## NUUsletter

#### **Unitarian Universalist Congregation of**

#### A Welcoming Congregation

#### **Sunday Services**

**January 7, 10:30 am, "Liberating Love"** Liberating Love is a value we UUs hold. How do we define what liberating love can and needs to be? During this service we will explore the nuances of a love that liberates us, our relationships and society. Rev. Terre

**January 14, 10:30 am, "Seeds for the New Year"**Sermon by UUA President Rev. Sofia Betancourt. Our new UUA president has send out a sermon to our association of congregations to consider as we begin 2024. The sermon is recorded and Rev. Terre will lead the service.

**January 21, 10:30 am, "The Gospel According to Ted Lasso and Divine Curiosity"** Part of living in the world is having curiosity about who people are and how they experience life. Rev. Todd Blake, Director, Parkview Mission.

This is also a Generosity Sunday.

**January 28, 10:30 am, "Love and Justice"** What happens at the intersection of Love and Justice? How do we live our faith and values? Faith isn't about talk, it is about action. What does love call us to do in the world? Rev. Terre



#### DISCUSSION GROUP January 7, 14, 21, 28

We will be meeting in UHouse at 9:20 am and hope that participants will attend in person. However, Zoom will be available for those who are unable to attend due to mobility limitations or other reasons.

Discussion Group Link: https://zoom.us/i/955583755? =YTFFbm01MlpYdjY1UkdCYU8gTOYyQT09

Dial-in: (301)715-8592 Meeting ID: 955-583-755 Password: 040542



Friends,

**Minister Column** 



2024 is here!!! While Jan. 1 is an arbitrary date to mark a year's beginning, it does feel exciting. There are so many possibilities for this year that we cannot imagine in these early days. Dare we put down a goal for this year? Resolutions too often fade away, no matter our intentions. Where does our excitement reside as we enter this new year?

Our theme for this month, "the gift of Liberating Love", is the perfect theme with which to begin our year. If we truly wish to live love in the world, then how do we embody love? There are so many ways each day that we can relate to people in a loving way. I recently read about an incident in the life of Yo-Yo Ma. His musical talent was discovered when he was a little boy.

Soon after that he was to perform at an event, I forget what, and he was introduced to Danny Kaye. Danny Kaye didn't do what the other adults did; Kaye knelt down so that young Yo-Yo Ma and he could look into each other's eyes to talk on the same level. Yo-Yo Ma said that encounter had a profound effect on his life. I decided to try to SEE every person, where they were. When I read about that simple interaction, I thought how simple it is to live liberation love, to let people we meet with compassion and an acknowledgement of their worth and dignity. The path to peace begins with us honoring one another. That is the meaning of the word "namaste"—the sacred in me sees the sacred in you.

In this new year, let us honor ourselves and others. And let us look forward to the new adventures this life will bring.

Blessings of the New Year! Terre



## President's Corner

#### **Betty Corbin**

The January newsletter falls near Winter Solstice, our shortest daylight period here. Living in a valley, the sun peaks above the hill about 8:00 am and falls below the western hill about 4:00 pm. It's a time to marvel at the beautiful night sky, red sunrises and sunsets, as well as to pause, take stake of all we accomplished this fall, and start planning 2024 congregational activities.

The Unitarian House terrace apartment is ready to lease thanks to Makanah Morriss' able leadership and the hard work of many of us. The congregation approved the 2024 budget at our December 17th meeting. Thanks to the board and congregation for all of your hard work. I greatly appreciate it.

The board and staff will prepare a draft 2024 calendar of events to roll out at a leadership retreat and at a town hall meeting in early 2024. Please watch your Friday blast for details. At the retreat and town hall we will prioritize the events and discuss how best to spread the community's work among more of us. One thought is to have our community groups take turns leading and covering various activities. For example, each community group would prepare and clean up the Sunday Soup meal after church; we hope to have 4 of these during 2024. We also hope to host a work day to do various projects about the buildings and grounds; host an evening potluck / social activity; and participate in Sunday Services and social justice activities. We have 4 community groups, so if the Green group is hosting the Soup Sunday, then Magenta would host the buildings and grounds work day, etc. All of us would participate in sharing the leadership and logistical work more widely among us. Doing these projects over the years is how I've grown to better know so many of you. When many of us work together, we get a lot accomplished and that feels good.

