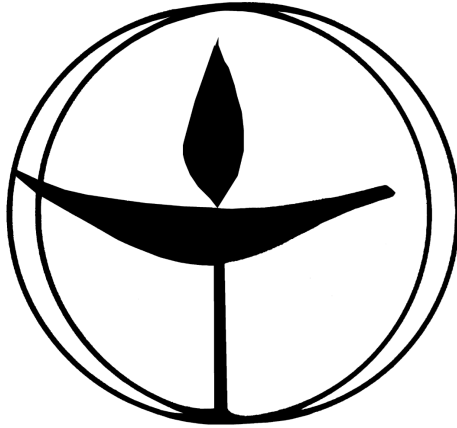


Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Blacksburg, VA.

Prospectus 2023/ 2024



Lifespan Faith Development

Welcome to Lifespan Faith Development at UUC

Unitarian Universalists believe that faith development is the lifelong journey of ethical and spiritual growth that each of us takes. UUC's goal is to provide support for our congregants' personal journeys from cradle to grave.

Beginning in the Nursery, our infants and toddlers learn that UUC is a safe and nurturing congregation. Paid caregivers provide careful supervision in a warm and welcoming environment.

At age 3, preschoolers move into the Children's Religious Education program, which provides age-appropriate religious education classes through grade 8. Our goal is to encourage each child's spiritual growth, a social conscience, and a personal UU identity. UUC does not tell a child what to believe; we support each child in the discovery of their own personal beliefs.

Middle school students can experience further bonding with each other by participation in Middle School Youth Group, which offers fun activities supervised by background-checked adult advisors. In grades 9-12, students may join YRUU, a youth-led high school youth group that meets weekly, with an emphasis on community building and service, leadership development, worship, fellowship, and social activities.

Adults also have opportunities throughout the year to participate in religious education classes. From Sunday morning discussion groups to classes that meet weekly or monthly, adults can explore their beliefs and deepen their faith.

We also offer other, specialized classes throughout the year, including the renowned Our Whole Lives sexuality education program.

We are here to help your family as you learn and explore. We know that each individual, child to adult, will have a unique religious journey, and we are here to support your travels!

~ Rachel Craine, Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Children's Programs

Finding the right religious education program for your child can seem daunting to many parents. Often, parents are seeking a community of shared values, and a way to help children form their own religious beliefs.

The Children's Religious Education program at UUC includes classes on our Judeo-Christian heritage, other world religions, our Unitarian Universalist identity, and social action / justice. We do not teach children what to believe, but help them to discover and travel their own personal paths.



If you are wondering if your child should attend church at all, consider the words of a Unitarian minister from the nineteenth century, Minot Judson Savage:

Parents tell me continuously that they do not give their children any religious training, from the feeling that it is taking unfair advantage of the child. They say, "I propose to let my child grow up as far as possible unbiased." (But) if you do not bias (your children), the first one that (they) meet on the street, or in school, or among their companions, will begin the work of biasing, of the impression of education, for this is a continuous process. Whether you will it or not, it is something over which you have no choice. It is something that will be done wisely and well—or unwisely and ill.

Parents are the most important teachers, but if your values are the same as ours, we can help you with this part of your job.

While here, your child will learn that all big questions have many answers, and that they will need to search responsibly for their personal answers. We will help them in their search as they consider the big questions and discover that there are as many ideas about these questions as there are people.

Goals and Themes

The goals of the RE program are:

- To encourage spiritual growth
- To provide religious literacy
- To help children in the development of their own UU identity
- To encourage a social conscience

There are five themes that are reflected within the RE curriculum:

- Jewish/Christian heritage
- Religions of the world
- UU identity
- Social responsibility
- Concepts of God



Religious Education

Nursery care is offered for infants and toddlers who have not reached their third birthday by September 1st. Nursery involves play and storytelling in a warm, nurturing atmosphere. Our Nursery is supervised by experienced, paid caregivers.

Religious Education classes are offered for preschool through grade 8 students. See page 6 for a listing of current curricula.

