



News & Notes

Monday Music Gathering: For music makers of all ages, levels, and instruments. The group meets on the first and third Monday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the high school classroom. May's gatherings will be on the 6th and 20th. For more information, contact Lee Criscuolo.

Women's Group: Third Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. On **May 20**, we'll try something new, meeting at **Wegmans**, 2281 Carl D. Silver Parkway. No reservations necessary—just drop by for conversation and connection. Newcomers are especially welcome. Check us out on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/303460327502>

Insight Meditation Community of Fredericksburg: Thursdays at the UUFF at 7:00 p.m. For more information, visit www.meditatefred.com.

Office Volunteers: Our current batch of office volunteers are fantastic, and we're extremely grateful for their help. However, we are still looking for a few people to fill in on the second and fourth Wednesdays from 10:00-2:00. If you can help out, contact Rev. Doug or Nancy Michael. Thanks in advance!

Grass Cutting Help: Do you like nature? Working outside? Helping others? We'd love your help cutting the grass around the Fellowship. We even have a riding mower you can use! Signing up is easy with SignUp Genius...[just click here!](#) For questions or to sign up offline, contact Ed Rodriguez.

Shopping on Amazon: Ordering something from **Amazon.com**? Don't forget to visit www.uuffva.org first, and click on the Amazon logo there. The UUFF earns a percentage of purchases resulting from a click-through from our website, which provides a nice income for the UUFF.

Social Suppers

Sunday, May 19 - 5 pm

Social Suppers are returning the evening of Sunday, May 19. Usually, these informal gatherings are held in the homes of members and friends, in groups of approximately eight people. However, other venues such as a park or the Fellowship are possible.

Hosts will provide the entrée and guests will bring a dish designed to complement the menu. This is a great way to get to know people in a relaxed setting, and we encourage newcomers to join in on the fun. Last year, over 70 people participated!

You can sign up on the bulletin board located in the Fellowship gathering space. Let us know if you'd rather be a host or a guest. Please consider hosting families with children at your home, at the Fellowship, or maybe at a park. We'll provide a babysitter.

Hosts are always needed! For more information, call, text or email Diane Elstein.

—Friendship Committee



UUFF ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, June 9

Immediately following service

The UUFF Annual Meeting will be held immediately following the service on Sunday, June 9. This meeting gives members of the UUFF the opportunity to vote on items that are crucial to the success of the Fellowship. Please attend to approve next year's leadership and the budget for fiscal year 2020.

The Raleigh Ringers

**IN CONCERT:
SATURDAY,
MAY 18, 7 PM
AT UUFF**

The Stafford Handbell Society is proud to bring the Raleigh Ringers to Fredericksburg for a special one-day event on Saturday, May 18. The world-renowned group will lead a handbell workshop at the Stafford Handbell Society's rehearsal studio at 112 Juliad Court, Fredericksburg from 1:00-4:00 p.m. At 7:00 p.m., the Raleigh Ringers will present a full concert at the UUFF.

Tickets are available for either event or both at a special discount. The concert is \$25 and the workshop is \$35, or attend both for \$50. Tickets are available at www.staffordhandbells.org.

—Bob McNichols

Wondering Out Loud

Rev. Doug McCusker



In a recent sermon, I dropped the line, “wholeness is not the same thing as perfection.” Ever since I said that, I’ve been mulling it over in my head. If I ever could be perfect, I’m not sure that I would feel whole or fulfilled. I firmly believe that we are both broken and whole at the same time; that my brokenness informs my wholeness and that my wholeness informs my brokenness.

I think a better pursuit is balance rather than perfection. Trying to balance my brokenness with my wholeness seems more productive. And by brokenness, I don’t mean damaged, lesser than or irredeemable. I am referring to the times when things aren’t working as well as I would like. Maybe I react harshly to someone or I go against my better judgment and do something harmful to me or someone else. Perhaps my body is out of whack, making me feel sluggish or in pain. These things can be healed and corrected if I am aware of them. Balance implies a tension like the high-wire artist. Notice how many tiny adjustments they make in order to stay balanced. They are constantly correcting and over-correcting, trying not to make sudden movements. It’s extremely difficult and it takes tremendous concentration.

