



January 2021
Volume 39, Issue 1

Crossroads

The monthly BRUU Newsletter

AS THE TURN OF THE YEAR

A MESSAGE FROM REVEREND CHARLOTTE

It has been my practice in recent years to take a break between Christmas and New Years, a vacation in which to step out of the routine and breathe more slowly and deeply. I'm not doing that this year, because Lisa and I couldn't go anywhere anyway. Instead, I'll take a vacation week at the end of January to roughly coincide with time I had planned to be away for study-leave. That study leave isn't happening after all, which I've known since late summer.

This past year – the year of 2020 – has been like that. The best laid plans had to be jettisoned; visions of travel, adventure, learning and growth changed. But the truth is that despite the pandemic and the letting go of those dreams, exploration, reflection, learning and growth were part of my life – and I hope part of your lives, too. For my study-leave, I've been taking classes on-line. For my vacation-leave, I've been finding ways to rest, relax and rejuvenate close to home in smaller doses.

It's not quite the same. And I miss my family and want so much to be able to go home to see them and hug my mother, especially. And yet, we don't have a good enough handle on the pandemic for me to feel safe doing that.

I am an optimist at heart. I want to feel hopeful about our being able to gain the upper hand on the COVID-19 pandemic. And I do believe that will come. But right now, I think we are a long way from being able to say we have managed to get control. Still, there is progress. More than one vaccine is starting to be delivered into people's arms.

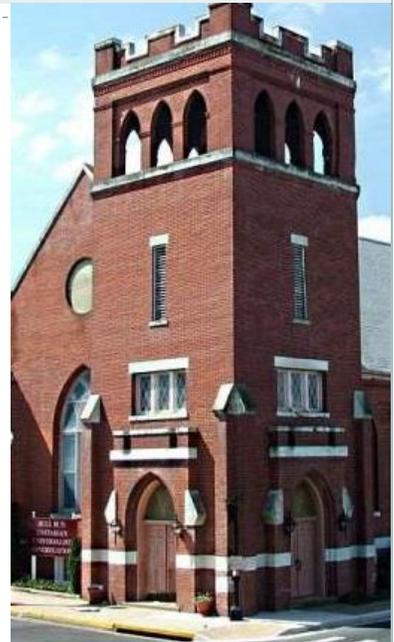
I am also a realist. I know that I – at 59 and reasonably healthy – will be among the people who receive a vaccination much further down the list, if not fairly close to the end of the line. That's why, the realist in me cautions that, because I am not at the front of the line for vaccination, I need you to know I won't be leading in-person gatherings until after I've been vaccinated.

I hope that the uncertainties become less so. I hope it begins to look more promising that we can safely gather in person – even while continuing to practice stricter hygiene including physical distancing, properly wearing masks, and washing our hands frequently – and I hope it means that we can have a real party to celebrate our UU community and the highpoints in our liturgical year before the end of 2021.

I do believe by the end of January, when the new administration is finally in place in Washington, D.C., that though "the road will be muddy and rough" we will get where it is we need to go, woyaya!

Keep on moving forward. Keep caring for each other. Wash your hands, maintain safe physical distance, and wear a mask, keep hope alive!

In faith,
Rev. Charlotte



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BRUU BOD ATTENDANCE

Present:

President Martin Crim

Vice President Randy Freed

Secretary Colin Credle

Treasurer Terrie McClure

Member at Large Jon Kostik

Member at Large Chris Sexton

Member at Large Susan Kehoe

Program Council Chair Pat Malarkey

Youth Member India Stephenson

Absent: none

Also attending:

Rev. Charlotte Lehmann



*A message from
Martin Crim BRUU President*

IT'S GOING TO BE ALRIGHT

THAT'S WHAT SIR PAUL MCCARTNEY SINGS ON HIS NEW ALBUM, MCCARTNEY III. THE ONE HE WROTE IN QUARANTINE. IT'S WORTH A LISTEN. AND THAT'S COMING FROM SOMEONE WHO HAS BARELY FOLLOWED HIS SOLO STUFF (I.E., POST-BEATLES).

