

Volume 38  
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2020



# CROSSROADS



Bull Run Unitarian  
Universalists

## Rev. Charlotte's Word-Weavings

### *Living With Uncertainty*

“As we practice moving into the present moment this way, we become more familiar with groundlessness, a fresh state of being that is available to us on an ongoing basis. This moving away from comfort and security, this stepping out into what is unknown, uncharted, and shaky—that’s called liberation.” Pema Chodron, [Comfortable With Uncertainty](#)

Many, many years ago, a dear friend of mine gave me a copy of Pema Chodron’s [Comfortable With Uncertainty](#). It was, for me, good confirmation on ways to navigate life’s challenges. I, like you, have encountered times in my life when everything was up in the air, when I wasn’t sure what decisions to make, or when the parts that I felt secure about shifted suddenly and were no longer there for me to count on.

This year – 2020 – has become one of those times in ways that are different from anything any of us have ever known. Very few people alive today were alive during the Spanish Flu epidemic. COVID-19 is a novel corona virus. We don’t have any prior knowledge to refer to in understanding its life-cycle. What’s more, the world is an entirely different place than it was a century ago. We simply can’t go about our days as we did a month or more ago. We must take this very, very seriously, heeding the guidelines provided by the medical and scientific communities on the frontlines working to understand and combat the spread of the virus for the common good.

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## April 2020 Crossroads

(Word-Weavings, continued from page 1)

What changes have happened or will happen for you and your family? How are you coping with these changes?

What are you discovering about yourself as you slow down, take stock, and re-prioritize your daily routines?

Have you noticed things you never did before? Are you aware of how life around you is changing in response as well?

I've noticed more families out walking or biking together. Neighbors wave.

I am appreciating the abundant beauty of the spring season bursting forth with blossoms everywhere I look.

If you've lived through extreme weather events or other crises that impact the whole community, you know that people pull together to lend a hand, to check in and make sure everyone is okay.

This is different – we don't already know how to live with the uncertainty of a global pandemic that is changing daily – but some things are the same: we need each other to survive, even when that means keeping our physical distance.

Be generous of spirit as we weather the days ahead; as Pema Chodron says “There are many changes in the weather of a day.”

May you find liberation in the midst of living with uncertainty,

*Rev. Charlotte*

### BRUU Virtual Happy Hour

We are having a BRUU Happy Hour (on Zoom) on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of April from 4-6 pm. Bring an inspirational reading, story, picture or music to share. The idea is to spend time lifting each other up. So, that's April 1<sup>st</sup> (share your favorite joke?), April 15<sup>th</sup> (tax relief day?), and April 29<sup>th</sup>.

From your computer, tablet or smart phone, go to <https://zoom.us/j/8487866672> or dial 646-558-8656 and enter the BRUU meeting ID # 848 786 6672 when prompted.



## Calendar of April Meetings at BRUU via ZOOM

<u>Date</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Who may attend?</u>
3/30	New UU	7 pm	New members
4/1	Seasoned Souls	11:30 am - 1:30 pm	Open to all
4/1	BRUU Happy Hour	4 – 6 pm	Open to all
4/8	UU Clergy Group	10 am – 12 pm	(closed, clergy group only)
4/8	COSM	4 – 6 pm	(closed, committee only)
4/9	Senior Youth Advisors	7:30 pm	Senior Youth Advisors Team
4/10	Questers RE team	10 am	Questers RE team
4/11	Budget meeting	10 am – 1 pm	Finance Cmte
4/12	Finance Cmte mtg	11:30 am – 1 pm	Open
4/13	Explorers RE team	10 am	Explorers RE team
4/15	Grief Support	11:30 am – 1 pm	Open to all
4/15	BRUU Happy Hour	4 – 6 pm	Open to all
4/16	Seekers RE team	7 pm	Seekers RE team
4/23	Board mtg	6:30 – 9:00 pm	Open
4/29	BRUU Happy Hour	4 – 6 pm	Open to all

Please note: BRUU staff team meets weekly on Tuesdays from 11 am – 12 pm.

To participate in an “open” or “open to all” BRUU Zoom offering: if you haven’t already done so, download the free Zoom app at <https://zoom.us> (go to “Download the Zoom Client in the top right under “Resources”) OR go to your smart phone or tablet’s App Store and download to app for iPhone, iPad, Mac or Android.

