



March 2022

## Group Gathering Policy

In the last month, we have been in a holding pattern as the Omicron variant hit its peak and started to decline. The Building Reopening Task Force met once and submitted minor changes to the Board of Trustees. The only real change to the policy is that the minister will check the [COVID Act Now Risk Factor](#) on Mondays instead of Fridays. That will give everyone more time to react and plan as things change on the ground.

As of this writing, the risk factor in Stafford is Very High, but just barely. In Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania, the risk factor has been degraded to High. Once it changes to High for Stafford, we will announce that in-person Sunday worship services will resume. We anticipate that it will be soon. Several committees and the Fellowship's leadership are preparing the building and examining our processes to ensure that we maintain safety while we gather together in community. Even after we reopen for in-person activities, we will continue to offer online access via Zoom for worship services and most meetings at the Fellowship.

At this time, groups of 30 or less can meet at the Fellowship. Every group that wants to meet at the Fellowship, indoors and outdoors, must contact the Fellowship Administrator Nancy Michael to request meeting space. Each group will need to have a point of contact who will ensure that the Group Gathering Policy is strictly followed. Please check the [UUFF Homepage](#) for the latest policies and procedures.

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## 2023 Fiscal Year Pledge Drive

On February 5th, our 2023 Fiscal Year Pledge Drive Kickoff (via Zoom) was filled with members relaying wonderful stories of the Fellowship's history, starting with our founding in 1955. Several related historical moments in poems, pictures, and songs, some serious, some comical, all endearing! The event was filled with stories of love and perseverance.

Our Pledge Drive theme this year is "Survive and Thrive". The Fellowship has endured many frustrations throughout the years, but we have always survived and grown stronger. We all know how difficult these past two years have been. But we've continued to meet for services (albeit on Zoom). Many groups still meet on Zoom and support each other just the same, and many of you consistently provided food for homeless adults in Fredericksburg. We do indeed have a strong and enthusiastic community!

Due to Covid, we've lost income from some otherwise reliable sources – building rentals, members who moved away, and other sources which had helped us meet our expenses. As a result, this year we are asking for \$280,000 in pledges, an increase of \$17,000 from last year. That's why we're asking people to **give a little more** this year, particularly if you have not increased your pledge in recent years.

Our outstanding, hardworking staff did not receive even a cost of living increase last year, and they deserve at least a modest salary increase during these inflationary times. Other necessary expenses have also increased.

As many of you know, we will be hosting a ministerial intern next year. Thanks to a UUA grant that we have received, plus the financial support offered by sponsors, the costs are covered and will not impact the budget.

Next year will indeed be a critical rebuilding year! And heaven knows, we're so looking forward to participating in Fellowship activities and programs *in person* and to becoming an even stronger loving community. But we need to survive now, so we can grow and thrive again, both personally and as a community. Please... pledge soon and give whatever you feel you can afford.

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Pledge [ONLINE!](#) Or you can download the [Form](#), print it, and mail it in.

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Contact [Curt Swinburne](#), if you need the form to be sent to you or if you have any questions about pledging.

~ Curt Swinburne, Eileen Carson & Diane Elstein  
*The Pledge Drive Committee*

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### **Living the Pledge 2022!**

Starting Saturday, March 26th and then meeting every Wednesday evening the month of April, our minister, DRE, as well as other members of our UU family, are all teaming up to bring the Fredericksburg Pledge to End Racism to this Fellowship. Based on the Birmingham Pledge and brought to this area by [First UU in Richmond](#), this 12-hour workshop, Living the Pledge, is a wonderful opportunity to deepen our commitment to ending racism in our communities. You will learn about the ways that racism impacts our society and institutions; acquire skills for engaging in empathic dialog about race, how to speak up when microaggressions occur and identify ways to carry the work of dismantling racism forward. Please [click here](#) to let the facilitators know that you are interested and to receive further information as it becomes available.

