



Unitarian
Universalist
Congregation

UUC

inspire • create • transform

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

Message from our Minister

It's hard to believe that winter is almost over, and spring is around the corner – especially with the unusually snowy and cold winter weather we've endured. And it's hard to believe that it's only been six weeks (as this newsletter comes out) since the beginning of this new administration in Washington, DC – especially because it has created so much turmoil and harm through executive orders and the dismissal of 30,000 federal workers (so far). We are on the cusp of the new growth and natural beauty of springtime while we are living through unprecedented upheaval in our nation's history.

Talk about cognitive dissonance. All this may seem too "worldly" a start for the minister's message, but our faith calls us to live our values, and currently our values of justice, equity, pluralism, interdependence, generosity, and transformation are under assault. I've heard many people express feelings of despair and impotence – what can we do in the face of such swift and autocratic



*Rev. Pam
Philips*

actions? One answer is that we can come together with others who are working to preserve our values. **Side with Love**, the Unitarian Universalist Association's organizing strategy team has created an invaluable **Action Center website** to help us keep up with what is happening, providing timely news and analysis, and, more importantly, offering opportunities for ACTION. Every week, they'll share a **Weekly Action Update** featuring essential resources, upcoming events, and spiritual reflections to support work across our intersectional priority areas. The first time I visited Side with Love, I had the opportunity to

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Message from the Minister

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send three messages to our legislators in Washington, DC and sign a petition. Imagine if we all did the same thing – our representatives might take notice!

In times like these, it's important for us to work together – as a congregation and denomination, but also with other faith traditions and community organizations who share our values. We'll have the opportunity to gather with people of faith from all over Blacksburg during this year's Lenten Series – Wednesday evenings (from March 12-April 9) we'll gather at a different congregation for a simple supper and a brief service exploring the theme of Hope. We'll welcome our neighbors to UUC on March 19 – please contact me if you'd like to help serve a meal of soup and bread.

It's equally important that we take care of ourselves. The worship themes for the coming months include **Living Love through the Practice of Trust, Joy, and Imagination.**

Exploring these themes in worship and small groups will help keep up our spirits and give us tools to act not just in reaction against unjust actions but in support of the people and institutions we value. Creating Beloved Community where all can thrive is hard work, but it can also be joyful and creative work.

This month, we'll be taking care of the congregation we love through our annual stewardship pledge drive, this year themed "In UU We Trust." In a world that seems especially topsy-turvy, it's good to have a place where we feel secure. I encourage you to attend the festive brunch on March 2, enjoy all the efforts of our creative Stewardship Committee, and pledge generously. We also have plenty of opportunities to learn, serve, and have fun together. See the following pages of this newsletter.

Even though many of us feel worried about the state of the world, we are reminded by the turning of the season that new life is ever waiting to be born – in the tender green grasses and delicate blossoms of spring. This calls to mind words written by Rev. Charle Howe:



We light this chalice to affirm that new light is ever waiting to break through to enlighten our ways.

New truth is ever waiting to break through to illuminate our minds.

New love is ever waiting to break through to warm our hearts.

May we be open to this light and to the rich possibilities that it brings us.

In the season ahead, may we be open to all these, and may they fuel our actions in support of all we hold dear.—REV. PAM



Budget, Pledge Drive, General Assembly & more updates

BUDGET & PLEDGE DRIVE | Well, the big news of the month is that it's budget and stewardship time again and since I'm the treasurer, I get to tell you all about where we are with that now and what is to come. Many of you are familiar with the process we go through to arrive at a budget each year. First, the Finance Committee gathers input from the staff and committee chairs on what they propose to spend in the coming fiscal year (July through June). The treasurer assembles all the input and uses judgement where input doesn't exist to present a candidate budget to the Finance Committee and Board at their February meetings.

