



September 2022

Shared Ministry Spotlight

Congregational Leadership

Every community needs some form of leadership to navigate through the ever-flowing waters of change. Religious congregations are no exception. Decisions need to be made that affect the whole group. People need to be organized around principles, a sense of mission and a vision for how they want to be in the world. Here at UUFF, we practice congregational polity, meaning that we govern ourselves without interference from a higher religious authority. This requires members willing to share their time and talents and serve as leaders for the good of the whole. When we were a little community, everyone participated in almost all decisions, small and large. But as we grew, we needed to establish policies and controls, elect officers, hire professionals, call ministers, and appoint volunteers to important teams that enable the Fellowship to run smoothly, equitably, and legally. They are accountable to the congregation and are tasked to lead with service as their guide and love at their core.

We are indebted to the generous contributions of time and talent from these volunteers who together with the UUFF staff, provide the vital leadership that serves our community. As you can see, it takes a lot of people to lead a Fellowship. This is only a snapshot in time. To be an effective organization, we must always be open to new leaders who bring their unique skills and life experiences to their work. And we must encourage people to take a break after a period of dedicated service. Please talk to Rev. Doug, Minister or Kit Carver, Board President if you would like to serve as a leader of UUFF in a capacity that feeds your soul. We need you.

Board of Trustees: Kit Carver, Alex Grissom, Sarah Dewees, Lisa Andretta, R.J. Boyd, Jenna Cooper, Mindy Littleton

Staff: Rev. Doug McCusker, Chris Johns, Jason Michael, Nancy Michael, roddy biggs (starting on Sep 15), Hannelore Montgomery, Nancy Douglas, Liesel Briggs

Committee Chairs: Bruce Callander, Curt Swinburne, Eunice Haigler, Debbie Brock, Clay Calvert, Susan Lovegrove, Diane Elstein, Nancy Krause, James Sperlazza, Susan Park, Bonnie Rossi, Alane Callander, Patrick Neustatter

Nominating Committee: Randy Walther, Lee Criscuolo, Kristen Tuxbury

Committee on Shared Ministry: Howard Heppe, Ed Rodriguez, Shari Pastore

Safe Congregations Team: Kristen Tuxbury, Mary Becelia, Sarah Dewees

Building Reopening Task Force: John Kin, Kristen Tuxbury, Alex Grissom, Hannelore Montgomery, Chris Johns, Rev. Doug McCusker

THANK YOU!!!

Water Communion
Sunday, Sept 11, 2022

Join us for our annual Ingathering Service featuring our first in-person Water Communion ritual in three years. Bring water in a small container that symbolizes your travels, spiritual and/or physical, during the summer. We will combine our water into a communal bowl as a celebration of our diverse experiences and a blessing for the new Fellowship year.

Welcome Back Potluck Lunch

September 11, following the service

The Friendship Committee invites you to celebrate our community with a potluck lunch following the Sunday Water Service on September 11. Please bring a delicious dish to share – your specialty or your favorite take-out – and enjoy the company of fellow UUs. We'll cross our fingers for good weather, so plan to eat outside on our patio or on the grass. Please bring a blanket or lawn chairs for seating. (If rain is in the forecast, we'll have a plan – stay tuned.) The Friendship Committee will provide drinks and will organize food contributions as you bring them in before the service. We encourage you to bring your own plate & cutlery, but we'll have back-ups if you forget. Potlucks are always a dining adventure, and we encourage you and your family to join in!

~Susan Lovegrove

Teaching Congregation Town Hall

Sunday, Sept 4, 2022, at 11:45am
(immediately following the Sunday worship service)

Plan to stay after the worship service for an important Town Hall meeting led by Rev. Doug McCusker and the Internship Committee. Our new Intern Minister, roddy biggs (they/them) will officially join us on Sept 15 and attend their first service on Sept 18. They will be with us for 2 years. At the Town Hall we will talk about what it means to be a teaching congregation, how we can all contribute to roddy's development as a minister, and how we can support the Internship Committee.