Perfection on the other hand implies that we don’t need to make any more adjustments in our life. The only way we could be perfect is if we stop time, eliminate things we can’t control, and remain still. In other words, “dead.” I had a discussion with a congregant recently. We both agreed that pursuing perfection is not bad, if you don’t expect to ever achieve it. So, why bother? I have a mantra that I made up several years ago that may help answer this question: “Expecting perfection is a mistake, accepting our mistakes is perfection.” It is through our mistakes, our cracks, that we learn, grow and experience new things. Accepting that we are good enough while still having room for improvement allows us to try new adventures.

I recently took up Tai Chi. It has been a humbling experience. Tai Chi requires me to unlearn how to move my body through space. Everything I’ve been doing up until now – the way I walk, run and stand – has been unbalanced. Tai Chi is showing me a new way to transfer energy in my body, so I am more in the flow. While I am learning, I am making a ton of mistakes. And in the process, I am feeling more balanced and whole with my mind, body and spirit. Wholeness then is more like finding balance with an inner flow that is never fully complete. It is okay to have cracks of brokenness, so the light can get in.

Yours in Fellowship,
Rev. Doug McCusker



President’s Corner

DEBBIE BROCK

As of this writing, we are \$73,000 short of our pledge goals. Some items in the budget goals were visionary and will become part of the strategic plan. But some items get to how we express our values. The Board of Trustees met last week and took the first round of budget cuts.

We will have fewer paid guest speakers on the Sundays Rev. Doug does not have the service. We will not have flowers on the stage. We will not have snow plow service and will have to close when it snows. We have reduced babysitting and transportation. We cannot offer to pay for those in need to attend General Assembly, so will only be “represented” by the affluent. We will not be able to paint the inside of the building nor pay for any aesthetic improvements. We will reduce our support to monthly dinners for the homeless. We have reduced supplies for Friendship, Membership, and Religious Education. Congregants who want to participate in adult RE will have to buy their own supplies. We will not pay into the repaving reserve fund. We have zeroed out the Security and Emergency Preparedness budget.

Regarding our hard-working paid staff, we have cut the tools they need to do their job and will deny them a cost of living increase for the second year in a row.

With all this, we are still short and are having to discuss even worse cuts. Whatever you appreciate about the Fellowship, we had to reduce it, or cut it out entirely.

The Board of Trustees will meet again on May 9 for one last look at the budget before it is presented to you at the **Annual Meeting on June 9.**

If you have not pledged, do so now. If you lowered your pledge or kept it the same, have a family discussion about possibly increasing your pledge in the next couple of weeks.

–Debbie Brock

–Anita Holle

UUFF ART GALLERY PRESENTS

The Portrait: Elegance & Expression



OPENING RECEPTION: SUNDAY, MAY 5 / 11:30-1

The UUFF Gallery’s next exhibit is *The Portrait: Elegance and Expression*. Various artists will show their portrait portrayals in differing categories from beauty to commentary to whimsical. The show’s opening reception will be held on Sunday, May 5, following the Sunday service. The exhibit will run for two months.



The newest version of the UUFF Social Justice Committee has been happening for almost a year, since June 2018. So by the time you read this, we four co-chairs, John Bernard, Scott Gray, Eunice Haigler, and I, Judy Love, will have met in a one-day retreat at the home of Bill and Cill Johnson-Miles to review this past year and to plan for the coming year. Bill has been our mentor and liaison to the Board from day one because, with the exception of Eunice, we are relatively recent members of this congregation.

Our focus and purpose has evolved organically, given the challenging times we live in, and because the five of us not only participate primarily as SJC Co-chairs and mentor, we also each belong to a wide variety of local progressive political groups (mostly non-partisan). So do many other UUFF members, some of whom are leaders in those groups.

Therefore, we of the SJC have co-sponsored, supported, and participated in a wide variety of local events and programs over this past year. These include, but are definitely not limited to: the UUFF Common Read (*Justice On Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and the Environment*); the Sacred Fire training at Richmond UU; the huge ERA dinner and movie facilitated by Mitzi Kendall in our UU sanctuary; and videos and documentaries there, too, about spiritual activism, pro-life issues, and more.

We have supported several presentations at the UUFF by One Virginia 2021 (regarding gerrymandering) with UUFF member Karen Kallay and Ginny McCormack taking leadership roles, both here and in the community. Eunice facilitated two diverse UU and community groups on "Race: A Conversation," after the three top Virginia leaders had major challenges. UUFF has hosted a monthly group, POP (Pass on Plastic), including folks from the Sierra Club, Food Co-op, Farmers Market, UMW, etc., who meet in the board room to cut and sew net produce bags, in order to reduce the use of plastic bags.

