



**BULL RUN**  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

January 2024  
Volume 42, Issue 1

# Crossroads



*From the Dec. 7 Affordable Housing discussion at BRUU.  
Left to right: Sonia Vásquez Luna, Tom Osina,  
Del. Michelle Maldonado, and Mark Wolfe*

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The monthly BRUU Newsletter



## January Sermon Descriptions

**January 7:** *On the Cusp of the New* (Rev. Charlotte Lehmann) – Using Karen Hering’s book *Trusting Change: Finding Our Way Through Personal and Global Transformation* as the basis, we will consider the thresholds in our lives – personal, congregational, and beyond – and imagine where we’d like to be a year from now. The service will include writing a blessing for ourselves to support us while living on these thresholds.

**January 14:** *On Repentance and Repair* (Rev. Charlotte Lehmann) – In *On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World*, the 2023 UUA Common Read by Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg, we are called to accountability. Based on a framework for making amends offered by the 12th century Jewish physician and scholar, Maimonides, this book invites us “to explore practices for accountability that can bring us into wholeness and make a difference in our personal, community and national relationships.”

**January 21:** *Go Green!* (Rev. Charlotte Lehmann & Larry Underwood) – Want to “Go Green” and help solve the climate crisis? BRUU's Green Team is developing specific suggestions on how YOU CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION to arguably the greatest challenge to face humanity since, well, since there has been humanity. Our goal is that in the next few months, every BRUUser take at least one Green action. We are encouraging everyone to “Go Green!” Stay tuned; WE CAN DO THIS!

**January 28:** TBD (Worship Committee)



## Minister's Column

### *Trusting Change, Welcoming in the New*

Rev. Charlotte Lehmann

Our congregation operates on a fiscal year that runs from July 1 to June 30. Other entities have different operational/fiscal years. Different religious and spiritual groups have calendars that start and finish on wholly other cycles. And then there is ye olde calendar year which begins on January 1 and ends December 31. I guess we can follow whichever one of these we would like to, and more than one if it's helpful somehow.

I'm feeling like this New Year of 2024 is likely to have some mighty big lessons for us to learn. I don't know exactly what will happen – I'm no oracle peering into a crystal ball – but there's an awful lot of handwriting being scribbled on the walls and sidewalks in our lives. Graffiti can be prophetic. It warrants our paying attention to it. I am certain that we are facing changes that matter. I want to be hopeful and not sink into a despair that prevents me being noisy about creating justice and building the Beloved Community.

One of our UU ministers, Karen Hering, has written a guide that is helpful in this respect. It is called *Trusting Change: Finding Our Way Through Personal and Global Transformation* (Skinner House Books, 2022). There was an article "Shedding Old Skins," adapted from the book, that was published in the Spring/Summer 2023 issue of the UU World (which all BRUU members should receive from the UUA). That article focuses on the need, when we are on the threshold of change, to learn to let go.

Are there things that you learned to let go of as a result of the changes forced upon you, your family or your community as a result of the COVID-19

# Minister's Column, Continued

pandemic? We are still navigating those changes. We are still needing to let go.

BRUU is on track this church-year to implement changes as a result of envisioning transformations in our organizational structure and in our strategic plans. It can be confusing (while we are in the midst of all this change) to know how to proceed. We are all in this together. While we have some conception of the goals, we don't know exactly what the "finished" product will look like. In fact, it is probably best not to get too attached to a particular image we might have; it might turn out that we'll need to adjust what we envisioned.

Regardless of where our paths of transformation – individual and collective – wind up, we can provide each other with support and we can celebrate our successes. There almost certainly will be times when we need to console each other. And other times when we simply need to rest along the way. Resting can be an act of resistance against the systems of oppression that impact us all. Rest can be a blessing. There are blessings to be had in trusting change and embarking upon transformational journeys.

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

I must start this letter to you with my delight at the selection of David Maley as Settled Music Director. I am so grateful to the Search Committee (Kelly Muzzin, Dorothy Greenhouse, Michelle Cole-Luman, and Bill Stejskal) for their efforts. Music is and always has been a significant part of the vitality and spirit of BRUU, our beloved community. Under David's leadership, it has expanded from an adult choir into a full music program incorporating BRUUs extraordinary instrumental talents. I'm especially pleased that David is exploring some of our pre-pandemic aspirations, such as resurrecting our children's and youth choirs.