We have challenges. There's a hole in the budget. (Can I be forgiven for singing that line to the tune of "There's a Hole in the Bucket"?) We haven't been to see each other in person, hug each other, cry together, or laugh together since mid-March.

I hope you were able to salvage a good Christmas and New Year's Eve, and find what joy we can in a subdued season. I think I'll appreciate the season more next year, but I'll never really know, right?

As the song goes, "Always look on the bright side of life."

--Martin

BRUU BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT - DECEMBER, 2020

The Budget

The Board discussed the budget situation and a proposal for spending cuts from the Finance Committee. The good news is that pledges are steady, but the bad news is that income is down due to loss of rentals and fundraisers, primarily the auction. Most of the proposed spending cuts come from Annease Hastings's cutting back her hours to half-time, reductions in utility usage, and reductions in contracted services due to not using the building. The total savings from expense reductions come to \$46,025. Unfortunately, the projected shortfall in revenue is \$86,589.31, leaving a hole in the budget of \$40,564.31. Email me at president@bruu.org if you'd like the spreadsheet.

To cover that kind of budget shortfall, the options are limited and the Board is looking at taking the full amount from reserves. Luckily, we ended the last fiscal year with a budget surplus of similar amount, so we are well situated to enter the next fiscal year in roughly the same financial position we had in July of 2019. The current operating fund reserve is \$82,693. That magnitude of a budget amendment will require congregational approval, and we anticipate giving notice of a special congregational meeting to make a decision on this issue in February, 2021. Before that, we'll have a Town Hall meeting on finances on January 31, 2021, after the service, so that any questions about the budget can be aired and answered before a vote is needed.

In the meantime, at the Program Council meeting on December 20, I asked the committee chairs to make only those expenditures that are absolutely necessary.

Right Relations Team

The Board discussed how to set up a right relations team, the purpose of which would be to mediate in the event of a serious breach of the Congregational Covenant that the parties to the breach cannot resolve themselves. No clear resolution came from the discussion, but I will be asking other UU presidents whether any of them use a neutral third party, and Rev. Charlotte will talk to our local UUA representative, Rev. Meghan Foley, about UUA resources.

Bookkeeper Position

Keeping the books for a church of our size is a tremendous undertaking, and kudos to Terrie McClure, Robin Fegeas, and Dorothy Greenhouse for taking it on. In the long run, the Board would like to see a paid position do this work, but our last attempt to select a contractor found all the bidders out of our price range. Options include sharing a bookkeeper with another UU church, or (when Tina retires) hiring a combination office assistant/bookkeeper. Luckily, the Board didn't have to reach a decision this month so we didn't.

Capital Campaign

Between January 17 and 24, our consultant Mark Ewert of Stewardship for Us will have a series of conversations with BRUU committees and the Board. As a result, the Board business meeting in January will be on January 28, since we'll be using the entire January 21 time slot, which would normally be our regular meeting, for conversation with him. He'll deliver a confidential report to the Board that we will discuss during our regular February meeting date of February 18, which means our Board business meeting will be February 25.

As always, our BRUU Board meetings are open to members and friends of BRUU unless we need to discuss confidential matters such as personnel. Feel free to drop in.

**Respectfully submitted,
Martin Crim, Board President**



“One tree can start a forest” - Van Leer

ALE CLASS ON “EMBODYING HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR INVESTMENT DECISIONS” IS JANUARY 7TH

At the 2020 UUA General Assembly, delegates adopted a business resolution to embody human rights in our investment decisions

<https://www.uua.org/files/pdf/p/proposedbusres2020.pdf>

Please join Rev. Charlotte and Ralph Giffen, Chair of the BRUU’s Endowment Committee in discussing the business resolution as well as BRUU’s Endowment principles and purposes. Last spring BRUU’s Endowment Funds were transferred into the UU Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF), which is committed to socially responsible investing. The UUCEF welcomed the adoption of this business resolution

<https://uucef.org/2020/09/uua-adopts-business-resolution-on-human-rights-investing/>

(UUCEF has a set of guidelines available for anyone who is interested in learning more.)

