



News & Notes

Music makers of all ages, levels, and instruments are welcome to join our **Monday Music Gathering** every other Monday evening in the high school classroom from 6:30-8:30 p.m. This month we'll meet December 7 and 21. For more info, contact Lee Criscuolo.

Take a break from holiday preparations and relax with the **UU Women's Group** on Monday, December 21 at 7:00 p.m. at **Pancho Villa** in Central Park. Enjoy casual conversation and dinner with a great group of women. No reservations necessary, and newcomers are especially encouraged to join us. Check us out on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/303460327502>.

The **Insight Meditation Community of Fredericksburg** meets on Thursdays in Dragonfly Yoga Studio (810 Caroline Street) at 7:00 p.m. for sitting and walking meditation, or Mindful Listening. Our winter day-long retreat, *Forgiveness as Practice and Pilgrimage*, will be held on January 30 from 9:00-3:30 at the UUFF. For more details, visit www.meditatefred.com.

Please note that the **deadline for the January newsletter** will be **December 12**, one week earlier than usual, to accommodate our holiday office hours.

More notes on page 7!

Christmas Eve Service



Our intergenerational Christmas Eve service on **Thursday, December 24 at 7:30 p.m.** will include a meaningful message, readings, special music, and beloved carols. The service will conclude with a UUFF tradition, singing *Silent Night* by candlelight. Please plan to join us for this annual gathering to celebrate the Christmas holiday.

HOLIDAY ART SHOW

Opening Sunday, December 6

The UUFF Art Gallery's Holiday Art Show, displayed during December, features the work of talented UUFFers of all ages. Please join us for the show's opening reception on **December 6** following the Sunday service.

We're still seeking artwork on any theme for the show, whether recently completed or not, in any two-dimensional medium. Everyone is encouraged to participate! For more information about submissions, see "Holiday Art Show" on page 8.



THE GIVING BOWL

Holiday Pageant • Sunday, December 13

Join us on December 13 as we present our annual pageant, featuring talented UUFF members of all ages. This year's offering, *The Giving Bowl*, is the story of a family who falls on hard times but finds help in a most unusual way. The tale brings to life the timeless message of hope and encourages us all to "pay it forward" this holiday season. The pageant is written and directed by Chris Johns, and features music from "Emma's Revolution." Our UUFF musical ensembles will be participating, as well.

-Chris Johns

The Celebration of Yule

Saturday, December 19 • 6 pm

The winter solstice has been celebrated for millennia. The Norse peoples viewed it as a time for much feasting, merrymaking, and more. Traditional customs such as the Yule log, the decorated tree, and wassailing can all be traced back to Norse origins. Many cultures have winter festivals that are in fact celebrations of light. In addition to Christmas, there's Hanukkah with its brightly lit menorahs, Kwanzaa candles, and any number of other holidays.

The UUFF community is also getting together to celebrate the long nights of Yule

on Saturday, December 19, starting at 6:00 p.m.

We'll start by sharing a potluck of great winter comfort foods and seasonal music, and finish up by making cookies together. It's always amazing to get fresh-from-the-oven warm cookies and treats.

Look for the details in weekly announcements and the UUFF Facebook page starting two weeks before the event. Planning will take place immediately after the service on December 6 for all who want to help.

-Craig Cherry



Holiday Hors d'Oeuvre Buffet

Sunday, December 20 after the service

On **December 20**, we'll spread some holiday cheer after the service at our annual holiday buffet. This year, we'll make it an hors d'oeuvres buffet of sweet and savory finger foods. Please bring a dish that's easy to eat—think small plates, no utensils. Share your family's favorite holiday treats, whether homemade or store-bought, and make plans to stay after the service to enjoy this special social time.

Wondering Out Loud

Rev. Doug McCusker



I wonder how many of our congregants are aware that we have an entity here at the Fellowship called the Committee on Ministry (COM). Its purpose and composition are actually identified in our bylaws. Here's what it says:

Committee on Ministry shall serve to strengthen the quality of congregational ministry. The Committee shall understand the Fellowship's vision of shared ministry and interpret this to the congregation, enhance relations between the Minister and congregation by facilitating dialogue, support the Minister by being available for counsel, consult with the Minister to submit compensation and professional development recommendations to the Board, and report annually to the Board on the work of the Committee. The Committee shall be comprised of three Fellowship Members serving staggered three-year terms. Each new member shall be chosen by the Board from a list of three candidates

supplied by the Minister. The chair shall be elected by the Committee members.

Part of the reason for the COM's obscurity is because we haven't had a functioning COM for over six years. So upon my arrival in August, the Board appointed three members of the Fellowship to serve on this very important committee. Our COM members this year are Steve Elstein (chair), Angie Noll and Randy Walther. All three are long-time members who have served in a variety of capacities at the Fellowship, including the most recent Ministerial Search Committee.

