



Newsletter

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September 2022

A Message from our Minister
Rev. Pam Phillips

September - the beginning of the new school year, the new church year - always brings with it a sense of promise. What new friends will we make? What new things will we learn? As a long-time teacher, I never lost that sense of newness in September. Each fall, I would meet a new group of students with whom I would travel through the year. Everyone would have a blank slate and the opportunity to leave behind what didn't serve them anymore - bad habits or attitudes that had bogged them down the year before. A fresh start.

This new "church" year at UUC feels like those new school years. While I don't have a new class of students, I find myself with a whole new slate of co-workers. Many of you already know our new full-time Director of Lifespan Faith Development, Rachel Craine, from her excellent work as LFD assistant. It's exciting to have a new partner in collaboration as we think about the year ahead in faith development. Many of you may have met our new Administrator, Ericka Kelly, who brings with her a fresh perspective and positive outlook. The newest member of our team is Ministerial Intern, Anna Tulou, who begins officially this month, but many of you will recognize her from guest preaching and an adult faith development class last winter. Who wouldn't be excited to start a new year with these wonderful folks! What new friends we are making.

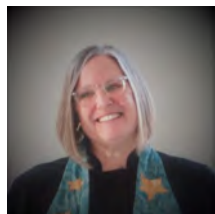
One of my favorite hymns is "Blue Boat Home," and one of my favorite lines in that hymn is *"Drifting here with my ship's companions, all we kindred pilgrim souls, making our way by the lights of the heavens in our beautiful blue boat home."* I love it because when I sing it, I am with

"my ship's companions" - with everyone here at UUC - and I feel a sense of **belonging** (this month's theme). This song also reminds me that I am *journeying* with kindred souls, that we come together to make progress toward spiritual and ethical growth. This year's worship themes, which come to us from Soul Matters Sharing Circle, are framed in terms of paths: *"What paths must we lean into and relearn as we travel together into our complex, challenging, and hoped for future? This is the overarching question our 2022-23 themes invite us to explore! Each theme will lift up a particular spiritual path crucial to helping us birth a new normal worthy of our hopes."* What new things we will learn!

As we consider the year ahead, I encourage us all to take advantage of this time of promise and fresh starts and look for opportunities to make new friends and learn new things. The Worship Team is looking for new Worship Associates to help lead Sunday services. Consider applying [here](#). The Lay Pastoral Care Ministry is looking for new associates who offer a listening ear to those who are navigating difficult times in their lives. Consider applying [here](#). The Growth Through Service Team is ready to have conversations with folks to reflect on their spiritual journey and maybe chart a new course. Contact them [here](#) to learn more or set up a conversation. We're forming new Soul Matters Small Groups that meet monthly for deep listening and sharing about the monthly themes. Sign up [here](#). Read through the newsletter to see if there is an activity you've never tried or a committee you've never joined and consider whether they will help you meet new friends or learn new things.

With excitement for the year ahead,

Rev. Pam



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Staff Office Hours

Minister:

Hours by appt.

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

Nancy Bodenhorn, President



Angela Parrish has recently joined the Board, replacing Alyssa Short who moved to New Jersey. Since this is a one-year replacement for Gene Gardner who moved from an At-Large member to the Secretary, the Board can make that appointment without a congregation vote. Welcome, Angela!

As I write this, we are preparing for our Board Retreat, during which we will establish our covenant and annual goals. I am excited about the activity of leading us through that process, as well as then enacting the goals throughout the year.

One important set of decisions has already been made, having to do with recovering our beloved community as COVID becomes more endemic than pandemic. We will be relying on the CDC Community Levels as an indication of the current impact of COVID on our county. If you are not aware of this resource guide, it is accessible [here](#).

While there have been some anomalies in the reported levels (going from red to green very quickly), this is the best source of current and local data that we have. The Board has voted unanimously on the following guidelines, with an understanding that each individual and family need to use their own personal responsibility to adapt these guidelines to their circumstances. Our entire community counts on each other to be responsible about staying home if you are not feeling well or have had a recent exposure to COVID (or the flu!), and we are proud of the responsibility and commitment to health that our community shares with one another.