Registration

Registration is required each fall for all children and youth age 0 through high school who will be participating in the LFD Program. There is no fee for classes and activities, but families registering are expected to contribute to UUC financially as they are able, and to volunteer with the LFD program. Register online at uucnr.org/education.htm.

Children's RE 2023-24 Curriculum

PreK (ages 3 & 4)

Chalice Children

Based on the premise that children learn best through experience, this program helps nurture spiritual growth, creativity and a sense of community through imaginative activities and rituals such as rhymes and fingerplays. Classes introduce children to concepts such as birth and death, dreams and the natural world.



Grades K-1

Picture Book World Religions



An introduction to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism is provided through a beautiful and engaging selection of picture books, allowing our children to explore the differences and similarities to their own lives.

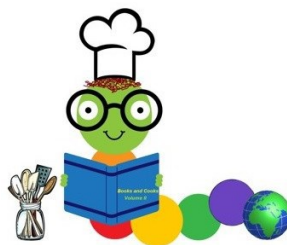
With this first exposure to religions of the world, we allow our children to begin a journey of understanding, tolerance and celebration for the diversity of human expressions of faith.

Grades 2-3

Books and Cooks

This curriculum introduces youngsters to different religions and cultures around the world through stories and cooking.

Lessons incorporate our UU values that encourage us to learn, grow, respect each other, and build a more peaceful world.



Children's RE 2023-24 Curriculum

Grades 4-5

Holidays and Holy Days

Holidays are an age-old vehicle of religious socialization, setting time aside to remember a great person or event, give thanks for life's bounty, or to invoke light and gladness for overcoming darkness and danger, death and drought. Festivities tell a story which children absorb through experiences far more than through words. The class will learn about and celebrate holidays and holy days of world religions throughout the year.

Grades 6-8

Building Bridges

This world religions curriculum introduces middle school youth to the faith traditions and practices of other religious groups in their community. Through classroom discussion and reflection and visits to other churches, the program deepens a youth's understanding of the dynamic, fascinating and varied world in which they live, broadening their knowledge of humanity and emboldening their spiritual search.



Multi-generational Visits with Middle School

Join our middle schoolers as they visit other places of worship this year as part of the *Building Bridges* curriculum.

Judaism: Temple Emmanuel

Buddhism: Dharmapala Kadampa Buddhist Center

Hinduism: Shantiniketan Temple

Islam: Islamic Society of the New River Valley

Christianity: St. Mary's Catholic Church

Christianity: Blacksburg Presbyterian Church

Christianity: Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church

Youth Programs

Grade 8-9 Coming of Age and OWL

Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education is offered in alternate years. Read more about the OWL program on page 12. Offered this year for grades 8-10.

Coming of Age is a special program that pairs youth with adult mentors in the Congregation, 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, culminating in an affirmation ceremony. *Not held this year.*

Teen Teacher Assistants: Open to youth in grades 9-12

Youth in grades 9-12 are invited to join a religious education teaching team as an assistant in the classroom. Youth are welcomed as team members and are a tremendous asset to the program, as the young children look up to them as role models. The teens gain leadership skills while remaining active in the life of the congregation.

The Eight UU Principles in Children's Language

1. We believe that each and every person is important.
2. We believe that all people should be treated fairly and kindly.
3. We believe that we should accept one another and keep on learning together.
4. We believe that each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.
5. We believe that all persons should have a vote about the things that concern them.
6. We believe in working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.
7. We believe in caring for our planet Earth, the home we share with all living things.
8. We believe in working to dismantle racism to build a diverse and beloved community.

Youth Groups

Middle School Youth Group

Open to youth in grades 6-8

Middle School Youth Group (MSYG) is the social component to our Middle School RE classes. The emphasis is on fun, with social activities and social action projects that encourage bonding among participants. Guidance is provided by adult volunteers.



Meetings are held once a month, usually on a Friday evening. Meetings may be held at UUC or offsite. Past activities have included bowling, hiking, bonfires, and a visit to Sinkland Farms. MSYG may also participate in social action projects.

YRUU (High School Youth Group)

Open to youth in grades 9-12



Our high school youth group, Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU), is a youth-led group that allows all to have fun while sharing spiritual interests, and serving others.

