



Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Newsletter

Summer 2024

1301 Gladewood Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060
Website: www.uucnr.org
E-mail: info@uucnr.org
Phone: (540) 552-9716

A Message from our Minister

Rev. Pam Philips

We began the month of June with a bang, ordaining, along with the UU Church of Roanoke, our ministerial intern, the now Reverend Anna Tulou. This was the culmination of two years serving as her teaching congregation, and it was a joyous celebration. We send her off to Richmond, where she will serve as assistant minister at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, with all our love. See photographs and the order of service [here](#).

The next day during the Sunday service we honored the recipients of the first Isabel Berney Award for Excellence in Service – read about the honorees [here](#). Afterwards, during our [Annual Meeting](#), we approved the slate of new board members and the proposed budget. It was a packed two days!

As luck would have it, June's theme is the **Gift of Renewal**. As I shared in my sermon on June 2nd, this is especially apt as I begin a time of personal renewal – enjoying a two-week “staycation,” followed by attending our annual UU ministers gathering and then the UUA General Assembly (both all-virtual this year), and then embarking on a three-month sabbatical. We are just finishing up seven years of shared ministry together, a time punctuated by COVID, the shutdown, and then coming back to worship and gather in-person and virtually. Which means it is a good time for me to let go of ministerial responsibility for a time to rest and recharge. I'll spend some time traveling with Jamie – out west to visit friends, to my favorite lake in the Columbia River Gorge, and to Italy to visit my sister – but the rest of the time I'll be enjoying time at home, restoring my spirit by reading, playing, gardening, and walking in the woods.

Before I leave, I'm excited to share the UUA General Assembly Sunday worship on June 23rd in the sanctuary. This annual service is what my husband loves calling a UU Megachurch – with UU's all over the continent coming together to hear excellent preaching and powerful music. This year, the service will be led by Rev. Molly Housh Gordon, who serves our congregation in Columbia, Missouri. She asked her colleagues to send in photos of their chalices and videos of congregants passing yarn to each other (like we did in the fabulous youth-led service last month), so you should see our chalice and some familiar faces during the service. If you can't make it to UUC at 10:00, you can [watch the service livestreamed](#) that afternoon at 1:00.

I'm so grateful to know that life at UUC will continue to be full and rewarding in my absence because so many people are willing and eager to take charge of all that needs to be done. Most of the social, spiritual, and conversation groups will be continuing through the summer. Check the [calendar](#) for times and places. The worship team will be making sure our Sunday services are spiritually nourishing, supporting guest speakers and ministers who will bring fresh ideas and perspectives. The Lay Pastoral Care Ministry will be available for pastoral needs. Rachel Craine, director of lifespan faith development, has not only planned fun-filled RE classes for children through 5th grade, but also monthly after-service picnics for all. Check out what LFD has to offer [here](#). (We still have room for summer RE volunteers – a great opportunity to find out how much fun it is to spend time with the youngest members of our faith community). Administrator Bekah Parker will be updating the directory, which you will be able to request by July 1st using this [form](#). You can also use forms to send [announcement requests](#) and [requests to reserve spaces for gatherings](#).

If you have questions or concerns about whom to contact during my time away, you can find all the information using a Sabbatical Update link that will be posted to the [Message from our Minister webpage](#) before June 24th.

I wish for all of you a season of Renewal – time for rest, relaxation, joy, and fun – and I look forward to being with you all in the fall!

With love and gratitude,

Rev. Pam



Contact Information

Minister Rev. Pam Philips
540-252-9156
minister@uucnr.org

President:
Fred Piercy
540-818-4935
president@uucnr.org

President Elect:
Laura Robinson

**Director of Lifespan
Faith Development:**
Rachel Craine
540-392-8449
dofd@uucnr.org

**Administrator/
Newsletter/Website:**
Bekah Parker
540-552-9716
administrator@uucnr.org

Pianist:
Jared Gibbs
pianist@uucnr.org

Choir Director:
Ella Kromin
choirdirector@uucnr.org

**Lay Pastoral Care
Ministry:**
LPCM@uucnr.org

UUC Website:
uucnr.org

UUC Office Phone:
540-552-9716

Staff Office Hours

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

Administrator:
Tues 9-4 and select
Sundays

DLFD:
Hours by appt.

If you need access to
the building, please
give 24 hours notice
by emailing [Bekah](#)

Letter from the Board

By Fred Piercy, UUC Board President

In this brief report, that was also presented at our congregational meeting on June 2, I will share a few of the things that the UUC board has been up to this year.

