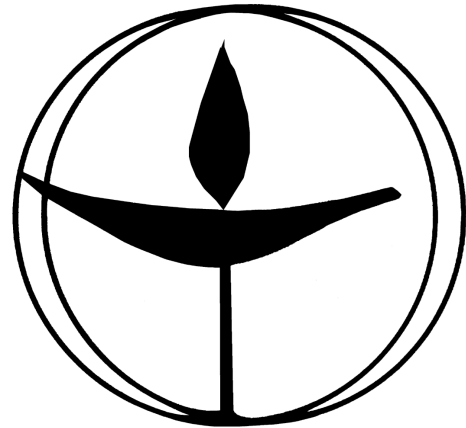


Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Blacksburg, VA.

Prospectus 2021 / 2022



Lifespan Faith Development

Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Karen Hager
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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 his/her 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 have opportunities throughout the year to also participate in religious education classes. From Sunday morning discussion groups to classes that meet weekly or monthly, adults have the opportunity to explore their beliefs and deepen their faith.

And, 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!

~ Karen Hager, 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. (Not offered this year.)

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/learn/.

Children's RE 2021-22 Curriculum

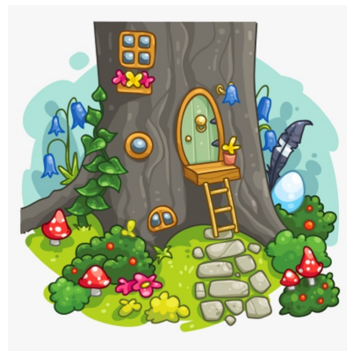
PreK (ages 3 & 4) *Stories and Play*



Our young friends will enjoy a story, coloring pages and simple crafts, plus lots of time to play and socialize.

Grades K-2 & 3-5 *Fun Community Building*

It's been a long time since we've been together in person so we'll send this year rebuilding our RE peer communities. Fun projects and games will help us get comfortable being together again as Unitarian Universalists.



Grades 6-8 *Middle School RE & Middle School Youth Group*

Our Sunday morning classes will involve lots of games and fun activities, plus opportunities for social justice. This group will also have fun social opportunities outside of Sunday morning (see Middle School Youth Group next page).

All classes are meeting outdoors, weather permitting. See pages 20-21 for a listing of outdoor classroom locations.

All children report directly to class at 10 am.
We do not go into the sanctuary first.

Safety Policy for Children & Youth

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

This year, additional Safety protocols are in place as risk mitigation strategies for the COVID virus. Mitigation includes:

- masks required in the classroom
- 3' social distancing to be maintained
- air purifiers added to classrooms

Families should not attend in person if any family member is experiencing possible symptoms of COVID-19; or if any family member has been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, for 14 days or a negative COVID test taken at least 5 days after the exposure. As part of our covenant with each other, families are asked to inform the DLFD or Minister of a positive COVID test.

A full list of our COVID Safety Strategies are included in the Reopening Plan, located at uucnr.org/learn/.

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.

Youth Programs

Grade 8

Coming of Age

(not meeting this year—will return in 2022)

Coming of Age is a special program that pairs 8th grade students with an adult mentor 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.

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 Seven 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.

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, September through May. 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.



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.

Meetings are held on Sunday evenings (time subject to change, based on that week's activity). Once a month, youth and adult 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 our annual Bridging Service each year.

Additional Information

Sunday Mornings

Due to COVID protocols, children will not begin in the Sanctuary with parents for the first 15 minutes of the service., as we have done in prior years. Parents are asked to sign in their children to class between 9:45-10:00 am each Sunday morning. RE classes last approximately one hour. Parents should pick up their children immediately following the service, signing out their child before leaving.

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. Due to COVID safety considerations, parents are asked to keep this transition time as short as possible, with the understanding that the child's comfort level is also of great importance.

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.

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.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

We have a wide variety of short-term volunteer opportunities available. See the DLFD for more information.

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 and 8-9 on an alternating basis. OWL for Adults is being added this year.

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 (tentative):

Winter 2022: OWL grades K-1 and 4-5

Winter 2023: OWL for grades 8-9

Fall 2023: Adult OWL

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. Classes will be held January—April 2019. An Informational meeting for parents will be held in November.

