



BULL RUN
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

February 2024
Volume 42, Issue 2

Crossroads



*Learn more about the "I'm Going Green!"
Challenge on page 11!*

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The monthly BRUU Newsletter



February Sermon Descriptions

February 4: Peace is a UU Value (Rev. Charlotte Lehmann) – During the service we will reflect on Peace as a UU value. A commitment to Peace is included in the current 6th Principle and has been proposed as an amendment for inclusion in the UUA by-laws Article II proposed language. The final draft of revisions will be voted on at the all-virtual 2024 UUA General Assembly (GA) in June. This service will provide updates on this important process for by-laws review and change. It will also serve as a call for delegates to represent BRUU at GA.

February 11: On Religion and Science (Rev. Charlotte Lehmann) – So often religion and science are pitted against each other. As a geologist and clergy person, I rely on both to inform my experiences in the world. So many of the most famous scientists have shared truly profound philosophical and spiritual statements that I find it hard not to look to both science and religion for guidance. This month's 2nd Sunday Share-the-Plate recipient is Project Mend-A-House (<https://pmah.org/>).

February 18: True Colors (Rev. Charlotte Lehmann) – What is your experience with expressing your real self? Do your “true colors” shine through? A reflection on why honest self-expression matters with special guest Muffy Blake Stephyns.

The 3rd Sunday Share-the-Plate benefits BRUU's Community Assistance Fund.

February 25: TBD (Kristin Worthington) – The annual Senior Youth service never fails to impress. What will they challenge us with this year?



Minister's Column

Go Green!

Rev. Charlotte Lehmann

BRUU's identity includes being a Green Sanctuary congregation. It is part of our social justice ministry, which includes environmental justice. The need for environmental justice is inherent in all of the many ways that we work towards a world where social justice leads our decision-making.

Larry Underwood reminded us in his introductory remarks during the "Go Green!" worship service that BRUU has been a leader among UU congregations in "being green" from the beginning of that UU program; our certification was awarded in September 2005.

I'm excited to see what many *new* ways of being green will emerge in our lives as we participate in the Green Team's challenge to "Go Green!" (And that's not a cheer for the Green Bay Packers... I'm not a fan of football.)

I'm not sure if it was clear during the service that the reason the Green Team awarded me it's very first "I'm Going Green!" ribbon is because I am the new owner of solar panels on my home. This is something that I have been looking at as a possibility since I bought my house in Manassas in early 2020. The roof-line and the direction it faces seemed to me to be ideal. Then I saw some information in an email from either Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (<https://faithforclimate.org/>) or Interfaith Power and Light (<https://interfaithpowerandlight.org/>) and pursued that. I signed the contract last fall, but the installation didn't happen until early January. My panels should be up and running starting early this month after they have been inspected by the City of Manassas – and the snow that's presently covering them has either melted or been washed away by forecast warm temperatures and rain! I'm also looking forward to the 30% tax credit I will receive when filing my 2024 taxes.

Minister's Column, Continued

There are, as the Green Team shared with us, many, many ways we can add new endeavors to our lives to make a difference in being excellent Earth Stewards and doing what we can to reduce – maybe even reverse? – climate changes and mitigate our impacts on this beautiful “Blue Boat Home” that we live upon.

We can also continue to do more and do better with our on-going efforts. For me, recycling is a habit I take very seriously. I would really like to see BRUU do better than it currently is – and we do recycle a lot of stuff! – on the recycling front. Far too often I find recyclable items in the trash cans around the church. I have asked the Green Team that we make sure that there are identifiable recycling bins in each and every room. Now, I am asking you all to do your part.

Thank you!

May your year be blessed with hope, peace and love as we together work for justice and build Beloved Community for all.

Rev. Charlotte

From the President's Desk

Angie Carrera, President, Board of Directors

What a whirlwind of activity at BRUU! Besides the forward movement of the Reorganization Plan that will focus our work on the Strategic Plan priorities, the Board has moved forward preparing for application to a grant from Partners for Sacred Places. The Board has already, with the congregation's approval, begun groundwork for supporting our infrastructure needs by examining the value of a Feasibility Study and addressing funding for the Study itself. This study is critical as it will determine our readiness to embark on a Capital Campaign and will last for a six-to-eight-week period. On January 17, we were informed by the Endowment Committee that the Board's request for \$20,000 funding for the Feasibility Study had been approved. This will allow us to contract with Partners for Sacred Places to begin the Feasibility Study in March of this year.