December certainly highlighted the benefits of staff and congregant partnerships! On December 10th, the service by David Maley and the BRUU Choir featured several faith traditions practiced in the U.S. (Thank you, presenters Annaliess Trommatter, Michelle Cole-Luman, Margo Davies, TJ Maile, Margaret and Carl McCalla, and the dancing team of Nina Lomax & Laura Crowne!). The following Sunday, Rev. Charlotte and facilitator Melissa Mullinax spoke to the personal losses experienced by many this year, with music including a special version of "In the Bleak Midwinter" as revised by Sandra Fox, Beth Roemmelt, and Scott Maile! Rev. Charlotte led the beautiful December 23rd service with Janette Muir and Eric Trumbull in the roles of Mary and Joseph in an imagined conversation recalling the birth of their son Jesus through the eyes of loving parents. Special thanks to musicians Michelle Cole-Luman, Martin Crim, Jen Deavers, Tyler Hruska, Chris Sexton, and song leaders, including Carmella Deavers and Bryson Adair-Casteel!.

On a personal note, having grown up with food insufficiency, I know what it means to be unable to focus on schoolwork or to be embarrassed for not having lunch or lunch money at school (back then). So, my heart has a special place for the BRUU's Food Pantry and the Little House in the BRUU garden that serves unhoused individuals or folks just needing food. Never having to live without a roof over my head, but knowing poverty too well, I can't imagine how people weather that particular storm.

# From the President's Desk, Continued

I'm always impressed with the energy and compassion of our congregation who step up for those in need.

And our Ed Stewart did just that! Noticing the canned foods provided in our little house is often inaccessible without a can opener, he generously provided 200 small portable can openers (called P-38s) to share each time we fill it. Then our community partner, Rice Hardware, stepped up too, providing 200 right-sized rings to connect each P-38 to individual's clothing or backpacks. We've added two signs to our Little House: one explaining its contents and P-38s, and another recommending food types for donation. As soon as the second sign appeared, an angel left two boxes of listed food by the Little House and then three people volunteered to make sure the Little House is regularly stocked. A season for miracles! Thank you, all!

Before I end this letter, I want to congratulate our Vice President Dianne Lane on her excellent facilitation process for learning and community discussion at the public Housing Forum held at BRUU on December 7, and attended by several BRUU members, as well as to thank her and Art Muirhead for preparing and implementing the Town Hall on Dec. 3 focused on congregational input as we move forward on implementation of BRUUs Reorganization Plan. So proud to serve on our Board with these awesome people.

Together for BRUU,

Angie Carrera, President, Board of Directors

PS: 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 the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the BRUU Conference Room and available on Zoom.*

The Board reviewed the Consent Agenda with reports from the President, Program Council Chair, Minister, and Membership Chair, which were approved.

Unfortunately, because we were having trouble with overhead Zoom, we were unable to open the meeting to interested members. Our apologies to anyone trying to login. We will get this corrected as soon as possible. Anyone interested in further information about the meeting may contact the President at [President@BRUU.org](mailto:President@BRUU.org).

- Approved Personnel Manual dated November 16, 2023, agreeing to delay correction of a redundancy found in one section for future review.
- Approved Reorganization's proposed Timeline as next step following the Dec. 3 Town Hall, with one slight word change needed for clarification.
- Reviewed the status of the Endowment Fund, presented by the Treasurer. The Reserve Fund status will be provided via email to the Directors by December 28.
- Approved of proposed guidance document for the FY25 Budget to be provided to the Finance Committee for the as proposed by Art Muirhead.
- Agreed to a change in process for staff providing funds based on balance in Community Assistance Funds. The approved process will appear as an SOP in KnowledgeBase.
- The President will respond to the Endowment Committee questions concerning additional costs anticipated to follow the Board's funding proposal submitted for a Feasibility Study for a Capital Campaign.
- Discussed formation of a Nomination Committee in preparation for nominations to the Board in advance of the Annual Congregational Meeting scheduled for June 2, 2024.
- Discussed Ministerial Assessment Process in Executive Session.

# Board Matters, Continued

## ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS OF INTEREST:

- The Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair are providing necessary documents to the CPA/EA William Coppa, who will perform a Financial Review for FY23, which was last done in FY18 by this same firm.
- The President submitted an updated list of BRUU Board of Directors to the State Commission and forwarded the fee invoice to the Treasurer for payment.

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





## *BRUU Hosted a December 7 Housing Discussion*

Charles Grymes

The Housing Study Group of the Social Justice Committee at Bull Run Unitarian Universalists (BRUU) hosted a housing conference on December 7.

Del. Michelle Maldonado (chair of the Democratic Caucus' Affordable Housing Policy Committee) attended, together with Sonia Vásquez Luna, Tom Osina, and Mark Wolfe on the Manassas City Council. Also participating were three members of the Manassas Planning Commission, the senior planner of city staff, and 11 others from the community.