Ministry Committees among many UU congregations used to be called Ministerial Relations Committees (MRCs). As the name suggests, their primary roles were to serve as intermediaries between the congregation and the minister, like an ombudsman; and to evaluate the minister. But in the last ten years, all across the Unitarian Universalist landscape, the role of the COM has changed from being a committee on the minister to the committee on our ministries. The focus is not on the minister, but on strengthening and coordinating our ministry teams for greater effectiveness.

So what are the ministry teams? They are all the groups within our Fellowship where the mission of the church is realized; where people live out their UU faith through service to the greater community of humankind. We have numerous ministry teams such as the various choirs, worship associates, greeters, pastoral care, stewardship campaign, auction organizers, teachers, and folks who serve meals for our homeless brothers and sisters at the Respite Center and St. George's Church. In fact, the COM is not really a committee in the classic sense. Instead it is a ministry team dedicated to the ideal of shared ministry.

As this Fellowship has grown and as opportunities to serve have increased, we require a COM that can help assess our ministries and help us in faithfully serving our mission. Unfortunately, our bylaws still describe the old MRC model that is focused on the minister. The goals of the COM this year are to increase awareness among the Fellowship members of their role, support efforts that enhance and coordinate the ministries of the Fellowship, and to align the bylaws to the larger vision of coordinated and shared ministry. Stay tuned!



President's Corner

Valerie Setzer

Since Thanksgiving hasn't passed yet as I write this, and it is a holiday celebrating and encouraging **thankfulness**, I am reminded despite what first comes to mind, it's not *all* about delectable foods, reunions with friends/ families, football games, Macy's Day and other parades, or Black Friday sales! Doesn't the meaning of Thanksgiving also "fit" in December for Christmas, and into the New Year as we reflect and look ahead? I've been asking myself if I am as cognizant of being thankful as I should be.

Max Kapp wrote this lovely poem that hit home for me. He lived from 1904 to 1979; was a minister, theological school professor and dean, as well as a denominational official; and played a significant role in educating seminarians and revitalizing the Universalist Church of America until it consolidated with the American Unitarian Association. In contrast to Harvard philosopher Santayana's view that "poetry

is religion which is no longer believed," Max Kapp maintained, "religion is the poetry which is believed."

GRATITUDE by Max Kapp

*Often I have felt that I must praise my world
For what my eyes have seen these many years,
And what my heart has loved.*

And often I have tried to start my lines:

"Dear Earth," I say,

And then I pause

To look once more.

Soon I am bemused

And far away in wonder.

So I never get beyond "Dear Earth."

As with anyone, there's been a continuing thread of past memories from all stages of my life resurfacing to the forefront of my mind. Gratitude flows when those explicitly recalled moments with location, time, those present, and what was said or heard, renewed vivid memories of how those moments felt to me. They're not usually the "biggies" in life...graduations, marriages, and childbirth; but it's the less significant ones that tug on my heartstrings.

One example was watching old B&W movies such as Ginger Rogers/Fred

Astaire, Doris Day, westerns, and war movies on TV late at night with my mother as a teenager and "home from college" almost adult. Those times created a special bond that culminated on one particular night when I felt such immense love and happiness, accompanied with a surge of gratitude that she was my mother.

On a recent road trip with a close friend to Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, the vistas of fall colors were so amazing I could barely stand to look at them without tears of joy welling in my eyes! BAM...another thankful moment!! It seems as we grow older, moments blending gratitude, amazement, tenderness and happiness become even more frequent and surprising!

Becoming more intertwined in our Fellowship and its loving, warm community has given me immense gratitude for this spiritual niche in my life. Like Max Kapp, when I wish to praise my world, all my heart has loved, I find myself distracted by even more wondrous moments!

My hope now and always for each of you is continuing special moments of gratitude in your lives.



As I sit here writing the article for the December issue of our newsletter—with visions of sugar plums and candy canes dancing in my head and the debate over this year’s Starbucks cup still waging—I find myself longing for a holiday that is uniquely Unitarian Universalist. I am often asked, “Why do you celebrate Christmas when UUs aren’t considered Christian?” I usually mutter something about my family tradition, growing up Presbyterian or I just shrug and say, “We like it.” But they have a point. Why do I celebrate Christmas?

And if not Christmas, then what? Yule? Hanukkah? Kwanzaa? They’re not necessarily considered Unitarian Universalist either. So then, how about a holiday to celebrate the 1961 merger of the Us and the Us? No, that happened in May. Chalica then? Yes, there really is such a thing. From UUA.org we learn:

“Chalica is a week-long celebration of our Unitarian Universalist principles. The holiday first emerged in 2005 out of a wish to have a holiday organized around Unitarian Universalist values. Chalica begins on the first Monday in December

and lasts seven days. Each day, a chalice is lit and the day is spent reflecting on the meaning of that day’s principle and doing a good deed that honors that principle.”