Dual Platform: In-person and on Zoom:
Zoom: [UUFF](#); Meeting ID: 632 068 0813; Password: 838891
Teleconference: 1-301-715-8592



It's SIGN-UP time again...for Chalice Groups

Chalice Groups are a form of "Small Group Ministry" as well as UU religious education. Whether you are a long-term member of the fellowship or are new to UUFF, we want everyone to feel at home and get to know one another at a deeper level. Currently, there are three **Chalice Groups** with open slots (with plans for a fourth), each led by facilitators. Currently, our groups are meeting virtually on Zoom, but safe, in-person gatherings and hybrid are being considered by leaders and groups.

*Chalice Groups are a way to deepen both belonging and meaning.
They are a unique opportunity to:*

- *Explore and experiment with deep personal reflection and listening*
- *Build a sense of community among the participants*
- *Create a climate of mutual respect and understanding*
- *Strengthen the shared experience of being a Unitarian Universalist, as well as HAVE FUN!*

Each Chalice Group is composed of up to 10 members who meet once a month for 90 minutes, to share their ideas and feelings regarding topics that reflect the current focus area (theme) in our fellowship each month. The themes for 2022-23 are the Path of ... Sept. ...Belonging, Oct. ...Courage, Nov. ...Change, Dec. ...Wonder, Jan. ...Finding Our Center, Feb. ...Love, Mar. ...Vulnerability, Apr. ...Resistance, May ...Creativity, and June ...Delight. Trained facilitators effectively conduct the meetings, and members are asked to prioritize meeting attendance.

For further information contact David Boone, (540) 840-7606, or david.boone@gmail.com. We look forward to new and returning participants in this meaningful small group ministry program.

September Social Events

Join the Friendship committee as we reboot the Friday Firepit Fellowship from 6pm-9pm at the UU firepit. We found hosts & are reserved for EVERY Friday in September!! September 2nd and 9th are open to families. Hope to see you there!

I feel like a lone Pagan crying into the wilderness: whoo? Whoo'll join us? I am going to forgo a Mabon/Autumn Equinox public ritual (holiday is on September 21st) and instead host a Samhain/Halloween one. This will be my 3rd of

3 in an *Ár nDraíocht Féin* series. I am hoping to explore other traditions or paths after Samhain, as determined by those in attendance. I would love to see the Earth-Centered community rebuild and start meeting again to share ideas and fellowship. Please reach out if you have any questions!

~Pati Dunn

RE Service Project

On September 24th the children will participating in the Jared Box Project to help deliver smiles to children at Mary Washington Hospital. Please look for the box in the RE wing to donate small toys and items to help us fill the Jared Boxes. These boxes will then be donated to the Project and given out to children at the hospital to entertain and put a smile on the faces of children in the hospital. If you have any questions, please contact Bonnie Rossi 540-834-7060.



Pledge Drive Team Volunteers



The Fellowship will start planning the next pledge drive in the fall. The pledges we receive sustain and grow our UUFF community. Please consider helping by being a pledge drive team member. This is a short-term volunteer opportunity. We especially need people who can keep track of pledges using a spreadsheet or database.

Please contact Curt Swinburne (cswinburne@earthlink.net, 540-455-4119).

News & Notes

Basket Contributions: As the UUFF ventures further into the 21st 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.

Monday Music Group: Join us for informal music making the first and third Monday of each month, 6:30-8:30pm. New folks always welcome and there's no commitment, just drop in when you can. When weather permits we'll meet outdoors. All instruments and levels of play are welcome! For more info, contact [Lee Criscuolo](#) (540-760-9620).

Women's Group: Meets on the third Monday of the month at 6:30pm. On Monday, September 19, the group will meet at El Patron Authentic Mexican Restaurant, 316 White Oak Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22405. Check out the [menu!](#). No reservations necessary – just drop by for conversation and connection. Newcomers are especially welcomed. Check out the UUFF 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.