1. The board, with the help of the finance committee, has developed and brought forward to you a budget very close to our goal of \$379,000 that supports the healthy function of our church and which is consistent with UUC values and mission. I am delighted to report that pledges received so far have brought in 99.23% of our proposed budget, which is great. The budget covers a lot of needs, but I'll focus on several important personnel ones: We wanted to bring a fair and significant salary increases for our minister and our Director of Lifespan Faith Development, and an increase in five additional hours of support for our newly hired administrator. More on this in a few minutes.
2. On October 25 of last year, Rev. Pam, Laura Robinson, the board president elect, and I held a meeting of 17 past presidents of the UUC, an impressive group, and learned a lot from them. One bit of feedback was that they encouraged us to be more visible as a board in what we do and who we are. That is part of the reason for this report.
3. In the spirit of being better acquainted with the committees in the UUC, their needs, and to encourage better communication among us all, the board invited a number of committee chairs and members to come to our meetings this year to provide feedback to us. These committees included the Auction Committee (Chris Long and Ally Dehoff), the Committee on Ministries (Ashley Dugan and Toni Cox on the evaluation of Rev. Pam; Jane Keppel-Benson, the evaluation of the grounds), Endowment Committee (Bill Baker), Connections Committee (Pauletta Copenhaver), the Right Relations Committee (Nancy Bodenhorn), and the Lay Pastoral Care Ministry (Jane Mahone). We will also meet next week with Sara Dalton, who will represent the Social Justice Team of the Social Justice Team.
4. We also sought feedback on a number of important things. For example, Dick Luke and Jamie McReynolds met with the board to provide feedback to us on their experiences with capital campaigns. Similarly, Rev. Pam did research for us on the best practices of UUC congregations in using or not using unrestricted reserve funds.
5. We developed and initiated the first annual Isabel Berney Award for Exceptional Service. As you learned earlier this month, the winners were Pauletta Copenhaver, and Cynthia and Dick Luke. Read about the honorees [here](#).
6. We reaffirmed our commitment to move forward on new playground equipment (first proposed in 2013), but in an incremental manner. This year a total of \$4,614 was approved by the board and allocated toward playground improvements.

Continued on the next page.....

Letter from the Board Cont'd

7. We approved a recommendation from the finance committee for a significant replacement and upgrade of our AV sound system. Similarly, we approved a heat pump system to provide better heat in the nursery and library, and met with Liz Crane, who has kept us aware of the substantial physical needs of the UUC.

8. We unanimously supported a public witness statement on defending democracy brought to us by Jim Bohland, Bob Stimson, and others. We are delighted that this work has expanded to important initiatives both within and outside our church. (The past president group encouraged the church to take more public stands on important issues. I think that the defending democracy initiative is the very kind of thing the past presidents had in mind.)

9. Finally, and this may seem like small potatoes, but it isn't: The board adopted an additional organizational chart that better clarified and affirmed how both the board and the minister are guided by the congregation and the mission, vision, core values, and covenant that the congregation develops and agrees upon. Put a different way, this chart led to an important discussion and captures well our ideal as a board: What we do is not all about us, but is about us being faithful servants to the will of the congregation, guided by a mission and values that are bigger than any one of us.

These points are illustrative of the work the Board does. If you are interested in knowing more, or if you have trouble sleeping, all board meeting minutes are available on the [UUC website](#).

One last secret about the board: Our work is meaningful and (most of the time) fun. If you get the chance to serve on the board or a committee, I highly recommend you do so. You receive every bit as much as you give.



Stewardship Campaign a Success



As another stewardship season draws to a close, we can look back over a fun and successful pledge drive in 2024. Thanks to all of YOU reading this article, the total pledged as of today is \$376,072, received from 181 pledge units*, toward our overall goal of \$379,000. This represents 99.23% of our goal – an amazing result! To put this in context, this is 7% higher than the total pledges received last year. The congregation is thriving.

The 2024 stewardship season began with a rousing Pledging Party Brunch, attended by 130+ UUC members and friends. To the tune of Wayne Neu's lovely baritone voice, singing "Expenses Keep Rolling Along", people filled out their pledge cards and wrote some of the things they love about the UUC on paper hearts, in keeping with the 2024 stewardship theme of "Love at the Center". People were also able to join the brunch online to be a part of the kickoff celebration. Pledges received that day totaled 56% of the goal for 2024.