BRUU Members and Friends as well as members of the BRUU Endowment Committee and the Bull Run Investment Club (BRIC) are encouraged to learn more about how investments and endowments can make an impact in matters of social and environmental justice.

Sign up for the this ALE class which will take place on January 7th from 7-9 pm via Zoom

<https://www.bruu.org/adult-life-enrichment-course-registration-winter-2021/>

REFLECTIONS ON REBIRTH

SANDRA FOX

At this time of year, I feel called to remember that darkness is real, that it has presence, and that it should be honored. Darkness is the fallow field that allows for new growth.

To germinate, most seeds need not only water and the right temperature, but also darkness. New growth happens quietly, gently, slowly in the dark. The Book of Genesis says that in the beginning there was darkness upon the face of the deep. It is as if darkness were the womb that light required in order to come forth. Once the light appears, darkness and light become eternal partners, entering into a dance—and inviting us to join in, too.

At this time of year, I put a single electric candle in each window. When the sun sets, earlier and earlier now, I light the candles and wait for darkness to fall. I love them because they emphasize the dark, punctuate it, reminding me to slow down, breathe deeply, enter into that fertile darkness.

But they are also shaped like seeds—little seeds of light that bring a reminder that a larger, brighter light is coming, and with it, a New Year and rebirth.

LUMAN FAMILY REFLECTIONS

Dean & Michelle Luman

We all know that this has been a challenging year for the world. But as we get ready to close this year and begin the Christmas season, I am reminded of what I learned in my Christian upbringing about the birth of Jesus Christ and how he would bring hope and love to the world. While I may not believe everything that I was taught in my CCD classes growing up, I do believe that Christmas can still be a time of hope and love and healing.

Dean and I also have our own reason for hope and love this year. Our first child is due to be born in January. While we know that our child may not bring hope and love to the entire world like Jesus did, she certainly will bring hope, love, and pure joy to our family.

2021 will bring us a new beginning for our family while we adjust to a life with a newborn. This includes adjustments to priorities, goals, and of course, sleep schedules.

Being born in 2021, our baby girl has the world at her fingertips. She has the opportunity to grow into the person that she is meant to be. She can aspire to do anything that she wants. I look forward to watching her grow up, see, and experience the world through her curious eyes.

I can't wait to see her interact and play with our cats. I look forward to when she can go to an amusement park and ride on rollercoasters with her grandpa, just like I did with him growing up. It will be fun to see her make messes trying arts & crafts with her Aunt Cathy. Perhaps she won't want to do any of that. That's OK with us too, though I hope that she & the cast get along.

So as we continue this Christmas season, we are still mindful of the pain and suffering in the world, but that does not diminish some of the hope that Michelle and I are feeling these days. People have always had little hopes like this, even in the direst times and part of what makes us human is the ability to have this dichotomy of emotions. So perhaps a piece of our own little hope and joy will have an impact on our own little corner of the world.

WHAT'S SASS, YOU SAY?

SASS is a subset of the BRUU congregation, an open group for women of a "mature" age. SASS stands for the Society of Audacious Silver-haired Sister. BC (Before Covid), we used to get together the 2nd Monday of every month in the BRUU Lounge at 1:30 pm to chat about issues of interest to this age group. Way back then some would gather ahead of time, at Noon, on the BRUU front doorsteps, to walk to lunch at an agreed upon restaurant. Now, during this quarantine we still gather, but by Zoom, at 12:30 pm on the 2nd Monday of the month to munch & chat from our own homes. Almost every month the group also holds a "hi-tea" Zoom, at 3:30pm on the 4th Friday of each month - just for pure entertainment (with any kind of beverage/snack that seems appropriate to you at that hour).

AC (After Covid) we will probably get back to doing some group activities & trips like in past years: helping with BRUU projects at the building and taking excursions to places of interest.