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### **Facilitator Training**

The Living the Pledge Team is currently looking for new facilitators to join us for the spring LTP class. The initial training will be held on Tuesday, March 8th and then continue over the course of the 5 LTP sessions this spring. Please contact the Director of Lifespan Religious Education, [Chris Johns](#) or [Rev. Doug McCusker](#) for information or to say you'll join us!

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### **Ministerial Internship Announcement**

At its regular monthly meeting on February 10, the Board of Trustees voted to offer an internship position, beginning September 2022, to roddy biggs. Below is the announcement that was made during the Sunday Service on February 13 by Lois Colbridge, President of the UUFF Board of Trustees:

Part of our mission and our vision as a congregation is to “Nurture Learning.” When we formulated our current mission statement, we came together in groups large and small to discuss and share with each other what we thought is the most important work that we want to be doing. During those discussions, a suggestion was made that the Fellowship consider becoming a teaching congregation. Being a teaching congregation is a very special ministry and a very special commitment to Unitarian Universalism both in the present and for the future. It is a commitment to continue to foster UUism by providing the opportunity for aspiring ministers to learn and to grow.

This is a commitment that only a select number of congregations undertake. It requires a considerable amount of work, and the congregation as a whole is called upon to provide a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for interns as they undertake this crucial formative experience in preparing to be ministers. A few years ago, our Strategic Plan called for us to give ourselves about four years to prepare to become a teaching congregation.

Then we were presented with the opportunity of having an intern several years ahead of our proposed schedule. At that time, we took a leap of faith and welcomed our first intern. The benefits that came to our congregation as a result of that are beyond measure.

We now have the opportunity to welcome a second intern. This is an especially challenging time to be doing that, given the struggle with the pandemic and the effect that has had on our services and activities, on our membership and on our budget. Through all this, the Board has seen the strength of this congregation and its commitment to continue carrying on our mission and our vision. So, after very thoughtful consideration, the Board voted to take another leap of faith and to offer a ministerial internship position, beginning in September of this year, to roddy biggs.

During the coming months, we will have many opportunities to come together, both online and in person, to continue to learn about and to grow into becoming a teaching congregation. Quite honestly, we as a congregation have some work to do in order to fully meet the requirements for that at this time. Your Board members believe that this work is well worth undertaking. And we have faith in our members and friends to fully step into this work. We look forward to meeting with you, hearing from you, and learning with you as we, as a congregation, continue our commitment to being a spiritual community that helps people lead lives of justice, love, learning, and hope. Let us all bring the very best of ourselves to this work.

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## Dear members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fredericksburg:



My name is rodny biggs, and I use they/them pronouns. I am honored and thrilled to be joining you as your Intern Minister in the Fall of 2022. I am a Queer, BIPOC (Black, indigenous, person of color) young adult. I have lived experience with trauma, and I have a social justice background. I claim a progressive, anti-oppressive Christian faith grounded in the principles of Unitarian Universalism.

Currently, I hold a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies and an Associate's degree in Media Production. I am now a seminary student at Meadville Lombard Theological School, Rev Doug's alma mater, pursuing a Master of Divinity degree.

I grew up Presbyterian, and after coming out, I left religion behind me, deeply hurt, and needing healing. Not knowing where to turn, I considered myself agnostic. I became heavily involved in community advocacy and social justice movements centered around LGBTQ communities and mental health. Along the way, I started considering myself a spiritual person. After the 2016 presidential election, I knew that I needed to find a spiritual home once more. That's when I joined the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville, TN. It was there that I would answer my calling to the ministry after witnessing the ordination of a dear friend in 2018. Since then, I finished my Associate's and Bachelor's Degrees and began my Masters of Divinity.

