

Volume 38
Edition 1
January
2020



CROSSROADS



Bull Run Unitarian Universalists

Rev. Charlotte's Word-Weavings

The Power of We

Happy New Year! Happy new decade! What resolutions have you made for this year? Do they involve sharing your gifts with this beloved community? It has been an active and rich six months into our second year together; I hope to see even more engagement during the second half of this church year.

This month we will have two worship services that focus our attention on the “Power of We” which was the theme for last year’s UUA General Assembly. Six questions probing the heart of UU-ism will be asked in two parts.

The first three, which follow, will be posed on January 12th:

- 1) What sustains you and your faith community efforts towards inclusion, equity, and diversity?
- 2) What limits you from living out our faith’s promise towards liberation and transformation?
- 3) What should we expect of ourselves and one another in living out our covenantal relationships?

The second set of three questions will be posed on January 19th:

- 4) When is a time that you felt “the power of we” in Unitarian Universalism?
- 5) What is so important in Unitarian Universalism that you would be willing to sacrifice for it?
- 6) What will it take for Unitarian Universalism to fully embody the power of we?

(continued on page 2)

(Word-Weavings, continued from page 1)

While these questions were written for reflection on UU-ism in general, they could equally be used to reflect on the specifics of how BRUU as a member congregation of the UUA can live into its own vision and mission. What is (are) BRUU's primary purpose(s) during this new decade of the 21st century? What opportunities might we grab hold of to be who we wish to be known as? What conversations do we need to have to generate liberation for all those lives with which we intersect?

Reflecting on the “power of we” is a way to imagine our future here in Manassas. The BRUU Vision Team will be bringing draft vision statements to the congregation in a town hall meeting later this month. Expect to hear more about the progress of their work, which has continued behind the scenes during the past two months.

By the way, it's not too early to register for General Assembly 2020, which will be in Providence, Rhode Island, from June 24-28 (<https://www.uua.org/ga>). “*Rooted, Inspired, & Ready!*” is the theme... We are in touch with our theological roots, we are engaged in transforming our faith, and we are fired up to take action in the wider world.”

May your days and nights be bright with hope and overflowing with love for all of Creation,

Rev. Charlotte

January 2020 Sermon Descriptions

January 5: *For The Time Being* (Ellen Badgley) – Using a section of W. H. Auden's poem by the same name, Ellen Badgley reflects on the post-holiday letdown, and what it means in a spiritual sense.

January 12: *The Power of We – Part I* (Rev. Charlotte) – This morning we explore the power of being a UU congregation and part of our larger faith community starting with three questions probing the heart of UU-ism: 1) What sustains you and your faith community efforts towards inclusion, equity, and diversity? 2) What limits you from living out our faith's promise towards liberation and transformation? 3) What should we expect of ourselves and one another in living out our covenantal relationships?

January 19: *The Power of We – Part II* (Rev. Charlotte) – This morning we explore the power of being a UU congregation and part of our larger faith community using three more questions probing the heart of UU-ism: 4) When is a time that you felt “the power of we” in Unitarian Universalism? 5) What is so important in Unitarian Universalism that you would be willing to sacrifice for it? 6) What will it take for Unitarian Universalism to fully embody the power of we?

January 26: *Science Fiction as Theological Reflection* (Pat Malarkey) – In December, Rev. Charlotte and Ellen Badgley gave us a baseline of how science and spirituality are perfectly compatible. This morning Pat Malarkey explores how fiction based on science provides a means for theological reflection. Science fiction allows us to invent new religions and beliefs and to look at existing ones through the lenses of time, space and- or species.



FROM ANNEASE

It's time to sign up for BRUU's annual variety show (Feb 29). We're looking for all kinds of family-friendly acts from all ages. Look for sign-up table in fellowship hall this month.