To join a meeting, enter the BRUU meeting ID using the appropriate link (audio and video) or phone number (audio only):

- Computer, tablet, smart phone: <https://zoom.us/j/8487866672>
- Regular phone: dial 646-558-8656. When prompted, enter the BRUU meeting ID number – 848 786 6672



## **Our Annual Pledge Drive – Progress toward Living Our Vision**

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, our BRUU community goes on, perhaps more necessarily so than ever. Although we must all keep our physical distance, we are still here for each other and can still worship and be together virtually ... and participate in our current annual pledge drive.

All members and pledging friends should have received their canvass packet in the mail (along with a new BRUU directory in many cases!). If you have not received your packet, please let us know at [canvass@bruu.org](mailto:canvass@bruu.org) and download packet documents from <https://www.bruunet.org/page/2020-21-canvass-documents> (if you don't have access to bruunet.org, please email [bruunet@bruu.org](mailto:bruunet@bruu.org) and request access).

Although the financial uncertainty and economic stress of this pandemic has the very real potential to limit commitments for this coming fiscal year, we need folks to step up. Many of us will not be able to pledge what we have in the past, much less increase our pledges. But we strongly encourage those who can, to generously increase their pledges or make significant new pledges; if enough of us do so, we could have a chance to cover the potential shortfall caused by the pandemic.

The progress we've made so far seems to indicate we do have a chance. As I write this (on March 26), we are 30% of the way toward our pledge goal with less than 30% of our pledges in and many more on the way. You can monitor our progress yourself at <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/bruu-2020-2021-pledge-campaign> (this is actually a page that allows folks to make credit card payments toward their pledges, but we are also using it to track our pledge drive progress).

The easiest way to make a pledge is to do so online at <http://www.bruu.org/donate-to-bruu/donate-online/> .

To reiterate, we know these are extremely difficult times for many of us with losing livelihoods and(or) savings, and uncertain about what's to come. But please consider pledging as though we will come through this -- if only because, with providence, we actually will, and quite possibly in the first month or two of the fiscal year! Note that if at any point during the fiscal year, you find you cannot meet your pledge, simply contact our treasurer (at [treasurer@bruu.org](mailto:treasurer@bruu.org)). For more information, please contact our canvass team at [canvass@bruu.org](mailto:canvass@bruu.org) .

## April 2020 Sermon Descriptions

**All worship in April will be on-line via Zoom.** To join worship, use the following link (audio and video) or phone number (audio only):

- Computer, tablet, smart phone: <https://zoom.us/j/8487866672>
- Regular phone: dial 646-558-8656. When prompted, enter the Meeting ID number: 848 786 6672

The link and number for our worship service will go live beginning at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday. If you've never used Zoom before, we encourage you to sign on well before 10 a.m.

**April 5:** *Liberative Theologies* (Rev. Charlotte) – Passover marks the beginning of the Israelites exodus from Egypt. Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus' entrance into a Jerusalem occupied by Romans. Today we explore liberative theologies. How does Unitarian Universalism's liberating message apply to our current reality?

**April 12:** *Easter* (Rev. Charlotte) – On-line multigenerational worship service with stories and music. Let's celebrate what's right with the world!

**April 19:** *Why 'Never Again' Matters to All People* (Rev. Charlotte Lehmann) – Yom HaShoah, held annually on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, is a time to reflect on the more than 6 million lives lost during the Holocaust. How can we oppose current and future attempts at genocide? What does it mean to say "never again" during a global health crisis?

**April 26:** *Carbon Neutrality* (Green Team) – [Carbon offsets... BRUU is now carbon neutral...] A workshop [??] will be held after the service.

*Note: Please get more information from Larry Underwood and Randy Freed about how they will do this service on-line.*



What, pray tell, might this be? And why is it pictured in the newsletter? Stay tuned. It's the sight of hope for better days ahead when we can initiate a new way to engage the larger community.

## Can you help rescue the BRUU Food Pantry?

Nearly all the volunteers who keep the BRUU pantry running are over 60, have underlying medical conditions, compromised immune systems or live with someone in these high- risk categories. Our team must stay at home and observe strict social distancing protocols. The BRUU Board has deemed the pantry an essential activity. Since some of you are healthy, under 60 and temporarily unable to go to work, would you like to contribute to keeping the pantry open during the Covid-19 crisis? Working alone or in family groups, many hands contributed to work-arounds necessary to have food ready for the Tuesday, March 23rd distribution. Even so, we were unable to shop from the National Capital Area Food Bank because they suddenly closed their facility in Lorton to shoppers and those picking up orders. Now only orders between 1000 and 1500 pounds can be placed. These will be delivered, but there can be no guarantee as to when they will arrive. Since we didn't know when the pallets would arrive, and we hadn't identified an ad hoc team of strong volunteers to unload last week's order, we had to cancel it.