Meetings are held Sundays from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Once a month, youth and advisors have an OOCE (Out Of Church Experience) such as laser tag, bowling, tubing, hiking, or other fun activity.

YRUU also participates in service projects, lock-ins at the church, a special coffeehouse fundraiser, and often a regional youth convention(known as a "CON") held out of town. YRUU also leads a Sunday morning service each year.

Youth empowerment is an important goal of YRUU. Teens gain the ability and agency to make decisions and create change in their own lives and in the lives of other people.

Additional Information

Sunday Mornings

On most Sundays, children begin in the Sanctuary at 10am with parents for the first 15 minutes of the service. After "A Story for All Ages", the children and their teachers leave for their classrooms. RE classes last approximately one hour. Parents should pick up their children immediately following the service (around 11:15) and are encouraged to bring them to visit during the coffee hour—children's activities are provided on a table in Elarth Hall.

Visitors

We welcome young guests in our RE classes on Sunday mornings. We ask that a Visitor's card be completed by the adult responsible for the child. To enroll in our RE program, please obtain a Registration Form from the DLFD or the RE Teacher.

Transitions

We know that it can be difficult for some children, particularly those who are younger, to feel comfortable in a new place. Parents are welcome to accompany their children to class for the first few visits to ease the transition to separation.

Attendance

We are here to help you educate your child, but we can't do our part if you don't do yours. It is important to be as consistent as possible in attendance, as familiarity is basic to a sense of belonging and ownership. A child's comfort level and relationship to the UUC community is dependent on their attendance.

Safety Policy

All teachers and advisors involved in ongoing work with minors are required to pass background and reference checks, per UUC policy. Two teachers will be present in each classroom during regular RE classes.

Other Programs for Children & Youth

Chalice Lighters



Our Chalice Lighters light our chalice in the Sunday morning service. Chalice lighting is considered an honor, with Chalice Lighters taking turns serving on Sunday mornings. Training is provided by the Minister. Those interested may contact Rev. Pam or the DLFD.



Children's Offering

Our Children's Offering benefits the Interfaith Food Pantry. Donations of canned goods and cash will be accepted in class. All parents are encouraged to have their children participate.

Learn more at interaithfoodpantry.org.

Our Whole Lives

Our Whole Lives (OWL) is an age-appropriate sexuality education program, jointly developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ.

OWL helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, OWL not only provides facts about anatomy and human development, but also helps participants clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality.

UUC currently offers OWL classes for grades K-1, 4-5, 8-9 and OWL for Adults.

UUC is fortunate to be offer this renowned sexuality education program to our congregants and we encourage you to enroll your child, if eligible.

OWL Schedule:

Fall 2023-Spring 2024: OWL for grades 8-9

Fall 2023: Adult OWL—Young Adult (18-35+)

Spring 2024: Adult OWL—Older Adults (50+)

2024-2025 Year: OWL for grades K-1 and 4-5

A commitment to attend all classes is required to participate in any OWL program.



Our Whole Lives

K-1 OWL

Supports parents in educating children about birth, babies, bodies and families. Parents and children attend classes together and are engaged with stories, songs and activities K-1 OWL promotes dialogue between parent and child for a healthy start to sexuality education. *Not held this year.*

4-5 OWL

Teaches children about the physical and emotional changes of puberty. Participants will examine topics such as values and sexuality, communication and decision making. A short-term optional covenant group will also be offered for parents of children enrolled in 4-5 OWL to allow parents to discuss issues raising a child nearing puberty. *Not held this year.*

8-9 OWL

Models and teaches caring, compassion, respect, and justice. This holistic program moves beyond the intellect to address the attitudes, values, and feelings that youth have about themselves and the world. Unlike many other sexuality curricula currently available, this program is comprehensive and progressive. In an inclusive and developmentally appropriate manner, it addresses sensitive topics that are typically excluded. *Offered this year for grades 8-10.*

Adult OWL

Participants must be age 18 or older.