Save these dates:

Feb 7 is evensong service

Feb 29 is variety show

Annease Hastings, Music Director



Above: Combined Children, Youth and Adult Choirs at December Holiday Service

Below: An afternoon of caroling, many thanks to Martin and Kelly for facilitating & accompanying



Photos in this issue contributed by Tom Miller, Bev Reusser, and Gretchen Almstead

You're invited to participate in a free intergenerational interfaith day of learning on January 18, 2020 from 10 am to 5 pm, which includes lunch. Three sessions focusing on healing and connection to build resilience in faith communities, imagining a just world using visual arts, and *Bal Taschit* (Don't Waste) – the environmental impacts of our eating habits and decreasing food waste, plus yummy recipes. The event will be held at Congregation Ner Shalom, 14010 Spriggs Road, Woodbridge, VA 22193

INTERFAITH DAY OF LEARNING

LOCATION: CONGREGATION NER SHALOM

14010 Spriggs Rd, Woodbridge, Virginia 22193

DATE: SATURDAY, JANUARY 18TH, 2020



Schedule:

Resilience 10:30-12

A Jewish proverb states, "Ask not for a lighter burden, but for broader shoulders." Come together for a reflective session of intergenerational healing and connection and learn about how faith communities can build resilience.

Lunch 12:00-1:30

Imagine a Just World 1:30-3

Using John Lennon's "Imagine" and Genesis as a catalyst, this visual arts workshop challenges participants to imagine what a perfect world looks like and identify what stands in the way of bringing that vision into reality.

Coffee break 3:00-3:30

Bal Taschit (Don't Waste!) 3:30-5

Learn how to be mindful of the environmental impact of our eating habits and to avoid food waste while trying some fun, sustainable recipes.

This is a free event! Come for the whole day, or just drop in for one session if you'd like!

MAKE SURE THEY HEAR FROM BRUU AT THE 2020 UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY!!

General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct Association business, participate in inspirational worship services and informative workshops, and reconvene with friends and colleagues. Now that we're getting past the hubbub of the holidays, it's a good time to remember that the 2020 GA will be held June 24 to 28 in Providence, Rhode Island – with good traffic, that's just a seven-hour drive for a BRUU carpool. GA is an unforgettable experience for the thousands of UUs who attend and come back with renewed energy and innovative ideas to share with their congregations. The theme for UUA-GA 2020 is *Rooted, Inspired, & Ready!*

Registration is already open at uua.org/ga. Full-time registration is \$400 for adults, \$240 for high school youth and retired and candidate ministers, and \$150 for off-site registrants. Register by March 15 for these low rates, since rates will increase on March 16 and again on May 1.

Providence combines the friendliness of a small town with the culture and sophistication of a big city. There's a thriving arts community, vibrant and diverse neighborhoods, outstanding hotels, a renowned restaurant scene. For lodging, there is a variety of hotels, dormitory-style accommodations at two local universities, and Home Hospitality B&B-style accommodations where UUs from local congregations will serve as host families. For more information, visit uua.org/ga. Hotel reservation begins March 2 at 9:00 a.m. Eastern.

Let's try to meet two goals for GA 2020. With our membership numbers, BRUU is eligible to have five official delegates – we haven't been able to send a full delegation the past few years, so with GA practically in our back yard, we need to ensure we have the voice and the access we deserve. Also, let's make sure BRUU shows up with a delegation that reflects the range of ages and backgrounds in our congregation. A generous BRUU member has already pledged to subsidize the participation costs of a young adult who might not be able to attend otherwise. Are there more donors out there who can do the same? If you want to be a GA Angel, contact any member of the Board to let your good intentions be known.

I've been to GA the last two years, and each time I've come back inspired by the experiences and the dedication of UUs from all over who work every day to make this world more just and more sustainable for everyone. Block out that last week of June on your calendar right now – you'll be glad you did!

Art Muirhead
Member, BRUU Board of Directors



December 8 Science and Spirituality Service

On December 24, Parrish Services contributed and delivered 10 boxes of canned foods to the BRUU food pantry. Special thanks to them, so we can provide food for the less fortunate in our community.

Just As Long As I Have Breath

Series Title: First Principles

Column Title: The System

In my speech accepting BRUU's vote to make me President, I spoke of stewardship, accountability, planning for a range of possible futures, vision, living our values, and love. Now that that series is over, I'm confronted with the lived reality of navigating the System.

The System is not planned, analyzed, or championed. It simply is. It is the way we've always done it. (Search Youtube for "The Way We've Always Done It Demon" for a funny take on this serious subject.) We find comfort in routine and solace in the thought that if the System were really that awful, we'd have changed it by now.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not getting ready to propose radical changes. But if you find that something at BRUU is hard to figure out, nobody seems to have the answer, and you'd like to be part of the solution ... find me at coffee hour.

