



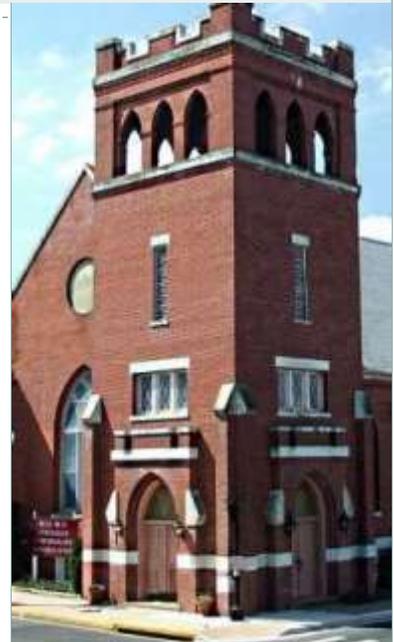
BULL RUN
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

July 2025
Volume 43, Issue 7

Crossroads



From the 2025 BRUU Annual Picnic



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The monthly BRUU Newsletter

July Services

BRUU's Summer Sunday Service Theme: Spiritual Travelogues

Summer is a favorite time for traveling, and spiritual experiences can happen anywhere! Over July and August, we are sharing our own Spiritual Travelogues - places we have found inspiration, a connection to the divine, or felt changed by the people and places we visited. Each week will showcase a different travel location, and how spiritual experiences can be found in every corner of the world, or even in our own backyards if we are open to it.



Summer RE

2025

JUNE
15

RAINBOWS!

Story: The Rainbow
Book by Kate Ohrt
Arts: Painting!

JUNE
22

SUMMER SOLSTICE

Story: The Longest Day
Arts: Flower Crowns

JUNE
29

Multigenerational 5th Sunday Service

JULY
06

Color Feelings

Book: Bubble Riding
by Lori Lite
Arts: Bubble Painting

JULY
13

MINDFULNESS

Book: Angry Octopus,
by Lori Lite
Activity: Mind Jars

JULY
20

INNER CALM

Book: Each Breath A
Smile, by Thich Nhat
Hanh
Activity: Bubble
Breathing

JULY
27

PEACEFUL BODIES

Book: Peaceful Piggy
Yoga by Karey Lee
MacLean
Activity: Yoga

AUGUST
03

PEACEFUL THOUGHTS

Book: Peaceful Piggy
Meditation by Karey
Lee MacLean
Activity: Mandalas

AUGUST
10

STEWARDSHIP

Book: Moody Cow
Learns Compassion
by Karey Lee MacLean
Activity: Nature Walk

REGISTER NOW



From the President's Desk

Josh Rachford, President, Board of Directors

Thank you for trusting me with this role, and please join me in thanking Angie for her service to BRUU during a challenging time.

I used to think leadership meant being the smartest person in the room, the one with all the answers. For several years, I was a director with Story Pirates, an arts education non-profit. I was a great joke writer, but the funniest shows happened when I stopped trying to write all the jokes and let people be their own funny selves. I learned to see leadership as creating conditions where everyone could contribute their best.

At another theater where I performed, information didn't flow, concerns weren't addressed, and toxic culture drove everyone into negative patterns. The harder I tried to fix things alone, the worse they got. That taught me that individual effort can't overcome broken systems - you need collective leadership.

That's the kind of leadership my dad modeled. He led a 50-person company, but what impressed me most was how adults his own age would come to him for advice. Not because he had all the answers, but because he created space for people to find their own wisdom. He's the king of asking you "What do you think you should do?" While it's not what you are expecting when you want advice, it's great for developing leadership in others.

Here at BRUU, we have the right people. When protests happen in our community, I show up and find BRUU members already there because our values call them to act. We come together for music, for work days, for service projects. We welcome anyone seeking spiritual community without demanding they believe specific doctrines.

But I think this community has potential we haven't realized. The UU theologian James Luther Adams called congregations "laboratories of democracy" - places where people practice shared governance and collective action that they then take into the wider world. Right now, too many of us act on our values individually rather than collectively. We have wonderful long-serving leaders who are tired, and newer friends and members who want to contribute but aren't.

President's Desk, continued

Josh Rachford, President, Board of Directors

Part of realizing this potential means finding ministerial leadership who can guide and inspire us. I'm pleased to announce that we've formed our Ministerial Search Committee, representing diverse voices from our congregation. The committee members are Owen Davies, Helen Elkin, Josh LaRosa, TJ Maile, Chris McClure, Janette Muir, and Rita Romano. Please thank them for giving their time and talent for this important job. They'll begin their work in July, and we'll keep you updated on their progress.