The county levels will be reported in the weekly announcements so that you can make your own decisions about joining in person or on Zoom, which will continue as a participatory option.

We will again open up the community for monthly Sunday potlucks after the service when Montgomery County is in the Green or Yellow level. Those who choose to participate will find seating in Elarth, as has been our custom, as well as in the library and outside when the weather is comfortable. This will allow us to spread our more than we used to, as a way to maintain safety. Participants will also need to be masked when they are going through the food line.

We have adjusted the guidelines about singing in the sanctuary during services.

- When Montgomery County is in the Red level, all attendees are required to wear masks.
- When Montgomery County is in the Yellow level, attendees are recommended to wear masks. The choir members can unmask when singing if they took a rapid test and tested negative the morning of their performance.
- When Montgomery County is in the Green level, masking is optional for all, including when singing.

Please understand that these guidelines are arranged with a commitment to flexibility for all, predictability for staff and volunteers, and most of all to maintain a balance between public health and sustaining our community.

Nancy

Upcoming Events & Community News

August ½-Plate Donations

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

August 7: ACCE (Access to Community College Education), \$174.47

August 14: VICC (Valley Interfaith Child Care), \$203.70

August 21: Women's Resource Center, \$138.54

August 28: Micha's Backpack, \$120.55

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

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

Flowers for Sunday Services

It has been two years since we've had regular Sunday flowers, and now seems like a good time to start having them again! As before, people can volunteer to bring flowers (from their gardens, ones they see on their walks, etc.) or natural elements (bittersweet, branches with berries, etc.) as often, or as little, as they would like. NO flower arranging or special talents are necessary - just a willingness to share some natural beauty with the rest of the congregation. If you are interested in volunteering and/or receiving more information about this activity, please contact [Polly](#)



WVTF Fund Drive

UU Sponsorship Announcements on public radio will be back this fall. One of the best ways potential members in western Virginia hear about UU congregations is through our messages on **WVTF/Radio IQ**. We combine sponsorship with UU churches in Roanoke, Lynchburg, and Charlottesville.

Public Radio listeners value substantive and meaningful programming and share many of the values important to UU. Area transmitters reach nearly 200,000 weekly listeners within the largest coverage area of any radio station in Virginia.

The sponsorship contract ended earlier this year, and we are starting a new one this fall. We ask our members to make contributions during the station fund drives in the spring and fall. By donating through UUC, you can support public radio, inform listeners about UU, and (possibly) get a tax deduction – all with one donation.

On **September 4th** we are kicking off the fund drive with our Sunday half-plate offering. You can also send 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).

If you'd like to make a direct pledge to be eligible for drawings for prizes or to have your name announced on the air, please consider splitting your contribution and sending part through UUC.

Thank you for your support of public radio.

-Gene Gardner

Upcoming Events & Community News

Second Sunday Potlucks Are Back!

Everyone is invited to stay following the service on Sunday, September 11, provided Montgomery County is not in the red zone for Covid, to enjoy a delicious meal together plus meet and greet old and new friends. Bring the family, bring your friends – also bring a dish to share – a main dish, side dish, or dessert – large enough to feed double the number in your party. Please include a small card with the ingredients for those with allergies. All going through the line should wear a mask and tables will be set up in Elarth or take your plate to our outdoor picnic area.

Our Potluck Crew is seeking more volunteers to help with set-up, serving and clean-up. Contact [Franklyn Moreno](#) to volunteer or for more info

August Food Pantry Donations

The Community Service Team is collecting food in the bins located near the accessible entrance to UUC. Suggested food donations to the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry in August are as follows: canned green beans, canned corn and canned soup.

The number of food pantry customers has increased greatly in the past 6 months. In January 2022, the pantry provided food for 435 individuals. In June 2022 the pantry provided food for 548 individuals. The customers and volunteers at BIFP appreciate your continued generosity.



Ride Your Bike to UUC

Every 4th Sunday through September is **Bike Sunday**. Ride your bike to UUC, save gas, help the planet, get exercise, and be part of the biking movement.

