

September 2020

BUUC News

Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church
9 Upper River Street, P.O. Box 386, Brookfield, MA 01506
buuc01506@gmail.com, www.buuc.org, 508-867-5145



Dear Friends,

"I didn't sign up for this," she grumbled. "She" being an older friend of mine struggling to take care of her ailing husband who is, shall we say, not fully compliant with diabetes treatment plan. While the most literal-minded among us might be inclined to argue that in marrying this man "for better or for worse", she did in fact sign up for this, a more empathetic response would lead us to hear and have compassion for the frustration, fear, and anxiety she's experiencing as reflected in her choice of words.

Over the past several months as we've had to adjust to living under the threat of a pandemic and all the attendant consequences of various reactions and responses to it, I'm sure many of us have grumbled, if not the exact words, "I didn't sign up for this." at least something equally reflective of our frustration, fear, and anxiety. And while it can be comforting to know we're not alone in how we're feeling, it is also helpful to have some ways to deal with how we're feeling that is measured or responsive, and compassionate rather than reactionary. The noted spiritual writer and psychologist Thomas Moore offers seven things we might try.

The first is, "Don't participate fully in modern culture". Take some of the time you may currently have from living on autopilot to discover and nurture your individuality.

Second, "Get your news from a fresh, intelligent source." As with so many things quality is more important than quantity. I find good journalism generally encourages reflection rather than incites reaction from me.

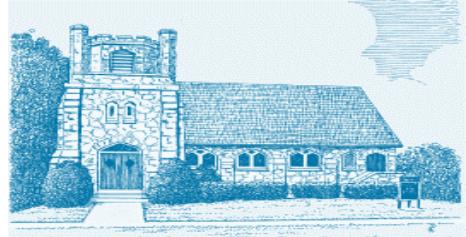
Third, "Intensify your relationship with the natural world." Get outside or spend some time looking out the window. Time in or observing nature provides a sense of stability and, Moore, notes, "Nature gives [us] a more expansive view of time", helping us to find some relief in the realization that whatever we are going through now will change.

Fourth, "Contemplate eternal things." Double down on your preferred spiritual practice or explore a new one. Gaze at the stars in the night sky or the horizon at sunrise or sunset. Anything that will help broaden your perspective.

Fifth, "Concentrate on your world". Give your attention to relationships and activities that bring you joy and help you relax. Kevin and I have been having a weekly happy hour via Zoom with friends in Chicago since March and my mother has taken up texting and sharing pictures of her garden to stay connected.

Sixth, "Make the arts part of your life." The arts are a unique entryway into the flow of time and can inspire, move, and inform us in ways many of the other things vying for our attention can't.

Seventh, "Make your own unique contribution, however small, to your times and your world." In times like these it is all too easy to feel a helpless victim of events beyond our control. Is there a cause you can support from home in some way? What strengths do you have that you could offer someone or some place you care about? I immediately think of people who have come



"The Little Stone Church That Rocks"

A Welcoming Congregation and a Green Sanctuary

We are a fellowship of seekers after truth, bound by no dogma, restricted by no creed.

Our Affirmation

HERE: We unite in an atmosphere of care and support to foster spiritual health and growth.

HERE: We focus on sharing our ideas and histories, with warmth, hope, loving friendship and an open mind.

HERE: We nurture stability for our daily lives and seek motivation to reach out to the larger community.

forward to get our Zoom services up and running and continually improving in the quality, depth and breadth of what we're able to offer during worship or took on children's religious exploration/education last spring or who started and staffed the lending library/book exchange and more.

Moore's list of ways we can respond to our current fears and anxiety may, on the surface, seem a little too gentle and soft, a little too quiet in a world trained to idolize big, splashy, noisy, triumphant actions, but I assure you what they lack in glitz and glamour, they more than make up for in resiliency and spiritual depth. And isn't that one of the reasons we gather as a religious community, to seek and sustain a resilient, spiritually meaningful alternative to the pervasive superficiality afoot in the world that so dominates our everyday lives?

I'll see you on Zoom, Sunday, Sept. 13th to start off the new church year. And don't forget to bring your paper "stone" from June or a new blank paper "stone" for Stone Communion.

Peace and love,
Rev. Craig



Food for Faith: Adult Religious Exploration

Freedom from Fear (Fall/Winter 2020)

Sometimes helpful, often uncomfortable, fear is a universal human experience and one a lot of us are struggling with in this time of relentless uncertainty. It is also a religious/spiritual concern that shapes our experience and ideas what it means to be human. Using the book Freedom from Fear: Finding the Courage to Act, Love and Be by the late UU Minister, Forrest Church, we will explore fear and ways we might engage it as people of faith to experience freedom in its midst.