This is a fabulous way to connect with other women in our congregation and the best part – there is no required attendance, responsibilities, or meeting minutes! We stay in contact by a group email update/reminder to everyone about our get togethers.

If you are interested in knowing more, please contact Helen Elkin by simply sending an email to OmaHelen@gmail.com, as she is the Keeper of the List for receiving the Zoom Invite connection.

BOOK READING FELLOWSHIP

Even in the very beginning, even BC (Before Covid), there was a BRUU Book Club. It met monthly and even had a potluck supper along with the discussion. Many times the meal was coordinated with the theme of the book, how cool is that? As the congregation of BRUU got larger so did the number of attendees at the Book Group. It soon got too large for it to be held at someone's house, this was before we had our current (but closed) building. Interested new members could not join until a current member moved away, lost interest or whatever.

So a second book-reading group associated with BRUU, Book Group II, got started. It organized as an afternoon reading group, with just snacks & beverages – no pre-planning necessary. Currently there are about 8-10 folks who participate via Zoom. We are a very eclectic group of readers, so the process of choosing a book each month can be just as entertaining as the discussion about the book we just read. Did you catch the part about "no pre-planning"?

Take heart there is no waiting to join, because there is no limit to our Zoom capacity. If you would like to know what we have been reading (as some sort of litmus, but not a very good one), and/or what we will be discussing on the 3rd Monday of the upcoming month, contact Susan Gregorio (the herder of the bookworms) [SusanG100@comcast.net] to get the information and ask to be put on the email group list to get a Zoom Invite. Consistent attendance has never been a prerequisite either.

NEWS FROM THE DRE

KRISTIN WORTHINGTON *DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION*

I am writing this on the day after the first snow. The sounds around me are the big THUNKS of snow that fall under the sunlight accompanied by the TWINKLE of ice falling as a wind blows. Without an expected rhythm, the thunks and twinkles make me jump with fear and giggle with delight at the same time. I was out side with a service tech and we starting recognizing a certain shake in the trees that told us to jump out of the way of falling frozen things as if we were avoiding terrors in the Fire Swamp.

OUR FAITH DEVELOPMENT THEME FOR JANUARY IS IMAGINATION

One silver lining to the current circumstances is that we are being asked to use our imaginations more than ever. How to occupy our time? How to safely achieve our goals? How to communicate & how to work constructively in these divided times? What inventions are waiting to be built? What creations are brewing in your soul? As a group, let's shake of those feelings of "being over this whole thing," and start having some fun. Will your imagination make us laugh? Will we be carried away to novel lands? Will we be lured into mystery and surprise?

During the month of January, you will be emailed short inspirations to explore. If you are not receiving them now, register on the web site or email me at dre@bruu.org. These are for all ages – children, youth and adults!

Here's the first.

Gather your household and watch "The Princess Bride" to spark your imagination.

We meet January 3 at 2:00 pm to kick off the month. January 10 at 2:00 pm Martin Crim and Heather Berthold will lead an imaginative Scavenger Hunt. January 24 at 3:00 pm, we meet in the aged grouped RE classes. Zoom links are provided to all who register.

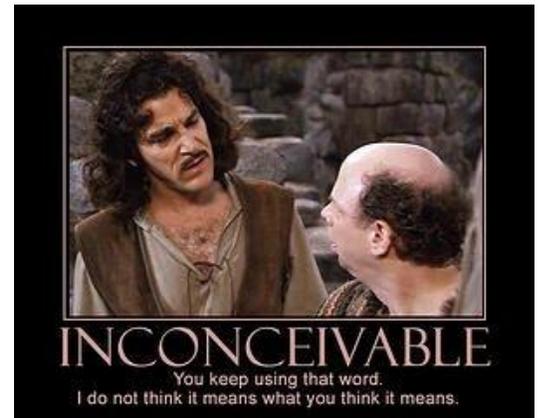
STARTING IN MARCH: UU WELLSPRING

UU Wellspring offers participants an opportunity for spiritual deepening that leads to more joyful living, increased congregational leadership, and faithful justice making in their lives and in their communities.

