



December 2022



**Cookie Decorating Party on Sunday, December 4th!**

Come decorate holiday cookies with the RE Committee! We will meet at the UUFF at 12 p.m. on Sunday, December 4th to decorate cookies of all types (and probably eat a few, too!). All are welcome. Contact Susan Park or Jenn Austin for more information.



**Winter Solstice Celebration!**

Come celebrate the Winter Solstice in a Norse Yule ritual at the firepit led by Jenn Austin on Sunday, December 18th from 6-9pm. Families welcome, as are all faiths! Bring a chair and a mug to share our wassail or your own drink to share in a toast, and an optional offering. No videography please."

**Holiday Hors d'Oeuvre Buffet  
Sunday, December 18, after the service**

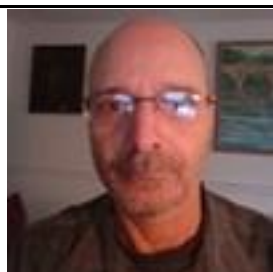


On December 18, we'll spread some holiday cheer after the service with the return of our holiday buffet. This will be an hors d'oeuvre buffet of sweet and savory finger foods. Please bring a dish that's easy to eat – think small plates, no utensils. Share your family's favorite holiday treats, whether homemade or store-bought, and make plans to stay after the service to enjoy this special social time.

*~ Friendship Committee*

**Internship Committee**

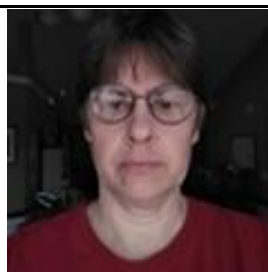
As roddy bell-shelton biggs is starting their 2-year internship with us you may have feedback that the intern committee would find valuable. Please note that for feedback to be beneficial as a teaching tool, anonymous feedback will not be accepted. Here are the members of the committee you can contact. Their contact information is listed in the Directory of Members and Friends. We are looking for additional members to join the team. Please contact Curt Swinburne or Eunice Haigler if you are interested.



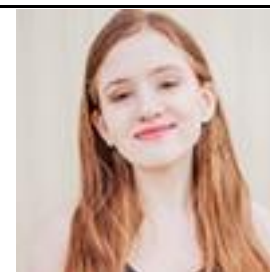
Curt Swinburne



Eunice Haigler



Ralph Bush-Resko



Leisel Briggs  
(Youth Member)

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## Board Business

The Board meets the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. on [Zoom](#).  
Meeting ID: 952 4301 5870; Passcode: 587441  
UUFF friends and members are welcome to attend.

This month at the Board of Trustees, meeting the following was acted on:

- Reviewed the UUA iInternship salary grant application for 2023-2024, approved
- Reviewed the request by Social Justice to approve the General Resolution from the UUA **The Right to Die with Dignity**, approved and referred to the congregation for ratification at the next congregational meeting.
- Accepted the anonymous donation of 3 new large screen TVs and a second camera to improve Sunday streaming services.
- Continued to work on follow-up of consensus building workshop.

After approval by the Board, the full minutes of each meeting are available in the [Document Repository](#).

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# News & Notes

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**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. Now that we have returned to in-person services, the text option will remain useful for those who cannot attend, or don't have cash or checks with them.

**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.

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**Monday Music Group:** Join us for informal music making the first and third Monday of each month, 6:30-8:30pm. New folks are always welcome and there's no commitment. Just drop in to jam 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).

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**Women's Group:** Meets on the third Monday of the month at 6:30pm. On Monday, Dec 19, the group will meet at Peter Chang Restuarant, [1771 Carl D. Silver Parkway, Fredericksburg, VA 22401](#). Peter Chang "is known for its variety in taste and high-quality fresh ingredients." Check out the [MENU](#). No reservations necessary – just drop by for conversation and connection. Newcomers are especially welcome. Check out the UUFF Women's Group on [Facebook](#) or contact [Susan Lovegrove](#).

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**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.

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**Day-long Silent Retreat:** The Insight Meditation Community of Fredericksburg presents a winter day-long retreat, Cultivating Concentration, led by Bill Brooks from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm on Jan. 21, 2023 at the UUFF. Click [here](#) for details and to register.