Using values, communication skills and spirituality as starting points, this program explores sexuality issues for adults of all ages. Adult OWL builds an understanding of healthy sexual relationships, affirms diversity and helps participants accept and affirm their own sexuality throughout their lives. *Offered for Young Adults this Fall and for Older Adults in the Spring.*

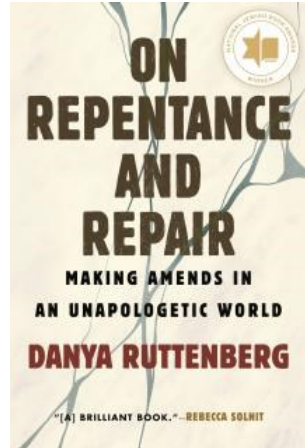
Adult Programs

UUA Common Read Discussion Group

On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World by Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg (Beacon Press, 2022).

This Common Read offers a glimpse into one of our faith's foundational sources, Judaism. Readers explore the call to accountability as we follow Rabbi Ruttenberg into a framework for making amends offered by the 12th century Jewish physician and scholar, Maimonides.

On Repentance and Repair invites readers of any faith to explore practices for accountability that can bring us into wholeness and really make a difference in our personal, community, and national relationships.



Discussion group will meet in Winter/Spring 2024. Learn more about the UUA Common Read at <https://www.uua.org/read>.

Is there a class you would like to see offered?
Are you interested in facilitating a class or workshop?

Email your suggestions to Rachel Craine at dlfd@uucnrv.org

Adult Programs

Building Bridges for Adults

This class will explore world religions including Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and more. Classes will be offered throughout the year to align with our middle school program, which includes offsite visits to seven different houses of worship. Classes are held at UUC from 12:30-2pm on select Sundays. Attend all the classes, or just a few. See the tentative schedule below.



September 10 and 24	Judaism
September 22	Visit--Temple Emmanuel , Roanoke
October 1 and 22	Buddhism
October 8	Visit--Dharmapala Kadampa Buddhist Center
October 29	Hinduism
November 12	Taoism and Eastern Religions
November 5	Visit--Shantiniketan Temple
December 10	Neo-Paganism and Indigenous Religions
January 14 and 28	Islam
January 21	Visit--Islamic Society of the NRV
February 11	Visit--St. Mary's Catholic Church
February 18	Christianity
February 25	Visit--Blacksburg Presbyterian Church
March 3	Christianity
March 10	Visit--Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church
March 17	Quakers
April 7	1800's-5 new Religions and cults
April 21	Humanism, Atheism, Agnosticism
May 5	Unitarian Universalism

Can't make it? Check out our online/on-demand world religions class at <https://uucnr.org/learn/adults/world-religion-adult->

Class schedules can be found on uucnr.org by clicking Calendar.

Adult Programs

Adult OWL

Our Whole Lives sexuality education. Using values, communication skills and spirituality as starting points, this program explores sexuality issues for adults of all ages. Owl classes will be held Sundays from 2-4pm throughout the year.

OWL for Young Adults: September 10 through December 17

OWL for Older Adults: January 14 through April 21

Read more about OWL on Page 12.

Transgender Inclusion in the Congregation—Online/On Demand

This 6 session workshop from the Transforming Hearts Collective, focuses on helping our congregation to be fully inclusive, and affirming of, the full breadth of gender diversity. Gain the context and skills to help us transform into a fully welcoming congregation. Not offered in person this year, but available on demand. Contact [DLFD](#) to register.

Populism and Authoritarianism—Threats to Democracy. Discussion led by Jim Bohland.

In the past two decades the world has witnessed an erosion of democracy in many heretofore nations with strong liberal democratic traditions, particularly in Europe and Asia. Many scholars and public officials have raised concerns that similar trends are happening in the United States, and worry whether our democracy can weather the storm of anti-democratic tides. In most of the recent transitions from democracy to authoritarian regimes, the anti-democratic forces have had a right-wing populist flavor about them. In the discussion group, we will focus on the nature of populist movements, primarily in the United States, and examine how these movements take on an authoritarian bent as they gain strength. We will close the discussion with thoughts on how best to restrain the populist trend that seems to dominate politics in countries thought to be immune to authoritarianism.

Sundays from 11:30-1pm. Tentative dates: 9/24, 10/1 and 10/8. Check the newsletter for more information.