I’ll admit, it has potential, even if the name is a little silly. But I’d miss the tree and the cookies and singing carols. So we’re back where we started. To Christmas or not to Christmas? That is the question.

But wait a minute! Weren’t Unitarians Christians? And Universalists? How did they celebrate Christmas? I am so glad you asked. A quick trip to Googleville revealed that it was a Unitarian who brought the Christmas tree to New England, a tradition that comes to us from our Pagan siblings. Some of our most beloved Christmas carols came to us from Unitarian composers, “Jingle Bells,” “Do You Hear What I Hear,” and “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear,” just to name a few. And “A Christmas Carol?” You guessed it. It was written by Unitarian author, Charles Dickens. I like what former UUA president Reverend Sinkford had to say about the story...

“The true meaning of Christmas, for Dickens, was that even the Scrooges of the world can be reborn as loving members of the human community.”

So that’s that. That’s why we celebrate Christmas. Regardless of what we believe, how we grew up or any other holidays that make up our family tradition, as Unitarian Universalists, our heritage—our shared history going back hundreds of years—entitles us to this holiday. Why do many of us celebrate Christmas? Because we can.

Wishing you a holiday season that is merry and bright,

Chris Johns



Cookie Decorating Party!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 • 11:30 AM

The Religious Education Committee is happy to announce that they will be hosting a Cookie Decorating Party for kids of all ages! Join us for this family fun activity from 11:30-12:30 in the elementary room on **Sunday, December 13**. What a wonderful way to celebrate the season and spend time with other parents. We will provide the cookies, frosting, decorations, and plates to take your works of art home. Feel free to bring additional cookie decorations to share with others if you feel inspired! **Please RSVP** with the event coordinator, Sarah Dewees, by December 6 so we know how many cookies to bring. We look forward to seeing you there!

—Sarah Dewees




We Want YOU (and you, too!)

We are seeing new faces every week at the Fellowship, and many of these are families. The RE Committee needs more members to keep pace with our new growth!! Parents of young children, parents of old children, non-parents, people with education backgrounds, people without education backgrounds, people who like to have fun and plan the programs that make our Fellowship grow are all needed. We need your ideas, energy and enthusiasm, so contact Kirsten Willis to let us know how you want to help.

—Kirsten Willis



Happy Thanksgiving, everyone! May there be a turkey, ham, or to-furkey on your table as we enter this busy and poignant holiday season. We have lots to cover here

so let's get started. Your UU Handchimes will perform next on Dec. 6. They will be doing "Welcome Christmas" from *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and "Jingle Bells." They will follow up that showing with a performance downtown on December 9 for the Fredericksburg Women's Club, our first solo gig!

December 13 will be Pageant Sunday with a brand new play by our very own credentialed RE Director, Chris Johns. All three primary musical ensembles will make an appearance. December 20 will see another appearance by the Adult Choir for Darkness/Solstice Sunday and then on December 24, Christmas Eve, the Adult Choir will perform a new arrangement of "What Child Is This?," "Christmas Star" from *Home Alone 2*, and "For Unto Us a Child is Born" from Handel's *Messiah*,

along with carolers and assorted Christmas fun. It's our busiest time of year in the music program; please come out and see what we've got planned.

Both the Adult Choir and the Hand Chimes have submitted recordings to radio station 95.9's Hometown Holiday Spotlight this year. No word as of yet if we've been selected, but last year the Adult Choir made the cut so we're cautiously optimistic. Watch the weekly announcements for word on our possible inclusion in this annual holiday event.

Bernadette Jones, Offertory Coordinator, is always looking for Offertory musicians to perform on non-Kana Sundays. Please email her if you are interested in sharing your talents with the Fellowship.

In the arts about town, **Miriam Liss** will play "The Mother" (Grace Bradley) in Stage Door Productions' mounting of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. Shows will be held December 11 and 12 at 7:00 p.m. and December 13 at 2:00 p.m. at 810 Caroline Street on the fourth floor. Please check with Miriam or on their website for ticket information.

The Fredericksburg Literary and Art Review will launch its fall edition this month with entries from Fredericksburg,

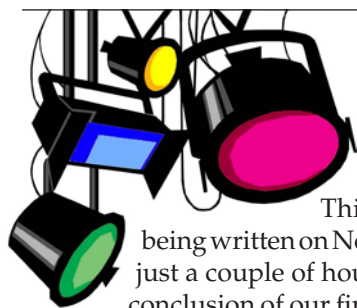
the state of Virginia, and beyond. **Amy Bayne** is the magazine's editor, and members **Mary Becelia** and **David Lovegrove** participated on this edition's literary and art panels. Look for it online.