The congregation's board meets on the second Wednesday of each month. If you have business for us to consider or you wish to attend, please let me know.

As we continue to work for justice and live love in the world, may we remember that together we are stronger.

Blessed be, Betty Corbin, President





Don't hesitate to contact the Care Coordinator of your Community Group if you need help or have a concern.

## **Zoom**NOTE FROM ZOOM ADMINS

Here are the ways to connect with us on Zoom!

#### **Weekly Sunday Service**

Time: 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada).

Every week on Sunday. Join Zoom Meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86315352706? pwd=S1M1eFZVd1ZBK0RJblp2dnN5WEc1UT09

Meeting ID: 863 1535 2706

Passcode: 318498

#### **Discussion Group:**

Link: <a href="https://zoom.us/j/955583755?">https://zoom.us/j/955583755?</a> =YTFFbm01MlpYdjY1UkdCYU8yT0YyOT09

Dial-in: (301) 715-8592 Meeting ID: 955 583 755 Password: 040542

### Alliance, BookwUUrms, and one time programming

Room: Rachel Carson Room

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85658301039

Dial in: +1 309 205 3325 Meeting ID: 856 5830 1039

#### Other meeting links:

Available from the relevant group upon request.



Pat Bower, Generosity Sunday team

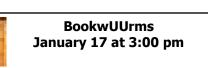
In November, our congregation contributed **\$1,051.87** to Jubilee Development Center. Thanks to everyone who participated in this generosity!

On January 21 we will hear an update from Shawne Farmer, Executive Director of **IOA** (**Interfaith Outreach Association**). The needs in our community which IOA addresses have been steadily increasing, including emergency assistance with utility terminations, evictions, first month rents, and utility deposits. Their other programs include Furniture and Furnishings, Interfaith Rebuilds, Visually Impaired, and Progressive Release, which holds Life Skills and Job Readiness classes for people returning from incarceration. Our church's Emergency Assistance Program for the Elderly, founded and administered by our members in the 1970s, was folded into IOA's structure in 2002.

To make a Generosity Sunday contribution in January, you may:

- · Place cash or a check in the offering basket if you are with us in person.
- Click the DONATE button on the web page
   www.uulynchburg.com
- Mail a check to the church at 818 Court St., 24504. The check may be made out to Interfaith Outreach Association or to Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lynchburg with IOA in the memo line.

The Generosity Sunday team also includes Finis Southworth, Barbara Lafleur and Molly McClenon





BookwUUrms will meet via Zoom on January 17 at 3:00 pm to discuss "Flight Behavior" by Barbara Kingsolver. It's "a breathtaking parable of catastrophe and denial that explores how the complexities we inevitably encounter in life lead us to believe in our particular chosen truths." - Amazon



#### MUUvies that Matter Tuesday, Jan. 9 at 7:00 pm "America At A Crossroads"

We will begin our 2024 MUUvies that Matter (via Zoom) with a viewing and discussion of the PBS documentary, "America at a Crossroads" with Judy Woodruff.

At a time of heightened partisanship, declining trust in institutions, increased political violence, and rapid social change, PBS NewsHour's senior correspondent Judy Woodruff explores the forces driving Americans apart. For six months Woodruff has traveled the nation, asking people from all walks of life and all political persuasions what might be done to reverse these worrying trends. This one-hour special also explores solutions — engaging academics and civic leaders to talk about strategies that seem to be working, and to find out what more can be done to reconnect Americans across partisan division and build stronger communities.

We hope you can join us via Zoom to watch the documentary together (or you can access it on your own via PBS) and then to share a time for discussion following.

Be in touch with Bob and Makanah Morriss at revs2uu@aol.com for the Zoom link.

## **Alliance News**

Westminster Canterbury January 11 at 12:00 pm

The Alliance will meet at Westminster Canterbury on January 11 at noon for lunch. Buy your lunch in the cafeteria there, or bring it with you if you prefer.