We were thrilled to assist Pat Smith, Anita Holle, and Debbie Loveland at the UUFF Visual Arts Committee's gala opening of the "Art of Protest" exhibit for March/April. We participated in the recent excellent Fossil Free Fredericksburg Climate Change Conference led by UMW students and mentors, including our own Eric Bonds. We are currently working with UUFF members and community leaders to plan other diverse social justice events and activities.

The UUFF Social Justice Committee meets on the third Thursday of every month in the board room at 6:00 p.m. and we would welcome you all to join us! Feel free to bring your own beverage, snack, or meal.

Onward together,
Judy Love



From left, UUFF Social Justice Committee co-chairs Scott Gray, Judy Love, John Bernard and Eunice Haigler.



Attention Parents!

The **Bridging Ceremony** will be held Sunday, June 2. If you have a child who is graduating from high school and is interested in participating or if you would like more information, please contact Chris Johns at uuffva.dre@gmail.com.

—Chris Johns, DRE

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 would like to be added to the discussion group email list, contact 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.

Topics for upcoming discussions:

- May 5:** Is the U.S. national debt really a problem?
- May 19:** Should bottled water and plastic grocery bags be banned?

—Rick Neil

SAVE THE DATE! UUFF Year-End Picnic Sunday, June 16, 1 pm



Mark your calendars for one of the most popular events of the year: our annual year-end potluck picnic at the country home of Patrick and Paula Neustatter. Enjoy a day of food, fun and friendship for the whole family. Take a dip in the pool, stroll the grounds, toss a Frisbee, or just relax in the shade with UU friends. Hope to see you there!

—The Friendship Committee

COMMUNITY ACTION CORNER

Short Term Mission Trips

Have you ever thought about going on a mission trip but it seemed either too involved or too difficult? If you want to find out what the experience is like, joining a short mission trip may be for you.

I went on a week-long mission trip to the Dominican Republic and had a great

experience. As a solo traveler, I joined an easy-going church group from Ohio and helped them provide medical help to people in poor rural areas.

These are two options for those who would like to join a group for short-term trips: www.therock.org, the one I went with; and orphanoutreach.com.

—Curtis Swinburne

UUFF Logo & Tagline Contest

Calling all creative congregants! How would you like to be the one whose symbol or catchy phrase is chosen to be the official logo and tagline for the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fredericksburg? Nike has the swoosh and “Just Do It.” What will be ours?

Now that we are incorporated, it's time we established our unique brand that tells the world who we are. The logo and tagline will go on our website, social media page, letterhead and tee shirts. We may even trademark them. The Communications Task Force is looking for simple and easily

recognizable representations that capture the essence of this Fellowship. You can submit as many ideas as you like. If you just want to enter a logo or just a tagline, we'll take it.

Whatever you do, don't take too long because the contest ends on May 15. Send your logo and/or tagline entry to Nancy Michael at uuff@verizon.net with “UUFF Contest” in the subject line. Depending on how many submissions we receive, we will narrow them down to a few finalists and then let the congregation vote on them.

—Rev. Doug McCusker

The Ramp is Complete!

Some of you know that several UUFF members have been preparing and constructing a ramp for Rev. Walter Braman, who is suffering from Inclusion Body Myositis, a degenerative muscle disease.

This ramp will make it so much easier for Walter to get in and out of the house. Oftentimes he has been housebound due to being unable to get out.

We send a very big THANKS and much LOVE to those who have given of their time and talent to see this to fruition.

Thanks to: Bill Brooks, Architect; Barry Clark, Chief Carpenter; Bill Wood, Chief Organizer; Bruce Callander; Clay Calvert; Don Emmerling; Patrick Neustatter; Curt Swinburne; and Craig Cherry (who installed the porch ramp).

We will be eternally grateful for the work and time you all put in. You truly are a loving community!!

Thank you and love to you all.
Walter and Cathie



Standing from left, Craig Cherry, Rev. Walter Braman, and Bruce Callander. Seated, Bill Wood.

Auction Wrap-Up



Success! Thank you so much to all of the generous donors, bidders, and auction volunteers who helped make our 26th Annual At Your Service Auction on April 13 our most successful. Together we raised \$22,715!

Who Bought What? Soon, we should have a binder in the lobby with donors' and buyers' reports, showing who bought each donor's item, and what each bidder purchased. You may also contact Maryann Brown for this information.