The Stafford Regional Handbell Society's premier group "Castings," with **Bob McNichols**, will be performing a Christmas concert at the UUFF on December 14 at 7:00 p.m. The Fredericksburg Community Chorus will present Handel's *Messiah* on December 5 at 2:00 p.m. and December 6 at 7:00 p.m. at the Fredericksburg Baptist Church located at 1019 Princess Anne St. Adult Choir member and tenor extraordinaire, **Ed Rodriguez**, will perform.

If you're interested in joining any of the ensembles, just show up for a rehearsal and start to share your gifts; we've got plenty of opportunities for you to shine. Adult Choir rehearses 7:00 p.m. Tuesdays, Handchimes rehearses 7:15 p.m. Wednesdays, and UUth Choir meets on Sunday mornings after services.

Gobble, gobble,

Jason Michael, Music Director



Spotlight on Stewardship

This article is being written on November 15, just a couple of hours after the conclusion of our first Stewardship Taskforce Town Hall Meeting. Need to meet that *UU & You* newsletter article submission deadline and I'm running late! Please excuse me, Maryann.

The taskforce team began the meeting this morning with an overview of the taskforce's work and findings, the advantages of expanding the way we view stewardship, the things that are being done now to broaden our view of stewardship and then concluded with comments on a handout illustrating the possible structure of a Council on Stewardship Ministries.

The mics were then turned on and the conversation began.

There were approximately 35-40 people present and everyone came prepared to participate. The questions and comments from those in attendance generated a discussion worthy of the importance of the subject.

Questions ranged from how the proposed changes might impact existing committees to how a Council of Stewardship Ministries would fit within the Fellowship's governance. They included: How would the co-chairs of a council be selected? Why would a Council of Stewardship Ministries utilizing "teams" be better than our existing Standing Committees in implementing and executing "acts of stewardship"?

Suggestions were made regarding possible additions to what might fall under the umbrella of a Council of Steward-

ship Ministries. Concerns were raised that more information needed to be gathered concerning the way the transition of a stewardship responsibility might occur between an existing committee and a Council of Stewardship Ministries.

The above input, as well as some not included here, will be addressed by the Stewardship Taskforce and responses communicated back to the Fellowship.

The UU democratic process is at work and is working. Look for the opportunity to attend another Stewardship Taskforce Town Hall Meeting early next year.

Be a part of the journey!

—Stewardship Taskforce Contacts:
Debbie Brock, Kit Carver & Jim Yeatts



The Sustainability of the UUFF

In ecology, **sustainability** is the capacity to endure; it is how biological systems remain diverse and productive indefinitely. Long-lived and healthy wetlands and forests are examples of sustainable biological systems. In more general terms, **sustainability** is the endurance of systems and processes. We spend a lot of time thinking about and taking actions in society to ensure life on this planet is sustainable.

Are we also willing to consider that our Fellowship, the UUFF, is sustainable, will endure, will remain diverse and productive indefinitely? The actions we are currently taking to consider stewardship as something we do to take care of each other and our community all year long, as well as our annual campaign to raise funds to take care of this place over the next year, is definitely a start over the short term. In addition to that, we also are seeking to build a robust planned giving program, the UUFF Legacy Giving Project, to ensure UUFF remains an important part of this community.

Why the UUFF needs the Legacy Giving Project:

- In 1993 the Investment Company Institute estimated that people 55 years or older will bequeath over \$8 trillion of

accumulated wealth to non-charitable and charitable heirs in the next 15 years. In 1996, Barlow T. Mann, writing "Give & Take," estimates the intergenerational transfer of wealth at \$10 to \$11 trillion between 1990 and 2040. We need to be in position to benefit from this expected transfer of wealth.

- Conventional wisdom holds that planned gifts are made by people between 55 and 70 years in age. As of December 1995, the average Unitarian Universalist was 53. By the year 2010 almost 14% of the U.S. population will be 65 or older. We are asking all of you, particularly older than 55, to please make a charitable bequest to the UUFF.
- A 1992 National Committee on Planned Giving (NCPG) survey revealed that planned gift donors are equally divided between those who are over 60 years of age and those that are younger than 60. By any measure, many Unitarian Universalists are at a point in their lives to make a commitment to the future of our liberal faith, particularly the UUFF.
- At any age, in every economic circumstance, charitable bequests are by far the most commonly used form of planned giving. Bequests are relatively inexpensive to arrange, they save \$1 in

estate taxes for every dollar given, they are "no risk" gifts, and they are easy for the UUFF to promote. All a donor needs to do is complete a legal Last Will and Testament. All you have to do is ask.