After the brunch, the pledge drive continued with testimonials, tongue-in-cheek videos by the Stewardship Committee, featuring the "Fanged Steward", and stewarding by the 12 wonderful people who volunteered to act as stewards. By the time the Board convened to finalize the budget on May 9, pledges totaling approximately 98% of the goal had been received.

A last-minute challenge was issued by Mary Ann Hansen, offering Danish pastries to the first five people AND the last person who would push the total to within \$1000 of the goal; then she would contribute the last \$1000. The congregation came within \$1928 of meeting this challenge. Mary Ann has volunteered to leave the challenge open, so that if additional pledges bring the total to \$378,000 before July 1, she will honor her challenge.

To read more about the pledge drive and to view videos recorded during the 2024 stewardship season, please refer to the website: <https://uucnrv.org/members/uuc-stewardship/> and click on the Stewardship 2024-25 link.

Meet Our Newest UUC Members

Hello.



Cindy Barden grew up in Blacksburg, then left for 20 years for school and career, returning to the area in 2003 to start a new career. Cindy is now a diabetes educator at Carilion New River. She lives in Christiansburg with her partner, Shirley, and dog, Maya. Her happy place is in the woods, and she loves to play outside.

As for her religious background - as a child the family attended the Methodist and Episcopal churches. However, in high school she became disillusioned with church and once in college stopped participating. In the past several years she has been on a spiritual journey and is lucky to have some very good friends who nudged her to try UUC - and she's glad she did. She looks forward to community, thought provoking conversations, service and a continuing spiritual journey.

Graham and Alicia Glynn were members of UUF Stony Brook (on Long Island) for 10 years and are happy to have found a new home at UUC. They started attending in 2017 but took a covid break for the last 3 years. They have been married for 33 years. Graham is a professor of

Biology and former Provost at Radford University. Alicia has a degree in Health and Human Development and has worked as a recreational therapist. Graham is a native of Ireland and came to the US in 1986 to complete a Ph.D. in Neuroscience. Alicia grew up in Ohio.

They have lived in many states including Michigan, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, New York, and Kansas before coming to rest in Virginia. They have two grown children, Courtney who lives in Atlanta, and Jordan who lives in Roanoke.

They also have one granddaughter and two dogs. For fun Graham likes to make furniture and is a passionate do-it-yourselfer and technophile. Alicia likes to crochet/knit and is a great cook. Together they like to watch movies in their home theater, bicycle, kayak, and shoot target bows.



Courtney Roberts is a criminal defense and family law attorney and is in her early 40s. She enjoys trail running, reading, social justice, and pets. She joined UUC after being impressed with the educational opportunities for her three children, both in regular Sunday morning RE and in OWL classes.

Matt Roberts is a husband and father who, on occasion, practices law. He likes to spend his free time swearing in his workshop. In the summers he loiters in the garden and does everything in his power to avoid pulling weeds. He's "just Matt" to his wife, Courtney.

Ellen Rummel moved back to Blacksburg 1 ½ years ago from Bent Mountain with her husband of 54 years, Bob, to be near family. Her pride and joy are her 3 children and 5 grandchildren who keep her challenged with keeping up with the times. She enjoys gardening, sewing, reading and her pets. A Hokie through and through, she is already looking forward to the next women's basketball season.



Welcome Our Newest UUC Members Continued



Ann Ruple is retired from a career in accounting/finance. She and her husband of 49 years, Steve, moved to Blacksburg about 2 years ago to be near their daughter and three granddaughters. They also have a son in CO. Ann is a fourth-generation native Floridian, a twin and 6th of 10 children. Ann and Steve met at the Univ. of Florida and have lived in SD, TN and CT where Steve worked as an archeologist then as an academic counselor.

Ann has enjoyed participating in women's breakfast, inspired meditation and Soul Matters, among others. Ann is a cradle-to-pandemic Episcopalian (baptized, confirmed and married). In her quest for spiritual growth, she has been drawn to UUC, finding resonance in the inclusive and diverse principles of UUism and messages of love, compassion and service to others. Ann has found a home, a wonderful community and family here at UUC and thanks you for welcoming her into your midst.