In my understanding of ministry now, such a vocation is about being a voice for all, especially those who have historically been told they do not belong in a faith community. Becoming a Unitarian Universalist minister is a complex one that requires a team of people for one to be successful. As part of my current formation as a minister, I have a spiritual director, mentors, and a counselor; and that team is growing as I add Reverend Doug as my teaching pastor and you as my teaching congregation. We are in this together, friends. I promise to bring my authentic self as we learn and grow together in fellowship, service, and community to and for one another.

*In Faith & Healing,  
rodny biggs (they/them) pronouns  
Soon to be UUFF Intern Minister*

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### Save the Date!



Join us for the Annual Congregational Meeting  
**May 22**  
after Sunday Service

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### Coming Soon to an Adult RE Classroom Near You!

Our DLRE is working very hard to get the dates finalized for an awesome new Adult RE opportunity - "Living More Fully with Marcia Grimsley, Professional Life Coach." This three-part interactive series will reflect UUFF fundamental principles and teach skillful living in today's world. Each class is crafted to stand alone, giving the participants the option to register for one, two or all three.

Class 1: Living Peacefully in a Chaotic World

Class 2: Creating and Maintaining Healthy Relation

Class 3: Just for Women: Know Your Worth and Do What Works

Dates/Times: TBA

These classes will be offered in person at the UUFF, with a Zoom option as well. There will be a fee for the materials. Please [click here](#) to get on the "Yes! I'm definitely interested! Send me details!" list or contact our DRE, [Chris Johns](#) for more information.

### Check Out the Fredericksburg Bookmobile!

The Fredericksburg Bookmobile will visit the UUFF on **Sunday, March 20** after the service. The bookmobile is a nonprofit mobile library that distributes free books in our region. The RE Committee has been collecting gently-used

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books and will be presenting them to the bookmobile that day. Children and adults are welcome to visit and pick out a free book from the bookmobile! Invite your friends and neighbors; all ages welcome. We are still collecting donations (there is a box in the UUFF lobby). For more details or questions, contact Bonnie Rossi or Susan Park. Learn more about the Bookmobile [HERE](#).

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### Board Business

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A report to the congregation on what's happening in the zoom room

At the regularly scheduled meeting in February 2022:

- Following consultation with the Youth Group, the Board approved the nomination of Lydia Zambon to serve as the Youth Representative. Welcome, Lydia!
- The Board heard from the Reopening Task Force. The current group meeting policy is posted on our website at [Coronavirus Updates](#).
- The Board voted to offer a part-time position as Intern Minister, beginning in September 2022, to roddy biggs (they/them). We also agreed to immediately begin the process of effectively communicating the Board's decision, as well as what we believe roddy can bring to the Fellowship and how the experience can benefit them in their goals for ministry.
- We reviewed the status of the pledge drive. As of February 10, 11 pledge units had pledged a total of \$28,840.
- Kristen Tuxbury has agreed to help conduct a Time and Talent Survey of UUFF members and friends. We noted that she will be devoting part of her Spring Break time to this task and commented that that is quite a gift to give to us.
- A discussion of possible By-Laws changes was deferred. We encourage UUFF members to submit any changes that you would like us to consider. The By-Laws can be found in the Document Repository: [By-Laws](#). Please send your suggestions to [Lois Colbridge](#).

~ Lois Colbridge

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**After approval by the Board, the full minutes of each meeting are available in the [Document Repository](#).  
The Board meets the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. on [Zoom](#).  
Congregants are welcomed to attend.**

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## News & Notes

### LOST

A gold ring set with a carnelian stone was lost somewhere on the grounds of the Fellowship after the Christmas Eve service. If found, please contact the office or [Chris Johns](#).

**Basket Contributions:** As the UUFF ventures further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are adding text giving to our options of ways in which contributions may be made to the Fellowship. We're not able to pass the basket at services while we are meeting virtually. But you can make those "basket contributions" during the Sunday worship services on your phone. And when we return to in-person services, the text option will remain useful for times when you cannot attend, or don't have cash or checks with you.

