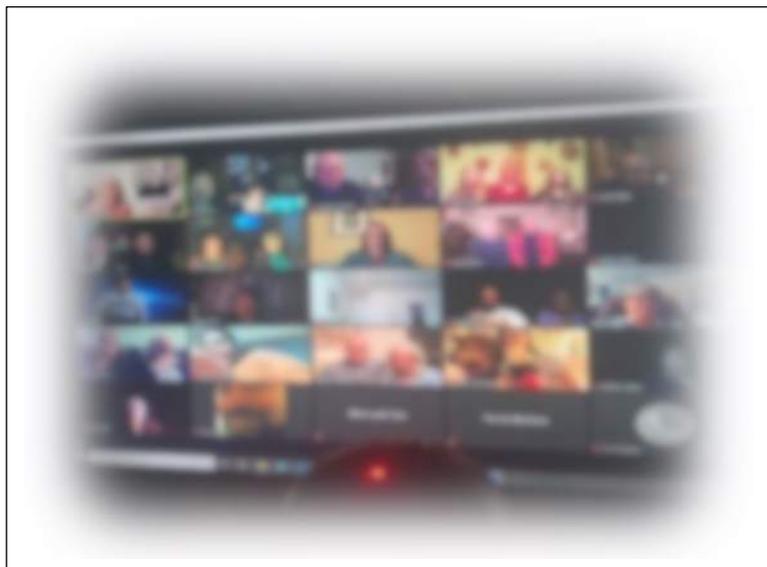


Volume 38
Edition 5
May
2020



CROSSROADS



Bull Run Unitarian
Universalists

Rev. Charlotte's Word-Weavings

Hope Grounded by Grace

Down the street from our house – in the next block north – is a new section of concrete sidewalk on which a grandchild creates old-fashioned memes: colorful chalk pictures and positive messages for their grandparents (who live in that house) and the people who pass by on their fresh-air forays. The third week of April it was a rainbow with these words: “Hope Grounded by Grace.”

I had been planning to write my newsletter column with a focus on gratitude, and when I saw that sidewalk-chalk meme, I thought to myself, “well, I’ll have to tie into that somehow.” Rather easy actually, since grace and gratitude are related words that convey all of the following: pleasing, thankful, pardon, mercy, elegance, virtue, esteem, regard, goodwill, agreeable, and “unmerited favor, love or help.”

There is so much that I am grateful for as I shepherd this spiritual community through these unexpected and uncertain times. I am grateful for your grace in working together to lead and to maintain our UU congregation exhibiting dignity in your selves and respecting the dignity of others.

(continued page 2)

(Word-Weavings, continued from page 1)

These are challenging times at home for all of us, but more so for our members, friends and neighbors who live at the margins of social and economic stability. We are caring for each other. Through the leadership of the Pastoral Care Team (PCT, pastoralcare@bruu.org), we have formed Caring Circles of households that have geographic proximity. If you haven't been contacted yet, please let us know; we are updating contact information as we go. We encourage those who are struggling to let myself, the PCT or their Caring Circle contact know about what's happening and how we can support you. The Community Assistance Fund (CAF) is a source of limited financial support and our food pantries are a source of food. If you donate to the CAF or the BRUU Food Pantry, you will help others by sharing your resources. If you volunteer as a Caring Circle point of contact or for the food pantries, you are making a difference in other's lives.

I am grateful for the grace of all of our volunteers.

Our religious education programming for children and youth has shifted on-line and provides welcome interaction with and among UU peers and adult teachers. Our music program is being creatively re-imagined to provide support to each other and to our spiritual lives through on-line worship and expanded Evensong events. Teachers, musicians and staff have all provided graceful leadership with the shift to virtual learning and worshipping in community.

I am grateful for the grace of your spiritual commitment.

The BRUU Board and the Finance committee have met extra demands for grace-filled leadership with careful reflection and informed thoughts. *And* each of you – our members and friends – have been gracious stewards of our community in your honest and generous commitment to fund our 2020-21 budget year. Because of you, we are able to hold onto the commitments made in recent years and not lose ground. Although we will need to step back to having volunteers handle our bookkeeping, our staff salaries will remain at current levels.

If I listed all 220-some members plus all of our BRUU friends and the grace they exhibit, this column would take up the entire newsletter. Better that you should glean from the rest of its content these many ways that we understand grace and gratitude: agreeable, elegance, esteem, goodwill, mercy, pardon, pleasing, regard, thankful, and virtue.

