

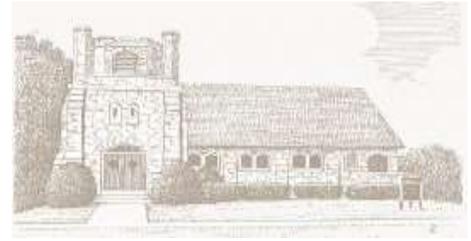


December 2022



BUUC Newsletter

Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church
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"The Little Stone Church That Rocks"



Dear Friends,

By now all but the most tenacious of leaves are gone from the trees that habitually release them from their branches each autumn. And with the departure of the leaves, one of my favorite sounds, that of wind rustling through leafy boughs, falls silent once again for a while. Save for human song written for the holidays, the sounds of the coming winter season, like its smell, taste, touch, and sight, are markedly different from that of the other seasons. Indeed, there is a certain desolation to winter that we humans seem to dread and consequently quickly act to counter with infinite varieties of distraction.

Perhaps we act too quickly.

What if winter's transformation of the outer world from technicolor to black and white is meant to redirect our attention to our inner world, reveal our complexity, and reacquaint us with the fullness of our humanity. What if winter in the outer world is our inner growing season? Offering opportunity for what must grow to emerge and what must fall away to be released.

I found myself churning this idea around in my mind during my recent visit to Iceland, a country whose people are alleged to be among the happiest on the planet. Indeed this curious bit of trivia was front of mind as I traveled outside the city of Reykjavik on a road meandering through a hauntingly desolate landscape with vast stretches of seeming lifelessness. Articles I had read largely seemed to attribute Icelanders' happiness to modern standards of well-being: high income, universal healthcare, political freedom, and social equity. And while these are surely factors in Icelanders' happiness, I couldn't help but wonder, might the desolate landscape be another? For in such an environment the external world seems more



*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

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

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

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

existentially challenging than entertaining and insists rather than suggests one ponder and get comfortable with one's paradoxically awesome and puny humanness.

Winter is on its way. The outer world is clearing a path to our inner world. How will you make the most of the season?

Peace and blessings,

Rev. Craig



Notes from the President



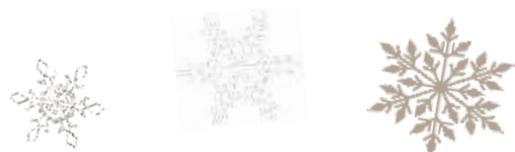
It was 6:25 pm. I was supposed to be hosting the 6:30 pm October Executive Committee Meeting. Thanks to a two hour tutorial from a very patient church member, I had managed to send out Zoom invitations to everyone. I joined the meeting on my brand new laptop. To my dismay, no one could hear me despite my not being muted. The problem was solved when I kept my laptop open and I then logged in on my old iPad. But it took twenty minutes to get to that solution. Those twenty minutes felt like twenty hours. I was embarrassed, overwhelmed, and on the verge of tears. During those twenty minutes, people very patiently helped me figure out what to do. At one point I glanced at everyone, expecting at least some looks of frustration and annoyance. To my surprise, I saw each and every person patiently waiting for me to begin the meeting. When I was finally able to be heard, I apologized profusely for the delay. The only responses I received were those of acceptance, compassion, and unwavering support.

Our third principle begins with, "Acceptance of one another..." My interaction with Exec was a prime example of this. Knowing that I was accepted as I was, imperfections and all, was an act of loving kindness. Our second principle is, in part, "...compassion in human relations." Many Exec members shared their own stories of being in tech trouble at some point. This left me knowing that I wasn't the only one who struggled with this. It warmed my heart. And when everyone chipped in in trying to help me solve my tech problems, they were keeping the first principle in mind; it is, "The inherent worth and dignity of every person." Instead of ending my twenty minutes of tech trouble in tears, I felt incredibly grateful to be able to call each person on Exec my friend.

As I ponder and pray for an even more inspiring and supportive church for all of us, I hope 2023 brings each of you a stronger sense of belonging to BUUC. We need you. You are the church.

Robyn Vincent,

President



Music Notes



All through 2022 I have been writing about Christoph Graupner and his *Monatliche Clavier Früchte* (Monthly Keyboard Fruits) for 1722. This is a collection of 12 keyboard Suites or sets of pieces (appropriate to play on any keyboard instrument; harpsichord, clavichord, organ, or piano). I have been playing from this collection ever since I discovered it several years ago but I made a special effort to add information about the collection and the composer. Why? It comes down to the first UU Principle: To honor and respect the dignity and worth of everyone.