Typically, about 50 families enter the side entrance at 9:30 am on second and fourth Tuesdays to receive food. With the church closed, and social distancing measures in place, we had to adjust. Without new supplies, we were limited to the canned goods we had on hand. Working alone to maintain social distance, volunteers set up an assembly line and others helped fill bags until we had approximately 4 bags each for 50 families. Bilingual instruction signs were created and set up with 6- foot spacing markers so that families could maintain social distancing while lining up outside the courtyard and down the street on both sides of the church.

Update as we close out distribution: Folks maintained their 6- foot intervals! Thirty families were served today. Each family received 4 bags of food. On the Monday before distribution we received donations of 177 pounds of rice, pasta, mac and cheese and ramen noodles which helped fill out the bags.

**Please e-mail [foodpantry@BRUU.org](mailto:foodpantry@BRUU.org) if you could help unload and bag pallets of food on Monday, April 13th. If enough people volunteer to unload food on Monday, and distribute food on April 14th, I will place an order and the BRUU food pantry can stay open. BYO masks and gloves. None of us know how long we will be virus free, but we've got to maintain strict social distancing, just in case. Thanks, Martha Muirhead**



## BRUU Board Meeting Summary

Your Board met by Zoom meeting on March 26, 2020.

Board Members participating: Rev. Charlotte, Martin Crim, Randy Freed, Michelle Luman, Owen Davies, Terrie McClure, Pat Malarkey, Art Muirhead, Susan Kehoe, Chris Sexton,

Visitor: Jon Kostik

The Board received reports from the Minister and the Treasurer.

The Board discussed ongoing adaptation of worship services and RE. We're moving online with worship, RE, and ALE. Only OWL cannot go online, so it has been suspended with no definite date yet for it to resume. The Family Retreat (first weekend of May) has been cancelled also. We are planning a virtual Happy Hour from 4 to 6 pm on three Wednesdays in April, the 1st, 15th, and 29th. This will be a Zoom meeting. Feedback on the March 22 service was generally positive. The next service will have breakout sessions for "coffee hour" with random groups.

Terrie McClure reports that people are still sending in their pledges. We seem to be going well with the canvass. It's a great connection now for folks and some pastoral concerns are getting passed along to Rev. Charlotte. We also have a GoFundMe site that is active for donations. The UUA has some resources for addressing stewardship in the current circumstances. The canvass was scheduled to go through April 5. The Board formed an **ad hoc committee of Martin, Charlotte, and Terrie** to reach out to our Finance and Stewardship folks for more info.

Zoom meetings seem to be working pretty well. Pat asked that Program Council be given a slot on the schedule to use the Zoom account. Other groups at BRUU are encouraged to use Zoom's free accounts to meet whenever they like. Rev. Charlotte would like us to be aware that the large number of participants for last Sunday's worship service was near our 100 participant limit, with each participant being considered one screen.

Randy briefed the Board regarding bookkeeping services. We solicited proposals from seven firms and received three proposals, all well above our cost estimate. A committee scored the proposals and found Simple Solutions Accounting Services (SSAS) to be the best, so we asked for a best and final offer, which resulted in a 4.7% price reduction, and we asked them to price out their services by task so we could determine what we could afford. The committee proposed a three month trial period and different scenarios with reduced services. The committee brought to the Board a proposal for full service accounting from April 1 to June 30, 2020, to be reevaluated around May 15, 2020, based on our canvass results and the service provided, to be potentially revised effective July 1, 2020. The Board agreed with this proposal. **Randy is to communicate this to SSAS.**

Martin posed the question of how we can continue the Vision Process during the pandemic. We are in the stage of synthesis, but there will be a need for feedback both in writing and in person. Rev. Charlotte pointed out that the five-member Vision Team are wordsmithing a Vision Statement out of all the gathered ideas. We have not had an opportunity to address the impact of COVID-19 on the Vision Process but **Martin and Rev. Charlotte will do so.**

The Board is looking at closing down all gatherings, including worship, through the end of May (so all services will be online). At the April 23 meeting of the Board, we will reexamine the situation and follow the guidance of the authorities. The Board will make a decision about the annual meeting June 6 later but it will probably be a Zoom meeting.

