



March 2023



Signs of spring seem to come earlier each year. The little yellow flowers outside my office

routinely peek up through snow, but not this year. Despite some bitterly cold weather, we haven't had much snow this year . . . Yet, saying that probably means that a snowstorm is just around the corner. But isn't that the way? We get tastes of springtime in February and March, only to get a blast of winter after the vernal equinox. Which makes those early blossoms seem all the more brave. Despite the unpredictability of the seasons, the crocuses, snowdrops, and even the daffodils leave the security of the soil to become harbingers of spring – bringing welcome spots of color into otherwise dreary days. They make themselves vulnerable to the weather in order to grow. Their growth requires vulnerability. Come to think of it, so does ours.

Being vulnerable – open to harm – has traditionally been seen as a weakness, something to avoid at all costs. But more recently, researchers like Brene Brown have popularized the notion that choosing to be vulnerable can lead to living more authentic lives and forming deeper, more satisfying relationships. When we open up and let others know who we really are, with all our human imperfections, we can be seen and truly known, which takes courage. When we risk taking opportunities to learn and grow, we can live into who we most want to be. Which takes courage – both as individuals and as a congregation.

How might we choose vulnerability, authenticity, growth, and courage as a congregation? We'll spend March exploring this *Path of Vulnerability*, starting with the kick-off of our annual Stewardship Pledge Drive, honoring the risks the founders took almost seventy years ago, leaving us the legacy of a thriving congregation. We are all invited to consider what risks and commitments we're willing to make – financial, yes, but also with our participation – in this community. [Sign up](#) for one of the many stewardship events to be reminded how much UUC means to you AND to have fun. We'll also have our annual chili cook-off this month, along with the family movie night, for plenty of times to gather as a community. At the end of the month, the Committee on Ministries will introduce a process of giving and receiving ongoing feedback so that we can explore ways we want to learn and grow, to become vulnerable and change.



In the month ahead, consider how you might choose vulnerability, authenticity, growth, and courage. When and where in your life could opening up – to people, to experiences, to yourself – lead to change and growth? Like those first flowers of spring, how might moving down the path of vulnerability lead to a more vibrant, colorful, and authentic life?

In faith,
Rev. Pam



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Staff Office Hours

Minister:
Tues-Thurs 9:00-1:00pm by appointment

Administrator:
Sundays 10:00-Noon
Other times by appt.

DLFD:
Hours by appt.
If you need access to the building please give 24 hours notice by emailing [Ericka](#)

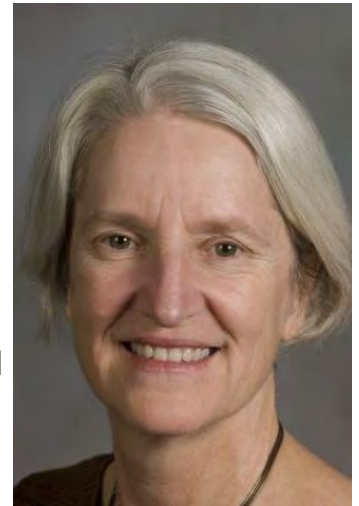
Message from Our Board

Are you feeling the buzz around UUC? I am! With the wonderful Auction behind us, the exciting Stewardship campaign starting, the new Social Action Teams, the multitude of offerings through DLFD, and lots of other activities occurring, there is a renewed focus and vibrancy in the air. I am especially grateful for the Stewardship campaign theme of **Legacy**, which in so many ways connects the past, present and future in our minds.

I am proud that the Board is also part of the buzz. One of my first board meetings four years ago, a member came to let us know that there was an issue with the accessible entrance. The issue was resolved the following week. The prompt action of the board has always impressed me. Last month it happened again. Members of the Environmental Rights and Justice Team came to request attention to the suggestions from the energy audit conducted last year. The auditors suggested three phases of work that could be completed at the UUC and save energy usage. The board was asked to support completion of phase 1, which was not specifically in the annual budget. The board approved funds for that work to be completed, and as we are working on the 23-24 projected budget, hope to include funds for phase 2. We count on you, as members and friends, to let us know your needs and priorities so that we can respond appropriately.