Day-long Silent Retreat: The Insight Meditation Community of Fredericksburg presents a fall day-long retreat, The Practice of Awareness, led by Todd Drake from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm on Oct. 15 at the UUFF. Click [here](#) for details and to register.

Intergenerational Discussion Group: Watch this space for the date of the next meeting!

Youth Group Meeting: The UUFF Youth and their advisors meet on Sundays after service from 12:15 - 1:45 PM starting Sept 18! Teens in grades 9-12 are welcome to join them for community building and faith exploration! Please contact [Chris Johns](#), DLRE for more information.

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.



September is the traditional beginning of a new “church-year”. Of course, we are open all year round and the fiscal year already started back on July 1st. But September is when we return from summer vacations and time off to renew and recharge our ministry programs. The various choirs start performing again, religious education classes reconvene with new curriculum, and our small group ministry, Chalice Groups, kicks back into full gear. It is a time to gather again in celebration of the blessings that uphold our community.

However, this year is like no other in the history of this Fellowship. It is like we are finally coming out of the dark, lonely cave that is the coronavirus pandemic. Yes, we have been open for in-person services since March. But there has been a tentativeness to the return. We are all still feeling the effects of a massive, collective trauma that none of us had ever experienced before. The pandemic caused us to close the Fellowship building for 2 years. That was monumental! It completely disrupted the way that we interacted as a community. Sure, we coped by trying to recreate our communal life within an online environment. But it wasn’t the same. It was weird and strange. And it seemed to go on with no end in sight.

We worried about infecting our fellow congregants and we didn’t feel completely safe in each other’s presence. We saw members leave and we worried if our beloved community was broken. Anxiety crept in, causing us to mistrust our leadership who didn’t protect us from harm. We developed a scarcity mentality with narratives about a lack of money and volunteers. We talked about people rather than directly to people. This is how trauma works. It gets into our bodies, and it doesn’t go away overnight.

In the last couple of months, many of our congregants contracted COVID. Some have gotten sick. Thankfully no one has died or been severely hospitalized. We are passing through the gauntlet. When we return this September for our Water Communion, we will be a different Fellowship than we were before the pandemic. We need to relearn what it means to be a loving, caring, and abundant congregation. We may think we are ready to start growing again, but first we need to heal. We need to give ourselves time to listen to one another and process our feelings through honest spiritual exchange. We need to embrace our vulnerabilities and use them as our compass for renewal.

Our Board of Trustees met recently to identify our goals for the new year. The goal of congregational healing rose to the top. We cannot move forward without it. Right now, we are in the preliminary planning phase. We aren’t alone. Just about every religious congregation is going through the same struggle. That means there are resources and ideas that we can leverage. In the coming weeks, we will identify various opportunities for us all to gather in honest, supportive dialog. It will take however long it takes to mourn the losses of the past two years and accept our present moment without judgment. We are about to embark on a collective spiritual transformation into the unknown. This will be a church-year like none other. I am ready to take this journey with you. I am humbled and honored to be able to serve this community in this time of great need.



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

**Spinning Plates
Or
Experiences of the President of the Board of Trustees**

I was doing very little in my life, when I was elected to the BOT and then in the same month became president. I am coming to realize that this is a little bit bigger than I anticipated. I am learning at a faster rate than I have had to do since I changed from being an Pediatric Occupational Therapist to being a Geriatric Occupational Therapist (about 15 years ago).



**President's
Corner**

Kit Carver

When I was a kid my family would watch the Ed Sullivan show every Sunday. This variety show invariably had an acrobat of some kind. One of the ones I found fascinating was the man with the spinning plates. He would put the plates on sticks balanced on the tips of his fingers and nose and set them spinning. More and more he would spin until

his set was over. I would hold my breath waiting for it all to crash down. As I am unpacking this trunk they call the BOT and the UUFF I am like that man. I am putting plates in the air and I am beginning to spin them. I have to keep going back to plates I set spinning a while ago and set those to continue to spin as I place new plates on the end of new sticks.