Kari Zoller and Zack Burgess moved to Blacksburg from Floyd 3 years ago with their two children, Béla and Scarlett Burgess. Béla will be going into 3rd grade in the fall and enjoys playing with neighborhood friends, doing science experiments with kitchen spices, baking soda, and vinegar, building inventions with cardboard boxes, hot glue, and anything he finds laying about the house, and beatboxing during family dance parties. Scarlett plays at Rainbow Riders during the days and enjoys doing art projects, wrestling her dad and brother in her SpiderMan costume, riding her bike, and eating as much sugar as her parents will allow. Zack grew up in Floyd and is happy to be living in Blacksburg at this stage in his life. He enjoys taking daily saunas, gardening, hiking, graphic novels, and Legos. He is a Licensed Massage Therapist and likes being able to work next door to his wife, Kari, who practices psychotherapy in the same building in downtown Blacksburg. Kari enjoys needle felting, getting shoulder massages from Zack, re-watching "The Office" and "Parks and Rec" episodes, wallowing with the family's cats, "Snuggles" and "Sweet Pea," gardening, and connecting with people through honest conversation. The Zoller and Burgess Family is so happy to be joining the UUC community!



Right Relations Team

We are pleased to announce that the Right Relations Team (RRT) has been selected for 2024-2025.

The team members are Jamie McReynolds, Jean Elliott, Linda Pfeiffer, Molly Lazar, Molly McClintock, and Nancy Bodenhorn.

Thanks to others who expressed interest and/or applied to join the team as well. We are building the website this summer, and will start training in the fall. The referral process and paperwork will be available on the website in the fall.

We look forward to serving the UUC in the capacity of enriching communication processes and transforming conflicts.

Defending Democracy Initiative

Defending Democracy is a grassroots effort that began in class discussions at UUC, led by Jim Bohland, examining the history of left-wing and right-wing populism and current world-wide trend towards authoritarianism. The discussions led the group to a desire to voice our concerns and values via a public witness statement that was endorsed overwhelmingly by those present at a Sunday service on February 24th. On their ballots, members were invited to offer "suggestions for action," which yielded a rich set of over 60 suggestions.

Jim also offered a VT Lifelong Learning Institute class – Threats to Democracy - in March 2024 that, because of its size, was held in the UUC sanctuary. Many in that class had a strong desire to translate knowledge into action. So, a fifth session was added on March 28th focused on a call to action. We were fortunate when Dan Casey, Roanoke Times columnist, heard about the proposed democracy event, interviewed the organizing team from UUC, and wrote an column about it that was featured on the front page of the Sunday edition before the event. So, instead of an expected 40-50 attendees, the Defending Democracy event attracted nearly 150 people.

The Defending Democracy event was advertised as a Convocation and Grassroots Action Event. Over 80% of the attendees were not members of our UU congregation, and some came from as far as the Roanoke and Charlottesville area. The convocation included a historical summary of the project, an exposition on the problem of democracy and authoritarianism, and a powerful 12-minute video available on YouTube titled [The Ten Tactics of Fascism by Jason Stanley](#).

Nearly everyone stayed for the second half, the action portion of the event. Based on the previously compiled 60 suggestions for action, participants convened into four action groups: Voting, Education, Networking, and Policy Advocacy. The following Sunday Dan Casey wrote another column, summarizing the event. Two weeks later we held follow-up Zoom meetings for each of the four groups. Over 30% of the attendees attended a follow-up Zoom meeting with their group, with each group having 7-13 volunteers eager to act.

These Action teams are now working on projects to accomplish doable goals within 2-3 months. These include:

- The Policy Advocacy group is writing a series of letters to the editor [LTE]. Ten people have volunteered to author an LTE or commentary, with several already submitted or published. The group plans to extend the impact of these LTEs by sharing them through contacts, listservs, and social media. Policy work may continue in the fall, such as researching potential legislation to expand voting rights and to limit the impact of money in politics.
- The Education team has pursued ways to increase community understanding through writing, speaking, and collaborating. Members of the team have developed a tri-fold pamphlet to be distributed at events and used as the basis for a standardized PowerPoint slide deck. Three individuals have already volunteered to speak to specific, local community groups. Collaboration in promoting the League of Women Voters (LWV) volunteers is underway.
- Members of the Voting team recently decided not to duplicate voting efforts of seven local organizations and instead encouraged members to work directly with one of those organizations.
- The Networking team has identified over 20 local organizations as potential collaborators and five actions to advance communication. Among these actions are constructing an elevator speech and identifying best practices used by other organizations engaged in democracy advocacy.