The Board, using input from the Finance Committee, then approves a draft budget which determines what our pledge target needs to be for the stewardship campaign. The Stewardship Committee runs the campaign during the month of March where we ask our members and friends to pledge what they will give over the coming fiscal year to support the work of the UUC. Once we know the total amount pledged, the Board, with the help of the Finance Committee, works to fit the budget to the income that the congregation tells us, through their pledges, we can expect to receive and that budget gets presented for a vote at the Annual Congregational Meeting (to be held June 1 this year).



by
Wayne Neu,
Treasurer

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Message from the Board *continued from previous page*

At their February meeting, the Board established a proposed 2025-2026 budget that will require \$397,800 in pledges to fully fund. Last year's Stewardship Campaign yielded pledges for our current fiscal year (2024-2025) totaling \$376,072 so the Stewardship Campaign will be asking for a **5.8% increase** over last year to fully fund our 2025-2026 goals.



*If we can meet
our goal...we
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the UUC the
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We can make
that happen!*



The increase in our budget proposal is dominated, by far, by the same aim that we featured last year – bringing the pay of our minister and staff up to UUA pay guidelines for our geographic area. We made great progress toward that goal with last year's Stewardship Campaign, which brought in an increase in pledges of about 9% over the previous year! If we can meet our goal of a 5.8% increase this year – just slightly more than the inflation rate – we will be very close to completing our journey toward fair and just pay for those we rely on to make the UUC the vibrant place we all love. We can make that happen!

Other significant goals include funding a 5 hr./week LFD Assistant, continuing our playground upgrade, funding the ongoing maintenance of our aging building infrastructure, and boosting our music program.

Speaking of the music program, I am pleased to announce that Jared Gibbs has been offered, and he has accepted, an increased role (with increased pay) as the UUC's new Music Director. We can all look forward to the many new initiatives he has planned.

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Message from the Board *continued from previous page*

PLEDGE PARTY BRUNCH | The Stewardship Committee is planning to kick off the Stewardship Campaign with a repeat of last year's wonderful Pledge Drive Brunch on Sunday, March 2. The sanctuary will again be set up with tables at which we will be served brunch and the service will be a stewardship themed program culminating with an opportunity to submit your pledge for the coming year. I encourage everyone to attend with a commitment to raise your pledge to help us meet our stewardship goal.



Pledging Party Brunch
Sunday, March 2, 10 AM
gather to celebrate UUC!

GENERAL ASSEMBLY | Finally, the Board is requesting that those wishing to serve as the UUC's delegates to this year's UUA General Assembly (GA) contact Laura Robinson (president@uucnr.org) as soon as possible so the Board can vote on a slate of delegates at their March meeting (3/13/25). This year's GA will be held June 18-22 in Baltimore, MD and both in-person and online attendance will be possible. Early discounted registration is available through March 31. While everyone is free to attend, only approved delegates may vote on the agenda of business items. It is important that we appoint a full delegation from UUC to fully represent our viewpoint on business matters that come before the UUA. — WAYNE NEU, TREASURER

Worship Themes this Season



In March we will explore Living Love through the **Practice of Trust**

March 2: In UU We Trust – Rev. Pam & Denise Martin

In uncertain times, we are drawn to the people and places we trust to welcome us into community, to inspire us to grow, and to help transform our lives. Join us for a special stewardship Sunday brunch service where we celebrate this congregation and our commitment to it.

March 9: Trust and Faith – Victoria Taylor & Ellen Plummer

In religious circles we often talk about faith. Is trust the same thing?

March 16: How We Trust – Rev. Pam & Gretchen Luke

What makes it possible for us to trust people and institutions and what makes us distrustful?

March 23: What Can We Trust? – Rev. Pam & Cynthia Baute

*What are the bedrock sources of trust in our lives?
On what can we rely, especially in times of trouble?*

March 30: Becoming Trustworthy – Rev. Pam & Britton Gildersleeve

*How do we cultivate relationships of trust —
as individuals and as a congregation?*

In April, we'll explore Living Love through the **Practice of Joy**. At least some of our explorations will include how we find joy and spread joy – as individuals, as a congregation, and in the wider community. We'll also have an intergenerational service to observe Easter.