**To donate to the UUFF, text 844-963-2785.** The first time you text this number, you will receive a registration link. Click the link and enter your contact and payment information, then tap "Process." After registration is complete, you will receive a verification text as well as a receipt via email. For future giving, simply send a text with the amount you wish to give, and your contribution will process automatically. Please visit [Vanco Payments](#) for more information. We hope this new way of giving will be helpful. As always, the missions of the Fellowship depend wholly on the generosity of our members and friends. Your support is vital, and much appreciated. ~Lois Colbridge

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**Save the Dates:** Coming Up April 14th, 21st & 28th! Three Evenings with Professional Lifecoach, Marcia Grimsley. Join Marcia for these three sessions as she combines practical and spiritual ways to address and improve many areas of your life.

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**Women's Group:** UUFF Women's Group will meet in March! After taking a long winter's nap, the UU Women's Group will meet in person at Rey Azteca Restaurant in the Eagle Village Shopping Center (across from UMW), on Monday, March 21. No agenda, just an evening of conversation, food, and drink. The group will gather at 6:30PM and all are welcome! Check out the [menu](#). See you there! Find the Women's Group on [Facebook](#) or contact [Susan Lovegrove](#).

**Insight Meditation Community of Fredericksburg:** IMCF provides a comfortable and supportive environment for individuals seeking to meditate in a group setting and for those new to the practice of meditation. Join them at 7 pm every Thursday at the UUFF. [Click here](#) for more information.

**Youth Group Meeting:** The UUFF Youth and their advisors meet on Sundays after service from 12:15 - 1:45 PM on ZOOM at [\[YG Meeting\]](#). Teens in grades 9-12 are welcome to join them for community building and faith exploration! Please contact [Chris Johns](#), DLRE for more information.

**Intergenerational Discussion Group:** Please join the members of the UUFF Youth Group for lively conversation on Sunday, Mar 13 from 12:30 - 2:00 for this hybrid conversation. Use the RE link found in the Sunday Reminder email to join us on ZOOM. Bring an open mind and your willingness to engage with these brilliant youth!

**Midweek Spiritual Practice:** First Wednesday each month, 5:30 - 6:00 PM on ZOOM at [\[Midweek\]](#). Formerly known as Vespers, the Midweek Spiritual Practice is an opportunity to engage over Zoom with others while practicing together a simple spiritual activity such as meditation, poetry, games, music, writing or doodling, to name a few. Community building and spiritual practice before dinner!

**UUFF Document Repository:** UUFF has a Google Drive where you can access copies of all our Policies and Procedures, By-Laws, RE documents, and other important items. The Document Repository is meant for anyone at the Fellowship to view by [clicking here](#), so that you have access to any important information.

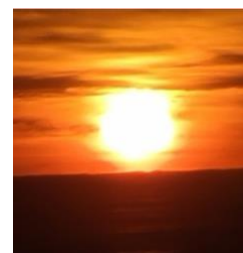
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## Wondering Out Loud

Rev. Doug McCusker



Our Soul Matters theme this month is Renewing Faith. That is basically my ministry in a nutshell. I am serving in my seventh year here at the UU Fellowship of Fredericksburg. It occurs to me that there is a little kernel of "renewing faith" in every sermon that I have given, every class that I taught and every time I gave pastoral care. I think it is the quintessential function of a minister. I'm not talking only about religious faith, but also faith in oneself, in our community, and in the ideals that we hold for our world. Every Sunday, I either look out over the pulpit or into the ether of Zoom and try to provide you a reason to have faith when you could easily fall into nihilism. The climate is changing so rapidly that the delicate balance of life is threatened. Our nation is gripped in a political polarization that most of us have never experienced. Racism is being enshrined in laws again. People are walking away from organized religion in droves. And a global pandemic has reminded us how fragile the human condition is. If that doesn't shake one's faith, it is hard to imagine what would. And that is why we are here. As a last bulwark of faith in the indomitable spirit of humanity. When you strip away all the dogma and all the words, faith is really about trust and hope in a way forward. We find it here in fellowship, in service, in love for each other. That is what we need to hold on to no matter who you are mad at in any given moment; even in the face of grief and fear and everything else that is crumbling. As long as you maintain faith that you matter, that life matters and that you can make a difference in someone's life, it is all worth it. I have faith in you!