Bike parking at UUC is available at the bike rack in the parking lot and by the Crescent Garden. Questions –contact [Susan Baker](#).



SAVE THE DATE

Biennial Health & Wellness Fair

Wednesday, September 21
12:00 PM-4:00 PM

Christiansburg Recreation Center
1600 N Franklin Street

For more information visit:

nextthreedays.com or

email: aarphealthfair.nrv.va@gmail.com



August Board Mtg. Highlights

- * *Angela Parrish was appointed to the At-Large position.*
- * *The Policy and Procedures Manual requires the Finance Committee to perform an annual informal audit.*
- * *Kim Feucht has agreed to join the Leadership Development committee.*

The next Board meeting will be hold on Thursday, **September 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 adresstheBoard@uucnrv.org.

Have you considered being a Grounds Zone Captain?

It is imminent! As of October 31, the current two primary grounds workers are retiring. Who will maintain the grounds that are used for wildlife habitat, personal enjoyment, meditation, outdoor weddings and meetings, picnics, cook-outs, yoga and recreation? The grounds have been divided into five zones to reduce the maintenance workload for any one individual. Each zone needs a leader; that's five leaders being needed. Only one zone has been claimed (by Susan Baker), leaving four leaderless, unmaintained zones.



Zone 1: Front entrance and playground



Zone 2: Peacock Meadow and Lark Lane Entrance



Zone 3: Upper lawn



Zone 4: Gardens in primary lawn area



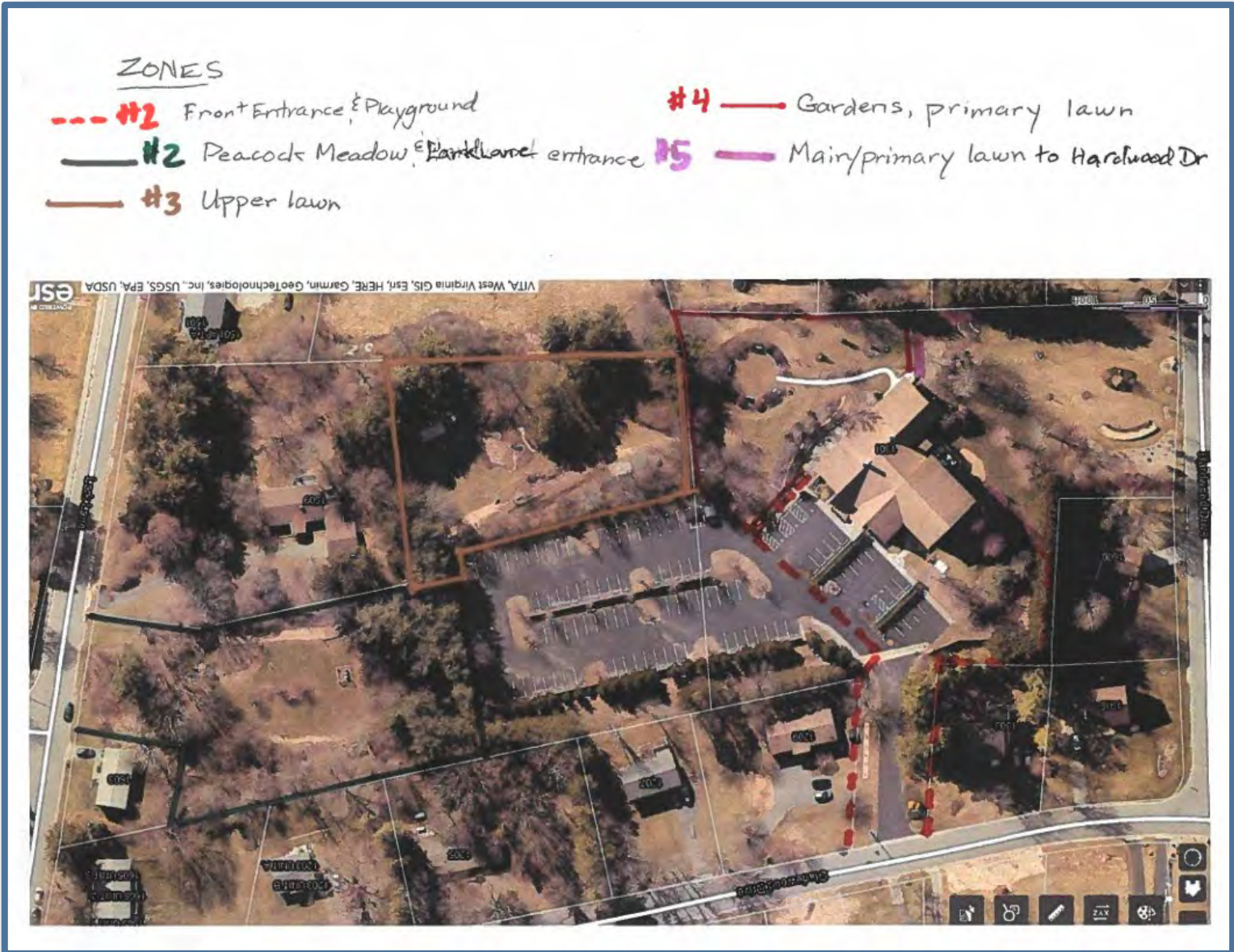
Zone 5: Primary lawn area from gardens to Hardwood Drive