UU Wellspring gives spiritual power to UU communities that will sustain and strengthen UU identity and justice work through small group connections, spiritual practices, deeper knowledge of UU history and theology, and putting UU faith into action.

Please view this short video on others' experiences in Wellspring:

<https://youtu.be/acKwZ7Lm5LI>



(ALE) Adult Life Enrichment

Launches January 18

Check the website for full descriptions and to register for these amazing offerings:

"Your Carbon Footprint"
w/ the BRUU Green Team

"How to be an Antiracist" a
book study

"Understanding Pronouns"

"Emotional Intelligence"

***"Faith Like a River:
Diverse Community"***

"Exploring the Hymnal"

"Beyond the Explainable" a
new on-going group

THE LESSONS OF

HANUKKAH

Joan Cantor

The idea of miracles permeates the holiday season. This time of year is about the movement from darkness to light, in both the spiritual and material world. I have been attending a small weekly book study group started by Marti Giese some years back and continuing, in her honor, to this day. Most of the attendees are BRUUs. We read and discuss the book, The Other Way, all the while wrestling with its meaning. It is a companion to A Course in Miracles - wordy, deep, confusing and confounding. But what a comfort it has been this year

It leads us to move away consciously from the background noise of the world and listen to our voice and God's, that still, small voice within that leads one to peace. In many ways, the book revels in metaphysics, reminding us always that we are one. One with the universe, one with the animals, one with our brothers and sisters. We are all in this together.

And the miracles are here; they are everywhere. In the frontline medical workers, in the supermarket clerks and bus drivers, in the teachers and childcare workers, in you and in me. I wonder if you have noticed, as I have, what a special joy it has been this year to watch the seasons turn, to listen to music, to see the smiles of loved ones, even if only on face time. To laugh. To breathe.

Suddenly there seem to be miracles all around. They have always been here, of course. But they take on new meaning when each day truly becomes a gift. The other voice prompts us to slow down, to look and listen, to notice and cherish. To be grateful for all we have.

Albert Einstein said, "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." That is the true lesson of Hanukkah. And the true lesson for all seasons.

BRUU CARES & ASSISTS

BRUU has been a member of Unity In The Community* since the inception of the organization. Because our affiliation has been consistent over the years, BRUU was one of the ten communities of faith that were chosen and notified in September about a CARES grant award. The grant request had been submitted by Unity specifically to help folks avoid being evicted from their homes. The total amount of the CARES grant handled by Unity was \$50,000.

Each congregation was invited to process applications that would provide rent assistance monies to residents (known to the congregation) who live in the county. Once the application paperwork was completed and submitted back to Unity, it was the responsibility of Unity to assess the application in compliance with the grant stipulations – to avoid eviction. Once the application was approved, Unity paid the resident's landlord or utility company directly.

BRUU handled this application process as an extension of the Social Justice Committee's Food Pantry participants support.

Due to our participation with Unity aiding 29 families, BRUU directly helped two, avoid imminent homelessness.

UNITY ITC CC GRANT WRAPS UP

During the fall, Unity in Community received a \$ 50,000 Cares Act Grant to help people who were behind in rent or mortgage payments due to the coronavirus pandemic. These funds had to be disbursed the funds by December 11th. No further funds are available. According Taalibah Hassan, MAV Interfaith Chair at Dar Al Noor Islamic Community Center and Unity's chairperson, a total of 29 families were helped through our efforts; that's about \$1725 per family.

The following Unity member organizations and faith communities participated in the distribution of funds: NAACP, social workers at PWC public schools, Bahai of PW, BRUU, Dar Al Noor Islamic Center, Epiphany Lutheran Church, First AME of Manassas, Manassas Church of the Brethren, Mount Olive Baptist, and St. Margaret's Episcopal.

Unity is grateful to people like our own Office Assistant, Tina Cox, who took the time to be oriented to the program, fielded requests for assistance, and processed the applications. As Taalibah wrote on 12/11/20 "It was work, and may God reward you for your efforts and patience dealing with the families as well as me." A special shout out goes to Gregg Reynolds of St. Margaret's Episcopal, who said "lets apply for this grant" and did all the behind the scenes spreadsheet reporting, and Ralph Smith who wrote the checks.