And may you experience hope in the “unmerited favor, love or help” that is grounded in that grace. My own hope for BRUU's future is grounded in your grace.

Along with my sincere gratitude, may you ground yourself in grace and experience hope in the world around you, *Rev. Charlotte*





Welcome to BRUU's new Little Free Library!

When I was visiting my daughter in Ottawa Canada, there were 2 boxes in her neighborhood. These are “take a book or give a book” small boxes to promote reading and good community fun! I could not wait to put one in our courtyard.

Through the Byer Memorial Fund at BRUU, the help of Sterling Rush who built the post and attached the box, and Jon Kostik who dug the hole and mixed the concrete to set the post, and my ordering and painting the box, we are now open for business. Thanks to the board for your approval and guidance from Rev. Charlotte!

You all can help by feeding your books to the box and perusing it too!

Amy Hamilton



Mini Pantry now Open 24/7 in BRUU Courtyard!

Until we purchase and install a Mini Pantry for the BRUU Courtyard we are using the left side of the Little Free Library for a Mini Pantry. Its motto is “Give what you can. Take what you NEED.” We hope this will provide help to those who are experiencing hunger and a service opportunity for all.

If you're in the area and notice that supplies are low feel free to donate anything shelf stable that you would want to receive. A single can of beans can help!

Martha Muirhead



Calendar of May Meetings at BRUU via ZOOM

Please note: BRUU staff team meets weekly on Tuesdays from 11 am – 12 pm;
Adult Choir meets weekly on Wednesdays from 7 – 8:30 pm.

Please also see RE news for schedule of all RE classes that are being offered on-line. This includes the weekly Tao class facilitated by Richard Demeret, which is open to all.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Who may attend?</u>
5/6	Seasoned Souls	12:00 am – 1:30 pm	Open to all
5/6	COSM	4 – 6 pm	(closed, committee only)
5/8	Evensong	7:30 – 8:30 pm	Open to all
5/10	Finance Cmte mtg	11:30 am – 1 pm	Open
5/12	Fundraising Cmte mtg	7 – 9 pm	Open
5/13	BRUU Happy Hour	4 – 6 pm	Open to all
5/17	Program Council mtg	11:30 am – 1 pm	Open
5/20	Grief Support	11:30 am – 1 pm	Open to all
5/22	Evensong	7:30 – 8:30 pm	Open to all
5/27	BRUU Happy Hour	4 – 6 pm	Open to all
5/28	Board mtg	6:30 – 9:00 pm	Open

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 and password 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

We are using security measures to limit access; you’ll need to request the password.

Food Pantry Update

The BRUU Emergency Food Pantry and the USDA pantry are still in business but need your help to stay open! Before our Sunday service went online, many of you routinely filled the Pantry Donation box before or after service which provided extra food for Pantry Clients and kept a good supply of gently used plastic bags available. The pantries have moved outside, and we are pre-bagging food which can be left for our clients who wait in line maintaining safe distances. Coronavirus guidelines discourage reusable bags, so our clients are dependent upon plastic bags to carry food home from the Pantry. So, if you have old grocery bags we ask you to double bag them so they are strong enough for a load of cans and milk, and drop them off in the pantry box in the fellowship hall, or leave them in the back of room 208. Better yet, those of you who are still venturing out to stores might be able to grab some extra bags and pass them along. Food has become more expensive and less available too, so we desperately need donations of dried red or black beans, rice, and Masa Seca (the corn flour used to make tortillas.) Our next distribution is 4/28, and many families count on us for food, so please think of the pantry the next time you shop, and drop off your donations in the Pantry Box in the fellowship hall or up in the back of 208 the next time you are in Old Town Manassas. As always, we appreciate your cash donations during the third Sunday split the plates.

Thanks, Martha Muirhead and Tina Cox

(Please see note about temporary mini food pantry on lower right of page 3)



May 2020 Sermon Descriptions

May 3: *May Sarton: For the Love of Poetry* (Rev. Charlotte) – A worship service featuring the writing of May Sarton on the 108th anniversary of her birthday.

May 10: *Coming of Age Service* (Kristin Worthington) – The Coming of Age youth and mentors lead this worship service sharing what they’ve learned and what they believe as Unitarian Universalists who will shape our faith’s future.

May 17: *Margaret Fuller* (Rev. Charlotte) – Margaret Fuller (1810-50) has been called the “mother of the feminist movement.” We will explore her life and legacy.