In May, we'll explore the theme of Living Love through the **Practice of Imagination**, including special services led by our youth to celebrate our seniors bridging into young adulthood and those completing our Coming of Age program. You can find more about these services once they are posted on the **Upcoming Services** page.





STEWARDSHIP

A message written by the
Stewardship Team

Our annual Pledge Drive theme this year is, "In UU We Trust." Our Financial Goal this year is \$379,800. But first let's talk about Stewardship and what it means to trust the UUC.

Stewardship is a state of mindfulness that guides us in how to care for the things that matter most to us, such as the values we hold dear and the future we want to see. Being mindful allows us to be intentional in our actions, thoughts and deeds.

Mindful stewardship of the UUC guides us to volunteer our time to activities that support the greater good of our community or communities beyond our doors.

Volunteering for committees or programs, such as the UUC Worship Committee, Lay Pastoral Care, To Our House, Right Relations, Small Group Ministries, the Music Program or Religious Education, to name a few, are some of the many ways in which we steward our community. The list of potential activities to which we could devote our time is long, and it is often not possible to get involved in all the causes we care about. But when everyone supports the things that matter most to them, collectively we can support the UUC values we hold dear.

One aspect of Stewardship at UUC is pledging. At its base, pledging is offering your financial support to the UUCNRV so that we can continue to fulfill our Mission. By pledging our financial support, we are being mindful about supporting the things that matter most to us. And by each individual pledging the amount they are moved to pledge, we can collectively support the financial needs of the congregation. Once all the pledges come in, we trust our board to make a budget that fairly and mindfully supports all the missions and visions of UUC. *...continued on next page >*

The
2025-2026
Pledge Drive
launches
with our
Pledging Party
Brunch Service
on March 2
at 10 AM

“In UU We Trust” *continued from previous page*

The amount you pledge to the UUC is a very personal decision. For many of us, pledging is a deep spiritual practice that helps us slow down and look at what is important. It is an action born from a state of mindful giving. *What is it that brought you here and what keeps you coming back? Do you see yourself reflected here?* These are the questions we ask ourselves when deciding on our annual pledge.

Every Sunday, we open the service by stating that we share a mission to Inspire, Create, and Transform. We often focus on how our stewardship or our pledging transforms others, forgetting that in the act of giving, we also transform ourselves. The act of transformation needs a catalyst, a way to sort through, and move forward, beyond where you currently are.



Take a moment, close your eyes, and ask yourself, “*how do I want to be transformed by this pledge?*” The amount of the pledge is not the catalyst; the act of pledging is. We not only trust the board to make our budget, but we trust ourselves to pledge what we feel is generous to support this beloved community. We also trust each other to pledge so that together we can achieve our overarching financial and stewardship goals.

As stated on the Stewardship page on the UUCNRV website, “In the end, it is not so much about ‘raising money’ as it is about creating a community of generosity where lives are literally transformed, where children learn our values, where we each find support in all areas of our lives, and where our values spread out into the larger world of social service and social justice.”

On Sunday, March 2, all are invited to the annual UUCNRV Pledging Party Brunch Service, a fun, mindful (and delicious!) way to support the congregation. At the brunch, we ask that you come prepared to fill out your pledge card for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

Come celebrate as we put our trust in each other to create a community of generosity in which we transform ourselves and our larger community!