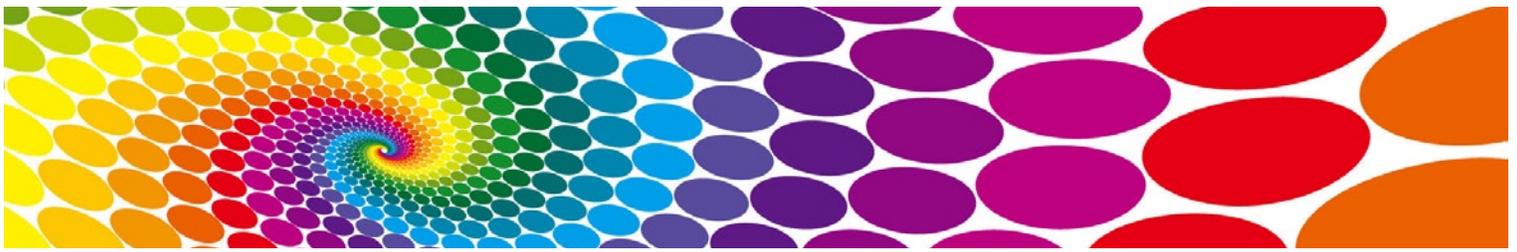
Who Contacts Whom? If you purchased an item that provides an activity or service at the buyer's convenience, buyers should contact the donor to make arrangements. Donors providing outings, dinners, etc., are encouraged to send reminders about the event to their winning bidders 1-2 weeks ahead of the event.

Billing: If you didn't pay your bill on auction night or on Sunday morning, your bill will be sent to you. When paying, please note “Auction” on the memo line of your check and drop in the Treasurer's lockbox in the workroom adjacent to the office, or mail to UUFF, Attn. Auction, 25 Chalice Circle, Fredericksburg, VA 22405.

Now Follow Through! Donors, if you've offered an activity for a certain date, please follow through on that date unless dire circumstances intervene. Events that are rescheduled may be problematic for buyers who planned their schedules carefully to buy your item. Buyers, please let your host know as soon as possible if you cannot attend. Don't be a no-show!

Second Chance Auction Catalog: Our Second Chance Auction catalog includes auction items not fully sold out. A pdf of the catalog will be emailed out, or you can pick up a paper copy in the Fellowship lobby.

—Maryann Brown



SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 AM

Monthly Theme: Curiosity

UU minister Victoria Safford speaks of curiosity using the metaphor of perception and sight. She writes, "To see, with only our eyes, simply to look, is an ethical act and intentional choice; to see, with an open heart, is a spiritual practice and thus a risk, for it can open you to ways of knowing the world and loving it that will lead to inevitable consequences. The awakened eye is a conscious eye, a willful eye, and brave, because to see things as they are, each in its own truth, will make you very vulnerable." There is a type of curiosity that is about enjoyment and adventure. It invites us to experience life as a playground. But there is another type of curiosity that leads to consequences, that changes us. It's the kind that drives us past enjoyment and comfort. It's not about enriching oneself; it's about altering oneself.

Just think of how we talk about our dances with curiosity. We don't just tell stories about barraging our poor Sunday School teachers with "Why?!" and "Who says?!"; We tell stories of doing it until we were kicked out of the class. We don't just talk about being open-minded; we talk about how our open-mindedness led us to leave home and family and walk a lonelier path than we wanted. And lately, many of us have leaned into the hard work of being curious about our role in upholding institutional racism and structures of white supremacy, none of which is just about "learning interesting new things." The point of all these stories is that, as hard as these curious paths are, we are grateful for them. We don't want curiosity to just be fun or interesting. We want it to make us anew.

—Rev. Scott Taylor, Soul Matters Team Lead

MAY 5

Blessed Are the Curious, For They Shall Have Adventures
Rev. Doug McCusker

Curiosity is that impulse that draws us toward the mysterious and the unknown like a moth to a flame. Sometimes it overrides our other impulse to play it safe and be satisfied with what we already know. It can get us in trouble, and it can open us up to new experiences. It's an essential ingredient of our humanity.

MAY 12

Be Careful About What You Ask
Rev. Doug McCusker

Sometimes I think the UU symbol ought to be a question mark rather than a chalice. The last line of the hymn *We Laugh, We Cry* has always intrigued me: "...even to question, truly is an answer." Join us as we explore the holy act of questioning. Why do we do it and where does it lead us?

MAY 19

RE Power!
DRE Chris Johns & the UUFF youth

All year long, the UUFF youth have been exploring their UU powers! The power of UU Tools, the power of UU Magic, the power found in UU History. Join us at this year's RE service and feel the power for yourself!