Grey's 512 5<sup>th</sup> Street January 25 at 11:30 am

On January 25, we'll meet for lunch at Grey's at 512 5th Street at 11:30. Contact Becky Piatt or Molly McClenon if you have questions.

All are welcome!

# JART Justice Action and Resource Team

Tuesday, January 16 at 7:00 pm on Zoom

Bob Morse will moderate the meeting. Email Pat Bower at

**bowerpatricia2@gmail.com** if you'd like to be added to our email list. The Zoom link will be sent out on the morning of January 16.









Thanks to everyone who helps to make coffee hour possible this year by bringing healthy snacks and especially by helping with clean-up!

How do you know who shares "your" Sunday? Or another Sunday, in case you are looking for someone to trade with?

Check the online **Directory of Members and Friends**. It is available via the email you receive each month which announces that the new nUUsletter is available, with a link to past nUUsletters and to the directory. Usually they both are in the second line of text. Just click on the link!

This month's volunteers are:

January 7 D-M

January 14 SOUP SUNDAY (BOARD)

January 21 N-Z

January 28 A-C

Our weekly Sunday Services nourish our minds, souls, and spirits. Our Coffee Hours provide connections, conversations, and fellowship. Our Coffee Hour is a ministry of hospitality that we all offer and share with each other.

#### Thank you for participating.

Please label snacks that contain any form of nuts, or other allergens, for those with nut sensitivities / allergies.

#### **Action Needed On Raising the Minimum Wage**

January 10, the beginning date of the 2024 VA General Assembly session, is coming right up! After a successful 100% Voting program leading up to the November 7 election, we decided to work on Virginia's situation regarding the minimum wage, an important economic justice issue.

A bill in the 2020 General Assembly raised the minimum wage gradually from \$7.25 per hour to the current \$12 per hour. However, the bill requires legislators to pass the measure again in 2024 to ensure that the minimum wage will continue to increase to \$15. Without this reenactment, it will stagnate at \$12 per hour.

The VA Interfaith Center for Public Policy has provided this information about the importance of raising the minimum wage:

- 92% of Virginians that currently earn the minimum wage are age 20 or older. It's not true that only teenagers work minimum wage jobs.
- · 89% of Virginians earning minimum wage work at least 20 hours per week. It's not true that only very part-time workers earn minimum wage
- · A higher minimum wage would help 1 out of every 2 women of color employed in VA
- · In 1968, the minimum wage was 53% of the median hourly wage. Now, it's just 29%. Poverty rates for black and Latino families would be almost 20% lower if the minimum wage today had kept pace.

If you agree that VA should raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, please tell your VA Senator and Delegate to vote for SB-1 and HB-1. Contact information for your legislators may be found at:

https://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov/

If you would like to learn more about lobbying the General Assembly, register for **Interfaith Power and Light's 2024 General Assembly Lobbying 101** to be held **online on January 4 at 6:30 p.m.** 

https://vaipl.ourpowerbase.net/civicrm/event/register?reset=1&id=216

#### **U House Project: A "UU Miracle" of Shared Effort**

As Unitarian Universalists we have a diversity of perspectives on if and what a "miracle" might be.

For me, a UU miracle is the joining together of folks offering their energy, ideas, creative solutions and hard work to help achieve a shared goal! Thus I want to thank all those who have helped our "UU miracle" of re-shaping our use and spaces in Unitarian House in just 3 months beginning in October.



Thanks to those who helped Sunday after Sunday during Coffee Hour to move heavy things from one floor to another, from one place to another to create "re-newed" clear spaces: Miles Dolihite, Stef Nicovich, Charles Keutgen, Cameron Perkins, Trudy and John Phillips, Andreas Anderson, Calvin Lipscomb, Jim Barton.

Thanks to those who helped find "homes" for some of our more unusual and challenging items: Trish, Courtney, and Molly.



Thanks to those who helped pack, move and unpack the Church Archives from the Church Office to the second floor "Archive and Meeting Room": Courtney, Maile, Becky, and Betty.

Thanks to those who did amazing hard work on our December Saturday Cleaning/Clearing Day: Tom and Gretchen Morgan, Bob and Joanne Morse, Sarah Ball, John and Trudy Phillips, Susan Turner, Stef Nicovich, Charles, Cameron Perkins, Pat Bower, Jim Barton, Matt Canning, Michael and Betty Corbin, Molly McClenon and Bob Morriss.

