on **January 8 & 15** from 10 AM – noon. The goal of this introductory workshop is to not only explore some of the book of *Genesis*, but also to bridge the theological moat and provide language and tools for further, deeper reflection on this and other works of the Hebrew Scriptures. This workshop is interactive and designed for all levels of participation – for those who may have read the Bible many times over or never at all, and those of all traditions and perspectives. [Register here](#).

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## Community Conversations

*Sunday, January 23, 11:30-1 PM via this [Zoom link](#).*

Join us for a conversation on *Abortion: For, Against, or Somewhere in Between*. Abortion is seldom a topic that we speak about in casual conversation. More often we hear abortion talked about by news media, politicians or, more rarely, depicted in books, television shows or movies. In most situations, abortion elicits an intense emotional response. In the U.S. the conversation on abortion generally centers on whether you are “for” or “against” it and very rarely explores personal narratives, what we believe about abortion as a decision, what the procedure entails, or how abortion affects an individual’s reproductive and mental health. Engaging in an honest and vulnerable conversation on abortion provides an opportunity to explore the depths of our beliefs about sex, life, death, agency, and parenting. It gets at the very root of what we care deeply for in life and opens the door to finding potential common ground. Led by [Rev. Jamie McReynolds](#).







## Unitarian Universalist Congregation Sunday Services January 2022

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

### January's Theme: Living with Intention

Join our dual-platform service each Sunday at 10 AM - both in person at UUC or via this [Zoom link](#).



**January 2:** *New Year, New Moon, New Opportunity*, Victoria Taylor, Darla Bray, Asha Mills, and Rev. Pam Philips. Drawing from the earth-based practice of intention setting, we will have an opportunity to reflect on our path and choose ways of being that may serve us in the coming month and year.

**January 9:** *Feeling Our Way to Intentions*, Rev. Pam Philips, Gretchen Luke, and Alyssa Short. What do empathy and compassion have to do with the way we live our lives? We'll explore how feeling with and for each other can help us live with intention.

**January 16:** *Living with Intention*, Anna Tulou with Worship Associate Kimberley Homer. There is often a gap between what we as humans profess to believe and the values reflected in our actions. Putting our principles into actual practice in our lives can be challenging, but without doing so, they are only lovely ideas. Join us as we take a look at stories from our own UU history that reflect this gap between belief and action. How might it inform our present and future faith?

Anna was born in Richmond and now lives in Salem, VA with her three children. She is currently a seminarian with Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, studying to become a Unitarian Universalist minister. A published poet, she also loves to write fiction and essays, sing, cook, hike, and talk to plants.

**January 23:** *When Good Intentions are Not Enough*, Rev. Pam Philips and Worship Associate Tommy Iafrate (in person!). While we may be living and acting with the best of intentions, we still may end up hurting others. We'll explore the relation between intention and impact and how to navigate our way back into right relation when they collide. We'll also recognize new members this Sunday.

**January 30:** *Intentionally Imperfect*, Rev. Pam Philips and Worship Associate Earle Irwin. We'll end our month-long exploration of living with intention by considering what might happen if we intentionally risked making mistakes. What might it mean for us to abandon striving for perfection and not only accept but celebrate imperfection, in ourselves and others?

#### Our Mission

**Inspire. Create. Transform.**

**Inspire** spiritual and ethical growth. **Create** compassionate community.  
**Transform** our community and the world through courageous love.

#### Our Vision

UUC will be a beacon of liberal religion in the New River Valley. We will join with other organizations and faiths to work for just causes.

We will practice generosity and radical hospitality. We will be known as a place of beauty, welcome, joy, and celebration.



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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## CALENDAR: January 2022

All times are PM unless noted otherwise

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

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY   | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY   | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY  |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| <b>(All Sundays)</b><br>κ 10:00 AM Worship Service (UUC and Zoom)<br><b>(January 9, 16, 23, 30)</b><br>κ 10:00 AM Religious Education classes (UUC)<br>7:00 YRUU (UUC) | <b>(All Mondays)</b><br>κ 7:30 AM Women's Breakfast (UUC)<br>κ 7:00 AM Men's Breakfast (UUC) | <b>(All Tuesdays)</b><br>κ 5:00 Meditation                   | <b>(All Wednesdays)</b><br>κ Noon Conversations on Our Faith<br>κ 5:30 Yoga (UUC)<br>7:00 Choir rehearsal (UUC) |  | <b>(All Fridays)</b><br>κ Noon Women's Lunch Bunch (UUC) | <b>1 Happy New Year!</b><br>κ 5:30 Festival of Lights Walk the Labyrinth at UUC                       |
| <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b>   | <b>4</b><br>κ 2:00 Sages (UUC and Zoom)                      | <b>5</b><br>6:00 Connections Committee  | <b>6</b><br>κ 6:30 Piecemakers (UUC)<br>κ 7:00 Transgender Support Group | <b>7</b>   | <b>8</b><br>κ 10:00 AM Adult RE: Exploring the Hebrew Scriptures<br>κ 10:00 Piecemakers (UUC)         |
| <b>9</b><br>κ 1:00 Anti-Racism Group   | <b>10</b><br>κ 6:00 Parent Bereavement Support Group   | <b>11</b><br>κ 7:00 Caregivers' Support Group                | <b>12</b><br>6:00 Finance Committee<br>7:00 Worship Team  | <b>13</b><br>κ 7:00 Board Meeting (UUC and Zoom)                         | <b>14</b>  | <b>15</b><br>κ 10:00 AM Adult RE: Exploring the Hebrew Scriptures<br>κ 1:00 Transgender Support Group |
| <b>16</b><br>κ 8:30 AM Sunday Circle<br>11:30 Stewardship Committee  | <b>17</b><br>κ 6:00 NAMI Connections Support Group   | <b>18</b><br>κ 2:00 Sages (UUC and Zoom)                     | <b>19</b><br>κ 6:00 NAMI Family Support Group   | <b>20</b><br>κ 6:30 Piecemakers (UUC)                                    | <b>21</b>  | <b>22</b><br>8:00 AM RE Teacher Training  |
| <b>23</b><br>κ 11:30 AM Community Conversations<br>κ 1:00 Anti-Racism Group  | <b>24</b>  | <b>25</b><br>κ 7:00 Trans Support Group for Youth & Families | <b>26</b>   | <b>27</b><br>9:00 February newsletter deadline                           | <b>28</b>  | <b>29</b>   |
| <b>30</b>  | <b>31</b>  |  |   |  |  |   |

Events listed above will be held via Zoom unless otherwise noted. See the write-ups in the pages above for more information. For Zoom gatherings, the [Online Calendar](#) has the Zoom URLs. That calendar will be updated as conditions change. Page 3 above has the Covid rules (at the publication time) for Building & Grounds Use.