MAY 26

My Religion is You: A Humanist Perspective
Janelle Kennedy

Humanism is an outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. Humanist beliefs stress the potential value and goodness of human beings, emphasize common human needs, and seek solely rational ways of solving human problems. The history of the Unitarian Universalist church parallels the modern history of Humanism and many of the UU principles can be attributed to the humanist movement. This talk will explore the history of Humanism and the relationship between Humanism and religion.



IN OUR HEARTS

We are deeply saddened by the death of long-time UUFF member **Pat Sabat** following a lengthy illness. She died peacefully on April 17 at Mary Washington Hospital with friends present. Pat was a mainstay of the early Fellowship, volunteering for numerous leadership roles, including serving as UUFF president. Most recently, she founded the Cancer Club to help support fellow cancer survivors. We send our love to her friends and family, and will keep her in our hearts. Information about Pat's memorial service will be announced later.

COFFEE TALK



Welcome to our newest member, **Anne Briggs**. Anne signed the Membership Book on April 14, and we are delighted to have her with us!

MAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			Chair Yoga 8:50 am 1 Spiritual Development 7 pm Handbells 7:15 pm	Lunch Meditation 12 pm 2 CoC Meeting 7 pm Meditation 7 pm	3	Little Ringers 10 am 4
Service 10:30 am 5 Art Opening 11:30 am Sunday Discussion 12 pm Youth Group 12 pm Young Adults 12 pm Shared Pulpit 12:30 pm Being Mortal Disc. 2 pm	Music Gathering 6:30 pm 6	UUth Choir 6 pm 7 Adult Choir 7 pm	Chair Yoga 8:50 am 8 Handbells 7:15 pm	Lunch Meditation 12 pm 9 Board Meeting 7 pm Great Books 7 pm Meditation 7 pm	10	Little Ringers 10 am 11
Service 10:30 am 12 Sun. Services Comm. 12 pm Young Adults 12 pm Youth Group 12 pm Women's Book Group 4 pm <i>Elsteins' home</i>	Community Action 7 pm 13 <i>Marriott</i>	Friendship 6:30 <i>Marriott</i> 14 UUth Choir 6 pm Adult Choir 7 pm Finance 7 pm Music Comm. 8:30 pm	Chair Yoga 8:50 am 15 Spiritual Development 7 pm Handbells 7:15 pm Logo/Tagline contest ends	Lunch Meditation 12 pm 16 Social Justice 6 pm Meditation 7 pm	17	Little Ringers 10 am 18 Newsletter Deadline 4 pm Raleigh Ringers 7 pm
Service 10:30 am 19 Sun. Discussion 12 pm Youth Group 12 pm Young Adults 12 pm Shared Pulpit 12:30 pm Social Suppers 5 pm	Music Gathering 6:30 pm 20 Women's Group 7 pm <i>Wegmans</i>	UUth Choir 6 pm 21 Adult Choir 7 pm	Chair Yoga 8:50 am 22 Handbells 7:15 pm	Lunch Meditation 12 pm 23 Great Books 7 pm Meditation 7 pm	24	Little Ringers 10 am 25
Service 10:30 am 26 Youth Group 12 pm	Community Dinner 27 <i>St. George's, hours vary</i>	UUth Choir 6 pm 28 Adult Choir 7 pm	Chair Yoga 8:50 am 29 Handbells 7:15 pm	Lunch Meditation 12 pm 30 Meditation 7 pm	31	

Activities are held at UUFF unless noted.
All are subject to change.

SAVE THE DATES! June 9: Annual Meeting - June 16: Year End Picnic

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
FELLOWSHIP OF FREDERICKSBURG**
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Austin McNichols, youth member

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the UUFF is to nurture learning, inspire spiritual insights, create compassionate relationships, and lovingly transform our community and the world.

VISION STATEMENT

To be a catalyst for spiritual growth and social justice with service as its guide and love at its core.



OFFICE HOURS: Monday–Friday, 10 am–6 pm. Office Administrator's hours are MWF, 2-6 pm. Announcement deadline: Wed. noon

REV. McCUSKER'S OFFICE HOURS: Tues., Wed., Thurs. 10-6
Drop-in hours are Wed. & Thurs. 4-6 pm. To meet with Rev. Doug at other times, please make an appointment.

June Newsletter Deadline: Saturday, May 18, 4 pm
Email all submissions to Maryann Brown.