Lifespan Faith Development

Religious Education



Volunteering in Religious Education: FAQ's

Q: How many volunteers does it take to run our programs? **39**

Q: Do I need to have experience teaching? **No**

Q: Do I need to prepare lessons? **All prep work is done for you.**

Q: What if my schedule changes? **That's ok, we have substitutes.**

Q: What will I get out of volunteering? **Here's what some of our teachers say:**

"...it's great to see children grow and know you are shaping their future belief system. I also like the idea of being a friendly, recognizable face to children when they come on Sunday mornings - building that sense of community and knowing each other." —*Diana Zaldivar (PreK, K-1)*

"Some of the most fun, rewarding part, is watching the kids mature over the time I am with them." —*Dan Taylor (PreK)*

Click here to Volunteer!

"Giving back to our community through teaching in the RE program is a great experience. I have enjoyed every class I have had the chance to teach over the past 20 years. Plus, our amazing DLFD creates an environment that makes teaching accessible, truly!" —*Angela Parrish (Gr. 6-7)*

"...(I) help teach kids how to be kind and caring to each other (and) learn about other cultures and religions." —*Brian Mayer (Gr. 2-3)*

High School Youth Group

YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) meets weekly, Sundays from 6-8pm.

Upcoming Special Events:

March 8: YRUU Coffee House—All are welcome. Come support YRUU and enjoy a great night of fun and entertainment at UUC from 6-9pm.

March 14-16: YRUU goes to the Mountain for a youth conference

May 4: Youth Bridging Service—come Sunday morning to enjoy the YRUU service and to recognize our graduating seniors.

June 18-22: YRUU goes to General Assembly in Baltimore.



Middle School Youth Group

MSYG meets once a month for fun activities for youth in grades 6-8. Upcoming meetings:

March 21—MSYG Escape Room. *Work together to solve a mystery. UUC @6:30pm*

April 11—MSYG at Shadowlake *Play games in the Shadowlake Game Room @6:30pm*

May 9—MSYG Bonfire and S'mores. *Welcome rising 6th graders to the group. UUC@6:30pm*

Lifespan Faith Development

Social Action



Easter Service and Egg Hunt: Sunday, April 20

Once again, our Easter Egg Hunt is going to the dogs—literally! Join the hunt for treat-filled eggs and other items for our furry friends. Donations will be distributed to the Cats of the Humane Society of Montgomery County and the Dogs of the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center. This event is a congregational favorite, with all the fun of an egg hunt.



The Egg Hunt will take place after a special, multigenerational Easter service on **Sunday, April 20**. Don't miss this fun and worthy event—awarded “two paws up” by the dogs and cats of Montgomery County!

Bring your donations of dog and cat supplies to the UUC by Sunday, April 13.

Magic of UU—Our 4th and 5th graders fight injustice.

Last month the class collected signatures and wrote letters to 3 chocolate companies urging them to stop child labor and use only fair trade ingredients. This spring they will fight for animal welfare, environmental protection, and fight against childhood sickness. Keep an eye out for these young activists!



Family and Multigenerational Opportunities

Parent Covenant Group—Meets monthly on a Friday from 5:30-7:30 pm

Join other parents for socializing and guided discussion. Discussion topics are loosely based on the *Soul Matters* theme, but with emphasis on topics relevant to parents. This year, a light meal of child-friendly foods will be provided at 5:30. Meeting and childcare begin at 6pm. Childcare provided at no cost, but you must RSVP to [Rachel](#) so we can have the appropriate number of providers.

Dates for Spring:

March 28

April 25

May 30



All Ages Monthly Fun and Game Nights

Come to UUC for a night of fun and games. A light kid-friendly meal and snacks will be provided. Bring your friends!

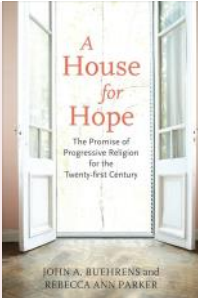
Spring Dates: Saturdays—March 1, April 5, May 3 at 5:30-8:30 pm

The Buddy Project

This year the buddy project has matched up 22 people with members of a different generation. They have been exchanging messages through February and March, and the **Great Buddy Reveal** will take place after the service on March 23. Come to the lower level to meet your buddy, have snacks, make crafts, or play games together. Buddies can also meet downstairs on March 30. Did you miss out on making a buddy this year? Look for the buddy project to return next winter!