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**Intergenerational Discussion Group:** See you next year!

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

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**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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## Joys and Concerns!

Beloveds, as our community grows, changes, and lives into what it means to be a Fellowship in the 21st century, your staff, with the support of the pastoral care team, have created a new way of collecting online Joys and Concerns for Sunday worship. Joining us in person? Not much has changed. Joining us online, you may now submit Joys and Concerns [HERE](#). They will be collected on Saturday evenings and shared with our beloved community during the Sunday service.

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### Wondering Out Loud

Rev. Doug McCusker



Our theme for December is *Wonder*. Does that sound familiar? I've been wondering out loud through this column for over seven years. Most of my sermons contain some form of embedded wonder. I see it as my job as a minister, to stir up questions so that you can try to answer them through the lens of your values and life experience. And your answers come more in the form of your actions than your ideas.

Wonder is a way of being for me. I try not to be dead certain about most things. I like to leave the door open to the mystery of life. I am fascinated by many things and for the most part, I don't need a definitive answer. I doubt that I will ever know for sure what came before the Big Bang and what happens to me after death. And I'm okay not knowing. It doesn't spoil my enjoyment of the here and now. I am currently on top of a mountain looking out over an immense vista of mountains and valleys. The rocks under my feet are hundreds of millions of years old. That blows my mind! I guess you could call that wonder with a bit of awe mixed in.

I also live, like you, in a culture that has been created by humans. It's amazing and messed up at the same time. There are aspects that have lifted us up so we can thrive and create beauty. There are also inequities that cause conflict and suffering. As a UU, I wonder if humanity will ever be able to find the right balance in which love reigns supreme. I wonder if we will be able find a sustainable way of living on this planet. I wonder if we will be able to find our way back to a loving relationship with the rest of nature. So many questions. The only way I can answer them is through my actions. I just hope I help more than I hurt.

I invite us all to wonder and be open to what arises. May this month of seasonal transition, holidays and celebrations, and cold nights ignite our sense of wonder. And may we embrace love in all the ways that we answer.

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

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### new beginnings

roddy bell-shelton biggs

## Wonderings of Winter Nights

“I think us are here to wonder, myself. To wonder. To ask. And that in wondering about the big things and asking about the big things, you learn about the little ones, almost by accident. But you never know nothing more about the big things than you start out with. The more I wonder, the more I love.” - *Alice Walker: The Color Purple*.

I wonder more this time of year, the night dark and cold.  
I wonder about the big things I've seen, known, or thought I knew.  
I wonder who I am and who I might become. I wonder about who we are and who we might be in time. I wonder about God, and I wonder about Spirit. Do any of my wonderings even matter? I wonder. Then I wonder why I wonder at all. What might it look like to see our Unitarian Universalist faith anew? Who might come to the table who has yet to be here? How might worship in hybrid ways take shape? I wonder what faith anchored in Justice, Generosity, Evolution, Pluralism, Equity, and Interdependence will look like in the next five, ten, and fifteen years.

Do you find yourself wondering more this time of year as well?  
What do you wonder, if you wonder at all? Do you wonder who you are as well? Do you wonder who we are? Who might we become? Together may we wonder.  
Together we may Nurture, Inspire, Create and Transform. Together may our eyes be open, and together may we grow.

Winter nights are a time for wonder, but you need not wonder alone.  
If you or someone you love is lost in wonder this holiday season and need someone to share your wonderings, pain, joy, or sadness with, know that I am here to support you however that might take shape.

*With Love and Wonder,  
~ roddy bell-shelton biggs*

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## How to make a volunteer love you and what not to say to a volunteer.



President's  
Corner

Kit Carver

Many thoughts jump into my head when I think about volunteers. Volunteers are not employees. One cannot really order a volunteer around. Except maybe as I did when I asked them to chop the vegetables faster. Volunteers need to be happy; they do not lose a paycheck if they quit. Volunteers need to feel appreciated, that is the paycheck. Volunteers squeeze time into their schedule to do an activity, their time is very valuable. Never think that a volunteer is less busy in their daily schedule than you.