*Yours in Fellowship and Love,  
~ Rev. Doug McCusker*

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I don't even know where to begin this month. Perhaps with a review of some of what's happening here at the UUFF:

- Our Friendship Committee is putting together the celebration of our **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** in our Chalice Circle home.
- Our Auction Team has begun planning this year's auction.
- After a pandemic/Zoom-fatigue drop, attendance at Sunday Services is remaining steady and even beginning to increase.
- The Pledge Drive is underway as we renew our commitments to financially support our mission and our vision.
- We have offered an internship to roddy biggs, to begin in September. As one UUFF member has put it, "Together, we will be doing the work of fully stepping into becoming a Teaching Congregation."



## President's Corner

Lois Colbridge

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- Our Reopening Task Force continues to monitor the COVID situation, make recommendations about safety protocols for in-person meetings, and discuss what will allow us to fully reopen for Sunday Services and other activities.
- The Religious Education Committee, which has found many innovative ways to provide opportunities for both virtual and in-person activities, recently hosted an online Brownies and Game Night. They are currently planning many future fun events. Stay tuned!
- Building and Grounds has worked to keep our building and grounds looking great. Their workdays have been productive and FUN. Workdays aren't just about work; they are also about fellowship!
- The Sunday Services committee did extra work to ensure that we had interesting and meaningful services during Rev. Doug's sabbatical. They are continuing that work now that Rev. Doug is back.
- Our Youth Group hosts Intergeneration Discussions the second Sunday of each month, beginning at 12:30. They are meeting on Zoom for now, and will continue in-person when we are fully reopened. This is a great group of kids. Come talk with them!
- Our Living the Pledge team has scheduled a new series of workshops, beginning Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, to bring the Fredericksburg Pledge to End Racism to the Fellowship and to the Fredericksburg community. [Click here for more information.](#)

And really, that's only some of the work that our committees and teams are doing. For quite a long time, I have lamented about COVID. But now I see that we remain a vital, vibrant, and growing community. A community that does so much to sustain each other as we move into our future. Hang on, it's going to be a hell of a ride. (Not that we believe in hell!)

~ Lois Colbridge

### The DLRE is Leaving the Building!



Our Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Chris Johns, has scheduled her second knee surgery and will be taking sick leave from Thursday, March 10 through Sunday, March 20th. While she will be able to answer emails and texts, please be patient with her response time. If something requires immediate attention, please reach out to the Rev. Doug or one of the RE Committee Co-Chairs, [Bonnie Rossi](#) or [Susan Park](#).

Peace,  
~ Chris Johns

### RE At-A-Glance

Due to the continuing surge in COVID, please check emails from Chris Johns who will let participants know if they are meeting in-person or online.

#### Sunday, Mar 6

YG 12:15- 1:30  
MS OWL 12:30 - 2:00 (in-person)  
Adult RE "What Moves Us w/ Rev. Doug" 12:30 - 2:00

#### Sunday, Mar 13

YG Intergen Discussion Group 12:30 - 2:00  
MS OWL 12:30 - 2:00 (in-person)  
Adult RE "What Moves Us w/ Rev. Doug" 12:30 - 2:00

#### Sunday, Mar 20

MS OWL 12:30 - 2:00  
HS OWL 12:30 - 2:00  
Adult RE "What Moves Us w/ Rev. Doug" 12:30 - 2:00

#### Sunday, Mar 27

YG 12:15 - 1:45  
MS OWL 12:30 - 2:00

### "The Music Man vs. West Side Story"



Two of Broadway's biggest musicals are back in the spotlight and, ironically, they have a decades long history of rivalry. *West Side Story* and *The Music Man* both opened on Broadway in 1957. They went toe to toe at the 1958 Tony Awards with *The Music Man* carrying the day for Best Musical. Ever since that fateful decision theatre historians have debated the merits of each with both musicals having vocal defenders and detractors. In

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the years that followed, *West Side Story* grew in estimation, often being cited as a turning point in the evolution of the musical's form with its handling of storytelling through dance. Simultaneously, *The Music Man*, though having remained immensely popular overall, has appeared increasingly backward and out of step with evolving American values. Did the Tony committee get it wrong?