For a serious period of time there was actually a concerted effort to only promote the very best of the best. As much as I love Bach, Handel, Mozart and Beethoven, I am reminded of a fad diet I tried in my younger days. It was that you could eat all you want of tuna fish, grapefruit, and bananas but only those three foods for a certain number of days. I loved all three and so happily embarked on this diet. Well, it worked, because after a few days I really got tired of all three and was hardly eating anything at all by the end of the allotted time. It was actually quite a while before I could stand any of those foods. As much as we might joke that we could live happily on our favorite food, it really isn't true. We need a variety of foods in order for the favorite to be special. (This metaphor breaks down for me at Bach. I could probably live the rest of my life listening to his music and nothing else, but that is a different story for another day.)

During the "let's only listen to the best of the best" period, there were many composers who were more than ignored, especially minority groups including women. In recent years, as previously ignored or unknown composers have been discovered or rediscovered, a wealth of new to us music has become available. There are scholars and performance groups that have specialized in this music. One such group is The Musicians of the Old Post Road. They have a concert April 29 at the Worcester Historical Museum that will feature music of Graupner and some of his Darmstadt colleagues as well as the more familiar and well-loved Telemann. I have it on my calendar! Let me know if you want to attend with me.

I hope that you have enjoyed hearing music of Graupner here at BUUC, and may remember some of the interesting details of his life. If you remember anything or want me to remind you of anything, approach me after church. Even if it is just to share that you do recognize the name Christoph Graupner. (*A tiny treat for anyone who has read this far and does approach me with a question or a comment.*) For anyone who missed any of the newsletter articles or wants to be reminded, please help yourself to an information sheet about Graupner that you will find on the parlor organ during December.

Happy Musical Holidays and New Year. May they be filled with favorite music and new-to-you music, as well.

Lila M Farrar

Music Director



Notes from the Director of Religious Exploration



It was October, and the final Sunday of the month was approaching. We spent the month exploring Judaism and the UUA's proposed 8th Principle in RE. Somehow, I needed to wrap those discussions up and tie them in with the BUUC's observance of All Soul's Day. Finally, it came to me: we would consider the Jewish death and mourning rituals. To kick off our discussion, I found a great picture book, *Sitting Shiva*, by Erin Silver and Michelle Theodore. Next, we would discover the symbolism of placing stones for the dead instead of flowers, and we would name our dead as we set out stones for them. Afterward, we would play our annual Halloween games (adorned with our costumes, of course).

The day came, and I was so excited to work with Laurie, RE's volunteer for the day, for this exploration. It was a small group due to various conflicts, but no matter. Laurie read the story after we shared joys and concerns in our lives, and then things fell apart. Instead of proceeding as planned, the group chatted. We ultimately placed our stones but never got to the games, nor did we experience the hoped-for depth of conversation about mourning practices.

As we prepared to close the session, I commented that we didn't have time to finish because it was time to go upstairs. One of our youth spoke with great astuteness as they said, "That's okay. Sometimes, we just need to talk."

This comment warmed my heart as I realized the day's exploration was perfect as it was. While I carefully plan each Sunday to allow for opportunities for exploration and growth, simply being together and talking also provides opportunities for magical growth.

Once again, I found myself in awe and grateful for the wisdom of our Explorers. I look forward to offering events for our youth to get together in the new year. I'm sure the conversation will sparkle.

Cara Wales,

Director of Religious Exploration



Committee for Ecology and Social Action (CESA)

CESA was very busy coordinating a letter writing campaign through Vote Forward in the run up to the November 8th midterm election. Twelve people participated and 525 letters were sent. The election in Georgia has resulted in a run-off election between Raphael Warnock and Herschel Walker which will take place in early December. We sent letters through Vote Forward to encourage Georgians to vote in the run-off election.

In mid-October we encouraged the church community to write letters of support to ICE regarding a migrant worker in Vermont who is being threatened with deportation.

Our monthly meetings are the *third Wednesday of the month at 7:00pm via ZOOM*. We are going to be looking for ideas for future projects. If you have any questions please contact Penny Blum at quabbinquilter@gmail.com.



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. To honor and create refuge for those whom this season brings difficult or mixed feelings and memories, a remembrance wreath will be placed in the sanctuary beginning December 4th, along with white ribbons that can be tied onto the wreath in remembrance of a loss you're grieving or someone you're missing this season.

For those who are unable or uncomfortable attending church in person at this time but would like a ribbon tied on the wreath, please contact Rev. Craig at revcraignowak@comcast.net to have a ribbon tied on the wreath for you.

Generosity Abounds!

A special thank you to the Chesson Family Fund of Greater Worcester Community Foundation for their recent gift in support of BUUC's mission.

Nursery Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to work in the nursery. You will go downstairs after Joys and Concerns.

If you are interested, please see Robyn Vincent or email robynbuuc@yahoo.com.