The initial goal was to have 4-5 initiatives accomplished within three months. We are on track to exceed that goal, with LWV and VT collaborations to finish in the fall. Following that, individuals and groups will assemble to consider new actions that would be initiated in this summer and fall.

Because of the ongoing energy for this project and topic, the leadership of Defending Democracy is already at work seeking to establish an ongoing organization with a website and identity affiliated with, but independent of, UUC.

We encourage everyone at UUC who is interested in defending democracy to join our efforts! Contact [Jim Bohland](#) or [Bob Stimson](#) for more information, or email [Mark Benson](#) to join in future actions.

Events and Community News



Second Sunday Potlucks

Everyone is invited to stay and enjoy a potluck after the service on Second Sundays. Bring your family and friends, and a dish to share (enough for eight), to enjoy a delicious meal together. Please include a small card with the ingredients for those with allergies. If you're interested in helping with potlucks, please contact [Franklyn](#) for additional information.

The Grounds Casual Work Day is usually the first Saturday of the month.

The maintenance tasks for the grounds are endless so any help we can recruit (without arm twisting) is greatly appreciated. Examples of tasks needing to get done are spray painting additional lawn chairs (placed in the picnic area), moving mulch/woodchips, weeding, pruning shrubs, and spraying identification marks on all the tools needed to maintain the grounds.

Casual workdays are just that –casual, but so important for getting tasks done! Amanda Morgan, the organizer, keeps us focused. If you can help on the casual workday, you can earn “brownie points” by letting [Amanda](#) know in advance that you will be coming. JUST COME!!



Spring ½-Plate Donations

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

March 3: UUJME, \$372.45

March 10: Planned Parenthood, \$290.69

March 17: UUC Pledge Party

March 24: Mo Co Animal Care and Pet Adoption, \$219.35

March 31: Humane Society of Mont Co, \$259.29

April 7: IFP Halal Meat, \$249.51

April 14: Calfee Community & Cultural Center, \$260.43

April 21: UU Ministry for Earth, \$235.04

April 28: SEEDS Blacksburg, \$223.82

May 5: Future Economy Collective, \$214.24

May 12: Blacksburg Rescue Squad, \$229.01

May 19: Imagination Library Mont Co, \$202.88

May 26: Vittles for Vets, \$190.44

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

A few words from Sally Mook,
our current artist on display:



“I've known since the age of 5 that I am an artist. After raising four children with my husband, Dean, and after retiring from my nursing career, I have finally

found time to pursue my passion. I hope you will enjoy looking at my paintings as much as I enjoyed creating them.”



MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUPS AT UUC

Surviving Spouses Support Group

Surviving Spouses will be on hiatus through the summer. If you have lost a spouse or partner and would appreciate support, please contact [Jane Mahone](#), head of Lay Pastoral Care Ministry.

Caregivers Support

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

NAMI Support

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

Family Support: Family and friends of persons living with a mental illness are welcome to join this NAMI support group on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 6-7:30 PM. [Email](#) for the Zoom link or for more info.



Parent Bereavement Support

A community-wide support group for bereaved parents and grandparents who have lost an adult or adolescent child. We come together once a month on 2nd Mondays from 6-7 PM to help one another on our journeys. For more info and the Zoom link, contact [Katherine](#) or [Lisa](#).

WEEKLY GATHERINGS

Women's Lunch

All women are welcome to join together for lunch on Fridays at 11:30 AM at local restaurants or noon at UUC. Check [online calendar](#) for locations and times for the following weeks.

UUYAs

If you're between the ages of 18 and 25, the UUYAs (Unitarian Universalist Young Adults) meet every Tuesday in Elarth Hall from 7:00 to 9:00 PM to play games, engage with the community, and support our congregation. Once a month they hope to have an event away from UUC. For more information, contact uuya@uucnr.org.

Women's & Men's Breakfasts

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

UUC Choir

UUC Choir: All are welcome to join every Wednesday in the sanctuary from 7 to 8:30 pm. No experience is necessary. Choir takes a break from mid-June to mid-August. Please contact [Ella Kromin](#) 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](#).

First Isabel Berney Award for Exceptional Service Recipients



The UUC Board created this award to honor Isabel Berney and to recognize a member or friend of the Congregation for extraordinary service and work in one or more areas of the life of the Congregation over a period of several years. The board received nearly a dozen nominations — so many people volunteer their time and talents to UUC! The decision was so difficult that they decided to acknowledge two recipients: Pauletta Copenheaver and Dick & Cynthia Luke.