Here are some tidbits of information to help you decide. It's not as easy as you think. *West Side Story* was neither a critical nor commercial success when it opened on Broadway. It ran a mere 732 performances and received very mixed reviews. The music wasn't considered tuneful enough, and the book too downbeat (it was and remains one of only a few musicals with a tragic ending). There were more than a few walkouts. However, a mere five years later, the movie version was nominated for ten Academy Awards including winning Best Picture. Our culture evolved that quickly. It is through the lens of the film's success that we tend to look back and see the stage show. Add to that, it is now known that *WSS's* chief creators were all gay: Composer Leonard Bernstein, Lyricist Stephen Sondheim, Book Writer Arthur Laurents, and Choreographer Jerome Robbins. As a result, the show also bears a celebrated distinction of being helmed exclusively by a marginalized community. Having said all that, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there has been a reevaluation of the portrayal of the Puerto Rican characters, with some critics taking offense at what they believe to be stereotyped roles, and further citing that no persons of color assisted in the creation of the show.

On the other hand, *The Music Man* was the brainchild of one man, Meredith Willson. He did it all – wrote the music, book, and lyrics, one of only a handful of creators to ever do so. He employed various musical styles including barbershop, counterpoint, and rap, to unforeseen effect. His hero is an early antihero who nonetheless we root for, and the cumulative effect on 1950s America was nostalgia and joy. It is somewhat easy to see how *The Music Man* won out. Also, within the last year it has come to light that Willson to his credit was very invested in the characters of Tommy Djialas and Jimmy Paroo, the former being an Eastern European boy not accepted by the town on the basis of race, and the later a wheelchair-bound child; both ostracized by River City. Willson, in early drafts of the show, saw these two characters as vehicles to examine race prejudice and ableism, but both were softened or altered to ensure commercial success. Tommy's arc remains peripheral, and Jimmy became Winthrop, wheelchair out, lisp in. The failed draft attempts have only bolstered Willson's good-natured credibility. But again, having stated the show's merits, modern audiences have to wrestle with Harold Hill's very deserved reputation as a sexual predator and con man, a Fourth of July pageant portrayed through stereotyped Native American dress and speech, and overall a view of America that never quite existed.

*West Side Story* is once again a hit movie musical, thanks in no small part to Steven Spielberg and revised book author, Tony Kushner. And *The Music Man* is back on Broadway, this time headlined by Hugh Jackman and Sutton Foster. I leave it to you to decide which is better, more entertaining, more thought provoking, and more relevant. It's just not an easy call.

*Namaste,  
Jason*



Winter is ordinarily a relatively quiet period for Building and Grounds volunteers. Grass isn't growing, weeds don't need pulling, and for the past couple of years there hasn't been much activity inside the building either! This winter, however, has been particularly brutal on our trees. Many branches were broken and have had to be pruned back. Many thanks to Jacque Arthur for her guidance and assistance in doing that pruning and disposal of much of the resultant clippings. Spring is now just around the corner and the B&G committee needs to arrange for some teams to tackle several projects (in the hope and expectation that we will be able to congregate in some fashion soon). On Friday, March 4 at 7PM Bruce Callander will host a short Zoom meeting to make plans for spring projects. If you are interested in helping please join us on Zoom at [[B&G Meeting](#)]; Meeting ID: 788 1472 0101; Passcode: mb4YcA.



