



NEWSLETTER

June 2020

Year 55, Issue 6

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Message from Our Minister Rev. Pam Philips

I write this letter after our annual Flower Communion where I got to see all your beautiful flowers and faces and listen to our children and youth describe what they learn from being part of our congregation. What a balm for weary spirits--to listen to the reflections of our Worship Associates, to enjoy the exquisite musical talents of Jared and Natalie Gibbs, Ella Kromin, and Tommy Iafrate, and to revel in the beauty of our community. My heart is full.

But I also write after watching the news, replaying the horrific video of a police officer kneeling on a man's neck even after he had lost consciousness and reports of cities across the country exploding in anger and violence. Demonstrations and riots sparked by George Floyd's death but also stoked by a long history of violence against and oppression of people of color. My heart aches.

Already, I've heard from many of you, expressing your sadness, your anger, your frustration, your grief, your confusion. What can we do? What can we say? How do we explain this part of our world to our children?

Already, you are exploring what it means to be *people of compassion*—people who are moved by the suffering of others.

Just as we could not have imagined how our lives would be upended by the global pandemic, we may not have predicted how this latest death of a black person at the hands of police would have upended our country. By the time you read this newsletter, who knows what more will have happened.

For this moment, though, I am certain that whatever the world throws our way, we can meet those challenges together. And as we explore this month's theme of **compassion**, we'll be continually reminded that the ties that bind us together as a religious community can and must extend outside our virtual walls to include the rest of our community and world.

One of the first lessons of COVID-19 was that a virus does not recognize the invisible boundaries that divide us—striking people regardless of their race, religion, political affiliation, sex, gender, economic status, country of origin—all the many ways we recognize each other as different. Everyone is vulnerable. And yet, another important lesson has been that some of us are indeed **more** vulnerable, depending on our ability to work from home or to work at all, our age, our health status, our access to health care—factors that are sometimes determined by our race, gender-identity, economic status. . .

Which is to say, while we have all been affected, some have and will be affected more than others. But if we are truly people of compassion, what happens to some must matter to us all. As the mystic Thomas Merton wrote, "The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another and all involved in one another." Compassion is an expression of our seventh UU principle: *respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*.

Compassion will be a rich theme for exploration this month, one that can help us as we struggle to make sense of all the ways our world is changing, all the ways it needs to be changed, and what we as people of faith are called to do. Let us explore it together.

In faith and with love, Rev. Pam



Contact Information

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Staff Office Hours:

**Staff office hours are
being held virtually
until the building
re-opens.**

Minister:

Tuesdays - Fridays, 9-1

Contact for appointment
or use this [link](#) to set one
up online.

Administrator:

Contact for appointment

Message from Our Board

Steve Keighton, Board President



As I sit down to write this last newsletter article for this year's Board, the last in my two-year tenure on the Executive Board, I am also preparing for our first-ever virtual Annual Congregational Meeting. By the time you read this, we'll know how it went! I could never have imagined, certainly none of us could, the kind of year it has been (referring primarily to just the past few months, although it certainly seems like it has been much longer). As we started the church year last summer, none of us could have imagined needing to close down the building for an extended period of time, having to be creative in the way we sustain our community, or the financial challenges that have also come along with this historical pandemic.

While our virtual community and financial situation is far from ideal, and it's important to recognize that many are struggling with isolation and/or financial challenge much more than others, it seems to me, that as a congregation overall, we are coping remarkably well. Thanks to creativity and hard work from so many of our staff and volunteers, sustaining our community virtually has been a bigger success than I could have imagined. I am especially grateful for Rev. Pam, Rachel Craine, Lisa Evanylo, Jared and Natalie Gibbs, the Worship Associates, the Stewardship and Finance Committees, and really the entire congregation for being adaptable, patient, and forward-thinking.

I am also extremely grateful for this year's Board in having to deal with not only the financial uncertainties that have come with the pandemic, but also the challenges upon discovering an oversight from years ago (and not the fault of anyone) related to retirement funds for our Administrator and DLFD, which took considerable effort to solve and remedy. This created its own financial challenge shortly before the pandemic hit. The Board stepped up to work both of these issues in ways I am immensely proud of and grateful for. On top of that, the Board has been working steadily on policy updates/reorganization (which will continue into next year but did include a new [Congregational Public Witness Policy](#) section), establishing a new strategic planning process and team (that is now facing the same unique challenges as our entire community just as they are getting started), working more closely with the Finance Committee and bookkeepers on the budget and cash flow, and many other things too numerous to mention here but can be found in our minutes throughout the year. Then of course came the difficult decisions about extended closure of the building, how to sustain certain functions, and thinking about future steps to transition to any partial use of the building while making sure we are all as safe as possible. This is weighty stuff; we understand the potential consequences of these decisions in either direction we lean. Please join me in thanking this year's Board, and in advance next year's new Board, for serving in the best interest of our congregation.