Pauletta was cited for her understated service -- never seeking attention or praise, and easily interacting with people in a friendly manner. Her work with the Connections Committee, including organizing Newcomer Orientations and heading up Hospitality, were noted as going a long way towards covering the newcomer integration activities that Isabel Berney used to manage. Her work with the Community Service Team — as co-leader for over ten years and coordinating efforts with the Interfaith Food Pantry, the Women’s Resource Center, the CROP walk, and the Fairview Home — has made her “the face of the UUC” for the church’s charitable efforts in the larger community.

Cynthia and Dick Luke were described as the “dynamic duo,” having served the congregation as both individuals and a couple since they joined UUC in 1995. They have both served as president of the board. Cynthia was recognized for her work with the Mental Health Justice Ministry, Lay Pastoral Care Ministry, and Nominating Committee. Dick was recognized for his work with stewardship and for chairing the capital campaign for expansion of the building, along with lending his truck and carpentry skills. They have opened their home to many in need and lend out medical equipment they store in their basement. They were described as being the “glue” to several on-going activities at UUC. They both “reach out, show up, create magic at the UUC.”

We have a new plaque with the names of all the honorees. Considering all the outstanding nominees this year, it won’t take long to fill it up. Pauletta, Cynthia and Dick will receive UUC chalice suncatchers as a token of our gratitude. Thanks to all those who made nominations this year. You’ll have a chance to recognize more amazing volunteers next year.



Voter Information for June 18, 2024 Primary Election

There is no Democratic primary this June as Tim Kaine is the only Democratic candidate for US Senate Virginia in the fall election.

However, there is a Republican primary in June with five candidates running: [Hung Cao](#), [Jonathan Walker Emord](#), [Eddie Garcia](#), [Scott Parkinson](#), and [Chuck Smith](#). Early voting for the Republican Primary started on May 3.

The following information is from the Montgomery County Office of Elections. Those living in other jurisdictions will want to check with your local registrar's office.

Polling Location

Your voter registration notice will indicate your polling place. Unsure of your polling place? Visit the [Virginia Department of Elections website](#) for information or contact the Montgomery County Office of Elections at 540-382-5741.

Hours

Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

What form of ID do I need to bring to the polls?

Virginia voters are reminded that state law requires all voters to provide an [acceptable form of identification](#) (ID) at the polls. Voters arriving to the polls without ID will be required to vote a provisional ballot and will have until noon on the Friday after the election to deliver a copy of identification to their locality's electoral board in order for their provisional ballot to be counted.

Questions

If you have questions, please contact the Montgomery County Office of Elections at 540-382-5741 or the Virginia Department of Elections at 800-552-9745.

Sample Ballots, Jun. 18, 2024 - Republican Primary Election

[June 2024 Republican Primary](#)

Dates & Deadlines

Jun. 07- Deadline (5pm) to apply for a mailed absentee ballot for June 18 Republican Primary

Jun. 08 - Office of Elections open for in-person early voting, 9am - 5pm
1546 N Franklin St., Christiansburg, VA 24073

Jun. 15 - Office of Elections open for in-person early voting, 9am - 5pm
1546 N Franklin St., Christiansburg, VA 24073

Jun. 18 - Ballot Drop Bags available at each polling site on Election Day

Jun. 18 - Republican Primary, all polling locations will be open from 6am – 7pm. You may not vote at the Office of Elections on election day.

For questions or to offer suggestions, please contact [Sara](#). Your participation is welcome whether for a one-time activity or ongoing involvement.



Lifespan Faith Development

Summer Religious Education

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

June 2—Covenant: We work together to make our classroom a sacred place

June 9—Pluralism: We welcome everyone who shares our values

June 16—Pluralism: We honor many spiritual practices

June 23—Generosity: Generosity isn't always easy

June 30—Justice: We are stronger when we work together

July 7—Justice and Equity: When you see something wrong, speak out

July 14—Equity: Every person is important

July 21—Transformation: We work together to transform our world

July 28—Interdependence: We are all connected to each other

August 4—Love: We show love by what we do



Sunday Fundays: Our Summer Pre-K Program

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

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



Coming Soon in Fall RE—Starts August 18

PreK—Rainbow Connection

Grades K-1—Picture Book UU

Grades 2-3—Superhero Academy

Grades 4-5—Magic of UU

Grades 6-7—Games to Build Community

Grades 8-9—Coming of Age

Middle School Youth Group (Friday nights, monthly)

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

OWL—Sexuality Education for grades 4-5* *OWL for grades K-1 coming Spring 2025

[Interested in Teaching?](#)
[Email Rachel](#)

Still need to register?