Susan presented about the alcohol policy. This was driven in large part by the Church Mutual liability check-up. At a minimum, Rev. Charlotte would like the policy to require removal of all alcohol from the premises after each event. **Susan will bring forward a stand-alone policy so that people can find it more easily.**

Martin presented on the continued need for a Right Relations Committee. This has been put on the back burner due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Rev. Charlotte asked the Board to continue to pay our childcare providers as if they were working on Sundays. It's a minimal amount of money (\$15/hour) and we have money in that budget line item. Those folks are paid monthly. The Board agreed to pay this.

Randy reported that he reached out to Matt at Ground Central Station and to New City Fellowship, which has stopped having Sunday services but is recording some music in our Sanctuary.

The Board discussed cleaning services and the importance of keeping our contractor employed, as well as perhaps taking the opportunity for the cleaners to do deeper cleaning and disinfection. **Rev. Charlotte will follow up on this.**

Both food pantries occurred as scheduled, but outdoors. They both attracted fewer patrons, many of whom were newcomers rather than regulars. Rev. Charlotte reported that we got a \$300 grant from No Child Goes Hungry for an outdoor food pantry.

We look forward to the days after the crisis is over so we can come together and experience the joy we are all used to feeling when we get together.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martin Crim  
Board President



## NOTES FROM ANNEASE

April 17<sup>th</sup> evensong service is canceled; however, we will have a shortened version (about 20 minutes) on April 10 at 7:30 via Zoom, with community time to follow. Join us for a meditative service on finding hope in this troubling time.

Annease Hastings, Music Director

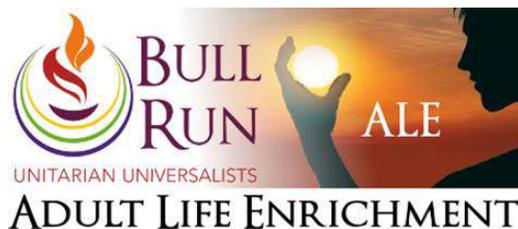
## FROM THE DRE...

I am so grateful that Spring is all around us. Being able to open the windows & allow fresh breezes in makes me feel less cooped up. Going outside and feeling the sun on my skin reminds me of the ever-present positive energies of nature. Maybe we can't hug a friend right now, but we sure can hug a tree! They are there waiting to tell us how strong we. While sharing breath with other humans is a concern, the trees literally draw in our waste, and breathe out the healing air. Look around at the tiny buds on each one of the plants. They are not frightened of venturing out. The plants are consciously following the rhythms of life, knowing that cold, dark times are followed by new life, brightness and color. Listen to the birds' songs. They are calling for others to join them. The air outdoors is truly the communal breath. While we are called to stay far enough away from each other remember to go outside and breathe in the healing airs of nature, the good wishes of your community, and breathe out your healing thoughts for others.

Your Religious Education teachers are devoted to keeping you connected through the magic of technology. The Explorers class (ages 3-7) is already online Sunday mornings at 11:00 am. You will receive an email weekly with Zoom sign in information. Questers (ages 8-10) have videos in production and will decide on a weekly Zoom time shortly. The Seekers group (ages 11-13) will check in on Friday evenings at 6:30 pm. and encouraging project partners to connect at their convenience. Senior Youth (ages 14-18) Advisors will also be setting up a weekly zoom session, plus emails with journaling and discussion questions. Keep your eyes out for notices via email. Contact me at [dre@bruu.org](mailto:dre@bruu.org) if you are not receiving the links.

Second Saturday Social: I will still be going on a hike April 11<sup>th</sup>. We should take separate cars rather than carpool (although you can use your best judgement.) Meet at the Dark Hollow Falls trail head (mile 50.7 on Skyline Drive) at 10:30 am, and bring a lunch. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat. socials are usually reserved for junior and senior youth, but this time let's make it open for ALL! .

Adult Learning Enrichment (A.L.E.) will be very limited for the Spring session. We're working on a few items that will easily transfer to the Zoom format. Once again, keep your eyes on your email or BRUU web blasts for information.



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DRE... (continued from page 9)

With permission, I share this fantastic note I received:

Kristin, we really appreciate you moving forward with the UU classes. TJ and I are very happy about attending and getting more involved. Sooooo a story to share..... TJ and I got married about 3 years ago and moved to Manassas. Not only did we want to live in Manassas, but, we wanted to be engaged with Manassas. So, we decided to look for volunteer opportunities, and found Beacon. We started to teach ESL classes at BRUU. Two things became immediately apparent: #1- Martha Walsh. Martha welcomed us with warmth, helped us get started as ESL teachers and she also invited us to attend a service (repeatedly!) and #2-The Energy of BRUU. The RE classrooms share their space with Beacon ESL, and are filled with the energy of BRUU. While teaching ESL, we were surrounded by messages of love, acceptance, and stewardship. We realized that we were in a very special place. The confluence of Martha's encouragement, TJ's intention mechanism, and the powerful messages in the classroom brought us to BRUU. After hashing out resolutions for the New Year, we attended our first service in the middle of January. We have been welcomed with open hearts and minds of the congregation. The BRUU community has become very meaningful to us and we thank you. Peace, Scott and TJ

Kristin Worthington, Director of Religious Education

As we suffer due to the corona virus "plague", **Passover Seder** will be passed over at the Bull Run Unitarian Universalists this year.