During this time, the Partners for Sacred Places consultant team will conduct brief interviews with members of the BRUU congregation to understand your relationship with BRUU and BRUUs relationship with local partners, the local community and businesses. We're depending on you to share information about your participation in BRUU's programs and activities, as well as your feelings about BRUU and its place in your life. Please remember that this process will be an opportunity for all of us to reflect on what is most important to us and our families.

Consider your own participation at BRUU, whether it is engagement as a helper on Workday or the Pantry, a parent of children in RE classes, as a teacher in RE or ALE or as a committee/team member with programs or activities that keep us safe, empower us to act and help us thrive.

I'm excited about our movement toward reorganization. This isn't something that is happening TO us. It is actually BRUU at its best, organically and mindfully moving toward change that will ultimately enhance what we do and empower all of us to focus on what matters. We need your eyes and ears to make BRUU all that we

From the President's Desk, Continued

hope for in our aspirational thinking for the future. It will take your involvement in our process, your thoughts, and skills to make it so.

We have a wonderful year ahead of us, if we take this opportunity to welcome new people, new thoughts, new processes, supported by our UU faith and our democratic process. Risk is always a little scary and reorganization can be scarier, especially when we still have questions and not always answers. But we do have each other, the power of beloved community that is dedicated to living in covenant with each other and the world we live in. Keep asking questions and let us know your thoughts and feelings as we move along. The Board is listening and wants this conversation and process to continue.

I believe the impact of these initiatives will be felt for years to come but can only be successful with your participation in the process. We (all of BRUU) are at a pivotal stage in our history. We're in a position to address our ongoing infrastructure needs, which are critical to our continued development as a beloved community. This building is our house, our members and staff are our family, our programs, and activities now and in the future are our legacy for a better world.

Please join us this year by sharing our thoughts, supporting us through your time, talent, and treasure, and joining us at the table where we are all faithful stewards for BRUU.

Together for BRUU,

Angie Carrera, President, Board of Directors

PS: Please don't forget that Board Matters is in a separate box for a summary of items discussed at the most recent board meeting. Check it out!

Board Matters

The Board meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the BRUU Conference Room and is available on Zoom.

The Board reviewed the Consent Agenda with reports from the President, Program Council Chair, Minister, and Membership Chair, which were approved with a slight modification to one recommendation in the President's Report to the Board.

Facilities Report (John Sunda) provides an update on the Stained Glass Window Repair invoices in dispute with the vendor. Anyone interested in further information about the meeting may contact the President at President@BRUU.org.

- Outreach: The Board reviewed a "Put the Walls to Work" proposal from the Communications Committee (via Charlie Grymes) submitted for Board support. Its purpose is to enhance BRUU outreach, establishing a clearer "core of Manassas" identity. The Board has forwarded its general support for the proposal to the Endowment Committee with some questions as they consider funding. Board member Chris McClure recommended that we make better use of our public Facebook presence. We need folks well versed in Facebook and social media branding to help us create consistent and clear messaging on who we are and connections we provide.
- Finance: The Board discussed our 2nd Quarter Review. Concerns regarding the debit process for commercial space use payment were discussed. Tenants will be notified and an SOP will be drafted to be presented to the Board by the next board meeting. UUA Membership will be paid for this year and the Share-the-Plate recipients be paid as soon as possible after Sunday collections. The Board directs that BRUU implement an Internal Audit by a volunteer-team every 3 years to more specifically inform us of any gaps in financial overview and process.
- Reorganization: Development of Core Committees moves forward and Art Muirhead is planning a Town Hall Meeting for March to keep the congregation

Board Matters, Continued

informed. (Read article on Reorganization.)

- **Infrastructure:** The Letter of Intent for a grant from Partners for Sacred Spaces is moving forward to meet its February deadline. Having received approval from the Endowment Committee for funding a Feasibility Study for a Capital Campaign, the Board is prepared to sign a contract with Partners for Sacred Places.
- **Staff:** The Board requested that the Personnel Committee draft a revision of the position description in collaboration with Facilities, Minister and key stakeholders by the next Board meeting. Ministerial Assessment Team is assembled and will meet soon to implement the assessment.
- **Volunteer Gaps:** The Board briefly discussed recruitment for Stewardship and Nominating Committee chairs as we approach Canvass season and prepare for the Congregational meeting on June 2. Angie has been in communication with volunteer coordinator Nina Lomax and will meet offline with Rita and Art to discuss further as the Community Engagement Core Committee meets.