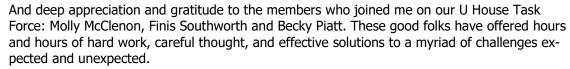




Thanks to the Library Task Force under the leadership of Barb LaFleur who did an awesome job of sorting, clearing, finding homes for, re-shelving our Charlotte Stern Library so it can serve in updated and new ways: Sarah Ball, Liz Farnsworth, David Wilson, Lori Schultze, Linda Mitchell, Rosemary Shannon, Betty Corbin, Terre Balof, Becky Piatt and Theresa O'Dell.

Huge thanks to our always exceptional staff – Rev. Terre, Courtney and Maile – for helping in a myriad of ways great and small, offering moments of shared laughter at unexpected "finds", and coming up with creative solutions at needed moments.

Thanks to our UUCL President Betty Corbin who offered support, hard work, enthusiasm and a belief we all could really do this!





WE ALL DID IT!! Our Unitarian House now begins 2024 with cleaned, re-newed, re-organized and re-purposed spaces. It is OUUR UU Miracle!



#### The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same by Milda Vaivada

Over the six decades of my father Anthony Simon Vaivada's career in espionage and as research analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), he would state the phrase, "The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same" and repeated it almost every day of his life as he watched world affairs churn. If he were not interred at Arlington National Cemetery, these words would have been the epitaph on his tombstone along with "Never Trust the Russians!"

An expert specifically on Eastern European affairs, my father knew everything that was going on at any time anywhere on any continent. That was his directive and skill. Born in Philadelphia to Lithuanian immigrant parents, he was fluent in five languages: English, Lithuanian, German, Polish, and Russian. Because of his linguistic skills and journalism background, he was enlisted into Army Intelligence during WW II. Later during the Cold War, he was recruited to Washington DC to join the Office of Strategic Services, which became the nucleus of the CIA.

My Father's entire life revolved around foreign affairs and by transference throughout my entire childhood, mine did as well. Whether we were living stateside or overseas, his assignments were always a secret, especially to his family. Incognito was the word of the day, every day.

My memories are of piles of newspapers filling any horizontal surface in the living or dining room in whatever home we lived in. He read daily copies of the Wall Street Journal, Evening Star, Washington Post, New York Times, and Christian Science Monitor, to name a few. In addition, he read: Foreign Affairs magazine, The Atlantic Monthly, and New Yorker supplemented with countless foreign language periodicals. Not only did he pour over every word, but he carefully clipped out numerous articles of special interest with sharp scissors using surgical skill precisely cutting, stapling columns together, and marking the piece with the date and its source. Then like specimens they would go in various folders for safekeeping. At dinnertime my job was to carefully remove the newspapers he had spread open and dissected like bodies on an operating table to set the plates and glasses so we could eat.

As children my brother, sister, and I were disciplined to eat and chew in silence less we disturb the sound coming from the single television in the family room during the 6:00 o'clock CBS evening news as Walter Cronkite and Eric Sevareid moderated the highlights of the local and national day's events. Even while at home, "Tony" as his colleagues called him, was on the job listening for any information leaks making the airwaves. Always the straight poker face, he rarely commented but often released gasps of frustration or the word "damn" would escape his lips.

It was summer vacation, June 1967, having just finished my senior year at Langley High School in McLean, VA when during multiple dinners we watched the Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors unfold on the small black and white television set my Father placed on a folding TV stand using an extremely long extension cord, pulled up like a baby in a high chair to our dining table. The reporter and video crew were documenting in real time the horrors of war and the aftermath. The conflict was creating hundreds of thousands of refugees and brought more than one million Palestinians in the newly occupied territories won in battle under Israeli control.

Our eyes fixated as the network camera spanned endless rows of white pup tents that were now home to newly displaced Palestinians. In the hastily erected refugee camp dozens upon dozens of angry teenage youths, disoriented and restless, were milling about in groups, their eyes hard and flashing dark at the screen as the camera passed by. Their faces haunt me still. I remember my father sitting at the head of the table putting down his knife and fork. Pausing, he looked at the images on the screen and said, "There are your future terrorists."