There were many other activities and accomplishments by the congregation as a whole we should be very proud of during the past year. Although I can't possibly name them all, I do want to highlight several (none related to the pandemic). Rachel Craine has done a superb job in leading the LFD program (with others of course) while Karen Hager has been on sabbatical. Susan Baker, George Lally, and the Grounds Committee have outdone themselves yet again, and without the usual help of VT students for the Big Event. Much appreciation to Kimberly Homer (and so many others) for bringing the

Continued on page 8

Upcoming Events

Many committees, groups, and activities are taking place via Zoom during this time of isolating from one another. See below for some of our current Zoom meetings with links. LFD groups meeting via Zoom can be found on page 5. Be sure to continually check the [online calendar](#) and [website](#) for updates about activities as well as our twice-weekly email announcements. If your group's Zoom link is not included, please contact [Lisa](#) to get it on our calendar and publicized to the congregation.

Update on Building Closure & Use of Outdoor Space

The Board voted at the May meeting to extend the UUC building closure through at least the end of our current fiscal year, **June 30**. The Board will revisit this decision at their **June 11** Board meeting. If you have a group of 10 or less and would like to gather in either of our picnic areas or elsewhere on our grounds, let [Lisa](#) know the date and time. Note that the building and bathrooms remain locked and will **NOT** be accessible.

Women's Breakfast

All women are invited to meet for breakfast, coffee and conversation at 7 AM each Monday via Zoom until we can once again gather at Panera. Use this [link](#) to join. If 7 AM is too early, join when you are able.

Men's Breakfast

All men are invited to enjoy breakfast, coffee and conversation each Monday morning at 7 AM via Zoom until we can once again meet at Panera. Use this [link](#) to join. If 7 AM is too early, join when you are 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, we'll meet via Zoom at this [link](#). Contact [Cynthia Luke](#) for more info.

Mid-Week Gatherings

Join us each Wednesday at 5:30 PM for an opportunity to share some words, music, and conversation via this Zoom [link](#). Gather together for a while and then go to small breakout groups for further conversation.

Sages Meeting Weekly

Join us each Tuesday at 2 PM for stimulating conversation via this Zoom [link](#). This group focuses on topics facing older adults as well as general conversation. All ages are welcome.



Sign Up for Amazon Smile to Benefit UUC

If you haven't yet set up for UUC to receive 0.5% of the money you spend on Amazon via the AmazonSmile program, here's how to do it. After you sign into Amazon as usual, go to the **Accounts and Lists** pop-down menu and select **Your AmazonSmile**. Your current charity (if any) will be displayed along with the amount you have donated to date via your purchases. To change your charity to UUC, click the **Change charity** button and search for **Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the New River Valley**. Then click **Select**. Your account is now set up for all your future purchases via Amazon. You will receive an email confirming your new choice. Not signed up at all? Please consider doing so.

Lifespan Faith Development

Summer RE

Grades PreK-5

Books and Cooks Volume II introduces UU kids to cultural cooking through books from around the world. Blessings, great stories and delicious food guarantee a great time for our budding sous chefs as they learn to make food from around the world! This summer's program is a brand new collection of recipes!

We will be continuing to have RE at home through the summer. Each Sunday, a new lesson will be emailed to families. It will include a story, a recipe, a meal blessing and other ideas for fun activities related to the culture or country of the week. A great activity for families to look forward to each week.

Click [here](#) to check out the ingredients and supply lists for each lesson.

Books And Cooks Volume II



Cultural Cooking for UU Kids

Date	Book	Blessing	Recipe
June 7	<i>Blueberries, Pancakes and Pigs</i>	Secular	Blueberry pancakes
June 14	<i>Bee Bim Bop</i>	Korean	Bee bim bop (rice & vegetables)
June 21	<i>Microwave Thundercake</i>	Russian Orthodox	Microwave Thundercakes
June 28	<i>Ugly Vegetable Soup</i>	Buddhist	Ugly Vegetable Soup

Children's Story Time

Children in PreK-5th grade are invited to meet virtually on Zoom each Wednesday from 10-11 AM for stories and sharing via this [Zoom link](#).