- The 1992 NCPG study cited above found that only 8.1% of those who have a charitable bequest provision in their estate plans have ever changed the terms of their bequests, and only 8.8% have ever removed a charitable organization from their wills.
- However, it is estimated that 70% of all Americans die without a will, and fewer than 10% of the people who are capable of making a charitable estate gift have ever been asked.
- It's not an issue of what it will cost the UUFF to run a planned giving program, rather it's what it will cost if we do not.

Please help ensure the UUFF becomes a sustainable congregation by promising a charitable estate gift through the Legacy Giving Project. Please contact the Finance Committee for more information, and pick up the pledge form and additional information in the entry hall. The UUFF Legacy Giving Project Endowment Document has been incorporated into the UUFF Policies & Procedures Manual.

—Craig Cherry



Parents' Afternoon Out Saturday, Dec. 19 • 3-6 pm

Parents' Afternoon Out is coming up in December! Drop the kids off with us at the Fellowship on Saturday, December 19 from 3:00-6:00 p.m. for an afternoon of fun while you finish up a few holiday tasks or just take a little time out for yourself. We will serve a pizza dinner for kids and volunteers.

Children ages 3 months through 6th grade are welcome. Cost is \$15 for the first child and \$10 for each additional child in a family. We are also looking for teenagers and adults to volunteer. RSVP to Kirsten Willis or Susan Park.

—Susan Park



UUSC: Challenging injustice, advancing human rights

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is a human rights organization that fosters social justice, economic justice, environmental justice, and protects rights at risk throughout the world. In partnership with dedicated UUSC members, tireless activists, and inspiring grassroots organizations, UUSC aims to ensure that fundamental human rights are realities for everyone, regardless of race, gender, or class. UUSC works specifically with people and communities who are denied their rights because of who they are—women, people of color, religious minorities, and others—and who are not served by mainstream human rights organizations.

UUSC works to deliver aid with dignity and advance the rights of people left behind during humanitarian crises, which include forgotten conflicts, natural disasters, and forced migration. Current initiatives include compassionate consumption, sustainable recovery in Haiti, and the human right to water.

To find out more, visit <http://www.uusc.org>.

—From UUSC.org



VEGETARIAN GROUP

Two members of UUFF founded the Vegetarian Group more than a decade ago. This group continues to thrive and meets the first Saturday of each month, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. from September to May. The first hour consists of attendees contributing to and sharing a delicious potluck luncheon of vegetarian and vegan fare (gluten-free is also welcome), along with camaraderie. Vegetarians and vegans, as well as many carnivores, omnivores, and flexitarians agree this meal deserves its reputation as “The Best Lunch in Town”! Following the luncheon, we enjoy hearing speakers educate us on a broad range of related topics.

You may have noticed that foods have become a hot topic in the news lately! Numerous national and international organizations are advocating a plant-based diet, and citizens are demanding transparency regarding the contents and additives in the foods we eat.

On Saturday, December 5 at 11:30 a.m., we look forward to a presentation from Keith Burgeson, Vegan Mentor Program Coordinator for the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Keith will discuss PETA’s history/mission, current and past campaigns, their new Vegan Mentor Program, and the many health and environmental advantages to following a plant-based diet.

Keith has a degree in Plant-Based Nutrition from Cornell University. A vegan for over six years, he has worked with several animal rights organizations including PETA, Farm Sanctuary, and The Humane League. He is currently spearheading PETA’s newly-implemented Vegan Mentor Program, an initiative focused on helping to ease the transition for aspiring vegans through a network of knowledgeable mentors.

You need not be vegetarian to attend since all are welcome! Please join us and contribute a vegetarian or vegan potluck dish to share, or a small donation. Upcoming Veg Group topics include “The Myth of the Malnourished Vegan,” on tap for January 2, and “All About Food Cooperatives and Why Fredericksburg Needs One” for our February meeting. For additional information, please contact Gloria Lloyd.

–Valerie Setzer

Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry (UUAM)

“People who dare to advance that animals are but animated machines can never have observed with attention the character of animals; not to have distinguished among them the different voices of need, of suffering, of joy, of pain, of love, of anger, and of all their affections. It would be very strange that they should express so well what they could not feel.”