After approval by the Board, the full minutes of each meeting are available in BRUUnet KnowledgeBase.



A Circuitous But Then Pointed Update on the BRUU Reorganization

Art Muirhead, Program Council Chair

I wanted to write an article for “Crossroads” about where things stand on our Reorganization process. And I’ll get to that. But first, you’re invited to come on a short digression about “Crossroads,” because it helps illustrate the point I want to make.

You see, I always thought the name from our newsletter came from the fact that here we are, perched at arguably the main crossroads of Old Town Manassas – the corner of Church and Main. Boy, was I wrong. It turns out the name “Crossroads” was chosen in August of 1992, years before we moved into our current building, when Jeff Westlake took over editing the newsletter previously known as “What’s BRUUing” from Charlie Grymes. Jeff saw BRUU as, “a *crossroads* where social, political and religious backgrounds can come together and celebrate their diversity.” Who knew? (Maybe some of you still remembered.)

That’s one of the revelations that has come to me over the past month while hosting seven Zoom meetings that brought together the beautiful diversity of our congregation to talk about what we should expect to accomplish when we have core groups for addressing the biggest challenges for our major mission areas – Communication Technology; Community Engagement; Covenantal Ministry; Lifespan Religious Education; Financial Stewardship; Facilities Management; and Human Resources. We’ve come a long way since 1992, but we still have a diverse group of members ready to come together not only to celebrate who we are, but to talk about how we can do better. Here a just a few of the topics we discussed at these meetings:

- Getting new sets of eyes looking at our social media and newsletters, using our communications and technology capabilities to get new people involved.
- Assuming the Feasibility Study bears this out, making ourselves ready to carry out a capital campaign in order to address our ongoing needs to implement vital infrastructure improvements.

Update on the BRUU Reorganization, continued

- Organizing the different groups that contribute to our music programming so that we can enrich the offerings to our congregation and the local community.
- Making sure our staff members and volunteers receive the support and training they need to stay capable and motivated.
- Creating a perception in our congregation that stewardship is a year-round, long-term commitment for all of us.
- Dealing with volunteer burnout by bringing in new people with new enthusiasms.

These constitute just a small fraction of the ideas for growth and change that were generated in this first round of meetings – I’m still working on teasing out pages of suggestions from the Zoom transcripts. Individuals from the different Core Committees are already at work crafting Action Plans aimed at turning these concepts into new realities. Some of the Action Plans are already in place, and one observation from the Community Engagement group struck me as particularly telling. “BRUU is not a magical Brigadoon. By consciously getting new members to ‘help make BRUU happen,’ we create a shared ministry with shared commitments.”

And that leads us back to yet another meaning for Crossroads: being at the point where we look at the possible paths ahead and decide which one to take. We’re at the start of a new year, and it’s a great time to get started on a new path. Did you see a topic that came up in the Core Committees that you want to get involved with? Or does your passion for BRUU to take action lie somewhere else? Contact the leader of the Committee if you know who that is, or get in touch with me and I’ll point you in the right direction. Here’s to growth and change in 2024!!

Art Muirhead

Program Council Chair

The I'm Going Green Challenge: How The Challenge Works

Larry Underwood

Ever feel overwhelmed with the complexity of the Climate Crisis? Fortunately, the fear is largely unfounded **if we work together**. Together we can, we must, and we will confront and solve the climate crisis. Together we can truly be Keepers of the Earth.

That's why the Green Team is proposing the **We're Going Green Challenge**, that will run between now and our June annual meeting. We're challenging every BRUUser—every member, friend, man, women, child, staff member— to take at least one action that will make our planet more sustainable. And if you do, you'll receive a I'm Going Green! ribbon to attach to your name tag, that will tell the world **you** are part of the solution.



And what specifically can you do? We'll make specific suggestions and have helpful hints on things you can do. Some will be big ticket items, like buying an electric vehicle, or putting solar panels on your roof. But others will cost little or nothing such as planting a tree or a butterfly garden, lobbying, local politicians, or joining a green group. Downstairs in the Fellowship Hall two portable bulletin boards have lists of possible activities.

In addition we'll publish:

- BRUU Weekly Bulletin articles with specific ideas and suggestions.
- Monthly Crossroads articles with more detailed discussions;

The I'm Going Green Challenge, continued

- Occasional Blasts that bring to your attention issues requiring immediate action.