On-Going Adult RE Programs

Spiritual Aging

Meets the first Sunday of the month (**June 7**), 3-5 PM via this [Zoom link](#)

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.



Anti-Racism Discussion Group

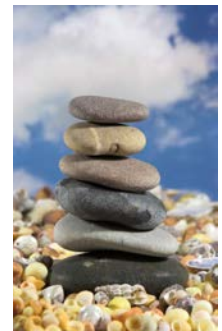
Meets the second and fourth Sundays, 8:30-9:30 AM via this [Zoom link](#)

All are welcome to join our ongoing discussion group on white privilege and racism. Topics are announced via email. Contact administrator@uucnrv.org to join the listserv to receive links to the discussion articles.

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 read the book, *The Lost Art of Scripture* 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](#).



Join our conversation on Sunday, June 28!

Bridging Conversations are a conversational bridge across issues that divide and separate us. They provide an easy structure for engaging in friendly yet meaningful conversation with those with whom we may not agree. These conversations increase understanding, reveal common ground, and sometimes even allow us to discuss possible solutions.

Join us **June 28** after the service at this [Zoom link](#) for our conversation on **Politics in Faith Communities**. The First Amendment of our Constitution states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." Under the Internal Revenue Code, 501(c)(3) organizations are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. In light of this amendment and regulation, and in the context of the political division in our country, how do we conduct ourselves as people of faith who are also responsible citizens? If you are interested in reviewing the conversation guide check it out [here](#). Led by [Rev. Jamie McReynolds](#).

UUC Community News

Update on 1/2-Plate Donations

Thanks to your generosity (see next article on how to donate), UUC continued its practice of helping others in both our community and beyond. The May recipients were:

May 3: Radford-Fairlawn Daily Bread, \$253

May 10: Virginia Diaper Pantry, \$263

May 17: The Mountain, \$178

May 24: UU Service Committee, \$276

May 31: Feeding America Southwest VA, TBA

Watch the weekly announcements and website for the coming weeks' 1/2-plate recipients. Have a suggestion—email [Lisa](#).

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

Need Help and/or Volunteer to Help

Use our online Google form at [UUC Volunteer and Assistance Request Signup](#) whereby one can volunteer to serve as a chat or video buddy, to provide meals, to pick up and deliver meds or non-Kroger groceries, provide technical support, be an online game buddy, etc. plus info on how to get free home delivery or store pickup via Kroger for your groceries and prescriptions from CVS. There is also a place to request help with these same activities plus a space for other. Please volunteer to help others in our congregation AND don't hesitate to request help as you need it. We are here to help!

Join Our UUC Facebook Group

To facilitate more conversation among us, we have set up a Facebook group -- **UUC New River Valley** -- where everyone can post. To make this a positive experience, we'll continue to honor our Congregational Covenant. This is a private group (only members can see who's in the group and what they post) but it is visible (anyone can find the group). Ask to join the [group](#) today!

May Board Mtg. Highlights

- ◆ Member and VT professor Linsey Marr offered recommendations on how and when we could re-open the building and allow use of our outdoor space.
- ◆ Strategic Planning is working on a congregational survey.
- ◆ The Board finalized the proposed (and now approved) budget.
- ◆ Our GA delegates will now be Rev. Jamie McReynolds, Rachel Craine, Helen Renqvist, and Wayne Neu.
- ◆ The Board voted to keep the building closed through the end of June and to revisit the situation at the June Board meeting.
- ◆ The Board approved the [Congregational Public Witness Policy](#).

The next Board meeting will be held via Zoom on Thursday, **June 11** at 7 PM. The [minutes and reports](#) of meetings for the past two calendar years are available.

Questions, Ideas, Complaints for the Board:

Simply send an email to addressstheBoard@uucnr.org.

Annual Congregational Meeting Update

Thanks to all who attended the virtual meeting online or by proxy. Your patience as we ran the meeting via Zoom is greatly appreciated. We have new Executive Board members, a new Trustee, and we approved the 2020-21 budget! Thanks to all who helped make it happen.

For more information on our new officers and the budget, visit the [Annual Meeting webpage](#).



Round the Grounds

Honey Bees Are Busy Bees by Amanda Haynes

What can you tell about a beehive from the outside?