Adult Programs

Sunday Circle

Join us for stimulating conversation on a variety of topics. Meets the first and third Sundays of the month at either 8:30 or 11:30 in the Library. View upcoming topics and times on our website at uucnrv.org.

Anti-Racism Discussion Group

All are welcome to join our ongoing anti-racism discussion group. Topics are announced via email. Email Rachel Craine at dlfd@uucnrv.org to join the listserv and receive links to the discussion articles. Meets on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 1pm on Zoom.



Conversations on Our Faith

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 in the Library and on zoom.

Adult Programs

Meditation Group

Start or deepen your meditation practice. Centering words and basic instruction are followed by sitting practice. Non-experienced and experienced meditators are welcome.



Yoga

For many years, free yoga classes have been held at UUC. The sessions are generally lightly strenuous though participants can adjust the poses or stretches to match their level of experience or fitness. The sessions are held each Wednesday from 5:30 – 6:30 PM outdoors, weather permitting, or in Elarth Hall. Bring your own mat or use one of the mats that are provided for you. Feel free to drop in.

Labyrinth Meditation

Walk UUC's own labyrinth. Our labyrinth is available for your use as needed.



Article II: Purposes and Covenant

At General Assembly in June, revisions to our Article II were presented and voted upon. These will continue to be revisited and revised throughout the year, with a final vote occurring in June at GA 2024. Below is an excerpt from Article II, as well as the graphic which places Love at the center.

"As Unitarian Universalists, we covenant, congregation-to-congregation and through our association, to support and assist one another in our ministries. We draw from our heritages of freedom, reason, hope, and courage, building on the foundation of love.

Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of Love. Inseparable from one another, these shared values are..."

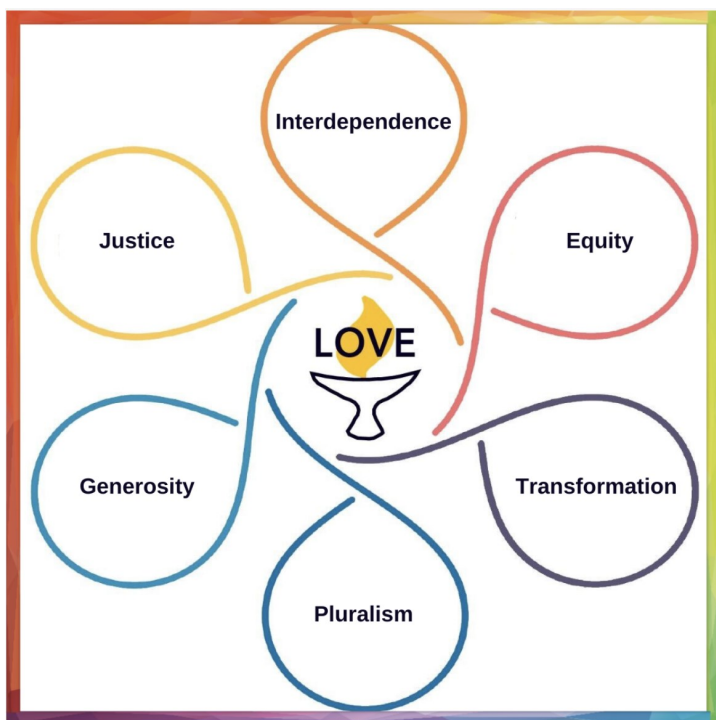


Image copyright Article II Study Commission

Look for opportunities throughout the year to learn more about this process. For more information, check out the [UUA Article II Study Commission](#).

Multi-Generational & Family Programs

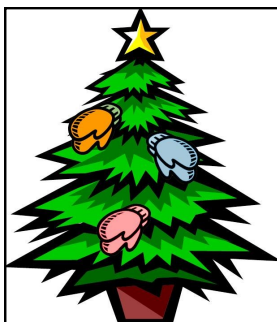
The Buddy Project



Children and adults are paired together for a fun way to make new friends of another generation! Participants exchange notes and small gifts without revealing their identity. Buddies meet each other at our holiday intergenerational service. Sign up in October to participate.