Lifespan Faith Development

Adult Religious Education Programs



New This Spring: A House for Hope with Rev. Pam

You've heard of anthropology and theology, but do you know what eschatology, ecclesiology, soteriology, pneumatology, and missiology are? You will after joining Rev. Pam for a class based on *A House for Hope: The Promise of Progressive Religion for the Twenty-first Century*.

This seven-week program invites participants to meaningfully engage with liberal theology from a Unitarian Universalist perspective. We will meet on Sunday afternoons at 1:00, beginning March 16th and running through May 4th (taking off Easter Sunday). [Register here.](#)

Date With Death Club—Meets the 3rd Mondays from 6:30-8:30 pm

Join us for a philosophical and spiritual exploration of mortality in community, with a balance of humor and earnest regard for the topic of mortality. This program provides a safe[r] and brave[r] space to explore the often-taboo topic of our mortality. Each session stands alone. [Register here.](#)

Meditation Group—Meets Tuesdays 5:00-6:00 pm

Our meditation group meets weekly for those interested in starting or deepening their meditation practice. Meditators from all traditions and all levels of experience are welcome. In the Library and on [Zoom](#).

Conversations on Our Faith—Meets Wednesdays 12:00-1:00 pm

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](#)

Sunday Circle

Join us for stimulating conversation on a variety of topics. Meets the first Sunday of the month at 8:30 am, October-May, in the library and on [Zoom](#).

March 2: Understanding Gender Identity and Pronouns with Rachel Craine

Understanding gender identity and pronouns is vital for fostering inclusive communities. We will explore various gender identities and the importance of using correct pronouns to affirm and support individuals.

April 6: Cybersecurity and Avoiding Scams—with Liz Craine

Liz will discuss many of the common scams used in email, text, and phone calls—how to identify and avoid them. An increasingly important topic in this digital age.

May 4: Sanctuary Then and Now — with Dan Thorpe

The current legal and political battle over sanctuary cities echoes a similar debate over enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law in the decade before the Civil War.

THE BIG EVENT with VT



Saturday, April 5
10:00 AM-12:30 PM
followed by pizza lunch



The wheelbarrows need joyful pushers! The annual Big Event with VT is our spring “get the UUC grounds ready” for gatherings, picnics, activities, meetings, meditation, walking, and over-all enjoyment.

Two hours of your time will be well spent:

- get to know other UUC’ers
- meet and work alongside hard-working VT student volunteers
- enjoy fresh air and the emerging spring flora growth
- FUN AND REWARDING!

SIGN UP TODAY!

Sign up **online** or at the table at the UUC. Contact Greg Evanylo at gevanylo@gmail.com with any questions.



ALL AGES WELCOME!
You are not too old and not too young to help!





By Sara Dalton

Voting Rights

There is good news from the 2025 Virginia General Assembly Session. Both the Senate and the House of Delegates voted to pass [SJ248](#), a proposed state constitutional amendment which provides for a fundamental right to vote for all citizens who meet the state's voting requirements and, additionally, would automatically restore voting rights to felons upon release from incarceration.

Passing a constitutional amendment in Virginia is a multi-step process as the amendment must pass with a majority vote in both the House of Delegates and the State Senate two years in a row with an intervening state election. Step one has just occurred. The Virginia fall 2025 election is the second step and the third step will be the 2026 General Assembly vote on the proposed amendment. The final step will be placement of the amendment on the Virginia ballot in the fall of 2026. The Governor may not veto a constitutional amendment.

Thus, the 2025 fall election in Virginia is critical to the passage of the voting rights amendment as all 100 seats in the House of Delegates will be on the ballot. The UUC Voting Rights Team will be gearing up to provide voter information and to promote voting for this fall's election when we will also be voting for Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General as well as



various local elected positions in some jurisdictions. We welcome all who would like to be a part of our efforts to promote voting. (See contact info at end of article.)

