

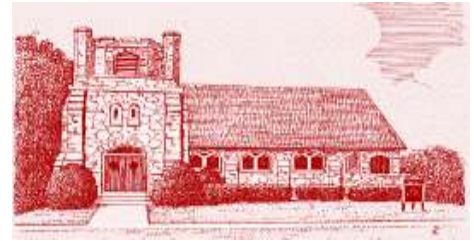


December 2023



BUUC Newsletter

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



The Silence of the Season

In Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, early into hatching his plan, the Grinch laments about all the noise that would result from the Whos' holiday festivities. He says, "There is one thing I hate! All the noise, noise, noise!" I cannot relate to the Grinch's point

of view much, but it is in this one regard that he and I see eye to eye. The noise surrounding this time of year can often be overwhelming.

It is lovely to see friends and family, many from far-flung regions of the country and perhaps even the world, but I could do without the noise. While many of us may be doing more of our shopping online, there are still last minute runs to the grocery store, holiday parties, and other holiday obligations that can leave many of us wishing we could lie down in a dark and quiet room.

I recently visited the Cape Ann Museum in Gloucester and it was a lovely museum, but one of the things I valued the most about my visit was the opportunity to sit quietly in a room all by myself. I visited on a Tuesday so there were few people there, and as a result, it felt almost indulgent to be walking around a museum virtually alone. I promised myself that during this season where I can often be overwhelmed, to find more opportunities like this, to find silence and time alone — even if those moments are fleeting.



As the days get shorter and colder, this can often be a difficult season for people, but I think there can be beauty in this season as well. People often think of January in particular as disappointing, dark, and cold, a come down from the many holidays peppering the months before, but it can also be a time of quiet reflection and a chance to find meaning in the stillness and quiet. I am reminded by a line in the poem *Winter's Cloak* by Joyce Rupp which states, "This year I do not want the dark to leave me. I need its wrap of silent stillness..." I am trying to make this be a guiding principle for me this year. Because I have often found it is in the darkness and the quiet that I am most likely to find my true self, the one who is waiting for me to give it time when I

*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.

am done with all the festivities and merrymaking, when the crowds have gone home and I am alone with my thoughts. I relish those times.

My hope for you during these next few months is that you can find some time for silence and stillness. That you can find comfort in the darkness outside your windows and its challenge to you to settle in and give this time to yourself. Perhaps you can take up a new hobby or get back to that book you have always wanted to finish reading. Or, maybe you can carve out some time to simply sit and be alone with your thoughts and take a moment to breathe.

Alyssa Lee,
Minister to BUUC

A little office business: *In lieu of regular office hours at the church, I have decided to set up a Calendly link. Simply visit <https://calendly.com/buuc-alyssa> and you should be able to set up a phone or Zoom call. If you have any issues, please give me a call at (978) 310-1303. You can also email or call me to set up a meeting. I would love to chat with you.*



Notes from the President



Where did the sunlight go? With the end of Daylight Saving Time, this getting dark at 4:30 in the afternoon is just about too much for me to take. When it is cold and dark outside, I want to put on my pajamas and call it a day. It takes huge effort on my part to not do that. And sometimes I fail.

My best friend left for her six month stay in California in November. Of course, I am going to visit her. But with the three hour time difference, it is much harder for us to talk as frequently as we usually do. And, of course, I can't get a hug when necessary. Sad, indeed.

This means I have to dig a bit deeper to find joy in these cold, darker days. But, it is there. Sharing Thanksgiving with my 95 year old cousin, playing pitch, and having her beat me. Having my son, who is openly hostile to all religions, coming to church and opening the filing cabinet in Alyssa's office with a set of lock picks, a skill he has been honing. And a great source of joy is coming to church each week. No matter what my week brings, I bring my cares to church. I always find that at least part of the service speaks to me and my cares. Here I also find challenges to my thinking, unending support, a community in which I truly belong, and an unending feeling of love.

I hope for each one of you that the joy of your season, wherever you find it, lightens your cares. In this unsettled world, we need all of the joy we can find. May BUUC offer you joy this holiday season.

Robyn Vincent,
President




Music Notes



During your next lull in coffee hour, work your way over to the little parlor organ in the corner. Here is where you will find background information about music you hear in our services, announcements about BUUC music events, local concerts and other arts events. We encourage folks in the BUUC community who are engaged in arts or music activities to post a flyer for your concert, play, art exhibit, or what have you. If there is something you are interested in attending and would like company, you can add or respond to a post it note, or contact Emily Foster (buuc01506@gmail.com) who oversees a loosely organized arts interest group for field trips together.