Martin Crim, President, BRUU Board of Directors

At its December 19 meeting, your Board of Directors:

- Received a report that we currently have 212 members.
- Discussed preplanning for a potential capital campaign in church year 2020-2021. This included a draft budget with a potential consultant; we are in the process of checking references.
- Discussed the canvass campaign for this coming Spring.
- Scheduled a Town Hall meeting for January 26. This will be run entirely by the Vision Team, so please bring your Vision questions, concerns, and insights to that Town Hall. This replaces the planned February Town Hall.
- Agreed to revisions to our lease with New City Fellowship, which is dropping from two services to one each Sunday.
- Discussed the lack of a right relations committee and agreed to gather information about ways that other churches handle internal church conflicts. There is more than one kind of such conflicts, but they fall into two general buckets, chronic and acute. For the chronic conflicts, the three options are the same as for any unwanted task in a volunteer-run organization: (1) recruit a volunteer or group of volunteers, (2) hire someone or (3) don't do it.
- Updated the calendar of future Board discussion topics. We will appoint the nominating committee in January; we'll discuss the alcohol policy in February; we'll address our leases in March; in April, we will set the record date for membership, set the date for sending notices to members of the annual meeting, and finalize the agenda for the annual meeting; in May and June, we will discuss the Leadership Development Team; and in July we'll discuss BRUU's communications.
- Discussed access to policy documents.

Mark your calendars now for the June 7 annual meeting of BRUU. Budgets will be approved, awards will be awarded, and leaders will be chosen. The messy business of democracy will be on display.

January 2020

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|------|--|------|--|
| 1/05 | VOICE Core Meeting, 11:30 A
Communications Com, 11:30 A | 1/19 | Soup Sunday, 11:15 A
Program Council, 11:30 A |
| 1/07 | UupBeats, 12:45 P | 1/21 | UupBeats, 12:45 P
PFLAG, 7 P |
| 1/08 | Tao Te Ching, 10:45 A
Seasoned Souls, noon | 1/22 | Tao Te Ching, 10:45 A
Moms Demand Action, 7 P |
| 1/09 | Worship Committee, 7 P | 1/23 | Board Meeting, 7 P |
| 1/11 | Effective Teams Training, 1 P | 1/26 | Membership, 11:15 A
Vision Town Hall, 11:15 A |
| 1/12 | Finance Committee, 11:15 A
Senior to Senior Tea, 11 A
BRIC, 11:30 A
RE Committee, 11:30 A | 1/28 | Food Pantry, 9:30 A |
| 1/13 | SASS, 1:30 P | 1/29 | Tao Te Ching ALE, 10:45 A |
| 1/14 | Food Pantry, 9:30 A | | |
| 1/15 | Tao Te Ching, 10:45 A
Grief Support, noon | | |
| 1/16 | Pastoral Care Meeting, 3 P
Master Naturalists, 6:30 P | | |
| 1/17 | USDA Food Pantry, noon | | |
| 1/18 | Zac Quintana Concert, 7 P | | |



**BRUU
Communications
(CoCo) Meeting!**

The Communications Committee will be meeting in the Byer Memorial Library on Sun 1/5/20 at 11:30. Have an interest in lending a hand? Plan to attend! **Open to all.**

Next Seasoned Souls meeting is January 8th at 12 Noon in the Conference Room facilitated by Sally Gibbs. Bring your lunch and enjoy exchanging experiences around navigating relationships with adult children.

Seasoned Souls resumes meeting on the 1st Wednesday of each month in February.

The Grief Group continues to meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. This is a drop-in group for those experiencing any kind of loss. Bring a bag lunch.



Zac Quintana & The Sages

Saturday, January 18th, 2020 7pm-9pm

Listen to Zac Quintana & The Sages in a concert in our sanctuary.

Ticket prices are \$12 online and \$15 at the door. This is a BRUU fundraiser.