May 24: *TBD* (Janette Muir and Tret Fure) – Special musical guest, Tret Fure, joins Janette Muir in leading worship this morning. At a later date, we will welcome Tret into our bricks-and-mortar sanctuary for an *in-person* concert, but don’t miss this opportunity to get to know this fine singer-songwriter and her in-spiring music.

May 31: *Wilderness Time* (Rev. Charlotte) – We’ve been wandering in the wilderness for the last three months. What is wilderness time? What are we learning? How has it changed us?

Report of the BRUU Board of Directors April 23, 2020 Meeting

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

Members Absent: None.

Guests: David Hamilton, Richard Firth, Jon Kostik.

Janice Byer was removed from the Membership Roll for inactivity. The current membership total is 221.

The Board will finalize the agenda for the June 7 annual meeting in May. Watch for news on how voting will occur at the annual meeting.

The annual meeting will require an agenda to be sent out by May 23. It will be sent out electronically. The Board set the record date for membership as May 8. The Board has an optional Zoom meeting on Thursday May 7 at 7:00.

The BRUU Vision Cafe is on BRUUnet.org with some discussion. The Board discussed the process and the need to have congregational buy-in. Martin will communicate with the Vision Team and the Board about how to handle the Vision Statement.

The annual budget has about a \$10,000 gap between income and expenses. Terrie reported that she has talked to our mortgage lender BB&T (now Truist) and found out we could skip our mortgage payment for 3 months and tack those months on to the end of our mortgage in 2027 with no application required. This will reduce our expenses for about \$6800 for this calendar year. Terrie made arrangements for this to happen.

(continued on page 7)

Randy brought up the bookkeeper situation. The lowest bidder for bookkeeping services was about \$31,000 per year compared to a budget of \$13,675. Dr. Dave said that we got three volunteers to do the work for the coming fiscal year: Trish Freed, Robin Fegeas, and Dorothy Greenhouse. Dr. Dave said the work is about 20 hours per week total and eventually we'll need to pay for the work to be done.

Dr. Dave will provide a final budget to the Board by May 3. If there is a surplus, he will make a recommendation on whether to add it to the FY 21 operating budget or place it into the operating reserves, per Section 8.1 of the Bylaws.

Richard would like to see changes to our canvass system with more "touches" throughout the year. This will require coordination and a change in the way we think about things.

The Board discussed whom to approach to take the two open positions on the Committee on Shared Ministry. Gretchen Almstead and Deborah Buckingham's terms are ending. Betsy McGrath has agreed to serve, and Rev. Charlotte has two other interested individuals. The Board will approve these members by email.

Under "Unstructured Discussion," Rev. Charlotte put in a plug for GA Delegates. We are entitled to five. Pat will look for potential delegates. We had an offer to sponsor one person to go to GA back when it was scheduled to be in-person, so Art will talk to the donor about spreading that money over multiple people. Michelle will reach out to young adults to see if they're interested in serving as delegates. The Board will have to certify the names of delegates and recognize them at the annual meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Martin Crim, Board President



Report from Your Canvass Team:

All things, both good and bad, come to an end – including this year's pledge drive. Our 2020 Stewardship Campaign (the "Canvass") provided some operational challenges amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, but it also provided greater insights into the amazing strength of our community. Despite the uncertainty, we have collectively maintained our pledge base to enable us to continue to fund the many wonderful things that we do.

At the time of writing we have received \$314,000 in committed pledges, and we believe that ultimately, we will have \$320,000 to \$325,000 in pledges. Unfortunately, this is short of our goal of \$370,000. This means we will not be able to increase salary and benefits for our staff or contract for bookkeeping services. But while we may have fallen short of our goal, we will nevertheless have still slightly increased our overall pledge total at a time when so many have lost their jobs or are living with heightened financial insecurity. That is remarkable and speaks volumes as to what BRUU means to so many of us. To all who have pledged, thank you! We could not do all of the things that we do without you. To each of you who is unable to pledge at this time, we have you covered, and we are here to support you. And to those that have not been able to pledge for whatever reason, but are now ready do so, we will gratefully accept your pledge and support at any time.



NOTES FROM ANNEASE

We will offer two evensong services this month - on May 8 and 22. Join us at 7:30 for a time of music and reflections. The service on May 8 will center on finding treasure and joy in the everyday, even in unexpected times and places. Check Roundup for invitation link.