### Update on Micah Ministries

#### Winter Shelter

During the pandemic, Micah's [Winter Shelter](#) program has been operating out of local hotel rooms. Qualifying guests receive temporary hotel vouchers for up to one week at a time during the cold weather shelter season. The Fellowship cooks and delivers meals once a month for those in these situations.

#### The Hospitality Center

The [Micah Hospitality Center](#) also called the Micah Center continues to be open during the week to provide guests in need

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with bagged lunch, shower, mail, clothing and connections to community resources. Community Resources also located at the center include Rappahannock Area Services Board (RACSB), Department of Social Services, Prison Re-entry Solutions, and The Veteran Administration. The center accepts donations of survival items such as clothing and toiletries preferably dropped off at the hospitality Center.

### Respite Center

The [Respite Center](#) focuses on those sick enough to need family hospice or home health care but well enough that they could be discharged to their home if they had one. The center is still able to provide beds for 8 guests. Guests receive case manager support and must have a referral from a medical or mental health professional. The Fellowship continues to provide cooked meals delivered to the Respite Center once a month.

### Micah's Housing Ministry

Micah's [Housing Ministry](#) provides several services to help individuals and families have a stabilized housing situation and to keep people from having to live on the street.

### Step Forward

Micah continues to operate the [Step Forward](#) Income Development Program to train and connect job seekers with partnering employers for hands-on work experience.

Micah normally accepts volunteers, but their volunteer program is temporarily on hold due to the challenges posed by the pandemic. For updates on any of these services you can call [540-479-4116](tel:540-479-4116) or visit their [Facebook page](#).

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**Thanks to all those who serve the local and wider community on behalf of our Fellowship.**

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## SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



When Rev. Doug McCusker mentioned during a recent service that the Social Justice Committee was no longer active, I looked into it and learned that our very energetic co-chairs, John Bernard and Eunice Haigler, had stepped down. As a former chair of this committee, I immediately

thought of all the social justice needs and opportunities for UU's to make a difference. So, I stepped forward to help reconstitute this important committee. If you want to be active with SJC, please email [Alane Callander](mailto:Alane.Callander).

Social Justice is definitely something you can do from home. I've been doing it in one way or another throughout the pandemic. It may be more exciting to participate in rallies in person or more fulfilling to attend candlelight vigils or social events, but those opportunities, I'm sure, will present themselves again in the near future.

The Social Justice Committee's project for this year is related to the [8<sup>th</sup> Principle](#) that the UUA has offered up as an addition to the adopted Principles of Unitarian Universalism. So far, several hundred UU congregations have approved the [8<sup>th</sup> Principle](#), and we anticipate voting on it at our Annual Meeting this spring. The principle deals with building a diverse multicultural Beloved Community and dismantling racism and other oppression.

There is a core group of seven UU's working to establish a Fredericksburg Chapter of the national group [Coming To The Table | Taking America Beyond the Legacy of Enslavement](#). The intent is to gather people from the community to promote conversation about race. Our participants are Lynda Allen, Bill Brooks, Eunice Haigler, John Bernard, Jesse Johnson, Ainsley Brown and Rev. Doug McCusker.

Another program, led by the First UU of Richmond, is [The National Pledge to End Racism Initiative](#). The pledge is a personal commitment to work on ourselves and with others to address racism in all forms. So far UUFF has had three workshops as part of this initiative and another is planned for this spring.

As an individual, I have been working with the non-partisan grassroots organizing group, [Virginia Organizing](#), on topics related to racial disparity and injustice.

Please contact me to join the Social Justice Committee or to ask any questions you may have about social justice opportunities.

*~ Alane Callander*

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## Sunday Discussion Group



Sunday Discussions are intended for people who enjoy discussing controversial public policy issues. The group meets from 12-1 pm on ZOOM on the first, third and fifth Sundays of the month. Participants are encouraged to suggest controversial topics of interest and to moderate those discussions. For more information, contact Rick Neil or visit the [calendar](#).