[Click Here](#)

Adult RE Programs —Coming in 2024-2025

Date with Death—Are you seeking to explore mortality in community, with less fear and more curiosity; less euphemism and more reality; less conformity and more creativity? If so, this program is for you! Dates and times TBD.

Parents as Tutors—This class will give parents guidance and resources for working with their children as they learn together. Dates and times TBD.

And More!— Watch for a more complete list of programs and sign up links in the fall newsletter. Have an idea for a class you'd like to take (or lead?) email Rachel.

On-Going Adult Programs

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

Topics are announced via email. Email dlfd@uucnrv.org to join the listserv to receive links to the discussion articles. [Zoom link](#).

Meditation Group—Meets Tuesday 5:00-6:00 PM

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

Conversations on Our Faith—Meets Wednesdays 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Bring your lunch and join the conversation, as we discuss a book that deepens our spiritual journey. All are welcome, even if you have not read the chapters being discussed. Group members share their insights and personal experiences and all thoughts and opinions are welcome. Meets Wednesdays at noon on zoom. To learn more, contact [Tim Pickering](#). [Zoom Link](#)

Parent Covenant Groups

Parent covenant groups are taking a break for the summer, but will be forming again in September. If you are interested in being in a group, please contact [Rachel](#) at for more information.

Summer Fun For All Ages



Want to get together with other families and UU friends of all ages this summer? Let's gather at the UUC for a picnic after the service with fun and games for all. Save the dates! Watch email and Facebook for details. **Sundays June 16, July 7, August 4**

Got Books? The YRUU Booksale is a bi-annual event that helps our youth group fundraise for trips. Drop off your book donations to Rachel anytime this summer. Our sale will be **September 15-22**.



Around the Grounds

By Susan Baker



Mother nature has been generous with rain this spring, and, as a result, the gardens at UUC are flourishing! The two pieces of beautiful stained glass mounted on old windows are now outdoors on display – thanks to Bob Stimson for making the hanging frames for the windows. That required a lot of measuring and leveling. Denise Martin and stained-glass artist Mary Ratliff were influential in getting the two windows for our ground’s enhancement. Ellen Rummel and Jill Kiecolt volunteered to be “water angels” – they keep the potted flowers from getting thirsty and are assisted by substitute “water angels”, Nancy and Paul Metz. We couldn’t keep the flowers looking fresh without these critical helpers.

Have you noticed how nice the driveway entrance looks? That’s due to the mowing and shrub pruning being done by Josh Dugan with assist from Denise Martin. Karen Holstein has a slew of pruning tools and she put them to work pruning the fringe trees that are at the entrance to the memorial garden. What a difference that artistic pruning made! She will continue to prune the shrubs in the Memorial Garden. Sally and Doug Pfeiffer monitor the blue bird boxes for occupancy and condition of the boxes. They kindly let the sparrows and swallows keep their nests in the blue-bird boxes. Greg Evanylo has taken on the task of rehabilitating the pollinator garden located in the peacock meadow. That area did not have a caretaker last year so Greg is playing catch-up. Richard Reid is the master beekeeper for the three thriving hives located in the peacock meadow. The bees made it through the winter without any hive collapse. As you have probably surmised, it takes numerous volunteers to keep the UUC grounds a welcoming place for humans and wildlife. That help is greatly appreciated!

Come check out the enlarged picnic area. The feature of the enlargement is construction of a permanent smokeless firepit. Handypersons, Lucas Machi and Ally Dehoff, put in hours to make the attractive and functional firepit a reality. Ally was especially adept at climbing the trees in the picnic area to put up strings of miniature lights – pretty awesome at night! The picnic area with the firepit is one of the most popular outdoor spaces on the UUC grounds. Applause to Lucas and Ally!



Unitarian Universalist Congregation Sunday Services Summer 2024

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

June 9 The Goat in the Pickup Truck - Rev. Janet Onnie and worship associate Cynthia Baute

Join guest preacher the Reverend Janet Onnie as she explores a story that forms the basis for a meditation on change, a byproduct of the renewal process, and offers suggestions on possible mechanisms to meet the challenge of an unknown future.

