



"The Little Stone Church That Rocks"

BUUC News

Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church
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Dear Friends,

A month. 31 days. That's it. That's all that is left of 2020. What say you? Hallelujah? Good Riddance? So long? Don't let the door hit you in the behind on the way out, perhaps? To be sure 2020 has been quite a year to say the least. An ongoing global pandemic, Trump's impeachment, stock market crash,

record unemployment, Black Lives Matter protests, wildfires, the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, President elect-Biden, a defeated president who, as of this writing, still refuses to concede, and oh yeah, murder hornets.

Then there's all the less widely known, more personal, and thus often more impactful events from our own lives that have occurred over the course of the last year. Births, deaths, illness, a lost job, a new career, new school, home, etc. Changes to our routines, some for the better, others for the worse. Events whose emotional, physical, and spiritual toll may feel intensified against the backdrop of an especially harrowing year globally, but which occur throughout our lives even in seemingly calmer years.

It is times like these that advice columnists, life hackers, and even friends, family, or a casual acquaintance feel compelled to offer us advice on how to cope with everything. Advice that is often some version of choosing to see our glass half empty or half full. And while such advice may appeal to our wish for, or belief in, independence and control, it hides in plain sight a spiritual reality more deserving of our attention and effort, the glass itself.

"For all that is our life", begins hymn 128*, "we sing our thanks and praise." That's thanks and praise for all that is our life, not only the good or enjoyable things. Indeed, the hymn acknowledges, as our own lives witness, the joy and suffering common to every life...giving and receiving, learning, work and reward, rest and love, sorrow, fear, failure, pain, and loss. Content that simultaneously fills and forms the vessel in which it is held and is, so the hymn goes, "A gift which we are called to use to build the common good and make our own days glad."

The charge here then is not to determine whether our glass is half full or half empty, but to be grateful there is a glass. Something, admittedly, more easily preached than practiced. Still, although we may be glad to soon have 2020 behind us, before we say goodbye or good riddance, we might pause to consider the innumerable ways in which life's sorrows, losses, failures, and fears are met and mingled with joy, sharing, success, and courage at home, within our church community, and beyond. And in doing so we may just find ourselves able to ring in a new year singing our thanks and praise for all that is our life.

Peace, love and blessings,
Rev. Craig

*128 "For All That Is Our Life" in Singing The Living Tradition, UUA, 1993

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.



Notes from the President



Dear Friends,

Even though I have planned and executed a few Sunday services myself, I know that I tend to take our Sunday services for granted. I rarely think about how much work goes into planning and executing the service each week.

These days, of course, with the services being on Zoom, they almost seem like magic. You click a link and there you are.

But I know for a fact that even though all I have to do is open an email and make one or two clicks to sit back and enjoy being “in church,” the people who are behind the scenes making the whole thing happen are doing a heck of a lot of work – more than they would be doing if the pandemic hadn’t hit us and changed our lives in so many ways.

So I want to take the opportunity to thank the people behind our Zoom services. That includes our Worship Committee: Roxann Smith, Fritzi Foster, John Kennison, Jo Ann Pierce, and David Yutzler. They are doing outstanding work keeping our remote services as close to “in-person” as possible.

I also want to thank Lila Farrar, our Music Director, and the choir who have worked so hard to make sure that we don’t have to miss the music we have come to appreciate and enjoy every week during normal times. And special thank you to Jared Adams, who mixes all that wonderful music together.

A year ago none of us could have anticipated that we would be attending our Sunday services in the comfort of our homes with our pets and our coffee by our sides, but it was made necessary by a global pandemic. And while it may seem like it, there is no magic involved in the continuation of our services week to week. There is a lot of hard work being done by a few people putting in a lot of effort. Thank you all so very much.

Live Long & Prosper,
Barbara Hale, President

Music Notes



Our December theme of “Sharing” was determined a year and a half ago, when it would have been impossible to imagine the ways in which sharing would be taking place now. Specifically thinking about music, even as music making has been sharply curtailed, folks have learned new ways of sharing and we have been the recipients of much generosity. Who could have guessed that by this time we would have enjoyed the choir and instrumentalists of the UU congregations in Grafton-Upton MA, and Brooklyn NY, the piano playing of John Kramer of the Winchester Unitarian Society, original songs by Amanda Udis-Kessler in Colorado Springs CO and Emily McKinney in Springfield MO, videos from members of First Unitarian in Nashville, Tennessee, and more.

And from our own congregation, so many people have stepped up to continue sharing music in new ways: Robyn Vincent, Lucy Colwell, Jefferson Upton and Laurel Hemmer, Rick Condee, Rob Adams, Linda Friedmann, Roxann Smith, Emily Foster, The Castors, Kim Burdon, Dave Yutzler, and the already generous and prolific Gary Blanchard who, besides offering his entire repertoire, has continued writing and recording new songs to match themes of our services.

The biggest sharing is from the choir, most of whom have had to cope with being out of their comfort zones, as well as, even in rehearsals, stuck with hearing only their own voices. We have been pleased to have a number of folks join us from time to time, but Mary Feathers, a member of the Storrs congregation, has become a regular, with Cara Wales, Nubia Peña, Emily Foster, Jo Ann Pierce, Donna Sullivan, Sarah Swift, Dave Yutzler, Jamie Bishop, Kim Burdon, and Bob Swift, who meet on Zoom each week to practice hymns, which are then recorded. Jared and Jessica Adams as well as Cara and Dave are the ones who record the initial tracks, which everyone else listens to when recording their own voices. But Jared's magic, and that is what it really seems like, in putting all these recordings together, is what gives you the sound of the choir. Jared's sharing of his time and talent is what makes the choir, as well as solo and quartet sharing with BUUC and the Storrs congregation, possible.