The event was designed to create productive discussion and candid conversation, not to advocate for any particular ideas.

At different tables, groups discussed what actions could be taken to address the affordable/attainable/workforce housing challenges. Questions were posed to start the conversation. Focus was on identifying barriers to overcome and different opportunities that could, added together, help the city increase the supply.

Options identified included:

- hiring a housing coordinator on city staff
- expanding the Housing Trust Fund
- using the Housing Trust Fund to buy down mortgage costs for low-income buyers
- approving an Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance

## *Housing Discussion, continued*

- authorizing sites for manufactured housing in the zoning ordinance so "mobile home parks" are a viable and legal option rather than pre-existing non-conforming uses
- partnering with Manassas Park and Prince William County to determine suitable locations for mixed use housing with a percentage of below market-rate units
- using public land to create land banks with already-approved zoning to minimize delay and business risk
- find more state/Federal resources
- public support needs to be voiced clearly when elected officials are preparing to vote on affordable housing issues

It was obvious at the end of the discussion that the affordable housing issue was receiving close attention from the elected officials, and more action beyond the recent zoning update will be taken by the city in 2024.

In particular, look for the FY25 Manassas budget to include funding for a housing coordinator. The FY25 budget process will create an opportunity for advocates to speak out in support of affordable housing.

# *The Power of Individual Actions in Solving the Climate*

Larry Underwood with special thanks to CHATgpt 4.0

The planet is grappling with a pressing challenge — the escalating climate crisis. It is imperative that we acknowledge the collective responsibility to tackle this issue. While governments and organizations play a crucial role, the power of individual actions should not be underestimated. In coming weeks the BRUU Green Team will explore and encourage individual actions that will contribute to solving the climate crisis.



In the meantime which of these areas of action appeal to you? :

1. **Raising Awareness:** Individual actions have the capacity to drive awareness and foster a culture of sustainability. By actively engaging in conversations, sharing knowledge, and participating in environmental initiatives, individuals can inspire others to take action. Such awareness can lead to a ripple effect, creating a mass movement toward climate consciousness.
2. **Responsible Consumption:** Personal choices greatly influence the demand for goods and services. By adopting sustainable consumption habits, individuals can contribute to mitigating climate change. Through practices like reducing waste, embracing renewable energy options, and supporting eco-friendly products, individuals can exert considerable influence on industries and encourage sustainable production methods.
3. **Energy Conservation:** Individuals can significantly reduce their carbon footprint by adopting energy-efficient practices in their daily lives. Simple steps like using energy-efficient appliances, switching to LED lighting, and optimizing home insulation can make a substantial difference. Collectively, these actions

## *Power of Individual Actions, continued*

conserve energy and minimize greenhouse gas emissions, making a meaningful impact on the environment.

4. **Sustainable Transportation:** Transportation is a major contributor to carbon emissions. Individuals can promote sustainable transportation options such as carpooling, using public transport, cycling, or walking. These actions not only reduce emissions but also alleviate traffic congestion and enhance local air quality.
5. **Regenerative Agriculture:** Individuals can support sustainable farming practices that prioritize regenerative agriculture techniques. By choosing organic, locally sourced, and seasonal produce, individuals encourage environmentally friendly farming methods while reducing the carbon footprint associated with long-distance transportation.
6. **Advocacy and Policy Influence:** The collective voices of individuals have substantial power in shaping policies and driving systemic change. By engaging with local representatives, joining advocacy groups, and using social media platforms constructively, individuals can advocate for climate-conscious policies. In collaboration with governments and organizations, individuals can help achieve more impactful and comprehensive climate solutions.

**Conclusion:** Individual actions play a vital role in addressing the climate crisis. By raising awareness, adopting responsible consumption habits, conserving energy, promoting sustainable transportation, supporting regenerative agriculture, and advocating for policy changes, individuals can make a significant positive impact on the environment. Although no single action can solve the climate crisis alone, the cumulative effect of individual actions creates a powerful force that can lead to meaningful change. Recognizing the influence we possess as individuals enables us to take responsibility and contribute actively to a sustainable future.