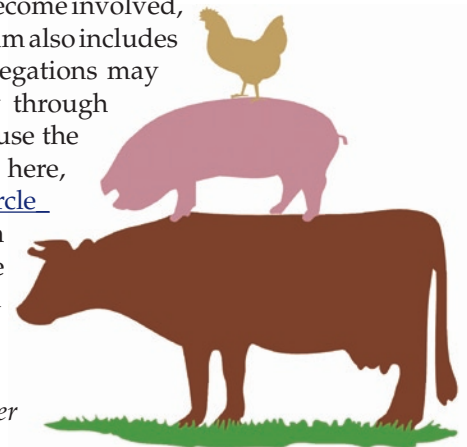
–Voltaire

Did you know that the UUA has a **Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry (UUAM)**? It does, and this ministry draws from our UU principles and sources, traditions, and congregational life to deepen our awareness of the interdependence of life. Support for one another is not just learning how caring for all beings is a moral and religious issue, but also engaging in concrete actions that bring about change on the individual, family, congregational, community, and societal level. This is done not just for humans, but also for nonhumans and all of life! As we live a life of awareness based on the interdependent web of life and the inherent worth and dignity of all beings, we live fully, deeply, and authentically. The UUAM serves as a central source of nonhuman animal awareness and education for UUs by relating the religious and spiritual aspects of our tradition to justice and ethical issues.

The UUAM has developed a **“Reverence for Life Program”** that assists UUs interested in understanding human relationships with other species, and what might be the response of both individuals and congregations to this understanding. This quotation from Albert Schweitzer is key to this program: “By having a reverence for life, we enter into a spiritual relation with the world. By practicing reverence for life we become good, deep, and alive. Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace.”

For this aim, the Reverence for Life Program supports congregations in the process of beginning, growing, and revitalizing their animal ministries. Although primarily aimed at UU congregations, this program is also suitable for groups or organizations that exist at the multi-congregational level, such as clusters and regions. And other organizations may also become involved, whether secular or faith-based. This program also includes small group ministry and classes. Congregations may participate in this small group ministry through covenant style discussion groups, which use the Seeking Circle Sessions Guide available here, http://www.uuam.org/docs/Seeking_Circle_Sessions.pdf. More extensive information can be found about the downloadable “Reverence for Life Manual,” classes via video recordings, or live online classes at <http://www.uuam.org/reverence.php>.

–Valerie Setzer



“As Unitarian Universalists, we are called to shed light on the suffering of our world. At times, this prophetic task challenges the spirit, but the way becomes easier and more joyful when we walk together. We therefore invite all Unitarian Universalists to join us in a living covenant which, as part of a Statement of Conscience of our UUA, would guide us in making food choices that courageously manifest our compassion, our mercy and our loving kindness.”

–From Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry, www.uuam.org

Help Our UU District Neighbors

The **UU Congregation of Hillsborough, NC**, needs our help. They are working to raise money to hire a full-time minister. They have raised quite a bit, but are asking for help from UU congregations in our district through a Chalice Lighter grant.



Please consider becoming part of the **Chalice Lighter** program. You will be asked to donate as little as \$15 three times a year to three different congregations in our UU district. If you sign up to be a Chalice Lighter before the end of 2015, your first contribution will be part of the grant to the good people of the Hillsborough congregation.

The most recent Chalice Lighter grants averaged **\$25,000!** This amount (or even more!) would greatly help another UU group to have a minister. We know how wonderful that would be for them!

Please visit <http://uuasouthernregion.org/chalichelighters.html> or call Sara Toye for more information. Thank you!

—Sara Toye

IN OUR HEARTS

We send love and get well wishes to **Susan Calhoun-Sousie**, who recently broke her hip. We hope Susan has a speedy recovery following her surgery and hospitalization. Feel better soon!

Lee Hamilton was recently hospitalized with pulmonary issues, and has been transferred to a rehab hospital in Richmond. We send our love and healing wishes to Lee as she deals with difficult health challenges.

Please keep the family of **Lori Weinkauf** (formerly Watson), one of our former DREs, in your thoughts, as her son **Dante Walker** was recently diagnosed with a cancerous tumor in his brain and is undergoing chemotherapy. We send Lori, Dante and family our love and prayers.

In response to the damaging floods that pounded South Carolina in October, the UUA and Southern Region leaders have arranged for the **UU Congregation of Columbia, SC** to receive donations to help with local **flood relief**. While the immediate urgency has eased, the ongoing need is great to help members, friends, and the wider community. The interim minister at UUCC is our former interim, Rev. Jennie Barrington. Make checks out to UU Congregation of Columbia with a note in the memo line, "Flood Relief." Donations can be sent to the church at 2701 Heyward Street, Columbia, SC 29205.

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



Did you know SNAP benefits (formerly known as food stamps) and WIC don't cover diapers or wipes? This is a real need for families in our community. Our very own UUFF and social justice committee member, Mandy Restivo-Walsh, co-owner of Connected Birth, will be holding a **diaper drive** this month to benefit S.E.R.V.E of Stafford. Keep an eye out in the weekly announcements for more information on how to help!