On Sundays downstairs there will be occasional WriteHereWriteNow campaigns where you will be encouraged to contact local, state, or federal legislators, to support specific environmentally friendly legislation. The next one will request passage by the State of legislation that will require data centers in Virginia to use renewable energy.

Also, in the Fellowship Hall there will be a green table where members of the Green Team will be available to answer questions. As you complete your tasks, simply come to the green table, tell us what you've done, and receive your awards . Zoomers can email the Green Team (green@bruu.org) or put something in the chat, describing their activities and we'll send them their awards.

That's it. That briefly is the **I'm Going Green Challenge!** It will make a difference. So, BRUU...

Let's Go Green!

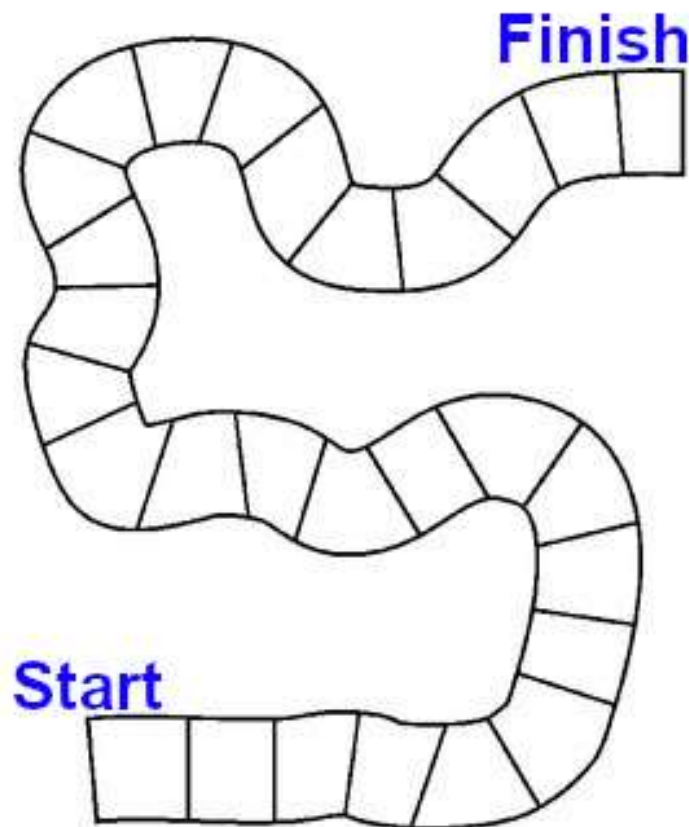
Want to Clone Thyself and Get Volunteers to Help Get Stuff Done at BRUU?

Charlie Grymes

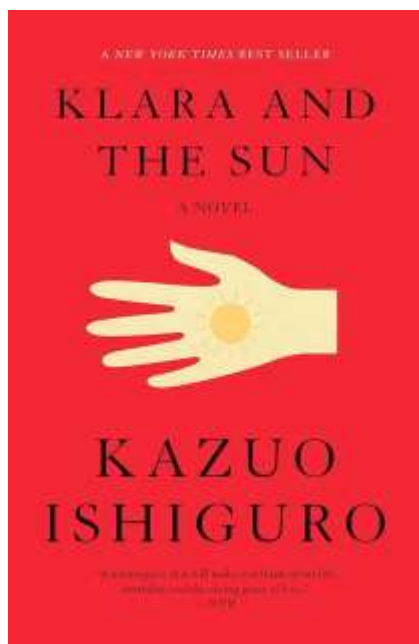
Make it easy for BRUU'ers to engage: show them what is expected. Use a simple tool to explain how to do the many tasks at BRUU – making coffee, teaching an RE class, repainting Fellowship Hall chairs, etc.

What simple tool? Post “how to...” instructions on BRUUnet.

“How to...” guidance can be crafted as a training guide with pictures, Standard Operating Procedures, Gospel Guidance, or even Wisdom From Omniscient Wizards On High. Need help with word or pictures, or getting stuff online? No problem – ask anyone who looks like a responsible adult at BRUU, and you’ll eventually end up with assistance. (Yeah, there oughta be a “how to do a how to...” guide.)



Events at BRUU



Join the BRUU Book Group!

Next monthly book club meeting will be at 3:30 on Monday, Feb. 19th. The book chosen is "Klara and the Sun" by Kazuo Ishiguro. All are welcome, but it's a Zoom... so you gotta make your own popcorn/cookies and pour whatever beverage you consider appropriate. (Pajama attire or cocktail dress? Your choice.)