# Events at BRUU

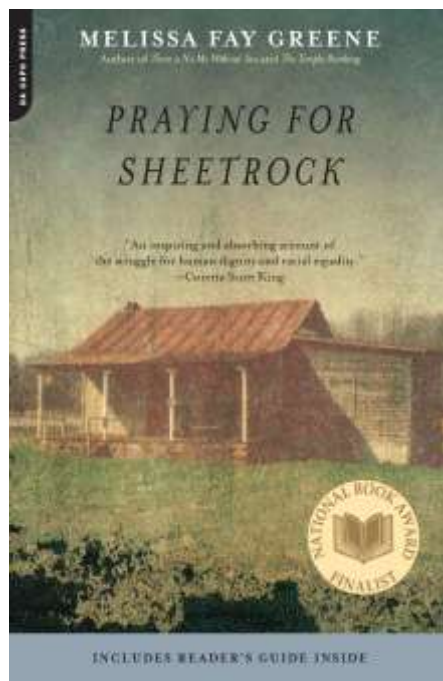
## Work Day Coming January 13th!

Save the date now for our next work day, which will be on Saturday, January 13th from 9:30am-3pm. Come lend a hand painting, cleaning, and fixing up our building while enjoying camaraderie with each other! As always, a pizza lunch will be provided; children welcome with adult supervision; and come when you can for as long as you can.



Sign-up will be coming soon. POC is Christine Sunda.

## Join the BRUU Book Group!



Next monthly book club meeting will be January 15, at 3:30-5:00pm. We will be discussing "Praying for Sheetrock" by Melissa Fay Greene. 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](mailto:susang100@comcast.net)



A promotional poster for the Annual Chili Cook-off competition. The background features a close-up of several white bowls filled with different chili recipes, including one with beans and another with corn and tomatoes. A QR code is located in the top right corner. The text is centered and reads: "Annual Chili Cook-off competition", "Bring your Chili A Game", "Last minute entries accepted", "Bring a Crockpot of Chili before service and compete for the title BRUU's Best Chili", "January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024, 11:00 am", "Vote for your favorite Chili", "Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/Chili-cookoff-2024>", and "It's cold out there, Come warm the cockles of your heart, taste the best of Bruu". The words "CHILI COOK-OFF" are written in large, stylized letters at the bottom left.

**Annual Chili Cook-off competition**

Bring your Chili A Game

Last minute entries accepted

Bring a Crockpot of Chili before service and compete for the title BRUU's Best Chili

January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024, 11:00 am

Vote for your favorite Chili

Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/Chili-cookoff-2024>

It's cold out there, Come warm the cockles of your heart, taste the best of Bruu

**CHILI COOK-OFF**

## **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](mailto: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>

## 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](mailto: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](http://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

## December's Puzzler

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Here is the answer to last month's Puzzler, *Sorting the Elves*:

With no double initials, Angeline is older than Miss Buttercup and Miss Dreamchaser, so must be Miss Cloverleaf. Cinnamon is younger than Miss Buttercup and Miss Artanis, so must be Miss Dreamchaser. Now remaining Brandy can't be Buttercup, so must be Artanis, leaving Dixie Buttercup.

Solution:

Angeline Cloverleaf

Brandy Artanis

Cinnamon Dreamchaser

Dixie Buttercup

**CONGRATS TO MICHELLE LUMAN!**

## BRUU

9350 Main Street  
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703-361-6269

### **Minister**

Rev. Charlotte Lehmann  
minister@bruu.org

### **BRUU Board of Directors**

#### **President**

Angie Carrera-Earl  
president@bruu.org

#### **Vice President (2022-24)**

Dianne Lane  
vicepresident@bruu.org

#### **Secretary (2022-24)**

Chris Sexton  
secretary@bruu.org

#### **Treasurer (2021-23)**

Heather Berthold  
treasurer@bruu.org

#### **Directors at Large**

Jessica Hruska (2022-24)  
Sophia Kadlubowski (2021-23)  
Chris McClure (2022-24)  
director@bruu.org

#### **Youth Director**

Freya Davies (2022-23)  
director@bruu.org

#### **Immediate Past President**

Rita Romano

#### **Program Council**

Art Muirhead  
programcouncil@bruu.org

#### **Director of Lifespan Religious Education**

Kristin Worthington  
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#### **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

## January's Puzzler

January is National Puzzle Month! In honor of this opportunity, open up your heart and soul to the puzzles of your life!

This month are some “mind flexors,” popularized by Games Magazine in the 1990s. Matching words in the two columns involves making some mental leaps and re-examining your vocabulary. If an Autoharp is a backseat driver, and Utile is a scrabble piece, the answer is a list of 10 matches (e.g., E5).

A. Blusher	1. Fire prevention
B. Holster	2. At ease
C. Appendix scar	3. Dogcatcher
D. Spot remover	4. Solid state
E. Coquette	5. Orthopedic department
F. Backward	6. Armrest
G. Tenure	7. Redone
H. Rigor Mortis	8. Gavel
I. Low blows	9. Sideline
J. Hearing aid	10. Dirty socks

Please email your answer to [newsletter@bruu.org](mailto: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!