Volunteers Needed for Hybrid Worship

Our ability to hold hybrid services (in-person and streaming) depends on having volunteers able to start and monitor the laptop at church during worship.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact Robyn Vincent at robynbuuc@yahoo.com.

Legacy Giving

Over the years members and friends have included BUUC in their wills or estate plans to help ensure our faith and this church will be here for future generations. You can, too. Gifts to BUUC's Trust help secure a place for liberal religious values in an increasingly illiberal world.

Contact Rev. Craig at revcraignowak@comcast.net for more information.

Supplies Corner

Each month this will be the place where you can see what supplies our church needs.

Donations may be placed in the first recycling bin in the kitchen.

- ❖ snow melt — 6 large containers
- ❖ sand
- ❖ paper towels — 2 rolls

Thank you for your continued generosity.

December Services*

Sunday morning services are held at 10:30 am.

December 4: "Make Light of It"

Worship Leader: Rev. Craig M. Nowak
Music: BUUC Choir

December 11: "The Seventh Principle"

Worship Leader: Sarah Swift
Music: Hammered Dulcimer Trio;
Linda Friedmann, Roxann Smith, and Kathy Spirtes

December 18: Intergenerational Winter Service

Worship Leaders: Rev. Craig M. Nowak,
Cara Wales, BUUC Children and Youth
Music: BUUC Choir

December 24, 4:00pm:

Intergenerational Christmas Eve Service
Music: BUUC Choir

December 25: "Calling All Risk Takers, Cautious Skeptics, Doubters, and Dreamers"

This will be a **Zoom service only**. It will be fairly brief and follow the format of our summer services.

Worship Leader: Jo Ann Pierce

*A Note About Worship

We are continuing to hold hybrid services for at least part of the church year, provided we have tech volunteers to run the ZOOM meeting.

Rev. Craig's Office Hours Through December 2022

Sundays at the church when he's in the pulpit, immediately following the service until 12:30pm; via Zoom, Facetime (for iPhone users) and telephone.

Email him at revcraignowak@comcast.net, or call 860-916-9261 to schedule a time.

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.

Announcements

Food for Faith: Adult Religious Exploration "Creation as a Spiritual Practice"

Afternoon Group: Monday, 12/5 at 1:30pm
Evening Group: Tuesday, 12/6 at 6:30pm

Virtual Stone Soup (Through December 2022)

With our traditional Stone Soup still off the table a little while longer, consider dropping in for Zoom Stone Soup, Wednesday, December 7th at 12pm. 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 7th.

Book Club

The BUUC Book Discussion Group will be meeting via ZOOM on Tuesday, December 13th at 7:00pm to discuss *On Animals* by Susan Orlean. Please feel free to attend. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Hale at b.lambert.hale@gmail.com.

CESA

The Committee for Ecology and Social Action is taking a break for the December holidays and will resume in January. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Penny Blum at quabbinquilter@gmail.com

Journaling Group

The BUUC Journaling group is open to anyone interested in keeping a journal. We gather monthly on Zoom to journal quietly with some suggested prompts. While we usually chat a little, we do not discuss our writings. Please feel free to join us! Our next meeting is Monday, December 26th at 7:00pm. If you have any questions, email Cara Wales at c.l.c.wales@gmail.com.

Women's Alliance

There will be a holiday lunch get together on Sunday, December 11th at 1:00pm at Charlie's in Spencer (next to the Big Y). Contact Laurie Magnuson (508-867-3763).

Choir Practice

7:00-8:30pm each Thursday.
Contact Music Director Lila M. Farrar at lilamfarrar@gmail.com or 508-864-5978.

Executive Committee

First Monday of the month at 6:30pm.

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

Director of Religious Exploration

Cara Wales

Music Director

Lila M. Farrar

Office Assistant

Emily Foster

Executive Committee

Ex-Officio member

Rev. Craig M. Nowak

President

Robyn Vincent

Treasurer

Colleen Groner

Clerk

Gary Blanchard

Members-at-Large

Christine Keough-Huff, Fritz Foster,

Amy Frisella, Laurie Magnuson

Collector

Dave Yutzler

Committees and Groups

Committee on Ministry

Mary Frisella, Roxann Smith,

Donna Sullivan

Flower Committee

Lila Farrar (chair), Judy Trifone,

Donna Sullivan

Membership Committee

Debbie Ennis, Joanne Hamerly,

Donna Boyea, Penny Blum, Christine

Holbrook, Alix McNitt, Robyn Vincent

Nominating Committee

Joanne Hamerly, Donna Boyea,

Karen Keough-Huff

Trustees

Doug Smith, Roxann Smith,

Kirk Upton

Women's Alliance

Laurie Magnuson, President

Worship Committee

Jo Ann Pierce, Roxann Smith, John

Kennison, David Yutzler, Barb Hale

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 <http://www.buuc.org/community-resources.html>.



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