May I suggest viewing [Chabad.org](http://Chabad.org) for your personal celebration in your own home. There is a Haggadah (service to read), recipes, and explanations of all you need to create your own holiday. I imagine that gefilte fish, matzoh, and macaroons are still available in the grocery stores.

There are 10 plagues mentioned in the haggadah brought on the dark atmosphere of Egypt by God, to cleanse and purify, to take us to the Promised Land.

May we add a drop of wine for our current situation, that we may learn right lessons and emerge stronger and wiser. The service closes with the words "Next year in Jerusalem", a reminder of being in exile and a desire to rebuild our nation. How timely.

Love, Nina

## Just As Long As I Have Breath

### The New Normal

So the new normal is teleconferencing, often from home, either by video conference or plain audio. The new normal is no hugs, no handshakes, and maintaining a six-foot distance except from other members of our “pod” - our family or other household members. Our pod is the group of people we can hug.

I filled out the census online and included my college age child Cas. I hesitated over the question, “Does this person usually live somewhere else?” Well, if I’d filled out the form when the link first arrived in the mail, the answer would have been different. Now they and I and my wife and son are part of one pod.

By the way, please do your civic duty and fill out your census form. This year the race question on the census got more detailed, did you notice? Rather than just letting you select Hispanic or non-, plus one or more colors, as in 2010, the census now asks for information about national origin. Not everybody has done a DNA test, so I wonder how useful or complete the information is, but the census seems consistent with the new normal of dividing people and keeping them apart.

So, I have an idea for bringing BRUU together: Let’s look forward to the next new normal, when this hunkering down is over. BRUU should have a week-long bacchanalia of joy, mixed no doubt with the sadness of loss. There will be music and hugs and more hugs and tears and lots of laughter. Start planning your event now! Not the date, at least not yet, but the theme and the guest list, for sure.

I’ve enjoyed reaching out to BRUU people and seeing them via Zoom, if nothing else. Please remain connected and reach out if you’re thinking of someone. It was good to see seventy-some households at the first BRUU Zoom worship, including some faces we haven’t seen before and some faces we haven’t seen in a while. I hope to see even more in the coming weeks.

--Martin Crim, Board President



## Committee on Shared Ministry

BRUU's COSM committee has continued to meet monthly to reflect on congregational wellness. In keeping with BRUU's collective visioning process, we developed our own: "Healthy and successful BRUU ministries." Our mission is "To assess the effectiveness of our ministries and to identify areas of improvement. We do this through the examination of key data elements and through open and appropriate communications between the congregation, the minister, BRUU staff, and the Board.

We have continued the year's focus on communication throughout BRUU's ministries, by monitoring progress and encouraging committees to follow up self-assessed areas of improvement. Ideally, all current committee documents will be readily available in Knowledgebase on BRUUnet so that institutional knowledge is captured to assist volunteer transitions, new committee members or leaders are equipped with the information they need to assimilate, and anyone in the congregation can access information to learn what each committee does.

We will be meeting with Program Council again to gather collective communication progress in May, shortly before our meeting with the Board of Directors and completion of our annual report. As that time approaches, we will further reflect on the input of the 2019 cottage meetings and interviews in order to fine tune our identified area of committee focus for the 2020-21 church year.

Please feel free to pass along your comments or questions to any member of our group (Gretchen Almstead, Deborah Buckingham, Rita Romano, Martha Muirhead, Tony Main, and Tom Cooke).

May Crossroads submissions of articles (no more than 400 words) or photos that relate to BRUU activities are due to [newsletter@bruu.org](mailto:newsletter@bruu.org) by midnight, April 25<sup>th</sup>.

Short submissions for the weekly Round-Up go to [communications@bruu.org](mailto:communications@bruu.org) by Tuesday midnight.

To include an announcement in the Order of Service, send to Tina at [office@bruu.org](mailto:office@bruu.org) by Tuesday midnight.