Meeting Date/Time(s):

Aside from an initial Sunday meeting, participants will have two groups to choose from, a Wednesday daytime group and a Tuesday evening group. A minimum of three participants per group will be required for that group to run with a maximum of twelve people per group.

All Participants, Sunday 9/27- 12:30pm - 1:15pm

Program Overview and Outline

Tuesday Group 7:00pm - 8:30pm

10/6; 11/3; 12/8

Wednesday Group: 1:30pm-3:00pm

10/7; 11/4; 12/9

Materials Needed:

Book: Freedom from Fear: Finding the Courage to Act, Love, and Be by Forrest Church
(Available new and used from various online booksellers)

Internet Connection: We will be meeting via Zoom

(If you need technical assistance accessing or using Zoom, please contact Rev. Craig to be connected to a BUUC member or friend who can help)

Registration Required:

Email Rev. Craig at revcraignowak@comcast.net to register and indicate whether you will participate in the Tuesday evening group or the Wednesday afternoon group.

Children's RE (Religious Exploration)

Cara Wales has generously volunteered to continue to facilitate children's religious exploration (RE) while we work to fill the open Director of Children's Religious Exploration position. An email with information concerning RE registration and program time will be sent out this month.

September Services*

Sunday morning services are held at 10:30 am via Zoom.

Sept 13: "The Best Sermon Ever!" –Rev. Craig M. Nowak

Sept 20: "What the Inner Person Needs and Wants" –John Kennison

Sept 27: "UUnited" –Rev. Craig M. Nowak

*Services will continue on Zoom through at least the first half of the church year. In the meantime, Rev. Craig and the Executive Committee, in consultation with state law, denominational recommendations, and our mission, are working on a policy that will guide our return to the sanctuary for worship and the building for other gatherings.

Announcements

Virtual Stone Soup

Stone Soup luncheon and conversation will continue this church year but will meet via Zoom until we can safely resume in person gatherings at the church. *12:00 pm on the first Wednesday of the month starting in October.* To attend, email buuc01506@gmail.com to be placed on the invitation list.

Aging As A Spiritual Practice

For the foreseeable future, the Aging as a Spiritual Practice discussion group will continue remotely via Zoom. If you would like to participate and you do not currently receive our meeting notices, please email jmh2ndchapter@gmail.com or cruger.johnson@gmail.com.

Book Club

Second Tuesday of the month, 7pm. JOIN US for an all-inclusive (men and women of BUUC and beyond welcome), exhilarating (maybe a little strong but we're really excited) BUUC BOOK CLUB. We hope to create a group that will generate meaningful conversations about a variety of books, authors, and topics. During the Covid-19 shutdown, we will be meeting virtually via Zoom. If you would like to join us, contact Barb Hale at b.lambert.hale@gmail.com to be added to the invitation list.

Choir Practice

Choir Zoom meeting 7-8pm or 8:30pm each Thursday. Contact Music Director Lila M. Farrar at lilamfarr@gmail.com

Executive Committee

First Monday of the month at 6:30pm.

Quiet Gathering in the Spirit of the Quakers

First Wednesday of the month at 7pm via Zoom. For details, contact Cruger Johnson Phillips, cruger.johnson@gmail.com

Sanctuary LGBTQ Coffee House

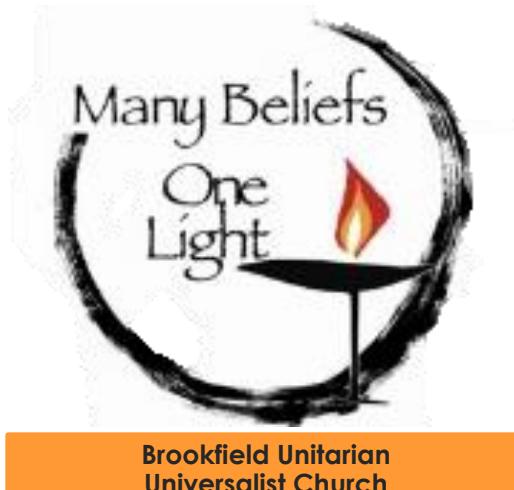
To be resumed when able.

Women's Alliance

To be resumed when able. Contact Laurie Magnuson (508-867-3763).

Community Supper

To be resumed when able.