Zone Captains Continued...

The choices before the congregation are: 1) continue the five month long search for leaders and provide them with the resources to do their "magic work." or 2) Let the condition of the grounds and its features deteriorate. To make option #1 happen, please, don't wait, contact [Jim Flowers](#) or [Susan Baker](#)

Birdseye view of grounds and zones



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 (Universal Unitarian Young Adults) meets 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@uucnrva.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.

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](#).

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 (**September 12**) 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 (**September 13**) 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 (**September 5**) and 3rd Monday (**September 19**) 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 (**September 21**) 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 (**September 1**) from 7-8:30 PM and 3rd Saturdays (**September 17**) 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 **Youth & Families Group** meets on the 4th Tuesdays (**September 27**) from 6:30-8 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 <https://heshezewe.org/contact/>

Lifespan Faith Development

Children's RE—Begins September 11!

We are excited to offer a full range of children's classes during the service this year. Children will start at 10am in the sanctuary and be "sung down" to their classes.



PreK—The Rainbow Connection

An introduction to the seven UU Principles for preschoolers, illustrating the values that all parents wish to instill in their children, such as respect, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, responsibility and good citizenship.

Grades K-1—Picture Book UU

Based on the best picture books for teaching young children about the love, reason, tolerance and good works that make up our faith, this class teaches our younger UUs the art of self-expression, to value individuality, to think for themselves, and to understand that everything is connected.



Grades 2-3—CartUUs

Unitarian Universalist values through the animated short films of Pixar and Disney. Award-winning short films, great discussion and a wide variety of activities combine to make this a fun class for kids!



Grades 4-5—Harry and UU

Based on J.K. Rowling's popular *Harry Potter* books, this class encourages the development of a social conscience, while allowing students to engage in fun wizarding activities. As members of Dumbledore's Army, the class will fight seven real-world horcruxes.



Middle School—Building Community

This year middle school will spend half their time on youth group activities, and the other half pulling from the Fifth Dimension and D'Oh God II curriculum. The focus will be on building community and discussing values through *Twilight Zone* and *Simpsons* episodes. Once a month they will meet outside the Sunday service time.

Coming of Age—This special program pairs 8th graders with an adult mentor to prepare for the transition from childhood to adulthood. This program emphasizes self-awareness and confidence-building, as well as service to our Congregation and to the community. It culminates in an affirmation ceremony and in the writing of personal credos.

YRUU—Our high school youth group, Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU), is an opportunity for all interested youth in grades 9-12 to have fun, share spiritual interests, and serve others. Meetings are held weekly on Sunday evenings, 6-8pm.

The UUC Nursery is Open: Nursery care will be offered every Sunday for our youngest friends.