Please consider attending the Dance Through the Decades on April 21. This is the board's offering for the auction and is designed to be family friendly. The cost is \$10 per person and a maximum of \$20 per family. We will have music from seven decades for your dancing entertainment, and some goodies to re-energize. We would love to participate in intergenerational dancing! If you are not signed up already, you can still sign up on the [auction site](#).

- Nancy, President



The Board has approved and endorsed the stewardship goal of \$376,000.



Events & Community News



February ½-Plate Donations

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

February 5: Christiansburg Institute, \$269.00

February 12: Southern Poverty Law Center, \$221.85

February 19: Living Legacy Project: Selma Tornado Relief, \$194.72

February 26: Side With Love, \$158.68

February Board Meeting Highlights

- Delegates have been chosen for this year's General Assembly.
- Board approved the request by the Social Environmental Action Team to fund the first phase of the Vented Attic Upgrade Project.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, **March 9** at 7 PM. The [minutes and reports](#) of meetings for the past two calendar years are available.

Questions, Ideas, Complaints for the Board: Send an email to adresstheBoard@uucnr.org.



Adopt-A-Highway Litter Pickup

Through our UUC Community Service Team, there will be an Adopt-A-Highway litter pickup on Saturday, **March 18**, starting at 9 in the Lowes parking lot. We do this 3-4 times a year, with usually about 15 participants. We would appreciate new volunteers joining our group. You can come as an individual or as a group/family. The more the easier the cleanup will be!

We meet at the Lowes parking lot at 9, socialize with donuts, etc, and then prepare for the pickup. Safety vest and orange trash bags are provided. Bring a mechanical picker upper if so desired. We divide into four teams, each with a section to work. Usually we are finished before 10:30.

If you are interested or would like more information, contact [Bob Stimson](#).

Come join our UUC Community Service Team activity. It is rewarding.

March 12 at 11:30 AM

Second Sunday Potluck

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



Events & Community News



March Food Pantry Donations

UUC's Community Service Team's March suggested food donations for the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry to include the following items: pancake mix and syrup.



Invitation From the Piecemakers

The Piecemakers is a committee of UUC which meets to make quilts and the decorative pieces for the front of the podium and the candle table. The quilts are intended as "comfort quilts" for anyone in the congregation who might enjoy a tangible item in a time of need.

The group is always open to new members (including men!), whether an experienced quilter or someone who might like to learn how to do this craft. If this appeals to you, we meet on the first Thursday of the month at 6:30 and the third Saturday of the month at 10:00 a.m. There are fairly rare occasions when we don't meet, and this decision is often made at the last minute, so if you are coming for the first time, contact co-chair [Polly Stimson](#) or co-chair [Marilyn DuPont](#) ahead of time. Polly and/or Marilyn will be happy to answer any questions.

Chili Cookoff returns on March 17th!

The UUC Chili Cookoff is back after a 3-year absence. Join us on **March 17** at 6 PM for an evening of fun, food, and fellowship. This family friendly event will feature our congregations' members own offerings of mouth-watering chilis and cornbreads. Beer, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages will be served. Childcare will be provided, please contact the [Administrator](#) by March 10.

Enter your meat chili, vegetarian chili, or cornbread as bragging rights and prizes will be awarded for: Best Chili, Best Meat Chili, Best Vegetarian Chili, Best Spicy Chili, the Rootin' Tootin' Award (Chili with beans) and Best Cornbread. Just go online to [UUC Chili Cookoff](#) to enter the competition, to provide finger foods, desserts, or drinks, and to assist with setup and cleanup. Contact [Franklyn Moreno](#) if you have any questions.



It's that time of the year to donate to the WVTF Fund Drive

We begin our spring WVTF drive this month. Our sponsorship announcements on our local Public Radio stations—Radio IQ & WVTF Music—are heard by nearly 200,000 weekly listeners in our part of Virginia. You can give by sending a check (made out to UUC with "WVTF fund" on the memo line). Or you can donate online via Vanco (see our Give webpage and choose WVTF). Thank you for your support of public radio!