- **Mar 06: Pat** "What should NATO and the US do to counter a major Russian invasion of Ukraine? Ground forces?"
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### Monthly Theme: *Renewing Faith*

How do we renew our faith when so much is falling apart? In these fragile days, we, who assess life through “the fire of reason,” find so little reason to trust that everything’s going to be ok. The climate is collapsing. Racism so often morphs more than it is removed. Politics divide more than they unite. Don’t tell us it’s slowly getting better. Don’t ask us to deny this feeling of despair that feels so real. On so many days, we have lost our hope for a better day.

But we do long for it! Don’t we? Despite the setbacks and slowness, there remains something inside that continues to say, “It can be better!” “More is possible!” “I need to believe that goodness is real.” It’s a longing that lingers no matter what. Maybe faith is more about remembering our longing for what we love and who we want to be, more than it is an act of restoring our trust that everything will work out well. We must remain faithful to the fight not because change is guaranteed but to ensure that we are not changed.

~ *Soul Matters March Packet*

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**Mar 6**

### *Faith is a Trust Walk, Rev. Doug McCusker*

Faith is less about belief than it is about behavior. The word “faith” derives from the Latin “semper fidelis” (always loyal). It is about keeping promises and being worthy of trust. To what are you loyal? How do you live a trustworthy life?

**Zoom:** [UUFF](#); **Meeting ID:** 632 068 0813; **Password:** 838891  
**Teleconference:** 1-301-715-8592

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**Mar 13**

### *Living Each Moment as a Leap of Faith, Rev. Doug McCusker*

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the declaration of the Coronavirus pandemic. Since then, we have come to a new understanding of what it means to live with uncertainty. Nothing is guaranteed. We are called to cherish each moment as a leap of faith. To trust the universe with our heart and soul.

**Zoom:** [UUFF](#); **Meeting ID:** 632 068 0813; **Password:** 838891  
**Teleconference:** 1-301-715-8592

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**Mar 20**

### *Celtic Spring, Rev. Doug McCusker and Jason Michael*

In Ireland, the rivers find their source in the Otherworld well bubbling up from the earth surrounded by trees of wisdom. To eat salmon from those waters is to receive poetic inspiration. To drink from the water is to enter a way of being in synch with the unfolding cosmos. Join us on Ostara, the Spring Equinox, for a Celtic music celebration. Experience the ecological spirituality of the Celtic heritage through music, poetry, prayer, and dance.

**Zoom:** [UUFF](#); **Meeting ID:** 632 068 0813; **Password:** 838891  
**Teleconference:** 1-301-715-8592

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Mar 27

**Helping refugees in the US, Interfaith Chaplain Munira Abdalla**

Interfaith Chaplain Munira Abdalla will talk about the work of her IMANI center (a Kiswahili word meaning deep faith, trust, respect, and compassion) where she is helping to settle SIV (special immigrant visa) families from Afghanistan.

Born in Kenya of African and Arab descent, she is trained in business administration and international affairs and exhibits strong IMAN – “deep unquestionable love, trust and faith in Allah/The Creator.”

She is involved with many charities and religious causes in the Fredericksburg area, including Refugee Coordinator for the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, the Fredericksburg Food Bank, University of Mary Washington and Mary Washington Hospital and has been featured in many reports in the media, including New York Times, Washington Post and several TV stations.

Amy Umble, writing about her in the Free Lance-Star notes “if it can be done – Munira will make sure it *gets* done.”

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**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 ADMIN HOURS:**

Tue, Thu - 10AM-2PM  
Fri - 1PM - 5PM  
Thursdays - Working from Home

**REV. McCUSKER'S OFFICE HOURS:**

Tue, Wed. 10AM-5AM, Thu. 10AM - 3PM  
Working from home Fri, Sat 10AM - 3PM

Contact [Rev. McCusker](#) to make an appointment

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