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Social Justice at UUC

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Reproductive Justice

A second constitutional amendment passed by the 2025 General Assembly is [SJ247](#). This proposed constitutional amendment provides for a fundamental right to reproductive freedom including the ability to make and carry out decisions relating to one's own prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, contraception, abortion care, miscarriage management and fertility care. To become law in Virginia, this proposed amendment must follow the same two-year process outlined above for the voting rights constitutional amendment.

There was some bipartisan support in the 2025 General Assembly for legislation directed at improving maternal health and reducing maternal mortality rates which are more than twice as high for black women.

As noted in the UUC winter newsletter, the UUC Reproductive Justice group has merged with a local non-partisan reproductive justice group, [Our Bodies Our Choice](#). On the state level, [Virginians for Reproductive Freedom](#), a coalition of 19 state and national organizations that represent healthcare providers, patient advocates and reproductive justice workers, is leading statewide efforts to promote passage of the Virginia constitutional amendment for reproductive freedom. We invite all who are interested to become a part of this movement.



Marriage Equality

A third significant proposed constitutional amendment passed by the 2025 Virginia General Assembly is [SJ249](#), the right to marriage between two adults. This legislation repeals the Virginia constitutional provision defining marriage as only a union between one man and one woman as well as the related provisions that are no longer valid as a result of the 2015 United States Supreme Court decision in [Obergefell v. Hodges](#). The amendment prohibits the Commonwealth and its political subdivisions from denying the issuance of a marriage license to two adult persons seeking a lawful marriage on the basis of the sex, gender, or race of such persons. The

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Commonwealth and its political subdivisions are required to recognize any lawful marriage between two adult persons and to treat such marriages equally under the law, regardless of the sex, gender, or race of such persons. As previously noted, all proposed Virginia constitutional amendments must follow the two year process outlined above.

—SARA DALTON

For more information and to join our Social Justice efforts please contact Sara Dalton at sarabdalton@outlook.com



New to UUC? Gather for a Newcomer's Orientation

Are you new or not so new to UUC and interested in learning more about our congregation and Unitarian Universalism in general? Want to meet other newcomers? Come to our Newcomers' Orientation **on Saturday, April 12 at 9:30 AM** for conversation, coffee, and refreshments followed by the orientation from **10-12 PM** and get your questions answered. Members of our Connections Committee and Rev. Pam will be there with much information and fun activities. Email [Pauletta Copenheaver](mailto:PaulettaCopenheaver) by April 9 if you can attend. Need childcare? Let Pauletta know by April 5.

How to Help our Immigrant Neighbors

By Molly McClintock



Deportation, detention, family separation, harassment, and more. These are the realities and fears facing our immigrant neighbors. They've been victimized by a broken immigration system and scapegoated by the current administration.

Your support, including a simple smile and a friendly word of encouragement, will be comforting and appreciated. Please remember them next time you eat in a local restaurant, shop online or at a store, pass a construction site, or stay in a clean hotel room. Beyond that, here are actions you can take:

1. Educate yourself and others about immigrant rights. Read, print, and distribute: **Know Your Rights & Red Cards**.
2. Contact your federal representatives and urge them to:
 - Oppose Trump's indefinite suspension of refugee resettlement. These individuals passed rigorous vetting and need safe harbor.
 - Protect Dreamers brought to the US as children. Pass legislation providing them permanent legal status and other protections.
 - End violation of sensitive locations and protected areas. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) should not be allowed in our schools, hospitals, and houses of worship.
3. Contribute to an ICE bond fund to free detainees as they try their cases. **Freedom for Immigrants** and **Act Blue**.