Anti-racism at UUC

Volunteer Effort Launching:

Please let [Barbara Taylor](#) know if you would be interested in volunteering for Christiansburg Institute (CI) once a week at a time to be determined between 9 & 5, for about 2 hours each time, on a day Monday- Friday, hopefully on an ongoing basis for a few months. (No ongoing commitment at this point, though.)

If you are interested in volunteering but couldn't come within those parameters, let me know - it may be that some remote volunteer work could be arranged.

We will be reading through 3 file cabinets' worth of interesting records pertaining to CI students who attended from the early 1900's until the school was closed in 1966 and reorganizing them for conservation and better access in the CI archives. The work would take place in Christiansburg, and it may be possible to carpool.



This is a terrific opportunity to contribute to an anti-racist effort. If you're not familiar with CI, ask Barbara - it's a fascinating story.

Anti-Racism Group is Continuing Our Discussion of the 1619 Project:

The Anti-Racism Group is discussing the award-winning book, *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*, edited by Nikole Hannah-Jones, Caitlin Roper, Ilena Silverman, and Jake Silverstein, which is about the inheritance of race and caste that defines America. We meet on the second and fourth Sunday of the month from 1:00 to 2:00 pm on [Zoom](#).

We take one chapter at a time, so that we have a chance to read, think about, feel deeply, and discuss with one another this invaluable history lesson that resonates in all of our lives today. So far, we have read the chapters entitled (1) Democracy, (2) Race, (3) Sugar, (4) Fear, and (5) Dispossession. In March, we will read (6) Capitalism (**March 12**) and (7) Politics (**March 26**).

Learning about our nation's history from the perspective of racial oppression, resistance, and strength is equipping us with more informed ways of showing up for our nation's dialogues about race and caste. Our March conversations are co-facilitated by Katherine Allen and Annette Burr. All are welcome to attend! Please join us, even if you haven't had a chance to read the chapters. We are learning from each other.

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

We hope you will join us!



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@uucnrv.org.

Women's & Men's Breakfasts

All women and men are invited each Monday at UUC for coffee, breakfast (bring your own), and conversation with the men gathering from 7-9 AM and women from 7:30-9:30 AM. The two groups meet separately. Join in when you are able.

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.

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](#).

The Community Service Team is looking for Volunteers!



If interested please see more information [here](#) about upcoming events and please continue to check the "Wider Community Doings" section in the weekly announcements.



Irene Peterson and Crosby Houston run bingo for Fairview Home residents Feb. 20.



Sally Bohland helps Fairview Home residents play bingo.

Feb. 18.

Join the fun!

Stewardship: Creating Legacy

My first involvement with UUC Stewardship was years ago when Marilyn DuPont was chair of the Committee. I received a phone call from Frank DuPont asking if I would consider being a steward and I listened as he explained the role – reaching out to congregants, asking about their concerns, talking about UUC activities and aspirations, and lastly, asking for a pledge. I heard “asking for a pledge” and said to myself, “No way can I do that!” Then, after some hemming and hawing, I told Frank that, yes, I would be a steward because, well, you just can’t say no to Frank.

At the end of the pledge drive, Marilyn asked for feedback from stewards on how it all went. I sent her a couple of thoughts based on my experience and she replied to say those were good comments and would I like to serve on the committee. I cringed and searched for any good reason why I would be a terrible committee member but in the end, I said yes, because you can’t say no to Marilyn either.

As a raw recruit in my first committee meeting for the new pledge year, Linda Powers, the chair at the time, turned to the group and said, “The first thing to do is elect a new chair and it should be one of our new members.” As one of only two new members, this statement set off all sorts of alarms. After a long staring match between Wayne Neu (the other new recruit) and me, I blinked and thus became Stewardship Chair. I was terrified, but it worked out okay because Linda and Joe Powers patiently shepherded me through everything. On a personal level, my involvement in stewardship grounded my own experiences at UUC and made me appreciate so many different aspects of the programs our stewardship supports – listening to my wife, Mary Ann, in the choir, watching my son, Finn, grow through RE, teaching in the OWL program, and feeling my mind settle during services.