"Dad," I asked stunned, "Why do you say that? They're just kids" Even though he was my father, our relationship was more all-knowing Professor and hopelessly naïve, ignorant, student. In his impatient patronizing tone as if it was all too obvious, he replied... "Well yes, just innocent teenagers who now have had their lives shattered. They have been bombed, seen friends and family killed, their community and homes destroyed, schools demolished, and any sense of normalcy or structure totally gone. Their childhood has been stolen from them. In the refugee camps there will be too much idle time with no hope for a future over which they have control- only a vacant life to be filled with frustration and rage. The abused become the abusers."

I have never forgotten the levity of his words that day. They were deeply imprinted in my psyche. Now, in October of 2023, they ring truer than ever. Truly... the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Where is the opportunity for disrupting the cycle of violence? It is the children who suffer most deeply and carry the scars of conflict into adulthood.

What is the path to breakthrough when there is so much hate, blame and revenge fueling the course of global conflict? Where can a constructive dialogue begin?

Perhaps there will be no future terrorists when every child can grow up happy, healthy, safe, and free from the trauma of war, terror, and fear. Perhaps the answer is as old as human history itself.

Rumi, the 13th century Persian poet, Islamic Scholar and Sufi mystic pointed us to a place of forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing when he wrote, "Beyond the rightness and wrongness of things there is a field. I will meet you there."

#### Dear friends,

Take a deep breath. We have entered a new year. The winter holidays, in whatever way you may honor or celebrate them, are behind us. Now we enter the season of quiet reflection that the dark of winter often brings. I am also really looking forward to some lifespan educational developmental opportunities this new year will bring us. If you have not already had the opportunity to do so, please take time to take the brief Adult RE survey that came to your email recently and let us know what opportunities you are most interested in for the months ahead.



I remain on break until January 3rd. I look forward to seeing our young ones back in classes starting January 7th.

Our children's Religious Education classes will be taking a look at **Liberating Love** this month. It has been such a delight exploring our Unitarian Universalist values and principles at all ages and stages over the past few months. Thank you for sharing your children with us. Their energetic and inquisitive selves are such fun to be around!

This month, our younger Religious Education classes will continue with the Soul Matters curriculum as we will learn from the theme of Liberating Love. We will continue to use stories, activities, movement, mindfulness, and crafts to help us fully embrace the curriculum.

If you have a child in preschool to 1st grades or 2nd to 4th grades, here is what you can expect: Soul Matters is a hands -on, exploratory curriculum. We use multiple learning modalities including books, music, movement, arts and crafts, sensory experiences, and shared experiences to learn the values in this curriculum. We will be studying and exploring:

- January 7 Love Pulls Us
- January 14 Love Pulls Us Upstream
- January 21 Love Pulls Us Back to the Table
- January 28 Love Pulls Towards Self-Acceptance

Our older kids (5th to 8th grades) will be continuing their look at gaming through a UU lens, as they work together at Building a Better World. In January, they will be exploring death and dying in real life and in their world, scarcity and abundance, and where we (collectively) are from and the origins of their world.

Finally, if you have a youth 9th grade+, let's chat about options for them. Additionally, our infant nursery is available at all times, except where noted above.

#### **Blessing of Liberating Love**

"As you receive love—friends checking in, family reaching out with a loving touch or a kind word, acquaintances and strangers acting out of an unexpected kindness—may you pass this love forward, being gifted, yourself, twice. As you witness acts of love taking place all around you, may their pervasiveness cheer you, and their impacts encourage you in difficult times. Never forget that love wins. When the time comes to sacrifice some of your own comfort, your own privilege, your own prestige, in order to create space for others, may you feel the courage and resolve to do so, knowing that the full expression of love in our world calls for such acts of brave giving. And may you greet the newness of the year open-hearted and committed, beginning as you mean to continue—in love." — The Soulful Home Team

We have great **Adult RE programming** this season as well! If you haven't found a spot for yourself yet, it's not too late. There are several great options for adults of all ages and stages! Soul Matters Small Groups meet once per month. It is not too late to join the in-person cohort or one of the online cohorts, so if you are interested, reach out to DLE Courtney Sinha for more information

Just like the changing seasons bring a sense of renewal, our Religious Education program aims to provide a nurturing and inclusive environment where you and your whole family can grow and flourish spiritually. If you ever have any questions or would like to get more involved, please don't hesitate to reach out.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Blessings, Courtney

#### **Director of Lifespan Engagement**

Contact Info:

courtney.sinha@gmail.com (434) 509-5821 text or call

Office Hours:

Sunday mornings you will find me around church, usually in the RE spaces.