What are the plates that are spinning right now you might ask? Good question. Membership (we don't have a chair, volunteer please call), Finance (updated controls being put in place), Bylaws (revisions are being made), Intern (we need a success for this person). BOT retreat (can I make it fun and meaningful)?

Then there are the greater fellowship plates, the UUA stuff. The Article 2 Commission and the so-called 8th Principle. I can not forget the Gadfly Papers by Todd Eklof. This minister was excommunicated from the UUMA for writing a book that disagreed with current thought on how the UUA is handling anti racism. What??

What is a little bit worrisome is that the trunk I mentioned earlier is still half full. Can I continue to unpack it? Can I keep it all spinning until the end of my set? We will see. But this I know, if you come join me on the stage, together we will have exciting things happen!

~ Kit Carver

And We're Off!

Welcome, Beloveds! As we stand here on the precipice of the new 2022-2023 Religious Education (RE) instructional year, I think it is worth noting that the September Soul Matter's theme is "Belonging." Belonging is the PERFECT theme for this month (not that it wouldn't have been good last September or even the next...). I have seen new little faces (welcome to the Heppie family and the Endes!) who might not understand why they are even there. We have OG families who haven't sat in an RE classroom on any regular basis for over two years. Either way, we have a lot of work to do and belonging needs to be held front and center as we take our first tentative steps towards, dare I say it, normalcy?



If finding a faith home that gives us a sense of belonging, wherever that may be, for our lives and the lives of our children, is important, what do we do once we find that place? Well, "to belong" is not a passive verb. Belonging takes effort and care and showing up. When I see the children in RE classes that seem to have that ease that comes with a sense of belonging, they are the children who are there week after week, or at least coming in regularly and getting involved in other ways (Little Ringers, anyone?). Belonging requires work. It takes willingness. It takes time. Especially for kiddos, who are often on a different "comfort zone time frame" than most adults.

My wish for all of us this month and throughout the year is that we find that sense of belonging that we yearn for. But Parents? Guardians? I need to say this out loud. If a sense of belonging is something you have found here for yourselves, but do not need to attend regularly to have it, please remember that your children probably do. So much of what happens in RE is cumulative. They are busy in the classrooms building new skills, new knowledge and most importantly, new relationships that will take them from pre-K through coming of Age through Bridging as Seniors in High School. It is my observation that our children and youth will most likely need more regular attendance to find that comfort with the other kids. My fervent hope is that you bring your children here as often as you can so we here in the RE program can instill that sense of belonging - with a little extra time, care, patience and love - and all the good things that come with it!

Oh! And one last thing (there is always one last thing!), this a rebuilding year for us! Please look for emails from me. I will be sending out the welcome letter a little later this month with news and updates on curriculum for the year, the next holiday pageant and milestone programming!

I CAN NOT WAIT to see what this new RE season holds for us! :)
Ms. Chris

PS In case your children ask why they are here? Click [here](#) for some helpful resources!

PPS [Register your children ages 0 - 18!](#)

September RE At-A-Glance

September 4 - 10:30 - 11:30 - End of Summer RE-Palooza!

September 11th - Intergenerational Water Service - NO RE

September 18th - Welcome Back Day!

First Day of RE 10:45 - 11:45

Youth Group 12:15 - 2:00

September 25th

RE 10:45 - 11:45

Youth Group 12:15 - 2:00

Tie Dye and Bike/Scooter Party!

Join us on Sunday, September 18 after the service for a tie dye and bike/scooter/roller skate/skateboard party at the UUFF! Bring a white t-shirt and your wheels. Contact Susan Park or Bonnie Rossie for more information.