It's Scary to be Hungry

Food donations are solicited for the Interfaith Food Pantry at a local Kroger store during October by kids in costumes. A great social action event for the family!



Mitten Tree

The entire congregation brings mittens, hats, and scarves to decorate our Christmas tree. All items are donated to the Montgomery County Christmas Store.

Easter Egg Hunt for HSMC

Our annual egg hunt goes to the dogs . . . literally! Children hunt for items for our furry friends which are then donated to the Humane Society of Montgomery County. Another great family social action project!



Parent Covenant Group

Meets second Saturdays from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Join other parents for a potluck followed by guided discussion. Discussion topics are loosely based on the *Soul Matters* theme, but with emphasis on topics relevant to parents. Childcare provided, with requested donation of \$5-10 per family.

[Please register your family here.](#)

Multi-Generational Services

Holiday Service

Sunday, December 17, 2023

Join us for a holiday multi-generational service meant for kids of all ages. Holiday music, holiday stories and our annual "no rehearsal" holiday pageant make for a fun, yet meaningful, service. Our Buddy Project concludes on this date, with buddies meeting at the end of the service.



Easter Service

Sunday, March 31, 2024

A UU Easter Service, celebrating the joy of the season, while remembering this important story from our Christian heritage. The service concludes with our annual Easter Egg Hunt for HSMC. (See adjacent page.)



Volunteer with LFD

Children's RE Teachers

RE Teachers teach as part of a 4-teacher team. Teachers volunteer for a semester commitment, responsible for leading 4 classes and assisting in 4 classes. The total commitment is 8-10 Sundays per semester.

Adult RE Teachers

ARE teachers teach alone or as part of a team. The commitment is dependent on the class needs.

MSYG Advisors

MSYG Advisors serve as part of a team, supervising youth at monthly meetings September through May,

YRUU Advisors

YRUU Advisors rotate as part of a six-member team, supervising youth at weekly meetings September through May.

Classroom Aide

Aides are needed to help with children in the lower grades that benefit from one-on-one attention. No prep is needed.

OWL Teachers

OWL teachers require special training to teach. Teachers are part of a team for a class that runs 8-12 Sundays, depending on the class age. Classes rotate biannually; teachers are asked to commit for multiple years, due to the cost of training.

Lifespan Faith Development Committee Members

The LFD committee is responsible for overseeing the overall LFD program and for policy creation.

Volunteer with LFD

Other Volunteer Opportunities

We have a wide variety of short-term volunteer opportunities available. Every family is asked to volunteer to help with the RE program.

- ◆ Take a shift at Kroger for It's Scary To Be Hungry
- ◆ Check in Buddies or help set up and clean up at The Buddy Project Buddy Meeting
- ◆ Provide childcare at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Childcare Event
- ◆ Help set up and clean up for the Ice Cream Social
- ◆ Fill or hide eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt for HSMC
- ◆ Help YRUU with fundraising, lock-ins, planning the annual trip, or the annual YRUU Coffeehouse
- ◆ Host a family party or movie night
- ◆ Teach or assist with a Summer RE class
- ◆ Help with multi-generational services

Please see Rachel Craine for more information on any of these volunteer opportunities.



[Sign up online to volunteer](#)

Summer RE

Summer RE runs June 9 through August 4, 2024.

UU LEGO Principles and Values Grades K-5

This summer the children of the UUC will explore our principles and values with stories, games, crafts, and LEGO bricks!