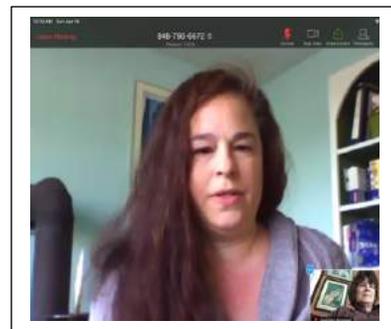
Annease Hastings, Music Director



FROM THE DRE...

“The Stars Are Dancing “
by Om Prakash

The stars are dancing tonight,
while the moon sits in her golden hammock,
swaying back and forth
to the rhythm of celestial voices.
The Beloved is full of rapture,
dancing worlds and stars into being,
drunk with the wine of passion
and filling the heavens with song.
Do not sit alone in the dark
while creation sings in three-part harmony,
Dance, my friends.
Dance wildly,
sing joyfully,
fill your heart with the beauty of the Beloved
as the Beloved turns your soul to light.



Kristin Worthington,
Director of Religious Education

Adult Life Enrichment announces opportunities to fill your heart Mondays on Zoom!

Get your brains pumping & your fingers moving. Meet up with BRUU friends and get to know some new ones. Spring ALE has moved online for May and June.

- Spring Movie: VICE
- UU History Series
- Arts and Crafts: Colorful Paper Basket Weaving
- Congregational Project: Peace Cranes and Paper Flowers
- Ongoing: Tao Discussion Group

See the BRUU website for details and registration information. Hope to see you there! Children and Youth Religious Education continues to meet via Zoom through May 31:

- Explorers (ages 3-7) Sundays at 3:30 pm.
- Questers (ages 8-10) Sundays at 2:00 pm.
- Seekers (ages 11-13) Fridays at 6:30 pm
- Senior Youth Sundays at 11:30 am

UUA First-Ever All-Virtual General Assembly June 24-28, 2020

While the UUA has made it possible to participate in its annual General Assembly from off-site for many years now, it will be 100% virtual for the first time this year. Registration is much more affordable at \$150 and no travel costs!

Every year Unitarian Universalists from across the U.S., Canada and around the world gather to do the business of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA). All member congregations are eligible to send delegates who vote on the decisions requiring their input. Ministers and certain religious educators are also voting delegates. In addition to delegates, thousands of interested UUs attend GA to learn, socialize and act for justice on behalf of our human family.

The number of delegates for each congregation is based on the number of members certified each year on February 1st. BRUU certified between 201-250 members, so we are entitled to 5 congregational delegates.

Let's make sure we send a full delegate team to GA this year! Please contact the Board (director@bruu.org) if you'd like to serve as a delegate, so we can make sure you get a delegate credential. If you want to know more about what GA is like, contact Michelle Luman, Bev Reusser, Larry Underwood, and the Muirheads who have all been to GA in the past two years.

To register and FMI go to: <https://www.uua.org/ga>



BRUU President's Column for April 2020

Of course we have to talk about the pandemic here, even though we're tired of talking about it. I'll just speak for myself and say that I'm beyond fear, dread and anger and have settled into the territory of terror, horror, and rage at the Federal government for what I'll charitably characterize as bungling. And a strong annoyance at people in the supermarket who don't wear masks, or who wear them around their neck, or just over their mouth and not their noses.

There are some bright spots. I think a lot of people have thought deeply about what is important in life. This should be reflected in our shared political life and our shared sense of group identity. Scott and T.J. Maille are collaborating on a fundraising project in which BRUUsers can express their pandemic experiences through art, prose, poetry, and photography. Watch for further information on that front.

As for BRUU's everyday activity, it seems we're ticking along OK with people understanding what is essential and what is non-. The food pantry continues, and we've adapted RE. Worship still has some logistics to straighten out but it's getting to be the new normal. Evensong has been a bright spot.

Frankly, I miss giving and getting hugs. When we write the history of this time, that will be a big deal in my book. I don't miss handshakes, and frankly could do without them the rest of my life. I am used to videoconferencing but have a new appreciation for in-person meetings. I look forward to seeing you all in the flesh another day and hope that that day comes.

Respectfully submitted,
Martin Crim, President

June Crossroads submissions of articles (no more than 400 words) or photos that relate to BRUU activities are due to newsletter@bruu.org by midnight, April 25th.

Short submissions for the weekly Round-Up go to communications@bruu.org by Tuesday midnight.

To include an announcement in the Order of Service, send to Tina at office@bruu.org by Tuesday midnight.