Rev. Onnie, the Minister Emerita of the Tri-County Unitarian Universalists, Florida (after serving for ten years) has retired to Staunton, Virginia. She is a passionate advocate for social justice issues in cooperation with interfaith partners and allies and is a frequent contributor to newspapers and public forums.

June 16 Renewal or Recuperation? - Victoria Taylor and worship associate Gretchen Luke

Is renewal an opportunity or a mandate? Should we use the opportunity of renewal to craft our futures or is it to clean up our past? What sorts of events or circumstances do we choose to renew from? Victoria will look to ancient traditions as well as contemporary practices for some insight on the opportunity of renewal.

June 23 "Weaving Our Lives" - Rev. Molly Housh Gordon and other UU ministers

We are all tangled up together in a great web of life that is woven with beauty and hardship, love and loss, thriving and struggle. How do we tend well to the weaving so that all of us are held in care? Join Rev. Pam to experience some of Unitarian Universalist's finest preachers and musicians at the UUA General Assembly Sunday Worship Service.

June 30 Trust: reliability, truth, ability, strength - Ellen Plummer and worship associate Denise Martin

We are trustworthy in more ways than we know. What can we do to identify and amplify our trust in each other and in our community? Let's talk together about how we thrive in trust.

The rest of our summer worship services promise a variety of voices, including seminarian Kirstin Fritz, our own UUC Writers Group with a Poetry Service, Virginia UU State Action Network (VUUSAN) Co-coordinator Bill Fogarty, Rev. Doug McCusker, chaplain Jennifer Springsteen, and Rev. Andrew Millard. More information will be posted when available at [Upcoming Services](#).

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.

Hi Friends!

From the Administrator's Desk

I am very excited to be part of the UUC community as the new Congregational Administrator. A Congregant suggested I introduce myself in the newsletter and Rev. Pam agreed, so get comfortable because you are in for a little adventure.

I was born in a little town called Washington in eastern North Carolina. My family has been in that area since kings were giving land grants. I was raised in the Deep South. My father was a minister for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and my mother was a Special Education teacher, among many other things. I am the youngest of 3 girls and used to light the candles on Sunday with bare feet and messy hair. I spent much of my childhood in Montgomery, AL and West Point, MS followed by a move to Great Bend, KS. I graduated with honors from Heritage High School in Lynchburg, VA where I was known as "Big Bekah" as part of my sports accolades.

I was introduced to Blacksburg in high school by a good friend from church camp. That friend is also the reason my wife and I met on Henderson Lawn 24 years ago. Shannon and I celebrated 20 years together this January and will be celebrating our 10-year legal marriage anniversary later this month. Shannon started working at Virginia Tech this Spring and is helping with the First Year Experiences Program. Shannon graduated from VT 16 years ago, so the office has been excited to have an alum and a Blacksburg "local" on their team. Our kiddo, Ellis, is 12 and will be going into 7th grade at Blacksburg New School this Fall. We are lifelong homeschoolers who practice child-led learning, so this is a very big and very exciting transition for us. Ellis is very excited to have found an accepting community and Shannon and I are looking forward to having such a wonderful group of people supporting Ellis on their educational journey.

I graduated from Radford University in 2006 with a BS in Sociology and Social Work and a minor in Women's Studies. My professional work has provided me with experience running a Boys and Girls Club after-school program at BMS, supporting the mental health of children and adults in the NRV, facilitating educational presentations on sexual assault, child abuse, and interpersonal violence to all ages, offering support services to adults and children who have experienced violence, and a handful of other things. I started my own business 11 years ago making beaded Baltic Amber and gemstone jewelry and was able to support my family with my art for a decade.

My family would most likely be considered Hobby Homesteaders and I like to think of myself as a Radical Homemaker. We live out in Hiwassee on the side of a mountain and have enjoyed keeping chickens and ducks for the last almost 8 years. Shannon is the gardener and chicken tender, and I am the bird medic, protector, and cook. Ellis is the animal behavioral specialist and tamed our barn cat into a sweet, cuddly varmint catcher.

It is so wonderful to be reconnecting with our old stomping grounds and finding so many familiar faces and being welcomed by so many new open arms. I look forward to serving the congregation and getting to know all of you. I will be in the office on most Tuesdays and two Sundays every month. The best way to get in touch with me is through [email](#).

~Bekah Parker