In that long preamble, which feeds into the theme for this year, *Honoring and Creating Legacy*, I mentioned five members of the UUC who have helped build our legacy. And even though I never would have believed stewardship would become a key role for me at UUC, I like to think my work there is also a small part of the UUC legacy that we carry forward. Importantly, I came to realize that the annual Stewardship Campaign is existential; without a financial foundation we cease to exist. And by “we” I mean not only the bricks, mortar, and utilities, but the programs and all we do within our own walls, as well as in the community and beyond. This is how it has been since 1956 when the original seven families applied to the American Unitarian Association for a charter. And I have faith that it will be that way for many decades to come. Let’s make sure our stewardship in 2023 becomes a part of our own legacy for the future.

The Official Stewardship Kickoff is **March 5**, but “Early Bird” pledging is open now and everyone should have received a Pledge Reminder postcard. Also, [read about](#) and [sign up](#) for one or more cool Stewardship Events. Later in the pledge drive, stewards will be contacting people who have yet to pledge at that point. As always, we are looking for stewards to help with the 2023 campaign. It’s an important and rewarding experience and I promise we won’t make you chairperson!

Andy Roberts,
Stewardship Committee



MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUPS AT UUC

***New* Surviving Spouses Support Group**

Surviving Spouses will meet at 2:00 pm in the UUC Library on the 2nd (**March 14**) & 4th Tuesday (**March 28**) 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.

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

Caregivers Support

UUC hosts a monthly support group for caregivers to share their experiences and challenges. The group meets on the 2nd Tuesdays of each month (**March 14**) from 7-8:30 PM via this [Zoom link](#). Questions or concerns - contact [Rev. Pam](#).

NAMI Support

Connections Support: Persons living with a mental illness are welcome to join this NAMI support group on the 1st (**March 6**) and 3rd Monday (**March 20**) of each month from 6-7:30 PM. Contact [Kimberley](#) for the Zoom link or for more info.

Family Support: Family and friends of persons living with a mental illness are welcome to join this NAMI support group on the 3rd Wednesday of each month (**March 15**) 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. Two support groups meet monthly, and both groups are sponsored by UUC.

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

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



Lifespan Faith Development

Family Fun and Movie Night



Matilda—Friday, March 31, 6-9pm

The larger-than-life tale of a little girl gifted with genius intelligence and magical powers - which she uses to survive her self-absorbed parents and an evil private school principal. A subversively charming family hit!

Come to UUC for a fun Matilda-themed evening. The fun starts at 6pm with food and crafts. The movie *Matilda* (PG—1996) starts at 7pm.

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

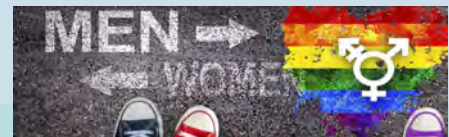
[Register Here](#)

The YRUU will be attending the Trampoline Park this month, date TBA. The Middle School Youth Group is planning to go to the Christiansburg Aquatic Center and Pizza Inn this month.

Adult RE Programming

Transgender Inclusion in the Congregation: This 6-session workshop by Transforming Hearts Collective, focused on helping our congregation to be fully inclusive, and affirming of, the full breadth of gender diversity will finish this month. Missed it? It is also available online. Contact [Rachel Craine](#) for more information.

Mondays at 7pm, library/Zoom



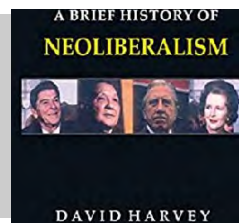
What Moves Us: A 10-session course by Thandeka, "What Moves Us" is a course in both Unitarian Universalist history and theology, exploring the voices and spiritual experiences of historical and contemporary UU theologians, and how their experiences resonate within our own lives and theological understandings.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

Wednesdays at 7pm on Zoom

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

Neoliberalism Book Discussion: Jim Bohland will lead a discussion of the book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, by David Harvey. [Sign up here](#)

Sunday March 5 and 12, 11:30 am-12:30 pm, Room 5 (downstairs) and on Zoom



Spiritual Practice—Zentangles and Mandalas

Sunday, March 19 at 1 pm

Explore the meditative practices of drawing and coloring led by Ministerial Intern, Anna Tulou. Great for people of all ages. [Register here](#)



On-Going Adult RE Programs

Sunday Circle

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

March 5—"What do you do with an Idea?"