This moment won't come again. Our congregation suffered some blows navigating COVID and Reverend Charlotte's departure. Now people are coming through our doors because of the upheaval under this presidential administration. They're looking for meaning and an avenue to be active.

Meanwhile, as Trump enacts the fascist playbook, if we don't speak out collectively, we risk losing our democracy. People in our community are disheartened by environmental rollbacks and mass deportations. We need to do more than electoral politics - we need to build the power to transform our community.

If we act now, if we build the leadership pipeline and spiritual depth we need, we can become that laboratory of democracy Adams described. We can develop citizens, not just churchgoers. We can model our values and be the safe community for seeking and service that our mantra promises.

Don't just read this newsletter and move on. Take ownership of this community:

- If Sunday worship is your main connection to BRUU right now, we want to help you discover other ways your gifts can serve our mission. Simple ways to start could be bringing food to share during coffee hour, participating in a workday, or just hanging out at BRUU on First Fridays.
- If you've never served on a committee, say yes when asked – or volunteer without being asked!
- If you've never chaired or led – or it's been a while – take that step. There are many resources available to support you, from written guides on BRUUnet to UU

President's Desk, continued

Josh Rachford, President, Board of Directors

Institute online courses to mentorship. There are a few critical roles recruiting right now; if you'd be interested, please let me know.

- If you're a long-serving leader on the edge of burnout, trust us enough to rest and let others carry the load.

See leadership as a practice we develop together. Commit to more direct, honest communication. Show up to Town Halls, which we will continue to hold.

Picture this: Families finding spiritual nourishment here and taking that strength into the world. New leaders emerging every year because we've created the conditions for everyone to contribute their best. A congregation that builds the power to create justice.

That's the laboratory of democracy we can become. That's the beloved community we dare to be.

The moment is now. The people are here. Let's choose to trust each other's capacity to serve, to grow, and to transform not just our congregation, but our wider world.

Thank you.

Josh Rachford

President, BRUU Board of Directors

Board Matters

This scheduled meeting was held on June 19, 7:00 p.m. in the BRUU Conference Room. There was a Closed Executive Session.

At this meeting, the Board unanimously approved the May meeting minutes and the Consent Agenda including the following reports (President, Membership, Staff Coordinator, Program Council). Attachments included Final FY26 Budget, Perpetual Board Calendar FY26, SOP for financial Review and Internal Audit, and Board Volunteer Position Descriptions.

Please see the BRUUnet KnowledgeBase for Board Meeting minutes, as well as attachments in support of the agenda and/or the reports.

- GUEST: FY25 Membership Chair, Randy Earl, provided a year-end review and described procedural changes to become a BRUU MEMBER. He also offered recommendations for the future. The Board extends its appreciation to Randy for his service and leadership
- The Board reviewed the Congregational Meeting, sharing that congregational feedback has been positive and thanked Josh for his powerful remarks on engagement.
- Reviewing our goals in relation to the UUA, it was agreed that the Secretary will notify our regional rep that having discussed its findings from the past Ministers' exit interviews (from UUA), BRUU will continue work on covenantal relationship as we move on with our search.
- The Board approved Jennifer Malos as BRUU representative at General Assembly.
- The Board reviewed overall Organizational Structure, re-appointed Allan as Board liaison to the Endowment Committee, appointed Nina Lomax to serve as Membership Chair for this coming term, and appointed Angie Carrera to serve as Leadership Development Chair. BRUU's Communications Chair position is still vacant.

Board Matters, Continued

- Allan Curlee reported that Laurie Perez, CPA, will conduct an audit for FY25.
- John Sunda has developed a list of possible contractors for elevator installation inside our building and reminds us that a funding request will need to go to Endowment Committee in the near future. Responding to Staff concerns about care for BRUU instruments, the Board agrees that Sanctuary temperature must be maintained for the piano.
- The Board reviewed the FY26 Operating Budget, agreeing funds held for the anticipated salary increase for the Sexton as his Performance Review should be submitted soon.
- The Board expects it will get updated on commercial lease management.
- Angie will end her role as Staff Coordinator in August and will onboard her replacement. She proposed that the Board consider a paid part-time Staff Coordinator position in the future to function as liaison between Staff and Board. It would also support a teamwork environment, and the part-time Minister can focus on priorities of Sunday Service and Pastoral Care.
- The President provided an overview of the Board Administrative Orientation for new Board Members (Ralph, Heather and Mary K) and arrangements for the Board Retreat for which all FY26 Board Members are expected to attend.
- In anticipation of the Board Retreat, the President asked each Board member to review their particular Board Volunteer Position Description and provide feedback on the new or old requirements. The President also provided a DRAFT SOP for Staff Personnel folders as the ones in the office where incomplete.