RE Committee - Fall Calendar of Events!

Saturday, October 29, 3 p.m. - Pumpkin Carving and S'Mores Party

Saturday, November 12, 6 p.m. - Bonfire with S'Mores

December (Date To Be Decided) - Cookie Exchange Party



Help Wanted

A crew of individuals, willing to commit to regular visits to our grounds to care for our lawns, gardens and trees is needed. It is helpful if they can bring weed-whackers, or pruning shears, or push mowers. Ability to operate (or to learn) the tractor/mower can help keep our yard looking like a country club (and have some fun in the process)! And, of course, there are always weeds to pull in the biofilter. If you can help for little or no cost and a modest investment of time, email Bruce at UUFFBaG@gmail.com! Thanks!



Community Action in the Fall

Community Action will be gearing up for fall projects to help people in our community. We have been supporting the Imani Refugee Center. We plan to work with FAHAS. Hazel Hill will have support from us over the Holidays. Community Dinners is our great ongoing project. There are other projects where there is need in our community.

Currently there are no regular committee members in Community Action; please consider joining the committee, even if on a trial basis, so we can continue to support our outreach.

Please contact Curt Swinburne (cswinburne@earthlink.net, 540-455-4119).

Thank you,
~ Curt Swinburne

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

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



The Social Justice Committee held its first in person meeting in many months, on Wed., August 10, with representatives of Virginia Organizing, a non-partisan grassroots organizing group, as guests. The topic of discussion was the working conditions for contracted custodial workers for Stafford County Public Schools. It was decided that the Social Justice Committee would host a town hall meeting jointly with Virginia Organizing to engage the public on the topic. It was scheduled for Saturday, August 27 at 3:30 p.m. at UUFF.

**Voting is a big topic right now for the SJC.
The committee encourages everyone to make a plan to vote.**

Visit <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/> to learn details about where and when to vote (including absentee and early voting), how to register to vote or to confirm that you are currently registered, and how to contact your voter registrar regarding working as an election official.

Our region is now in the 7th Congressional District.

The candidates for the November election are Democrat Abigail Spanberger, the incumbent, and Republican Yesli Vega.

Important dates:

- First day of in-person early voting at your [local registrar's office](#): **Friday, September 23, 2022**
- Deadline to [register to vote, or update an existing registration](#): **October 17, 2022.**
- Deadline to apply for a ballot to be mailed to you: **October 28, 2022.** Your request must be received by your [local voter registration office](#) by 5:00 p.m.
- Voter registration offices open for early voting: **Saturday, October 29, 2022.**
- The last day of in-person early voting at your [local voter registration office](#): **Saturday, November 5, 2022** at 5:00 p.m.

See who is on your ballot by viewing the [candidate lists](#).
Register to vote or apply for an absentee ballot online using the [Citizen Portal](#).

There's a lot of work to do on the social justice front, but we need more UU's willing to put some time into projects and to take on leadership! For further information, contact Alane Callander, Social Justice Committee Chair, at alane.uuff@cox.net. The next meeting of the committee will be Wednesday, Sept. 14 at 1 p.m. at UUFF.

~ Alane Callander
Social Justice Committee Chair

**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](#).

- **Sept 04: Fred** "Should Student Loan Debt Be Cancelled?"
- **Sept 18: Stew** "Are Trade Embargoes an Intelligent, Effective Foreign Policy Tool?"



Monthly Theme – Belonging

You hardly knew
how hungry you were
to be gathered in,
to receive the welcome
that invited you to enter
entirely...

You began to breathe again...
You learned to sing.

But the deal with this blessing
is that it will not leave you alone,
will not let you linger...
this blessing
will ask you to leave,
not because it has tired of you
but because it desires for you
to become the sanctuary
that you have found...

- [Jan Richardson](#)

This is no gentle invitation, friends. No sweet reminder to think of others. It's a warning. A desperate hope that we will wake to the fact that there are two kinds of belonging: one that wants to *bless* us and another that wants to *enlist* us.