Sally Bohland will talk about the beginnings and the evolution of the Montgomery County Christmas Store from 1982-present. The Montgomery County Christmas Store (MCCS) is a non-denominational, all-volunteer, community-wide, non-profit organization that assists eligible low-income individuals and families in Montgomery County during the Christmas Season by providing a shopping experience characterized by choice and dignity.

March 19—"LGBTQ+ rights in Montgomery County Public Schools"

Rachel Craine will present a brief overview of laws and policies in Virginia and MCPS that are affecting trans youth in particular. A panel of youth from Christiansburg and Blacksburg High Schools will share their experiences speaking before the school board and organizing for LGBTQ+ rights in their schools.

Anti-Racism Discussion Groups

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

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

Meditation Group

Meets Tuesday 5:00-6:00 PM

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



Conversations on Our Faith

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

Join our conversation as we read *The Great Transformation*, by Karen Armstrong. All are welcome, even if you have not read the chapters of the book under discussion. To learn more, contact [Tim Pickering](#).



'Round the Grounds

By Denise Martin

"Beauty surrounds us, but usually we need to be walking in a garden to know it." Rumi

The Hellebores have started to bloom, those first harbingers of spring. The giddiness we feel when we first come upon them helps carry us through those last days of winter. What better way to celebrate the coming of spring than to start planning for the Big Event!

This year the *Big Event* will be held on **April 1**. (no fooling) 10:30-2:30. We'll have approximately 20 cadets coming to help us wake up our grounds and get it ready for the new growth. What does it take to prepare the grounds? Lots of moving mulch and woodchips, putting a fresh coat of paint on the benches, pulling the invasive vines, and preparing the earth for the new flowers to come. Not your cup of tea? We also need people to donate food (cookies, cupcakes, salads) and to help with set up and clean up. Still not your cup of tea? How about donating money for pizzas to feed all those young cadets and the slightly older workers who reminisce about the days when they used to be able to work like that.

If you'd like to volunteer for the Big Event or to bring food, please use this link to access the Signup Genius. [Big Event Sign Up](#) If you'd like to donate money for pizza, please contact [Denise Martin](#).

We all love our grounds because they reflect the care we have for our community and for our ourselves. Most of us have taken a walk around at least part of the grounds and marveled at the beauty. Have you ever thought about what it takes to sustain this amazing space or how you could be a part of helping to nurture the garden? We are always looking for volunteers to help in whatever capacity suits them. Whether you have lots of time or just a little, there is something you can do to help if you're so moved. Talk to either [Denise Martin](#) or [Susan Baker](#) if you're interested in finding out more.

"Live Simply; Bloom Wildly." Unknown



Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Sunday Services March 2023

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

March 5: Honoring & Creating Legacy, Rev. Pam and Worship Associate, Denise Martin.

We'll begin our journey down the Path of Vulnerability by acknowledging the risks taken by the founders of our congregation and exploring how we might do the same for those who come after us. Our guest musician will be vibraphonist Brian Peters.



March 12: In Trust, Ministerial Intern Anna Tulou and Worship Associate, Ellen Plummer.

Vulnerability takes courage, as we open ourselves up not only to connection and growth, but also sometimes to harmful experiences. In our desire to live our lives authentically and to encourage others to do the same, how can we better understand what is needed to minimize the potential for harm and maximize our deepening connections? Join us as we explore the concept of trust.

March 19: Unchosen Vulnerability, Rev. Pam and Worship Associate, Cynthia Baute. We can choose to be vulnerable, particularly with people and groups with whom we have created relationships of trust. But we can also have vulnerability thrust upon us by circumstances outside our control. What can we learn and how might we prepare from those periods of vulnerability?

March 26: Speaking the Truth in Love, Rev. Pam and Worship Associate, Earle Irwin. Join Rev. Pam and members of the *Committee on Ministries* as we explore ways to openly share our thoughts and feelings about who and how we are together so that we can live into our mission and vision.

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.