Anyone interested in further information about the meeting may contact the President at President@BRUU.org.

For your consideration

At BRUU's April Special Congregational Meeting, a comment left unspoken regarding the Ministerial Search is included here in keeping with the Board's invitation for any feedback to be shared with the congregation. With the speaker's permission, it will also be provided to the Search Committee as the search begins.

Michelle Cole Luman [Former Worship Chair]: “What I've learned in my role in the last three years and my time on the Ministerial Assessment Team before Rev. Charlotte left would be valuable in consideration of getting a new minister. I would approve of moving forward with a search for a minister because some of us on the Worship Committee are experiencing burn-out. A congregation of our size needs a full-time minister based on our current growth. Because we are used to having a full-time minister, I could see our congregation pushing a part-time minister to try to do as much work as a full-time minister. We would need to make sure whoever is on the Search Committee can find someone who is willing to set and maintain strong boundaries with us as we can be a strongly opinionated congregation. The Search Committee should try to find someone not just based on credentials in a resume/CV, but also try to be able to suss out a minister's personality. We probably need someone who is less serious, and one who has a kinder presence, as our last two were perhaps too serious and academic.”

Can I Toss that Apple Core Out the Car Window?

Charlie Grymes

Hey, you're a BRUUser. You're an environmentalist. So - what's wrong with throwing an apple core out the car window? After all, it will biodegrade on the side of the road. A small rodent might get a good meal. Apples are organic, so they're not "litter" like a plastic water bottle or a candy wrapper.



Answer: an owl may try to catch the mouse, vole or squirrel attracted by the waste apple core to the side of road. Cars are zipping by on the highway, and an owl diving for a meal could end up getting struck.

So...Plan A: toss the apple core into your compost heap, or at least a trash can. It will then decompose in a landfill.

Being UU's, we welcome alternatives - so here's Plan B. Park safely by the side of the road, get out of the car, march thirty yards deep into the woods, throw the apple core even deeper into the trees, then get back in the car. Oh, check for ticks too.

June ALE

Kaylee Rachford

Thank you to all who attended our special summer ALE, "Eating as a Spiritual Practice." We made vegan quinoa salads topped with tahini dressing and vegetarian galette filled with gouda and vegetables. Chef Becky taught knife technique and gave some veggie roasting tips, then we all enjoyed a hard-earned meal together!



If you are interested in learning more about eating as a spiritual practice, please contact Kaylee Rachford or Nina Lomax.



BRUU Is Greener and Less Gassy

Charlie Grymes

The Green Team has purchased carbon offsets since 2019. We assessed BRUU's emissions back then as the equivalent of 60 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂e). Electricity, used primarily for heating and cooling the building, is the biggest part of our carbon footprint. Since 2019 we've cut our electricity use by almost 10%. Our new heat pumps in the courtyard will be even more energy efficient in the future. BRUU is making progress in a forward direction.

The electricity we purchase is greener; each kilowatt hour now produces about 17% less CO₂ emissions. BRUU has also reduced fuel oil consumption by about 50% compared to 2006-2009.

The net effect? We've cut our annual emissions from 60 to 38 metric tons CO₂e, a 37% reduction.

Our reduced carbon footprint is the latest in a long series of environmental and clean energy actions BRUU has taken. Organized action beyond individuals recycling paper/plastic started with BRUU becoming one of the first certified Green Sanctuaries in the UUA back in 2004. In 2021 we became one of the first two congregations in the UUA to earn accreditation as a "Climate Justice" Green Sanctuary. To earn accreditation, we committed to reducing and neutralizing our carbon footprint for BRUU's building.

We also launched a carbon footprint challenge, asking BRUU members and friends to measure, reduce, and neutralize their footprint at home, and a backyard habitat to help promote ecosystem resilience. Ultimately, this could have a lot more positive impact than what we do at BRUU's building. Many members have already taken these actions.