Deep down we know this. The hard part is to remember it. To use Richardson's language, if we find ourselves being

invited to linger rather than leave, alarm bells should go off. We need to be weary of those who welcome us with a club jacket and a soft couch. They may have let us in, but soon they will enlist us into the work of keeping others out. There will likely even be a part of us that wants to keep others out. After all, closed circles don't just set us apart, they sit us above. But they also keep us small. Maybe this is why Richardson's blessing is so intent on not leaving us alone. It knows that we only grow when the circle does. Circles that keep others out also keep the air out. No one inside a closed circle truly sings; they only suffocate, slowly.

It's all one big reminder that the true blessing of belonging is not that you get to come inside the circle; it's that you get to participate in expanding it. Again, as the circle grows so do we.

All Services

In-person and on Zoom

Zoom: [UUFF](#); Meeting ID: 632 068 0813; Password: 838891

Teleconference: 1-301-715-8592

September 4

Do Our Bodies Belong to Us?, Rev. Doug McCusker

It seems absurd to even ask the question of whether our bodies belong to us. But all around our country, states are codifying laws that take away bodily autonomy. Forced birthing and criminalizing abortion have severed the sacred bonds that humans have with their bodies. Where might this lead and what must we do to restore one of the most basic freedoms known to humanity?

September 11

Grateful to be Together, Rev. Doug McCusker

This is our annual in-gathering Sunday when we share the joy of being a connected community. For the first time in 3 years, we can actually come together in-person around the communal waters that bind us in body and spirit. Join us for the Water Communion ritual as we express our deep longing for each other and start to heal from the trauma of the coronavirus pandemic.

September 18

Belonging Starts with Being Who You Are, Rev. Doug McCusker

Social worker and author, Dr. Brené Brown teaches us that the opposite of belonging is fitting in. "Because fitting in is assessing a group of people and changing who you are. But true belonging never asks us to change who we are. It demands we *be* who we are." And together, we benefit by a whole that is greater than its parts. Join us in welcoming our new Intern Minister, roddy biggs as we covenant to be a teaching congregation.

September 25

Music and Homo Sapiens, Steve Walk

Henry David Thoreau said: "When I hear music, I fear no danger. I am invulnerable. I see no foe." And Bruce Springsteen shared: "The best music is essentially there to provide you something to face the world with." Yes, music can raise us above the pain, grief, and even despair of injury, loss, and anxiety. All good, right? In my talk I will explore the evolution story of music and homo sapiens, from the past, to the present, and peer toward our future.

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:
Mon, Wed, Fri - 1PM-5PM
Wednesdays - Working from home

REV. McCUSKER'S OFFICE HOURS:
Starting on Aug 9: Wed, Thu - 10AM-5PM, Sun 12PM-2PM
Fri - Study Day, Sat - Working from home
Contact [Rev. McCusker](#) in case of an emergency or to
make an appointment

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
FELLOWSHIP OF FREDERICKSBURG**
25 Chalice Circle, Fredericksburg, VA 22405
540-310-4001 -- Email: uuff@verizon.net
www.uuffva.org

BOARD MEMBERS

Minister: Rev. Doug McCusker 540-310-4001
Office Admin: Nancy Michael 540-310-4001
Dir. of Religious Ed: Chris Johns 540-310-4001
Music Director: Jason Michael 610-698-6896
Treasurer: Ron Wasem 540-373-2929
Custodian: Hannelore Montgomery 540-842-7018

President: Kit Carver 540-907-8395
Vice Pres: Alex Grissom 540-273-5174
Secretary: Sarah DeWees 540-368-0785
Lisa Andretta 540-842-4991
RJ Boyd 703-585-4980
Jenna Cooper 703-615-3605
Mindy Littleton 540-288-1010
TBD Youth Member