Notes from the President



Dear Friends,

Right now, we find ourselves in an awfully bad situation. Covid-19 continues to rage throughout the United States. Fortunately for those of us here in Massachusetts, the numbers have been fairly steady for the last couple of months and better than much of the country. Still, the numbers are poor enough and this virus is so contagious that we will not be able to meet for services in our beautiful church building for the foreseeable future. We need to protect the BUUC's most important asset...all of you.

But I suppose it is important to look for a silver lining in every bad situation. This summer, a silver lining in this Covid-19 pandemic for me was that because I didn't have to get up, get dressed, gulp down my coffee and get in my car and drive to church at the ungodly hour of 9:30 on a Sunday morning, I did attend all the summer services by Zoom with my coffee cup and my dog by my side. That got my weeks off to good starts, hearing inspirational words and seeing friendly faces. And I am incredibly grateful for that.

As we start the new church year, we will continue to hold our services on Sunday via Zoom, but we will be going back to the original time frame of 10:30 a.m. If you are on the BUUC email list, you will receive an invitation to the service. If you are not on the BUUC email list, please contact our Office Assistant Nina at buuc01506@gmail.com and ask her to put you on the list.

So until we meet again in the Little Stone Church that Rocks, please wear your masks and maintain safe distances. We want to see you all in person and healthy one of these days.

Live long and prosper,
Barb

BUUC Book Group News

The BUUC Book Discussion Group met on August 11th to discuss the book How To Be Less Stupid About Race by Chrystal M. Fleming. At that meeting, we all agreed that we need to continue to learn about and discuss the issues of white supremacy and racial discrimination. We have decided to make these issues our focus for the coming church year.

Our September book had already been chosen prior to the last meeting. It is Washington Black: A Novel by Esi Edugyan. It is the story of a young slave on a sugar plantation on Barbados who is chosen to be the assistant of his master's brother, Christopher Wilde, who turns out to be a naturalist, explorer, inventor, and abolitionist. The book is the story of their adventures together.

Going forward, we need to put together our list for the coming year, which we will do after we have finished our discussion of Washington Black on Tuesday, September 8 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. It would be wonderful to have as many people as possible at this discussion so that we can put together a comprehensive and meaningful list of books for the coming year. We alternate fiction and non-fiction so keep this in mind if you have any suggestions. If you can't make our meeting, but know of a book that you think would be good to include on our list, please contact me at b.lambert.hale@gmail.com.

You are all welcome to join in on our discussions. Because of Covid-19, we will be meeting on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. via Zoom until it is safe for us to come together again in person.

Music Notes: "Inside Out and Backwards"



Have you ever accidentally put on your clothes inside out or backwards? That is what preparing music for worship feels like these days.

When the pandemic hit and it became clear that singing in a choir is one of the most dangerous things you can do, choir practice came to an abrupt halt at the same time that in-the-building meeting for worship did. Suddenly no choir practice for three months. But with the motivation of wanting to provide choir offerings for the last service in June and for Laurel Burdon's Zoom memorial service, we began "meeting" on Zoom and have continued to do so at our regular Thursday 7:00 time. We all look forward to the day we can again meet in person, but since that won't be able to happen for a long time, here is what we do: On Zoom, everyone is muted and thus singing alone as I play the piano. For choir members who sing in choir for the group singing experience, it doesn't even come close, but it does give us some good dedicated practice time.

For the virtual choir performances, a recording of the piano or organ is sent to choir members, who record their own voice while listening to the recording. They then send their recording to Jared who, through the generous gift of his expertise and skill, lines them up and combines them and (magically, it seems to many of us) we have the sound of the choir. On the plus side, folks living far away, or otherwise unable to participate in actual choir, have been able to do so.

All of this has required rethinking how to do almost everything. One thing that is true for most of us is that we simply aren't singing as much as we did when attending regular church. Some of us who live alone may not be talking much either. Just as is true of other muscles, the voice needs to be used. This is especially true as we age. So the advice here is to use your voice. Call friends and relatives; don't just send texts. And SING! Sing to yourself. Sing to your dog, or cat, or iguana, or house plants. But if you don't think to sing when you are alone, then here is one thing we can offer to you (everyone): Join us on Thursday at 7 for Zoom choir practice. You are welcome. (Just let me know.) No one will hear you. You won't hear anyone else, either, but you can join in the jovial assurances about having just sung perfectly. And you will have a chance to see and talk to others a bit ---we do take time for that---connecting with the good people who are working now to provide hymns when the not-so-regular regular church year starts Sept 13.