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. Classes will be held January—April 2019. An Informational meeting for parents will be held in November.

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. *Not held this year.*

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. *Not held this year.*

Adult Programs

Tarot Workshop

This Introduction to Tarot workshop examines numerology and iconography, and how these two elements work together to create a narrative journey that circles through a deck of 78 Tarot cards. All are welcome to this workshop; no experience or knowledge of Tarot is needed. You do not need a deck in order to participate.

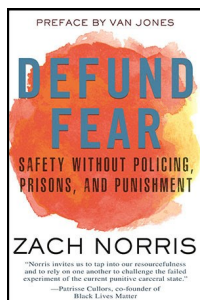


Sacred Language & Sacred Translation

As Unitarian Universalists we are called to a free and responsible search for truth and meaning within the context of a theologically diverse and pluralistic faith community. We will explore how we use sacred language to make meaning, and navigate how to put our languages of personal belief into dialogue with others.

Transgender Inclusion in the Congregation

LFD and the Welcoming Congregation Team are pleased to co-host this 6 session workshop, focused 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. Held as both an in-person class and an on-demand online class.



UUA Common Read

Defund Fear: Safety Without Policing, Prisons, and Punishment by Zach Norris

Learn more at www.uua.org/read

Adult Programs

The 8th Principle of UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

The 8th Principle

On June 6, 2021, UUC voted to adopt The 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism, which reads:

"We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

In support of the 8th Principle, LFD and our Anti-Racism group will be hosting events throughout 2021-22. Watch our monthly newsletter and weekly email announcements for more information as the year unfolds.

Watch LFD weekly emails
for upcoming class dates!

Not getting weekly LFD
emails? Join the list by
scanning this QR code.



Adult Programs

Spiritual Aging

Interested in intentionally exploring the process of aging? Join our monthly group as we consider the practical and spiritual aspects of aging. Meets the first Sunday afternoon of the month, beginning in October.

Community Conversations

Community Conversations are a conversational bridge across issues that divide and separate us. They provide an easy structure for engaging in friendly yet meaningful conversation with those with whom we may not agree. These conversations increase understanding, reveal common ground, and sometimes even allow us to discuss possible solutions. Come join the conversation after the service!



Adult Programs

Sunday Circle

Join us for stimulating conversation on a variety of topics. Meets the first and third Sundays of the month at 8:30 am. View upcoming topics on our website at uucnr.org.

Anti-Racism Group

All are welcome to join our one of our two ongoing anti-racism discussion groups. Topics are announced via email. Email Karen Hager at dlfd@uucnr.org to join the listserv and receive links to the discussion articles. Meets on the second and fourth Sundays of the month.

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.

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

Enjoy a free yoga class at UUC. Sessions are generally lightly strenuous, though participants can adjust the poses or stretches to match their level of experience or fitness. Meets Wednesday evenings.

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

Multi-Generational & Family Programs

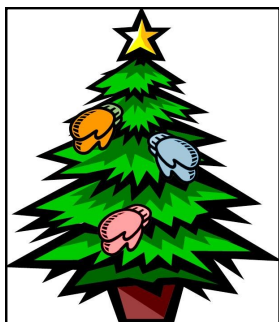
The Buddy Project



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 by kids in costumes at our annual October event. 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

Our annual egg hunt goes to the dogs . . . literally! Children hunt for items for our furry friends which are then donated to a local animal shelter. Another great family social action project!



Multi-Generational Services

Water Service

Sunday, August 29, 2021

Bring a small amount of water from a place that is special to you to this annual service. The combined water is blessed for use in child dedications and other ceremonies, and is symbolic of our shared faith coming from many different sources.

Holiday Service

Sunday, December 19, 2021

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.



Easter Service

Sunday, April 17, 2022

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 . (See adjacent page.)



Flower Service

Sunday, June 5, 2022

An annual tradition in which each congregant brings a flower to the Sunday service and takes home a different flower from the combined bouquet. Originally created in 1923 by Unitarian minister Norbert Capek, who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia.



Outdoor Classrooms

This year, our PreK-gr. 5 RE classes will meet outside, weather permitting, as a safety protocol.