Family Calendar

January 2020

5 - Children's choir 11:15-11:45

Youth choir 11:45-12:15

OWL, 7-9, 11:30

11 - Second Saturday Social

12 - Children's choir 11:15-12:15 (followed by lunch)

Senior Tea

19 - Youth choir

OWL, 7-9

Mandatory Parent Meeting OWL K-2nd grades

11:30 A

24-6 Coming of Age Retreat

26 OWL 7-9, 11:30 A

30 - Children's choir 6:30-7:30

Upcoming Leadership Development Workshops

Jan. 11 9AM-4PM

Attend with the LDT and get treated to lunch
RESILIENCE: Leadership Development for the 21st Century

Rev. Renee Ruchotzke

Diving deep into how we might develop resilient leaders for the changing church

-changing demographics, finances, time constraints

-mission and how it impacts the church

-what motivates people to serve

Sponsors: Central East Region of the UUA and UU of Fairfax

At: UU Congregation of Fairfax

2709 Hunter Mill Road

Oakton

RSVP to Nina Lomax 571-247-2811 phone/text or ninalomax@comcast.net
and we can ride share

Feb. 1 Saturday 1-2:30PM promptly
Flamingo Lounge free

Who Were Those Unwanted Visitors?

You have just spent 90 minutes in a meeting, and you leave felling faintly dissatisfied. What was the meeting's purpose? What am I supposed to do next? Why was everyone so distracted?

If this sounds familiar, come learn some tips and techniques for

Running Effective Meetings

Dianne Lane

- How to get the most from your teams
- Make your meetings value-added to your mission
- Get at least 3 new tools/techniques to improve your management style
- Help you offer feedback to your meeting leaders

RSVP Nina Lomax 571-247-2811 text/phone or ninalomax@comcast.net by 1/28 to ensure for supplies

Next Steps in the Vision Process

We have completed the Vision Cafés, collected more than 500 comments, and digested the results. Many thanks to all who participated!

Now we embark on a new phase of the Vision process, where we begin to form visions for congregational consideration. Vision candidates will be presented to the congregation at a town hall meeting on Sunday, Jan. 26, in the sanctuary after service.

We have identified five candidate visions, listed below as clusters of related comment categories:

1. **Social Issues**, Diverse Congregation (becoming diverse thru Social Justice activities), Outreach, Intergen, Mental Health – Kathy Sobrio
2. **Strong Congregational Community**, Inclusion, Expanded Accessibility, Volunteers, Fun, Diverse Congregation, Music, Intergen, Attracting Younger Audience – Angie Carrera
3. **Physical Plant**, Green Building, Expanded Accessibility, Volunteers – Tony Main
4. **Religious Education**, Personal Growth, Building Spiritual Community – Mike Cleary
5. **Outreach** (City? County? Region?), Volunteers, Raising Our Profile (create marketing content), (Social Issues?) – Laura Coates

The central principle of each candidate vision is listed in bold, and other categories are listed with them due to their natural affinity. Members of the Vision team, listed, are assigned to help craft descriptions and statements for the different visions.

Vision team members are now working with congregational stakeholders to gather ideas for the candidate visions. For example, the Social Justice committee has been contacted to work on the Social Issues-centered vision.

These candidate visions were determined by organizing all comments into more than 20 categories, many of them cutting across several categories. The five categories that attracted the most attention were chosen. They naturally relate to other categories, forming the clusters of categories in each candidate vision.

The visions are not set in stone! Each vision is subject to change, expanding to encompass other related activities or narrowing to focus on its most important goals. Stakeholders will have considerable influence on what each vision turns out to be.

One goal of the process is to incorporate the best ideas, wherever they may be. The Vision Team looks forward to hearing from anyone with an interest in the visions or the process.

How You Can Participate in the Vision Process

You can participate in creating a vision for BRUU by getting in touch with a Vision team member or a stakeholder working on a vision. Share your ideas, questions, and concerns. All ideas are welcome!

You can also participate by attending the town hall where the five candidate visions will be presented to the congregation:

- Sunday, Jan. 26, 11:15 am (approximately), in the sanctuary

From the DRE...

This fall in Religious Education has been offering explorations of our Unitarian Universalist beliefs, opportunities for relationship building, young leadership and above all, a safe space for seeking and service.

Our Junior high and Senior Youth kicked off the year with an overnight. There they discussed options for social justice projects, hearing from a few organization representatives, weighing their own priorities and areas of concern. As a result, an LGBTQ Information Fair is being planned for late April, hosting organizations that serve as resources and support for the LGBTQ community, also featuring speakers and trainings on how to be an LGBTQ Ally.