Our services often include music by UU's. Oftentimes I have met them at the summer conferences of the Association for UU Music Ministries (AUUMM). Years ago I started collecting pictures of UU composers I have met, and so there are sometimes pictures of them. Right now I have displayed the picture of Bart Bradfield, the composer of the song we sing when the children leave for RE, and Niki Davis who wrote the benediction response we sing each week. Niki was a wonderful mentor to me and it cheers me to be able to share her image with you.


I often include brief notes about lesser known composers of the past in the weekly OOS, but sometimes there will be more extensive notes that may or may not have been shared in a newsletter. When there are multiple copies you are welcome to take one home to read at your leisure. This is likely when it is a composer whose music is being surveyed over time, i.e. their name keeps popping up in the OOS. If you have read this far, and there is a composer whom you are curious about, let me know and I may write about them in the future!



December is for many people a busy time with extra activities. It is important not to overextend yourself, but it is also an opportunity to hear extra music. May you seek out live music events as you establish or maybe change your holiday routines.

Have a joyous, music-filled holiday season!

Lila M Farrar,
Music Director





Notes from the Director of Religious Exploration



Outside, the weather was thick and steamy. I left the car in the driveway to bake and entered the side door into the church, removing my shades as I moved from the hot sunshine to the dark cool of the basement.

It's true that the main floor of the Little Stone Church That Rocks can be pretty unbearable in the summer. The heat takes over, and thankfully, it takes a little time before it reaches the basement. As a person who lives in a historic home with minimal air conditioning, the RE space downstairs feels like a sanctuary in the summer.

Also, there is less church programming as we all enjoy a change of rhythm for the season. This makes what I term "the basement project" ideal summer work. I spread materials out on every surface as I sort and clean. Last summer was the third summer in a row wherein I took time to sort through the RE supplies to see what we've run out of, what we have too much of, what I'll use, what I won't, and to find homes for what stays.

The first summer, I tackled the office and cataloging all of the curricula owned by the RE program. The second summer, I worked a bit on the main basement area but primarily focused on the books as I put together a database to help me plan programs around what we already have.

Last summer, I continued work on our main Exploration space. I sorted through the upper cabinets and found many treasures. I also found a careful of things to donate, a lot to recycle, and a few things that went in the trash. Since I moved into the office a couple of years ago, it also got a quick second sort.

Outside, the weather is now chill and grey. I arrive on Sunday mornings thankful for the heat after the walk through clouded breath to set up the Exploration space for our Explorers. The area downstairs is still a sanctuary, albeit a warm one now. I feel gratitude for the summer's work that allows the rest of the year to flow so smoothly.

Cara Wales,

DRE



CESA News

Committee for Ecology and Social Action (CESA) continues to meet on the third Wednesday of the month on ZOOM. We are working on a number of initiatives.

The World Central Kitchen can will be on the table in the parlor each Sunday during coffee hour. We are collecting donations for their general fund which will go to provide food where it is most needed. We are also collecting deposit bottles and cans on the third Sunday of each month to go to Kids in the Congo which is a charity that helps provide funds to educate children in The Congo. The effort to help migrants in Sturbridge is currently focusing on purchasing bi-lingual books for the library in Sturbridge. We have started a Welcome Blanket project where we will be making handmade items to be given to immigrants to welcome them to this country. We will also be starting up another Vote Forward initiative soon in advance of the 2024 election.

If you have any questions, please contact Penny Blum at quabbinquilter@gmail.com.



Eat, Drink and Raise Money!

The BUUC Membership Committee will hold a fundraiser at the Sturbridge Uno's on *Tuesday, December 5th*. For BUUC to get credit for your purchase, please present the Uno's "ticket" available in the parlor to your server. Thank you for supporting this event!



Christmas Eve Worship

The UU Fellowship of Storrs, CT invites BUUC to attend their morning worship at 10:30, in person or on ZOOM.

The morning worship will feature a reading of a play by Ginny Wallace-Whitaker titled *The Dragon Who Never Had a Christmas*.

"PJ's, slippers and hot cocoa are appropriate" for ZOOM attendees.

(Note: *There will be no morning service in Brookfield.*)

Christmas Eve Service at 4:00pm will be held in person at BUUC and on ZOOM. Members of the Storrs congregation are (as always) welcome to attend!