To get the Zoom link, contact Susan Gregorio at susang100@comcast.net .

Orientation to BRUU—February 4, 2024

On Sunday February 4th from 11:45 – 2:00, please join the Membership Committee & Reverend Charlotte in the Conference Room for Orientation to BRUU, an orientation class for newcomers to UUism, or just to BRUU. This class fulfills one of the requirements for BRUU membership. Lunch will be provided, and childcare can be arranged if needed.



Please email membership@bruu.org to reserve a spot. More information will be provided by email after you express your interest.

For additional information use the following link: [Membership Information](#)



Bull Run Unitarian Universalists

Warm your heart with Hot Cocoa

FC Fellowship Committee

Contact

Just in time for Valentines Day. A reminder that there are many kinds of love to celebrate. You are loved, join us Sunday 11:00 am, February 11 2024, after service for a fellowship of love. Hot cocoa, flavors mixins and dippers will be available. Sugar free, gluten free and vegan options will be provided. Point of Contact (POC) Mary Kadlubowski Fellowship@bruu.org



<http://tinyurl.com/Hot-Cocoa-2024>

Second Sunday Hike—February 11, 2024

On the Second Sunday of February, 1:00-3:00pm, we will explore the Discover Trail at the Eco-Park between the county landfill and Hoadly Road (Did you know there was an Eco-Park, much less a Discovery Trail?)

Please register at <https://tinyurl.com/e27h4m8s> to get details, including where to park. Greater Price William Trails Coalition will notify those who register if weather forces postponing the hike.





Pastoral Care

One of our strengths as a congregation is how we care for one another.

Please reach out to us at pastoralcare@bruu.org and let us know if there is a need within our community, so that we may coordinate with caring volunteers within BRUU.

See Something? Report It!

Notice anything in or around the BRUU building that needs maintenance or repair? Please report it by using this link:

www.bruu.org/www2/building-repair-request-form

This will provide a quick opportunity for you to contact the Building & Grounds folks and alert them to the situation that needs attention.

It takes a village (aka congregation)!



THE PUZZLER

January's Puzzler

Here is the answer to last month's Puzzler, *Mind Flexors*:

- A7 (Blusher = Redone)
- B6 (Holster = Armrest)
- C9 (Appendix scar = Sideline)
- D3 (Spot remover = Dogcatcher)
- E2 (Coquette = At ease)
- F5 (Backward = Orthopedic department)
- G1 (Tenure = Fire prevention)
- H4 (Rigor Mortis = Solid state)
- I10 (Low blows = Dirty socks)
- J8 (Hearing aid = Gavel)

Congratulations to Martin Crim!!

BRUU

9350 Main Street
Manassas, VA 20110-5150
703-361-6269

Minister

Rev. Charlotte Lehmann
minister@bruu.org

BRUU Board of Directors

President

Angie Carrera-Earl
president@bruu.org

Vice President

Dianne Lane
vicepresident@bruu.org

Secretary

Chris Sexton
secretary@bruu.org

Treasurer

Terrie McClure
treasurer@bruu.org

Directors at Large

Jessica Hruska
Sophia Kadlubowski
Chris McClure
director@bruu.org

Youth Director

Maia Malos
director@bruu.org

Immediate Past President

Rita Romano

Program Council

Art Muirhead
programcouncil@bruu.org

Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Kristin Worthington
dre@bruu.org

Director of Music

David Maley
music@bruu.org

Office Administrator

Taylor Johnson
office@bruu.org

BRUU OFFICE HOURS

M-F 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

THE PUZZLER

February's Puzzler

Three periods of time were asked to write brief autobiographical verses. Can you puzzle out the names of the three poets?

1.

In leap's embrace, I find my tune,
A day in hand, every quadrennial moon.
Where passion's letters are often sent,
In winter's core, my days are spent.

2.

In my embrace, the buds do swell,
The earth awakens from a wintry spell.
Laughter and trickery may fill my morn,
But by my end, the earth is reborn.

3.

I follow the season of sun's bright reign,
As colors transform, and students' refrain.
Harvest moon rises, crops bow in grace,
Equinox witnessed, in this temporal space.

GOOD LUCK!

Please email your answer to newsletter@bruu.org

Use the *Subject Line* - **BRUU PUZZLER**

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