Grounds work continues through the winter. Yes, we still spread mulch and wood chips, clean tools, cut up fallen branches and complete tasks left from the fall.

grounds
in the
winter



what
we're
looking
forward
to!



The grounds ministry members are looking forward to welcoming you to the UUC grounds (just short of 6 acres) throughout the year.



**JOIN
US FOR
SOME
FUN!**

new!
**"ADOPT
A PLOT"**

The need for helpers on the grounds is CRITICAL (as in an "SOS Critical"). Here is a great opportunity to help maintain the grounds, but the best part is that helping will require only about an hour of your time, once every 2 weeks, April-September. We can make adjustments for when you might be traveling. See the next page for spots that are eagerly waiting for adoption!

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ADOPT-A-PLOT! Invite friends to join you in taking care of one section of our grounds.



Picnic area—keep chairs and tables orderly; add woodchips when/if you feel like it; resupply wood pile when/if you feel like it (everything helps)!



Playground – mow grass; keep play equipment orderly



Memorial Garden – periodically rake leaves and remove weeds from the gravel circle; dead head flowers at the entrance to the garden



Driveway – mow grass on both sides of driveway (use our self-propel mower); periodically trim shrubs on right side of driveway (use electric trimmer for “easy-peasy”).



Labyrinth – pick up sticks in labyrinth and along labyrinth entrance path; manage plantings outside of the labyrinth border; keep path weeded if you want to go “above and beyond.”

We will mentor and train you!

Once you adopt-a-plot, we will show you where equipment is located and how to use it. Contact Grounds Ministry leader Amanda Morgan at ajmhaynes@gmail.com with questions or to adopt your plot today!

—Grounds Ministry—
New Saplings are Needed to help our Mature Trees!



George is tired! Help him and other Grounds Team members take a much-needed break!

Do you know the importance of pruning? By trimming away the old, we make way for new growth.

Our beloved UUC has benefitted for many years from a dedicated Grounds Maintenance Team. These long-time workers have rooted themselves deeply (read: they're getting old) and are ready for some new growth (read: we need some new folks!)

Grounds Team members **THEN...**



and a **GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE** if they keep working so hard...



Leaders Susan, George, Greg, and Denise will continue to do what they can, but things that were once easy now demand more energy and strength and the work is harder on the body. The two longest serving workers are in their 80's.

ARE YOU INTERESTING IN SERVING? OUR BIGGEST NEEDS:

#1) Grounds Maintenance Team Members

New folks are needed to help serve on a team of folks to care for our grounds. The more folks we have to help, the less work each person has to do. It is preferred that you serve on a regular basis to ensure continuity and the condition of the grounds. Recruit some friends! ...continued>>

#2) Grounds Team Leaders

Leaders can help inspire and organize. Thanks to the hard work of our team over recent years, the grounds are in excellent shape. Let's honor the good work of the individuals who have put years of service to develop and maintain the grounds by continuing their good leadership!

#3) General Volunteers

- Take on small tasks such as winterizing the lawnmowers, pruning bushes and trees, watering potted flowers, and more.
- Participate in our scheduled Work Days.
- "Adopt a Plot" (see page 19 for details)
- Take photos on work days
- And more 1-time or short-term volunteer roles

**What's next?
Contact
Amanda Morgan at
ajmhaynes@gmail.com**



Where Do We Come From?

UUC has a fascinating history, starting with the intrepid folks who came together in 1955 and petitioned the American Unitarian Association to become a recognized fellowship: BUF (Blacksburg Unitarian Fellowship).

Since then, we've undergone many changes – including building the first meeting house, then the current one and its expansion, calling ministers, and changing our name (more than once!). People love hearing about this history, especially at our Newcomers' Orientations.

We have lots of information about our history – including histories written and compiled by Wilhemina Elarth, Mary Houska, and Arthur Snoke; a series of audio interviews collected on the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the building; old photographs; and plenty of documents.