I am a volunteer, so is everyone on the BOT, all the chairs of the committees and all the workers in the committees. The person who greets you on Sunday morning is a volunteer. Without the volunteers of the UUFF we would have to close the doors permanently. If we use an analogy, then the volunteers are the rowers of the ship called the UUFF.

The following are things that trigger me as a volunteer. By this I mean how certain phrases can make me angry without even finishing the sentence. The first one is "You should..." When I hear that phrase, I have an almost automatic trigger of my inner oppositional teen. Then there is the one, "The UUA says..." What the H\*\*\* does the UUA know about us? Finally, "You could do this better if..." My response in my head is then do it yourself! The only kind of advice I want as a volunteer is, "Here let me help you with that."

I know this has been a somewhat negative message so I will end with examples of great people in the volunteer world.

**Connie Moore** helps with community meals (we fix meals for upwards of 65 people in need.) She said to me several months ago, "I think we should make chicken BBQ and potato salad. I'll find the recipe and buy the potatoes. I was so stunned by her statement that I stared at her open mouth. No one had ever offered recipe suggestions, much less offered to purchase something. Of course, we made chicken BBQ and potato salad.

**Diane Elstein** said, "I'm not really happy with the Sunday service." I'm going to join the Sunday services committee." Wow, I was so impressed by her proactive engagement.

**Terry Hughes** said, "I read you need help on the Human Resources Committee. I have experience in this. I will be on that committee." All I could do was hug him. What a sweet person.

I say to my loyal readers, "Be like Connie, Diane and Terry. Don't be a sideline quarterback. If you have a complaint, come ready to work on the solution.

~ Kit Carver

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## Happy Chalica



Officially starting Monday, December 5th and ending on Sunday, December 11th - although, the addition of an eighth principle adds another day to the festivities - some of us here at the UUFF will celebrate Chalica. This holiday is quite new compared to other holidays celebrated at this time of year. According to UUA.org, Chalica "first emerged in 2005 out of a wish to have a holiday organized around Unitarian Universalist values." And so to get us all in the Chalica mood, I offer this humble poem, with apologies to Clement Clarke Moore.

### 'Twas the Day Before Chalica

*'Twas the day before Chalica, 'twas time to prepare,  
For seven days of a UU holiday so rare.  
Our beliefs, how they differ, from one UU to another,  
What binds us are the Principles - seven in number.*

*We set up our chalices, sometimes one for each day,  
With rainbow colored candles to brighten our way.  
We choose seven readings and seven actions with care,  
And think about all of the joy that we'll share.*

*Then we honor each day with heart-felt intention,  
We focus our actions and give full attention:*

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*To Worth, to Kindness, to Learning and what's True,  
To Voting, to Justice and Connection to You.*

*When all of a sudden, I thought, "Oh no! wait!"  
We've adopted one more, so now there are eight!  
Eight days now to honor, eight days to explore,  
The depth of this faith, we've been gifted one more.*

*With this new principle, we work to create,  
The Beloved Community, without racism or hate,  
And on the eighth day, we will light a new candle,  
As we dream about systems we seek to dismantle.*

*And so let me say, as I close out this note,  
Happy Chalica to all of us on Earth's life boat.*

Want to hear more about Chalica? Just [click this link](#) or contact our Director of Lifespan Religious Education, [me!](#)

*Wishing you the Merriest of Everything and Peace throughout the Season,  
~Chris Johns*

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## RE At-A-Glance

### Dec 4

Cookie Party! (12:00pm - 2:00pm)

### Dec 8

Pageant Tech & Dress Rehearsal

### Dec 11

Pageant Sunday!

### Dec 18th

Holiday Stations

### Dec 25

NO RE or meetings



**The RE Committee has some fun events planned for this winter!**

January - Online Game Night via Zoom

February - Birthday Cakes and Board Games at the UUFF



### Help Needed!!

Building and Grounds is in need of volunteers to commit a small amount of their time to tend the outdoor part of our property. If you want to help, email Bruce at [UUFFBaG@gmail.com](mailto:UUFFBaG@gmail.com)! Thanks!



### Fall Update!

The Fellowship had a gleaning day picking produce out in Westmoreland for the food banks in the surrounding counties. It was a great experience helping others with the labor of our own hands. The farm was beautiful and the weather was perfect. A good time was had by all. We will be looking to schedule another gleaning in the future.