There is a lot you can learn about what is happening inside a beehive by observing it from the outside. The hives on the UU grounds are langstroth hives which consist of a number of boxes stacked on top of each other with 10 vertically hung frames in each box, a bottom board with entrance, and an inner and outer top cover to provide protection from the weather. You may also see a metal strip in between a couple of the higher boxes which is a queen excluder (more on this below).



The size of the entrance is determined by the size and strength of the hive and time of year. The bottom two or three boxes are the brood nest which may be followed by another box with the hive's honey stores. Above these boxes, there may be what looks like a metal strip which is the queen excluder. This prevents the queen from entering the boxes above the excluder so she cannot lay eggs in the frames of honey that will be harvested in the fall.

Some of the things you can notice at the entrance of the hive include the number of bees, their flight patterns, their activity, the color and quantity of pollen that is being foraged, the amount of bee waste on the sides of the hive, and the type and quantity of hive debris and dead bees on the landing board and the ground below. This time of year, you will also notice large, horse fly-sized bees called drones. These are the male bees that mate with queens from other hives in the area.

When it's hot outside, you may also notice a large number of bees hanging on the outside of the hive doing something called bearding. This may be an indication that the colony is cooling the inside of the hive. Sometimes you will also see bees on the landing board fanning with their wings. Among other reasons, they fan to help regulate the temperature and humidity in the hive and evaporate the water content in nectar to turn it into honey.

You can also tell how strong or weak a hive is by watching its activity on the landing board. A strong hive shows increasing numbers of bees coming and going at a steady pace. If there is robbing activity, which can be a sign of a weak hive, you may see bees circling the entrance instead of going straight in, and there may be fighting on the landing board as well as comb debris.

And in Other News by Susan Baker

I admit it – I'm a trespasser. When I'm on UUC's grounds, I am "trespassing" into the domain of a variety of wildlife. We have baby groundhogs who play in the peacock meadow which are cute, regardless of one's feelings about them. There are rabbits, squirrels moving about, birds feeding their newborns or looking for a lover, butterflies flying from flower to flower, ants building their expansive communities, and bees moving to and from the 3 hives. Sometimes I feel like an interloper spying on the activities of wildlife but also realize I am part of this web of life and am fortunate to be one of the caretakers. Life as we knew it may have ground to a halt, but not so with the activity on our grounds. We welcome you to come and explore, relax, and refresh.



Entrance to Memorial Garden



Add your finds to the table

A new addition is a "Nature Speaks" table located near our side entrance. Items on the table have been found on our grounds with the exception of two rocks that have aquatic fossils on them and came from a farm about 20 miles away. Dislodged birds' nests, animal skeletal bones and interesting pieces of wood are currently displayed. We encourage you to add interesting items you find when enjoying our grounds.

Thanks to Bill Patterson's recent tree co-sponsorship, we are adding one more tree to the inventory of new trees on the grounds. These new trees will help reduce UUC's carbon footprint and provide food and shelter to wildlife. If you would like to co-sponsor a tree for \$100, contact [Susan Baker](#). This is a great way to "walk the talk".

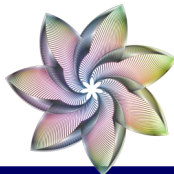
Grounds' wish list: 1) pails with handles (preferably hold 5+ gallons) - simply leave at the side entrance door, and 2) someone to water the potted plants on Mondays.

Message from Our Board, continued from page 2

opportunity to us and successfully hosting *To Our House* for one week in January. I sure hope we can host again when the time is right. Hayden Catlett, Rev. Pam, and Karen Hager made available to us and facilitated a Transgender Inclusion course, which many in our congregation (plus others) took advantage of. Hayden also brought a proposal to the Board to approve the Transgender Support group, which was already meeting in our building, as an official UUC-sponsored group (the Board approved). I know there are many others I am leaving off this list, but these are a few that came to mind, and I hope we make sure to thank all the folks involved in making these and other successful activities happen.

Looking ahead, we know we will still be dealing with much uncertainty for a while, and this is likely to be another challenging year. Yet, there are also some things we can look forward to in the year ahead. I expect in some form or fashion, we will begin to get back into the building during the upcoming year (small steps initially and hopefully full services again down the road). I sure hope we can celebrate when we do! How about some other celebrations? We look forward to welcoming back from sabbatical our newly credentialed Director of Lifespan Faith Development (DFLD), Karen Hager! We are REALLY hoping that we can get a large group traveling to the 2021 UUA General Assembly in Milwaukee where we anticipate supporting Rev. Pam during the Final Fellowship ceremony for UU ministers! There is also a chance Karen will be formerly recognized in a ceremony for newly credentialed DRE/DLFDs (depending on what happens during this summer's virtual GA). So let's plan for a "Posse 2021 to Milwaukee"!