On-Going Adult RE Programs

Anti-Racism Group

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 dldf@uucnr.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 book, *The Book of Hope*, by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams. All are welcome, even if you have not read the chapters of the book under discussion. To learn more, contact Tim Pickering.



Sunday Circle

Will resume regular meetings in October

Community Conversations

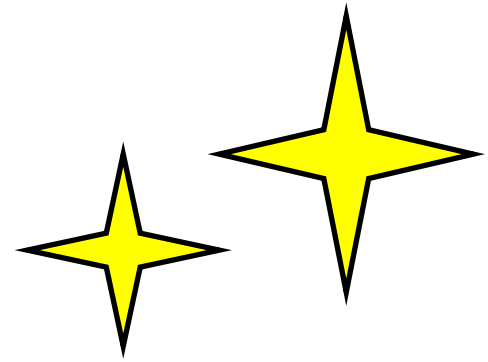
Sunday, September 18 from 11:30-1:00pm

Immigration has become a flashpoint in our politics. It is highly personal for a wide variety of reasons. This conversation is an opportunity to just listen to each other's experiences around this issue. Increased understanding can be a foundation for better relationships and even solutions.



AROUND THE GROUNDS

By Susan Baker



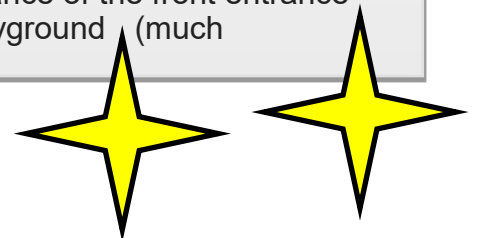
A Round of Applause Please!

Two volunteers deserve applause for their weekly mowing – **David Warner** and **Daniel Volger**. For at least four years David has held “the monk mower” together with wire and help from Joe Powers; the mower has finally “bitten the dust”, but fortunately David is still on the scene. Daniel keeps up the appearance of the front entrance and playground (much



Save the Date:

It's time to think about the **“Put it to Bed” fall workday**. Plan on helping **Saturday, October 22, 9:30-12**. Pizza afterwards! We have three annual grounds workdays and they are highly productive because of the enthusiastic volunteerism of the congregation (all ages). We need your continued support for these events to keep the UUC grounds in good condition for multiple uses. A sign-up genius will be available in October, but please put the date



The Search Continues...

We have the ongoing crisis of needing a leader for each of the five zones of the UUC grounds. This is, at minimum, a year commitment effective November 1, 2022. In addition to the need for zone leaders, there are special needs that require only periodic attention – weed whacking slopes around the large parking lots, trimming the hedge row that runs along the uphill side of the main grounds area, spring and fall mower maintenance, inspection of two detention ponds (inlets and outlets), as examples. [Jim Flowers](#), Grounds Ministry Chairperson, will be thrilled to answer question and explain tasks in greater details.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation Sunday Services September 2022

Services are now in person at UUC and virtual via [Zoom](#).

September's Theme...

Welcome to the path of

Belonging



Join our dual-platform service
each Sunday at 10 AM

both in person at UUC or via this [Zoom link](#).

September 4: Coming Home to Ourselves, Rev. Pam with worship associate Ellen Plummer. We'll begin our month-long exploration of being on the path of belonging by starting at the core-ourselves. What does it mean to belong to oneself and how does knowing that help us in the world?

September 11: Where The Spirit Leads, Rev. Pam with worship associate Heather Nicholson. What does it mean to belong to a spiritual community? The answer may be different for each of us, and different for each of us over time. We'll explore the myriad ways of belonging to UUC and consider where your spirit may be leading you.

September 18: There's a Place for (Us), Anna Tulou with worship associate, TBD. Before we can belong, or others can belong with us, space must first be made and then held. How do we create and hold space, so that belonging can occur?

September 25: Belonging to the World, Rev. Pam with worship associate Gretchen Luke. What does it mean to belong to the interdependent web of life? We often think of the responsibilities it brings, but how might belonging to the larger world also benefit us?

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.