I am off on Mondays and Saturdays.

Tuesdays: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm and 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Wednesdays and Thursdays: 10:30 am - 2:00 pm

Fridays: By appointment only.

#### **Adult Religious Education Offerings in January**

- Adult RE Committee meets January 16 at 7:00 pm. Please reach out to DLE Courtney Sinha if you are interested in learning more about this committee.
- Discussion Group meets on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am.
- Soul Matters Small Groups meet at various times, in-person and online. If you wish to join us, reach out to DLE Courtney Sinha.
- The Young Adults will meet on January 2 and January 16. Check with Rev. Terre to confirm meeting information before attending.
- Alliance usually meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays and for special events. Watch your email and announcements for January dates and events.
- MUUvies that Matter will meet on January 9 at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

#### Children and Youth Religious Education Offerings in January

- The Children and Youth RE Committee does not meet this month. We will see you in February! Please reach out to DLE Courtney Sinha if you are interested in learning more about this committee.
- We are so excited to be offering OWL for Kindergarten to 2nd grades! Parent orientation is January 14 and OWL sessions start on January 21. Contact DLE Courtney Sinha to enroll your children or get more information. Please see flier for more information on OWL.

#### **Multigenerational Offerings in January**

- Starting January 14, we will be offering Soup Sundays about once per quarter. Plan to stay for lunch after the service for a tasty meal and good community fellowship. The first Soup Sunday is hosted by the Board. Lunch is a suggested donation of \$5/person, family cap of \$15. If your committee or group is interested in hosting a future Soup Sunday, please speak with DLE Courtney Sinha.

#### What's Happening in Your Community Group?

- Watch your email for upcoming Community Group gatherings! We have some exciting changes planned for 2024.
- Drop me a line to let me know what's happening in your group so we can feature it here next month!

•
<b>7:00 pm</b> Parent Support Group

#### Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lynchburg 818 Court Street Lynchburg, VA 24504

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED



THIS MONTH: • SOUP SUNDAY, 1/14; p.1

• mUUvies That Matter; 1/9; p.3 • JART meeting, 1/16; p.4

#### **Church Staff**

Rev. Terre Balof.......Minister
Maile Shay-Mountain ......Administrative Assistant
Courtney Sinha ......Director of Lifespan Education

Ernest Berry ...... Sexton

#### **Church Officers**

#### **Trustees**

Audrey DeJarnette (2024)

Jim Barton (2025)

Miles Dolihite (2026)

#### **Nominating Committee**

Joan Lewis-Yoder (2023)

Makanah Morriss (2024)

#### **Committee on Ministry**

Briana Valone

#### **Endowment Committee**

Joan Lewis-Yoder (2023)

Office Phone: (434) 528-0744 Email: office@uulynchburg.org Website: www.uulynchburg.org

## Content Deadline for the February nUUsletter:

Saturday, January 20th

Submit Info at:

https://uulynchburg.breezechms.com/form/20746f

Jane Pianowski Fagiano, Editor

**Directions:** The Church and Sanctuary may be accessed from the top of Monument Terrace steps. Unitarian House is at 818 Court Street. If the steps are a problem, handicapped parking spaces can be reached by driveways on either side of the Unitarian House. Once on the lower level, enter the Addition, where there is an elevator to access the Sanctuary level.

**Notes:** For files, please submit as Word document. Submissions prepared on Apple computers should be submitted as text within the body of the Breeze message.

If you would like your name to be removed from the nUUsletter mailing list, please leave a message at (434) 528-0744 or email office@uulynchburg.org.