Junior and Senior High (ages 11-17) meet monthly for our Second Saturday Socials - chances for fellowship, faith development and fun. We've visited Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church in Charlottesville to walk on their labyrinth, and explore other spiritual practices; picked pumpkins; and baked an amazing 66 dozen cookies for our first annual Holiday Cookie Sale. The Youth (ages 14-17) are working with the Coming of Age curriculum, which draws them into deep and thoughtful discussion about what their faith values currently are, how they came to be and how they live them every day. They each have an adult mentor (or two) to further explore these ideas, receiving personal guidance. They are creating even more relationships with participants in the Senior Teas, a well-loved tradition here at BRUU. Keep your eyes on your mailboxes, they'll host several more in 2020. Coming up for the Senior Youth are a spiritual practice retreat at the end of January, with mentors coming along; the celebrated Youth Service in February, planning and implementing instructional time with the younger classes, and of course, lots more fun.

The Seekers (junior high youth ages 11-13) have spent the last seven weeks examining our principles, one per week. Their current work is putting the principles in their own language, creating creative ways to explain them to younger children and to those outside the UU faith. 2020 has them learning about important individuals in UU history, taking a look at some of the major themes: Religious Reformers, Rights Activists, educators & scientists, and more. Because our faith is a living and breathing one, particularly important to the Seekers work are Contemporary UU's, individuals who are shaping our religion and association towards multiculturalism, equity, and continued personal development. They'll have the opportunity to speak to several of these people personally!

Our Questers (ages 8-10) have spent the first half of their RE year examining the "Tools" of our faith, such as "questioning," "integrity," and "democratic process," hearing the stories of important persons who represent these values, and discovering their own strengths of faith. The second half of their year will be focused on empowerment - learning the ways in which they can effectively share these tools in school, at home and in the world.

The Explorers (ages 3-7) similarly have been (literally) playing with UU characteristics and values utilizing story, song, and art to embody them. Their home includes the entire church,

and they recently hosted fellowship hour, during which they enthusiastically set up/cleaned up and welcomed members & friends to the place they love so much.

All this activity takes a lot of participation. BRUU's RE Ministry is fortunate to have a tribe of adults that are encouraging, supporting, welcoming. All of the regular RE Leaders each have unique strengths and knowledge that make them just the right person for the job. This is reflected in the trust that our younger ones give to these adults, and the fact that they are pushing many of their families on Sunday mornings to attend! Added up, Sunday RE leaders and mentors total 28 adults working with our next generations. Some are parents of participants, but most are not. All of this varied participation makes our program richer, and will lend to an exciting and special Family Retreat coming up in May and a Summer Camp this summer. Hope to see you there!

Blessings,
Kristin Worthington, Director of Religious Education



BRUU EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY NEWS
Announcing Sherman Food Pantry Matching Grant
Once again, during this season of giving, the Sherman Family has donated a \$3500 matching grant to help fund the BRUU Pantry. The Sherman Family will match dollar for dollar all donations to the Sherman Food Pantry Challenge from now until all the funds are matched or the end of January, whichever comes first! Please make your checks to BRUU with Sherman Food Pantry Challenge on the memo line. Thank you, Mary!!
Martha Muirhead and the Food Pantry Elves

The Capital Improvement Matching Talbot Grant of \$5000.00 is over halfway there. Many thanks to all who have contributed the \$2700.00 so far. Have you enjoyed the projection system, computer, painting, radiator covers, hand railings, floor sanding, and balcony carpet? We have repaired plumbing and have split HVAC systems for Ground Central and BRUU office, conference room and kitchen installed. These will be more energy efficient, as we are always trying to be more green. Room 308, Kelly Muzzin studio, has had water damage and required roof repairs, sanding, replastering and painting to bring it to satisfactory condition, as well as wall repair on the studio/childrens' chapel. Higher toilets and grab bars will be installed to make restrooms more accessible for our handicapped individuals.

There are constant demands for repairs and improvements to maintain a 96-year-old building that we have called home for 20 years. These unexpected additional improvements this year required us to borrow \$6000.00 from building fund reserves. We cannot continue to borrow from reserves, so matching funds are vital.

Concerns and recommendations for improvements can be sent to: Gwen Talbot, getalbot1@comcast.net or to Christine Sunda, sundas3@aol.com to be considered for the 2020-2021 Capital Improvement Budget.

Major expenditures such as: a 3-story elevator, handicapped bathrooms, furnace replacement, roof replacement will be considered for our Capital Campaign.
Gwen Talbot (703-368-7357, getalbot1@comcast.net)