What we need now is someone who can dig through all these resources and put together a new, living history of UUC that we can share with each other and our posterity. Contact [Rev. Pam](#) if you are interested in exploring the archives and helping to create an updated history.



Seeking a Historian

Bring
your
talents
to the

YRUU Coffee House



Our Young Religious UUs invite you to share your talents: Sing a song. Read a poem. Tell a joke. Do a dance. Tell a story. Play an instrument. Explain the Pythagorean theorem. Juggle donuts while riding a unicycle and reciting the Gettysburg address. Anything goes!

Or, simply sit in the audience, support others, and enjoy witnessing so many talents. Also, there will be coffee and snacks.

When: Saturday, March 8, 6-9pm

Where: Sanctuary and Elarth Hall at the UUC

Why: Because it's fun! And, your donations add to the YRUU travel fund, which helps the youth get to the Mountain CON and UU General Assembly, and more.

Bonus: This is a beautiful opportunity to connect across the generations, something that strengthens and energizes our beloved UUC community!

UUC Brings Joy to 5 Families Affected by Hurricane Helene

Our congregation is grateful to have supported five families affected by the flooding from Hurricane Helene. With a "mini-grant" from the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), we were able to assist families who were directly impacted by the storm in September 2024. These families lived along the New River in Giles County, Virginia.

Our congregation worked with the Giles County Administration to identify the families in need. Four of the families had to relocate due to the flooding. The other family is currently living in a camper while they repair their home. These families continue to face challenges months after the flooding.

In January, we had the privilege of speaking with each one about their struggles. One recipient, moved by our support, shared how difficult it has been. Her grandchild, who had already previously lost a parent, was now facing the added stress from the ramifications of Hurricane Helene. All of these families expressed deep appreciation for our support and felt comforted knowing that the community cares and hasn't forgotten them.

Sometimes rural towns in Appalachia are forgotten, but we remembered. It feels so good that the Unitarian Universalists are there for everyone. Please know we've made a difference with this. - UUC BOARD



ONGOING GATHERINGS

Support Groups

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](#).

Caregivers Support

Share your experiences and challenges on the 2nd Tuesdays of each month from 7-8:30 PM via [Zoom](#). [Contact](#).

Surviving Spouses Support Group

Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 2 PM. If you have lost a spouse or partner and would appreciate support, please contact [Rev. Pam](#).

NAMI 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.

NAMI Family Support

Family and friends of persons living with 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.

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.

ONGOING GATHERINGS

Women's Lunch | Fridays at 11:30 AM at local restaurants or noon at UUC.

UUYAs | If you're between the ages of 18 and 25, the UUYAs (Unitarian Universalist Young Adults) meet every Tuesday in Elarth Hall from 7-9 PM to play games, engage with the community, and support our congregation. For more information, contact uuya@uucnrv.org.

Women's & Men's Breakfasts | Gather any Monday you're able 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.

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](#).

Men's Group | Open to anyone who identifies as male and would like to connect with others. Gathers in the evening on the 1st Tuesday of each month | [Sign up](#).

Know at UUC'er who has really kept Love at the Center? Submit your nominations today for the Isabel Berney Award



The UUC Board is now seeking nominations for the Isabel Berney Award for Exceptional Service. The award recognizes 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 (member or friend for at least seven years). Please fill out [this nomination form](#). Contact Margo Walter with questions at margoleewalter@gmail.com.

Donate to UUC for Radio IQ/WVTF Public Radio Sponsorship



Did you know that UUC partners with several Unitarian Universalist Congregations across the Blue Ridge to purchase advertising slots on WVTF Public Radio/Radio IQ? These sponsorships help us reach far and wide. Can you help? **Your donations will help us reach folks who are looking for a place to inspire, create, and transform.** To contribute, mark a check with "WVTF" in the memo line and place it in the offering basket, the safe in the administrator's door, or the mail. You can also donate [online](#). (Please note that online donations incur fees.)

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