I am looking forward to all of these events as a regular member of the congregation again! While it has been a rewarding couple of years, and I have so enjoyed working with my fellow Board members (ya'll are amazing!), it's time for some personal renewal and putting energy into other activities. I am so appreciative of our congregation and for all the support I and the entire Board have been given by everyone in this past year. Thank you, and I can't wait to see many of you in person in the not-too-distant future!



Monthly Support Groups at UUC

Parent Bereavement

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, **June 8**. Join the group via Zoom. For more info and the Zoom link, contact [Katherine](#) or [Lisa](#).

Caregivers

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 **June 9** at 7-8:30 PM. Join us via this [Zoom link](#). Questions or concerns - contact [Rev. Pam](#).

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 [website](#).

The Adult Group meets on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of each month (**June 11 & 25**) via Zoom from 6:30-8 PM and welcomes all adults who identify under the trans umbrella or are questioning their gender. Contact nrvtrans@gmail.com for the Zoom link.



Unitarian Universalist Congregation Sunday Services June 2020

Virtual Services at 10:00 AM via [Zoom](#)
Religious Education Classes at Home (contact [Rachel](#) for more info)
All are invited to share conversation in small groups following the service by staying on the Zoom link.

Worship Theme for June: Compassion

Join us at 10 AM each Sunday at this Zoom [link](#). Why not bookmark it?

June 7: Rev. Pam Philips, *Active Compassion*. We'll begin our month-long consideration of what it means to be a people of compassion by exploring the root of the word--to suffer with--in relation to the pain and anger stirred by the most recent killings of black men and women. As people of faith, what are we called to do?

June 14: Rev. Pam Philips, *Cultivating Compassion*. The Dalai Lama says, "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion." We'll explore what it means to cultivate compassion for ourselves and others in our lives.

June 21: Rev. Pam Philips, *Compassionate Community*. Several years ago, Karen Armstrong initiated the *Charter for Compassion* hoping to start a world-wide movement to encourage people and religions to embrace the core value of compassion. As we work to create our own compassionate community, what can we learn from such movements?

June 28: *UUA Sunday Worship*. We'll gather together as a congregation to participate in the Unitarian Universalist version of "megachurch"—the Sunday morning worship of the UUA General Assembly. Come listen to the Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, minister of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier, Vermont. We can "chat" during the service and have coffee hour afterward to connect with one another.



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

1301 Gladewood Drive, Blacksburg, VA 24060

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P.O. Box 10116, Bburg 24062-0116 URL: uucnr.org

CALENDAR: June 2020

Staff Virtual Office Hours:

Minister: 9-1 Tu - F; [Contact for appointment](#)

Administrator: [Contact for appointment](#)

DLFD: On sabbatical leave through June 2020

All times are PM unless noted otherwise

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
(All Sundays) N 10:00 AM Worship Service	(All Mondays) N 7:00 AM Women's Breakfast & Men's Breakfast	(All Tuesdays) N 2:00 Sages N 5:00 Meditation	(All Wednesdays) N 10:00 AM Children's Story Time N Noon Conversations on Our Faith N 5:30 Mid-week Congregational Gathering		(All Fridays) N Noon Women's Lunch Bunch (UUC picnic area)	
	1	2	3 6:00 Connection Committee	4	5	6
7 11:40 AM Men's Group N 3:00 Spiritual Aging	8 N 6:00 Parent Bereavement Support Group	9 4:00 Committee on Ministries N 7:00 Caregivers' Support Group	10 5:45 Finance Committee 7:00 Worship Team	11 N 6:30 Transgender Support Group 7:00 Board Meeting	12	13
14 N 8:30 AM Anti-Racism discussion group	15	16	17 4:00 Lay Pastoral Care Synergy meeting	18	19	20
21 11:40 AM Men's Group	22	23	24	25 N 6:30 Transgender Support Group 9:00 July Newsletter Deadline	26	27
28 N 8:30 AM Anti-Racism discussion group N 11:30 Bridging Conversations: <i>Politics in Faith Communities</i>	29	30				

NOTE: The UUC Meeting House is closed at least until June 30. Events listed above will be held via ZOOM unless otherwise noted. See the June UUC newsletter (this file) for details. For ZOOM gatherings, the [Online Calendar](#) will have the ZOOM url. That calendar will be updated as conditions change.