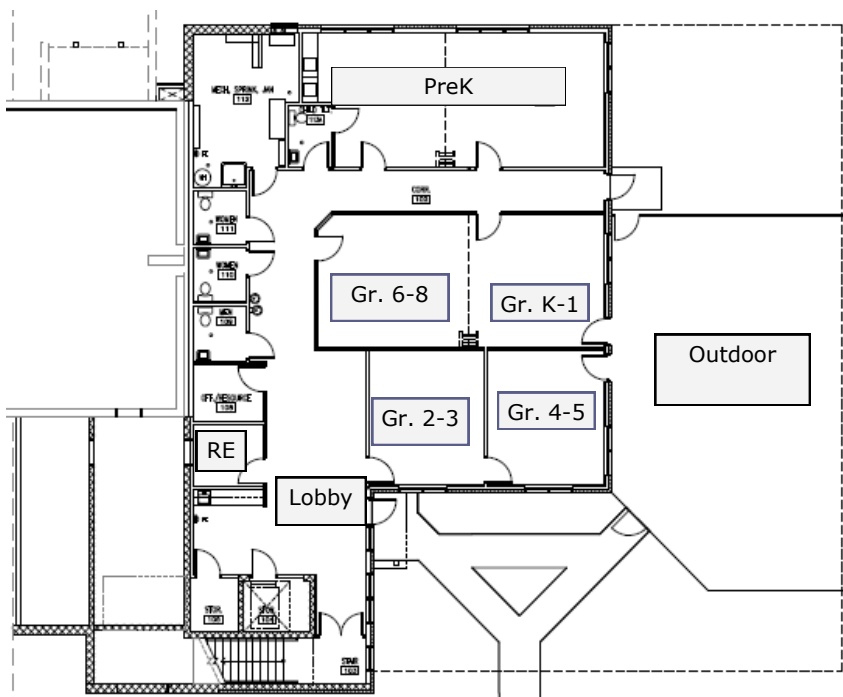
Come build community this summer at the UUC!

Sunday Funday Program PreK

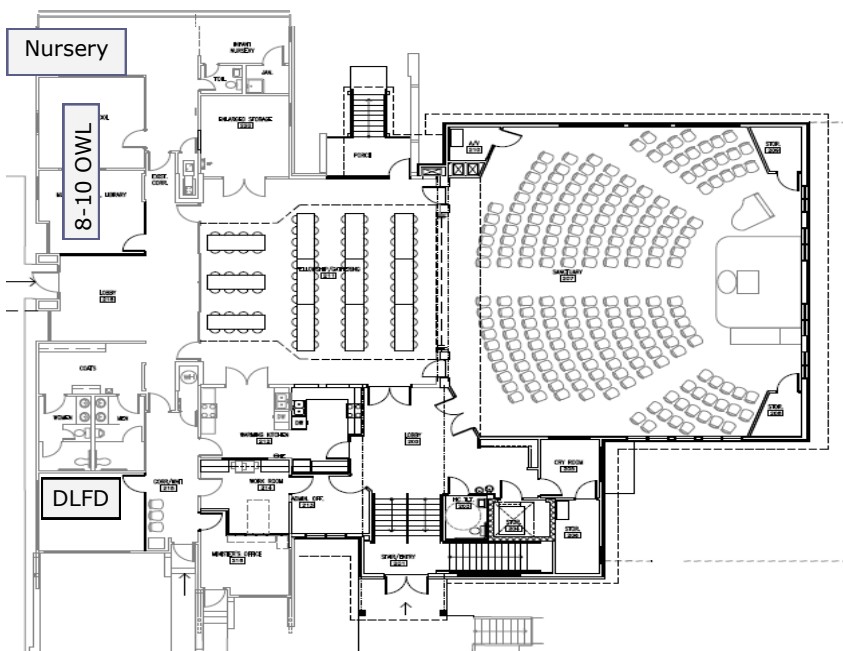
Bring a toy to share, and come have fun with your friends at our Sunday Funday program. Playtime, a story and a coloring sheet will help our littlest friends get comfortable at UUC before the next RE year begins.



Please note: Children do not go upstairs first to the Sanctuary during the summer. Please report directly downstairs.



LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



MAIN LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

Contact Information

Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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Minister

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(540) 552-9716

Administrator

Ericka Kelly
administrator@uucnrv.org

Additional information about Lifespan Faith Development programs is communicated via our weekly email newsletter. Contact the DLFD to be added to the listserv at dlfd@uucnrv.org.

Welcoming Congregation

UUC is officially recognized by the UUA as a Welcoming Congregation. We welcome participation by all kinds of families and recruit our RE teachers regardless of sexual orientation.

Register online at uucnrv.org/education.htm
Visit uuvnrv.org for class dates
and additional activity information.

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