PreK: playground

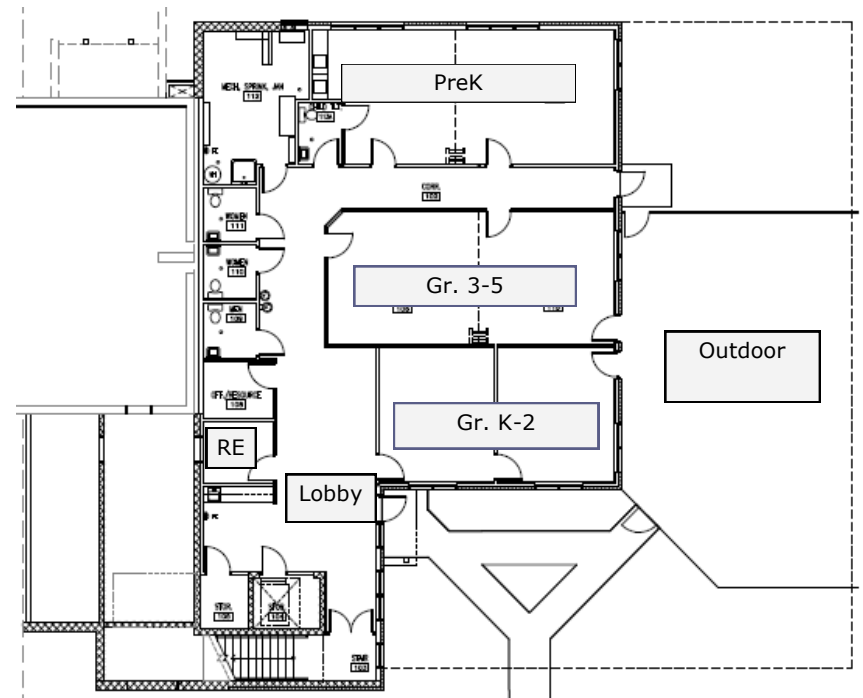
K-1: lower fire pit

Gr. 2-3: crescent garden

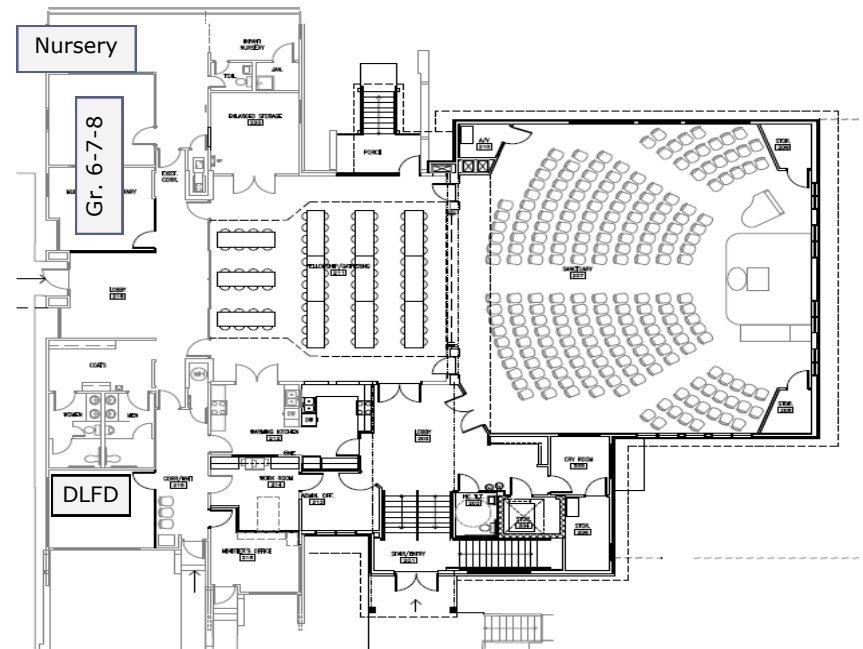
Gr. 4-5: upper fire pit

Parents are asked to check in their children before class at the check-in desk located next to the playground. Staff will be available to help direct children to their outdoor classroom areas.

Parents may pick up children at the outdoor classroom after the service.



LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



MAIN LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

Contact Information

Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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Minister

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Administrator

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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/learn/
Visit uucnrv.org for class dates
and additional activity information.

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