—Jenny Bishop

More Notes

Simplify your life and earn money for the UUFF by doing your **holiday shopping online at Amazon.com**. Remember, visit www.uuffva.org first, and click on the Amazon logo there. The UUFF earns a percentage of every purchase that results from a click-through from our site, and the funds have been adding up to a small but steady monthly income.

To get a UUFF-related announcement in our weekly **Wednesday emails**, submit your message of no more than 70 words to the office by Wednesday at noon.

In case of **inclement weather**, call the Fellowship at 310-4001 to see if services or events have been cancelled, visit our website, www.uuffva.org, listen to radio station B101.5, or check www.b1015.com.



DiabetesSisters offers a range of education and support services to help women of all ages with all types of diabetes live healthier, fuller lives, and recognize that emotional and peer support is vitally important to a woman's overall well-being. Through DiabetesSisters' meetings, women form a special bond and can freely share information, helpful tips, and stories of hope.

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month, from 7:00-9:00 pm at Panera Bread in Cosner's Corner. Look for us in the back. For more information, visit www.diabetessisters.org or contact Susan Calhoun-Sousie.

—Susan Calhoun-Sousie



Need another tax deduction?

Just a reminder that UUFF pledges for 2015 are a great way to add another itemized deduction to this year's tax return! This is the last month of calendar year 2015, so don't miss this opportunity to catch up, or get ahead on your UUFF pledge contribution!

—Valerie Setzer



During December, the gallery will host a Holiday Art Show featuring the work of UUFF members and friends of all ages. We'll celebrate the show opening with a **reception on December 6** following the Sunday service.

We're seeking artwork on any theme, whether recently completed or not, and in any two-dimensional medium. Children are welcome to submit artwork. **Artwork will be due on December 3.**

For planning purposes, it would be helpful to know who will be participating and how much artwork we'll be hanging. **If you plan to submit artwork, please email Anita Holle with your name and the number of pieces you'll be submitting.** Here are the criteria for entries to the show:

1. Artwork may be from crafts, painting, knitting, quilting, photography, and

include any media, except 3D, that can be hung on the gallery wall.

2. Work must be framed or in condition for showing. Visual Arts Committee members can assist, when requested, with framing advice.

3. The title of the piece, medium, price, and artist's name should be placed on the bottom back of art work. Also, please fill out the entry form below and bring with you when submitting work.

4. Artwork may or may not be for sale, as the artist wishes. Any sales are between the purchaser and artist. Donations to the UUFF from sales profits are up to the individual artist.

5. Work should be delivered to the church on Thursday, December 3 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

6. Participating artists are asked to bring cheese, crackers or fruit for the opening reception on December 6.

7. Removal of the artwork will be done on December 27 from 12 noon to 2:00 p.m. following the service.

If you have questions or need to make other arrangements for art drop-off, please contact Anita Holle.

-Visual Arts Committee

COMMUNITY ACTION CORNER

The Spirit of Giving: Share the Plate

During the past year, the Fellowship has given to organizations to make a better place in our community and the world.

2014

Nov: Unaccompanied Refugee Minors, \$220.00

Dec: Moss Free Clinic, \$153.87

2015

Jan: Mental Health America, \$135.50

Feb: Fredericksburg Area Food Bank, \$206.25

Mar: Moss Free Clinic, \$210.00

Apr: SPCA/Kinchloe Spay & Neuter Clinic, \$146.67

May: Hazel Hill YMCA Fund, \$128.00

June: Rappahannock Area Community Services Board, \$214.83

July: School Dressing Days, \$178.25


Aug: Heifer International, \$140.37

Sept: Fredericksburg Area Food Bank, \$222.36

Oct: Thanksgiving Baskets, \$183.00

Thank you from the Community Action Committee!

-Curt Swinburne

 ENTRY FORM: Submit with artwork

Artist's Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

1. Title _____
Medium _____ Price _____

2. Title _____
Medium _____ Price _____

3. Title _____
Medium _____ Price _____

Make additional copies as needed.

Sunday Discussion Group




The Sunday Discussion Group meets after the service on most first and third Sundays from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. in the Clara Barton board room. If you are not on the regular discussion group e-mail distribution and wish to be informed of the meetings, please e-mail Steve Brown. Visit our website at uuffva.org/home/congregational-life/interest-groups/sunday-discussion-group. All are welcome to participate or just sit in on discussions of interest.