Online Discussion Group

A reminder that Alyssa Lee will be leading a small group online starting in the new year. Please contact her if you would like to participate in the group, and she will contact everyone to start setting up meeting times.

We will be using the book *Heart to Heart: Fourteen Gatherings for Reflection and Sharing*. It would be ideal for participants to purchase the book beforehand, but if you need accommodation, please let Alyssa know.

If you would like to join Alyssa, please let her know at buuc.alyssa@gmail.com.

December Services*

Sunday morning services are held at 10:30 am.

December 3: "Why?"

Worship Leader: Tanya Neslusan
Music: BUUC Choir

December 10: "Where Do We Go from Here?"

Worship Leader: Alix McNitt
Music: Jared Adams

December 17: Intergenerational Solstice Service "The Beauty in the Darkness"

Worship Leaders: Alyssa Lee, Cara Wales,
& the BUUC Religious Explorers
Music: BUUC Choir

December 24: 10:30am Service at UU Fellowship of Storrs, CT

(In person and on ZOOM. The link will
be sent at 8:00am as usual. There
will be no morning service at BUUC.)

December 24: IG Christmas Eve Service at 4:00 "All My Memories of Christmas"

Worship Leader: Alyssa Lee, minister
Music: BUUC Choir and Congregation

December 31: "Ending the Year in the Spirit of Quakers"

Worship Leader: Cruger Johnson Phillips

*A Note About Worship

Currently we are holding hybrid services (in-person and streaming) as often as tech volunteers are available. For those who wish to stream the service (attend online) a link will be provided via email. If you'd like to volunteer to be one of our ZOOM Geeks, email Barb Hale at b.lambert.hale@gmail.com.

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

Uno's Fundraiser

At the Sturbridge Uno's on Tuesday, December 5th. For BUUC to get credit for your purchase, please present the Uno's "ticket" available in the parlor to your server. Thank you for supporting this event!

Stone Soup

Wednesday, December 6th at 12pm. Come catch up with friends and have lunch together. (Attendees are invited to bring their lunch. Coffee and tea will be provided.)

Book Club

The BUUC Book Discussion Group will be meeting via ZOOM on Tuesday, December 12th at 7:00pm to discuss *If Cats Disappeared from the World* by Genki Kawamura. Please feel free to attend. A complete list of this year's books can be found on our website at www.buuc.org/events. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Hale at b.lambert.hale@gmail.com.

Poetry Night

Join Alyssa Lee for another night of Poetry! Do you have a favorite holiday or winter solstice poem? We'd love to hear it! We will be meeting over Zoom at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13th.

CESA

The next meeting of the Committee for Ecology and Social Action will be Wednesday, December 20th, at 7:00pm on ZOOM. 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 Wednesday, December 27 at 7:00pm. If you have any questions, email Cara Wales at c.l.c.wales@gmail.com.

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 our minister Alyssa Lee at buuc.alyssa@gmail.com.

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

Alyssa Lee

Director of Religious Exploration

Cara Wales

Music Director

Lila M. Farrar

Office Assistant

Emily Foster

Executive Committee

Ex-Officio member

Alyssa Lee

President

Robyn Vincent

Treasurer

Colleen Groner

Clerk

Amy Frisella

Members-at-Large

Fritzi Foster, Jared Adams,

Christine Holbrook

Collector

Dave Yutzler

Committees and Groups

Committee on Ministry

Mary Frisella, Roxann Smith,

Donna Sullivan

Worship Committee

Barb Hale (chair), Roxann Smith,

John Kennison, David Yutzler

Flower Committee

Lila Farrar (chair), Judy Trifone,

Donna Sullivan

Membership Committee

Joanne Hamerly, Donna Boyea,

Penny Blum, Alix McNitt,

Robyn Vincent, Karen Goudey

Nominating Committee

Joanne Hamerly, Donna Boyea,

Karen Keough-Huff

Women's Alliance

Donna Boyea, Barb Hale,

Joanne Hamerly, Laurel Hemmer,

Laurie Magnuson, Sharon Smith,

Donna Sullivan, Judy Trifone

Committee for Ecology and Social

Action (CESA)

Penny Blum (chair), Joanne Hamerly,

Donna Boyea, Laurel Hemmer,

Sarah Swift, Barb Hale, Lila Farrar,

Emily Foster, Elizabeth Lang-Holmes

Trustees

Doug Smith, Roxann Smith,

Kirk Upton

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>.

**BROOKFIELD
UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**

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