BRUU is fulfilling our commitment to be carbon neutral. Your purchases of free trade coffee and chocolates on Sundays in the Fellowship Hall provide the funding for these offsets. If you're interested in doing your part, please see a Green Team member on Sunday or email us at GREEN@BRUU.org. Also, there's more detail on BRUUnet at <https://www.bruunet.org/page/green-team>.

Events At & Around BRUU

Second Sunday Hike: Bull Run Mountain on July 13, 1:00-3:00pm

On July 13 we will explore the new Blue Trail at Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve (<https://www.vof.org/protect/reserves/bull-run-mountains/>). It's a sneak peak, trail is not yet open for general public use.



Please register https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1u0oFcojge1ANZlvJHu_jeHSjCziI6ZfrGz3cNVOH_nU/viewform?edit_requested=true to get details, including the location of the starting point.

Registration will allow us to notify you if the hike is postponed or cancelled because of weather conditions. (We cancelled in June due to heavy rain; we'll explore Broad Run in August now – weather permitting.)



YOGA



QI GONG



Mondays
6:30 - 7:30 pm

Class will meet
July 7
July 21

taking a break
for August but
will resume in
September

Thursdays
6:00 - 6:50 pm

Taking a break for July

Class will resume
August 7

Contact dre@bruu.org
for questions or to register

**Next Biblical Discussion Group:
JULY 6, SUNDAY, 9:00 AM in the Flamingo Lounge**

Satan – Lucifer -- Devil – Serpent
We know the Great Deceiver by many names



God's adversary in the Garden of Eden, disguised as a cunning snake, plays an intriguing role in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Martin Crim will lead us in looking at concepts of "evil" in ancient Judea that remain with us today.

Come join the fascinating discussion!



Mark your calendar for
BDG every 1st Sunday,
9:00, Flamingo Lounge



Friendly Reminder: We have a Little Free Library book box in the courtyard and also a white overflow storage shelf in the BRUU library for you to give your unwanted books to. The reverse of that is you may take books from either one. Enjoy!



BRUU Midweek Coffee Hour - 10am Wednesdays



- Visit with old friends and make new ones
- Share your joys, concerns and insights
- Discuss serious topics and not so serious ones.
- Start your day off with a smile and a laugh or two!

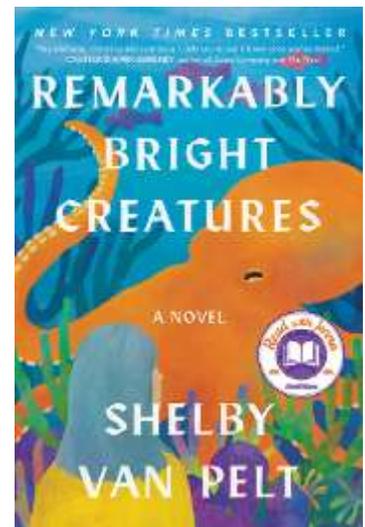
10am-11:30am every Wednesday on Zoom. Feel free to drop in at any time. Contact Gordon Ward for links at midweekcoffee@bruu.org.

Join the BRUU Book Group!

There will be no book club meeting in July.

On August 18th, at 3:30, we will be discussing "Remarkably Bright Creatures" by Shelby Van Pelt.

We meet via Zoom on the third Monday of each month. New members welcome, including people who are not members of BRUU. To get the Zoom invitation, contact us at bookgroup@bruu.org.



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.

Deadlines



To better serve the BRUU community, late submissions for BRUU publications **will not be accepted**, except in extreme circumstances. Please note the following deadlines for BRUU publications:

Round-Up: 11:59pm on Tuesday night

Crossroads: 11:59pm on the 24th of the month

Order of Service items (incl. announcements on the back): 11:59pm on Wednesday night

Items received after these deadlines **will not be included**, except in extreme circumstances.

Please contact office@bruu.org or president@bruu.org with any concerns. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this matter.

From the Treasurer's Office

Links for donating to BRUU



BRUU can receive online charitable donations via Zelle, Stripe or Paypal. You can use these services for your pledge payment (supporting our operational expenses), food pantry or community assistance donations, capital fund contributions, Sunday and split-the-plate, or any of our special collections and fundraisers. When donating online, you may use the comments section to specify your designation.

If you have questions or concerns just send us a note. Thanks!

Terrie McClure, Treasurer,

treasurer@bruu.org

Robin Fegeas et al, Bookkeepers,

bookkeeper@bruu.org

BRUU

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BRUU OFFICE HOURS

M-F 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
2nd and 4th Tuesdays 12:00 pm-2:00 pm