And when that happens, do sing along. Hymns are not for listening. Hymns are an important embodiment of being connected, being one with your fellow congregants. It is one of the few times when we actually do something united. Please sing. Even if it is virtual, in that you are just mouthing the words. Since we all are muted during Zoom, it will appear as though everyone is singing and that will be a wonderful thing.

We look forward to the day we can experience singing together--- when we don't have to do things backwards. In the meantime, let's do the best we can.

Lila M Farrar, Music Director

lilamfarrar@gmail.com

508 864 5978

We Rise: Social Justice Resources Page

For those who feel called by our faith to take the side of human worth and dignity through social action. Go to www.buuc.org and click the tab "We Rise: Social Justice Resources" on the menu at the left side of the page.

Interested In Membership At BUUC?

Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal faith making membership in our community both simple and challenging. It is simple in that to become a member all that is generally required is signing the membership book. It is challenging because that is not all that is asked of our members. In addition to honoring our congregational covenant, as a member you would be asked to :

- Worship in community regularly
- Work faithfully on your own spiritual development
- Be involved in a ministry of service to others
- Share your financial resources as stewards of the present and future of this religious community
- Continue to learn and connect to the wider movement of Unitarian Universalism
- Assume responsibility for offering the genuine hospitality of this community to all who come here

Visitors and friends curious to know more or who are considering becoming a member of BUUC are invited to contact Rev. Craig at revcraignowak@comcast.net



Being a Green Sanctuary

includes recycling. This is something that we all share. There is no one who comes around to clean up after us; that is to say there is no "they" only "we". If we don't want to take the Order of Service home with us, we can put it in the blue recycling container at the back of the sanctuary. There is a larger blue tub for recycling paper downstairs. Any paper that had food in or on it must go in the trash. Thanks for keeping BUUC green!

Rev Craig's Contact Info

Office Hours: While Rev. Craig is not currently keeping regular office hours at the church due to the pandemic, he is available via Zoom, Facetime (for iPhone users), and telephone. If you have a pastoral concern or just want to "stop by" to talk, please email him at revcraignowak@comcast.net or call 860-916-9261 to schedule an appointment.

Our Covenant

As we share our lives in this place of blessed community, we promise to unite in an atmosphere of care and support, provide a spiritual home for ourselves and our children, and work together in our search for truth and caring ways to be in community with each other, both within and beyond these walls.

We seek to embody a welcoming community of

CARING, SUPPORT, AND SERVICE

We therefore promise to

- * Treat each other with respect, trust, and compassion;
- * Actively listen to all points of view on important issues;
- * Create an open environment for nonjudgmental participation;
- * Honor dissenting views, agreeing to disagree;
- * Make decisions with as much participation as possible;
- * Accept that we will make mistakes, forgive each other, and move on;
- * Express gratitude for the efforts of others;
- * Work together to live by our Covenant; and
- * Try to the best of our ability to live by our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes, affirming our tradition of service and justice for all.

Adopted by the members of BUUC

May 20, 2012

Who's Who at BUUC

Staff

Minister

Rev. Craig M. Nowak

Music Director

Lila M. Farrar

Office Assistant

Nina Ellison

Executive Committee

Ex-Officio member

Rev. Craig M. Nowak

President

Barbara Hale

Treasurer

Doug Smith

Clerk

Gary Blanchard

Members-at-Large

Laurie Magnuson, Helena Paez, Sarah Swift, Christine Keough-Huff

Collector

Dave Yutzler

Committees and Groups

Committee on Ministry

Mary Frisella, Roxann Smith, Donna Sullivan

Capital Campaign Committee

Amy Frisella, Kim Burdon, Tim Boon

Flower Committee

Lila Farrar, Chair

Membership Committee

Debbie Ennis, Chair

Nominating Committee

Amy Frisella, Laurie Magnuson, Laurel Hemmer

Trustees

Tim Boon, Roxann Smith, Kirk Upton

Women's Alliance

Laurie Magnuson, President

Worship Committee

Roxann Smith, Chair



Community Resources

At the heart of Unitarian Universalism is a deep recognition and respect for the interconnectedness of life. As a faith community, Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church seeks to foster spiritual health and growth, but we also recognize that it is equally important to encourage and empower one another to lives of physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being. To that end, we have launched our Community Resources page. To access the page visit www.buuc.org and click on the "Community Resources" tab on the side menu.

**BROOKFIELD
UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**

P. O. Box 386
9 Upper River Street
Brookfield, MA 01506

Phone: 508-867-5145
Email: buuc01506@gmail.com

We're on the web
www.buuc.org

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter
@BrookfieldUU