Dec. 6: Open discussion

Dec. 20: Open discussion

-Steve Sanders

DECEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Adult Choir 7 pm Men's Group 7 pm <i>Primavera</i>	Handchimes 7:15 pm	CoC Meeting 7 pm		Veg Group 11:30 am
Service 10:30 am Art Show Opening 11:30 Uuth Choir 11:45 am Sun. Discussion 12 noon OWL 12 noon SoupRE Sunday 1 pm Coming of Age 1:30 pm Spirit in Practice 1:30	Music Gathering 6:30 pm	Friendship 7 pm <i>Marriott</i> Adult Choir 7 pm Men's Group 7 pm <i>Primavera</i>	Handchimes 7:15 pm	Board Meeting 7 pm Great Books 7 pm		Knitting Circle 12 noon Newsletter Deadline 4 pm
Service 10:30 am Cookie Decorating Party 11:30 Sunday Services Comm. 12 noon OWL 12 noon SoupRE Sunday 1 pm Spirit in Practice 1:30 pm	Stafford Handbells Concert 7 pm Community Action 7 pm <i>Marriott</i>	Music Comm 6:30 Adult Choir 7 pm Men's Group 7 pm <i>Primavera</i>	Handchimes 7:15 pm	Bldg & Grounds 3 pm Membership 7 pm RE Comm. 7 pm		Parents' Afternoon Out 3 pm Yule Celebration 6 pm
Service 10:30 am Holiday Buffet 11:30 Social Justice 11:45 am Sun. Discussion 12 noon OWL 12 noon Coming of Age 1:30 pm	Music Gathering 6:30 pm Women's Group 7 pm <i>Pancho Villa</i> Finance 7:30 pm	Adult Choir 7 pm Men's Group 7 pm <i>Primavera</i>	Handchimes 7:15 pm	Christmas Eve Service 7:30 pm	<i>Christmas</i>	
Service 10:30 am Life Preservers, 3 pm <i>Pinschmidts'</i>		Men's Group 7 pm <i>Primavera</i>				

SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 am

DEC. 6

Reframing Family, Pamela Philips

Whether yours resembles a Norman Rockwell painting or a blurry selfie, our sense of family comes into sharp focus during the holidays. During this time when expectations about and from family can be challenging, we'll consider how reframing those expectations might lead to a more joyful and spiritually satisfying time. Pamela is a ministerial intern at the UU Community Church of Glen Allen.

Handchimes Choir performs.

DEC. 13

Pageant: The Giving Bowl Chris Johns & UUFF Cast

This year's pageant tells the story of a family who falls on hard times but finds help in a most unusual way. The tale brings to life the timeless message of hope and encourages us all to "pay it forward" this holiday season. Written and directed by Chris Johns, with music from "Emma's Revolution." UUFF musical ensembles join in.

DEC. 20

Blinded by the Light Rev. Doug McCusker

In almost all the ancient creation myths, light emerges from darkness and time begins with the first cycle of day and

night. Human existence has always known this beautiful dance of darkness and light, which has nurtured our sense of awe. But as we move toward a 24x7 pace of life on this planet, we seem to believe that darkness is something to be conquered. What if we bathed ourselves so completely in our own light that we lose touch with darkness? What are the spiritual consequences?

Adult Choir performs.

CHRISTMAS EVE, DEC. 24, 7:30 PM

A Place for All Babies Rev. Doug McCusker

In the Christmas story, Jesus was born in a manger because there was no room at the inn. In our intergenerational Christmas Eve service, we will explore the significance of that inauspicious beginning. The service will include readings, special music, and the singing of beloved carols. The service will conclude with a UUFF tradition, singing Silent Night by candlelight.

DEC. 27

Drumming, Ken Crampton

Drumming is a powerful tool for expression, connection and healing. Ken is a local musician who has been building community through drumming for many years.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF FREDERICKSBURG

25 Chalice Circle, Fredericksburg, VA 22405

540-310-4001 • Email: uuff@verizon.net

www.uuffva.org

Minister: Rev. Doug McCusker

Office Admin: Nancy Michael

Dir. of Religious Education: Chris Johns

Music Director: Jason Michael

Treasurer: Bob McNichols

Newsletter Editor: Maryann Brown

BOARD MEMBERS

President: Valerie Setzer

Vice President: Jim Yeatts

Secretary: Barry Waldman

Alane Callander

Bernadette Jones

David Lovegrove

George Solley

Janet Watkins

Nora Wilson-Lesser

OFFICE HOURS: Mon, Wed, Fri, 9:30-3

Announcement deadline: Wed. noon

REV. McCUSKER'S OFFICE HOURS:

Tues. & Wed. 10-4 / Thurs. 3-6.

Drop-in hours are Tues. & Wed., 2-4 pm.

To meet with Rev. Doug at other times, please arrange an appointment.

Jan. Newsletter Deadline: Sat. Dec. 12, 4 pm.

Jan. Publication Date: Dec. 18.

Submit articles to Maryann Brown.