UNITY ITC CONTACTS—GET INVOLVED

We are a member congregation of Unity in the Community.

Currently, **Catherine Ring** represents us at Unity meetings.

If you would like to know more, about the mission of & membership in Unity In The Community, please visit: www.UnityITC.org OR talk with Catherine about getting involved.

PROGRAM COUNCIL KUUDOS

Bruce Roemmelt says KUUDos to the **Re-Opening Task Force!** **Susan Kehoe** has been doing a marvelous job developing plans and communications to help us stay safe right now and how we can open BRUU when it is safe to do so.

Kathy Nickel says KUUDos to **Susie Eastridge** who designed a nice banner we hope to display when we get back to the building and that we can take to events when we can do those again.

Star Muir has complete awe for the **AV team!** KUUDos to **Lisa Stewart** and **Tony Main!** They bring a lot to the services and they've done so much work in preparing for live streaming. **Ellen Badgley** seconds Star. The AV team have been testing livestreaming and have ironed out the glitches.

Faye Sledge give KUUDos to the **Membership Committee** who called people to get the directory done! The directory is ready and is now with Faye who will mail them in the next several days.

Robin Fegeas gives KUUDos to the **whole worship team!**

Christine Sunday says KUUDos to **Kelly Muzzin** and **Martin Crim** for putting on the December 20 fundraiser! They've been flexible in how to get this done with the building closed.

KUDOS

ku·dos \ 'kü-,dōs

In the later part of the 19th century, *kudos* entered English as a singular noun, not an acronym. It comes from the Greek noun *kýdos*, meaning praise and renown.

KUDOS

+

BRUU

=

KUUDOS

When the Program Council meets each month, the very first agenda item says KUUDos are a,

“Free-form recognition of BRUUers who are approaching the “new normal” in novel, inventive and ministerial ways.”

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NEW NEWSLETTER—SAME NAME

Crossroads has been the name for the monthly BRUU newsletter for many year. This New Year the name will stay the same, while the look will change.

With the goal of refining the aesthetics of the newsletter in every issue you may see different layouts, different imagery and new features every month. While this may first appear as a tactic to designed to confuse an bewilder the ready, rest assured my intentions are just, and serve the overall mission of the newsletter.

Crossroads Mission Statement

BRUU's newsletter, Crossroads, offers an intersection of activities and ideas. It advertises upcoming events in our very-active community, helping everyone stay connected. In addition, Crossroads includes monthly columns from BRUU's leaders, with commentary intended to stimulate, challenge, and provide comfort to our community.

It is my intention to continue the traditions of Crossroads while embracing the many digital tools available to create an engaging, entertaining an informative publication.

Enjoy! And send any comments or concerns to newsletter@bruu.org

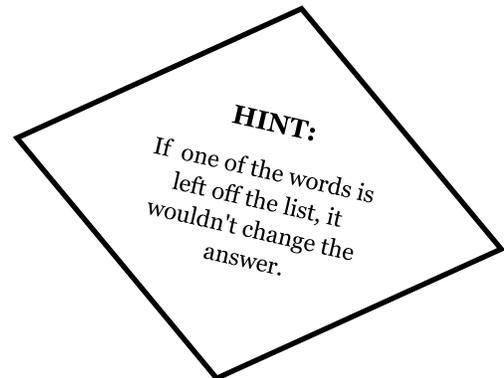
-Jerome Hruska, editor

THE PUZZLER

Each and every word in this list has the same unusual uniqueness in common.

Here are the words:

Assess
Banana
Dresser
Grammar
Potato
Revive
Uneven
Voodoo



What's the answer? What do they all have in common?

Please email your answer to - newsletter@bruu.org

Use the Subject Line - BRUU PUZZLER

From the correct answers, one random winner will be chosen to be featured in the newsletter and awarded bragging rights of course. Good Luck!