So in this season of sharing, let us be grateful for all the creativity and effort that make it possible.

Lila M Farrar
Music Director

Children's Religious Education Notes: Cara Wales

The last several months have seen significant change in the Children's Religious Education program. First, we lost the presence and leadership of Laurel Burdon, our longtime DRE. Around the same time, COVID 19 was upon us, providing more challenges and opportunities for Religious Exploration.

After a month to adjust to our new normal, we began to offer RE online and have embraced change and growth as we continue to have fun and explore within our new space.

Our theme for September was "Unite." We practiced making music together with homemade instruments, and sang "This Little Light of Mine." We talked about the different things we cared about and believed in, and how we accept and respect each other despite and because of our differences.

In October, the theme was "Support." We discussed the Golden Rule, and gave each other affirmations. We created a self-care bingo sheet with the goal to complete three activities over the course of a week, and we played a self-esteem game. We talked about how we calm ourselves down when we need it, and surveyed our interests as a way to brainstorm how we can support ourselves better during challenging times. There were lots of great conversations about supporting ourselves so that we may be strong enough to support others.

"Growth" was the theme for November, which we explored through the lens of New Year celebrations from Pagan, Chinese, Islamic, and Jewish cultures. We played games, wrote fortunes for each other, practiced each movement for an Islamic prayer and discussed their meaning, and heard stories. Our children and youth shared with the congregation about those they have lost and are missing during the Thanksgiving season – a recurring theme in many New Year's observations around the world. It has truly been a celebratory month as we looked back so that we may grow forward.

This December, we will focus on "Sharing." Without a doubt, the stories and conversations shared within the RE space, no matter where that space resides, are sacred, and act as a light for all of us as we turn toward the darkest time of the year. May your days also be lit with shared stories and conversations in the weeks to come.

With Joy,
Cara Wales

December Services*

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

Dec 6: "The 'G' Word (It's Probably Not What You Think)" – Rev. Craig M. Nowak; Music—Rick Condee flute and choir

Dec 13: "Living on the Edge" –MaryAnn Adams; Music—The Trio MUSE: Meg Pash, Anita Anderson Cooper, and Rob Adams

Dec 20: "What's In A Name?" –Rev. Craig M. Nowak; Music—Choir and Melissa Monforti

Dec 24: Joint Intergenerational Christmas Eve Service with the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Storrs at 4pm on Zoom; Music—Choir, solos by Mary Feathers, Nubia Peña, quartet of Cara Wales, Jessica Adams, Dave Yutzler, and Jared Adams, with hammered dulcimer by Linda Friedman

Dec 27: "So Long, Farewell, auf Wiedersehen, Goodbye" – Rev. Craig M. Nowak; Music—First Unitarian Brooklyn Choir and Jefferson Upton flute

*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.

Remembrance Wreath

With so much emphasis on the joy of the season, the holidays can be an especially difficult time of year for people who are grieving or simply reminded of a loved one or dear friend who is not able to be, or is no longer, with us. For several years now we have placed a remembrance wreath in the sanctuary in December to honor and create refuge for those whom this season brings difficult or mixed feelings and memories. Since we cannot currently hold services in the sanctuary, a time for quiet remembering will be included during Joys and Concerns each week during the month of December.

Generosity Abounds!

Thank you to Cara Wales who has worked tirelessly this fall during the pandemic to keep children's religious exploration at BUUC going strong.



Brookfield Unitarian
Universalist Church

Announcements

Zoom Stone Soup

December 2nd, 12pm. With our traditional Stone Soup off the table, so to speak, for a while, consider dropping in for Zoom Stone Soup. Gather your lunch, log on and spend some time catching up with friends. We'd love to see you. The Zoom link to attend will be emailed December 2nd.

Food For Faith

Freedom From Fear

Tuesday Group: December 8th, 7pm on Zoom
Wednesday Group: December 9th, 1:30pm on Zoom

Aging As A Spiritual Practice

The Aging and Spirituality discussion group will meet via Zoom on Sunday, December 20th at 12:30pm. If you are not already receiving meeting invitations and would like to be included, please email Joanne Hamerly at jmh2ndchapter@gmail.com or Cruger Johnson Phillips at cruger.johnson@gmail.com.

Book Club

The BUUC Book Discussion Group will be meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, December 8th at 7pm to discuss Rising out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist by Eli Saslow. Please feel free to attend. In January, we will be discussing Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko. A complete list of the books we will be discussing this year are online on our website: buuc.org/events. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Hale at b.lambert.hale@gmail.com.

BUUC Library and Food Pantry Drop Off

Always 10:30am-12pm, December 9, December 21, January 13, January 25

Choir Practice

Choir Zoom meeting 7-8pm or 8:30pm each Thursday. No choir practice on December 24th. December 31st is a possibility. Check with Lila M. Farrar at lilamfarrar@gmail.com or 508-864-5978.

Executive Committee

First Monday of the month at 6:30pm.

Women's Alliance

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

Quiet Gathering in the Spirit of the Quakers

To be resumed when able. Contact Cruger Johnson Phillips, cruger.johnson@gmail.com.

Sanctuary LGBTQ Coffee House

To be resumed when able.

Community Supper

To be resumed when able.

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

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, Joanne Hamerly, Donna Boyea

Trustees

Tim Boon, Roxann Smith, Kirk Upton

Women's Alliance

Laurie Magnuson, President

Worship Committee

Roxann Smith, John Kennison, Fritzi Foster, Jo Ann Pierce, David Yutzler



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**

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We're on the web

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