### Holiday Help!

The Fellowship will be working with Hazel Hill during the holidays to support the residents. For Christmas we will be collecting 13 additional gift cards for the teens to make 21. Donations of Amazon or Walmart \$30 cards are ideal. We would like to deliver the cards by December 12th.

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**Community Action is soliciting other ideas for community outreach during the holidays.**

Please send any ideas or questions you have to [Curt Swinburne](#).

Thank you,  
~ Curt Swinburne

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

## 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](#).

- Dec 4: TBD
- Dec 18: TBD



## Monthly Theme – Wonder

The path of wonder seems well worn. It's a journey that brings us down to size. Just think of those pictures which reveal that our galaxy is just one of billions more. Or think of when you've stared into the empty darkness of a midnight sky or an endless ocean. Such images remind us that the universe is more vast than we can imagine. They leave us with a sense of wonder that overwhelms. In the face of such an incomprehensible abyss, one can't help but feel humbled and small. But religion never wants us to stop there. "Hold on," it says. Just stand at the abyss a bit longer. Lean in a little bit more. And when you do, you'll realize that this path doesn't end with a deep darkness that doesn't care. No, if we remain there in witness long enough, a new message emerges. You look into the vast mystery and surprisingly, it stares back, as if to say, "Welcome home."

Wonder, and its cousin awe, reduces us to make room for something more than our self-centered needs, wants and worries. With our narcissism shrunk down to a reasonable size, it becomes possible to notice that we are not the only ones up there on the stage. It's in this way that looking up into the cosmos allows us to look across at each other. Which is, of course, a huge gift, because while being center stage and the center of the universe can feel powerful, it's also a very lonely place to be. So, friends, don't just look up at the stars this month. Let's make sure that our looking up leads to us looking across.

~ Soul Matters Monthly Packet

## All Services

**Dual Platform:** In-person and on Zoom

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

**Teleconference:** 1-301-715-8592

## December 4

*Wonder Who We Will Become as a World*, Rev. Doug McCusker

These times are surely changing! We are experiencing a climate crisis, a perilous war, global economic destabilization, and the rise of authoritarianism. In this month of wonder, join us for a mini-sermon series on wondering who we will become. We will start by examining who we are in the present and what our values and principles call us to do.

## December 11

*The Giving Bowl, Holiday Pageant*

This year's holiday pageant, *The Giving Bowl*, tells the story of a family who fall on hard times but find 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, the pageant features music from “Emma’s Revolution,” performed by the UUFF choir and a cast of all ages!

**December 18**

***Wonder Who We Will Become as UU's, Rev. Doug McCusker***

We are emerging from a devastating pandemic that disrupted the very concept of religion and how we here at UUFF saw ourselves as a community. In this month of wonder, join us for a mini-sermon series on wondering who we will become. We will start by examining who we are in the present and what our values and principles call us to do.

**December 24**

***Christmas Eve Service, UUFF Staff***

Join the UUFF staff and the Adult Choir as we celebrate our annual Christmas Eve service. We will share the Christmas story, tell some stories of our own, sing familiar carols and light our candles for peace and tranquility.

**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.

**The UUFF Office will be CLOSED from December 23, 2022 until January 2, 2023.  
Happy Holidays!**



**OFFICE ADMIN HOURS:**

Mon, Wed, Fri - 1PM-5PM

Wednesdays - Working from home

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

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

**roddy bell-shelton biggs OFFICE HOURS:**

Tue & Thu - 10AM - 3PM

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
FELLOWSHIP OF FREDERICKSBURG  
25 Chalice Circle, Fredericksburg, VA 22405  
540-310-4001 -- Email: [uuffva@gmail.com](mailto:uuffva@gmail.com)  
[www.uuffva.org](http://www.uuffva.org)**

**BOARD MEMBERS**

**Minister:** Rev. Doug McCusker ..... 703-203-7558  
**Intern Minister:** roddy bell-shelton biggs ..... 615-784-9648  
**Office Admin:** Nancy Michael ..... 540-310-4001  
**Dir. of Lifespan Rel. Ed:** Chris Johns ..... 540-295-0509  
**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  
Youth Member ..... TBD