



March 2024

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April Newsletter Deadline: Saturday, March 23rd

Please send all submissions to <u>Matt</u> by the deadline. Contributors will receive a confirmation email of article submission within 48 hours.

News & Notes

KING AMENDS IN AN UNAPOLOGETIC WORLD RUTTENBERG

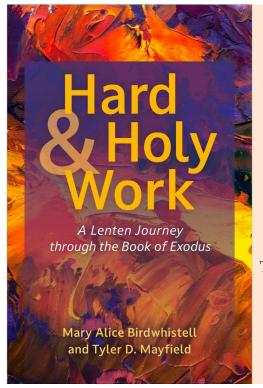
THERE IS STILL TIME TO PARTICIPATE! Interfaith Book Study and Potluck Dinner -- Part 2

Mar. 3, 2024, 5:30pm – 7:30pm at UUFF. Led by Rev. Doug McCusker and Retired Rabbi Ronda Young. If you missed the first discussion, no worries! We had such a terrific discussion at our first gathering that we still have lots to discuss about the book, On Repentance and Repair by Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg! Folks shared their personal revelations and insights from reading this book after we all enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner. It was a wonderful evening. When it seems there is so much that divides us, we're excited to offer another opportunity for learning and community fellowship with our friends at the Beth Sholom Temple. Purchase On Repentance and Repair from inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop. Please register by clicking this link: [Registration]. Childcare will be provided upon request. Contact Rev. Doug McCusker if you have any questions.



UU101 - Newcomer Orientation Class

Saturday, Mar 2, 2024, 9:30am – 1:00 pm, Calling all newcomers who started attending UUFF in the last year, even if you are a long-time UU. You are cordially invited to our newcomer orientation class that we affectionately call UU101. We will provide coffee/tea and pastries. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet newcomers like yourself and share your respective religious/spiritual journeys in a safe and positive setting. To register, click here [Registration] or contact Rev. Doug McCusker.



ADULT LENTEN RE OFFERING HARD & HOLY WORK: A LENTEN JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF EXODUS BY MARY ALICE

Join UUFF Intern Minister Phoenix Bell-Shelton Biggs for a Lenten Journey through the Book of Exodus.

This Adult RE class will take place on Saturday's Starting Feb 17th at 3:30pm and will last 90 minutes the 6 weeks of Lent.



Lenten Reading Journey: You are invited to Join UUFF Intern Minister Phoenix Bell-Shelton Biggs for a Lenten Journey through the Book of Exodus. Lent is a period of self-reflection and action, and this book guides readers through a distinctive Lenten journey, urging them to view the marginalized through God's eyes, reflect on how privilege and uncertainties can cloud our spiritual sight, and cultivate endurance in justice work with reliance on God's provision. This Adult RE class will take place on Saturdays Starting Feb 17th at 3:30 pm and will last one hour over the six weeks of Lent, ending on March 30th. This RE offering will take place Fully online. Here is the link to Register for the Class. The book can be purchased via Amazon. If you have any questions, email internminister@uuffxbg.org



Stewardship: Making Our Dreams Reality: The UUFF FY25 Stewardship Campaign is fully underway. We have raised a total of \$149,376 toward our goal of \$290,000 from 52 donors. We are a little over halfway to our goal!!! The Stewardship Committee respectfully requests all members and friends to pledge as soon as possible. For those who have already pledged, a great big Thank You! If you have not pledged yet, please submit your pledge of financial support as soon as you can and please consider raising your pledge from last year by 10%. To pledge online, click here [FY25 Pledge]. You fill out a paper pledge at the Fellowship. If you would like a form mailed to you or if you have any questions, please contact Curt Swinburne.



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY VIRTUAL GA · JUNE 20 - 23, 2024

Theme:

Love Unites, Stories Ignite

Unite with fellow UUs as we explore the boundless power of love in our faith community. Ignite your spirit with the incredible stories that shape our faith and inspire change. Dive into the rich tapestry of narratives that have the potential to ignite a brighter future for us all.

※ Virtually Uniting Our Faith Community

Join the 2024 UUA General Assembly! Dive into a groundbreaking experience from the comfort of your own space. The 2024 UUA General Assembly is going virtual, opening the doors to an incredible opportunity for all to come together, share ideas, and unite our faith community like never before. Experience the warmth and camaraderie of fellow UU members, ministers, and leaders from around the world. This fully virtual event allows us to transcend borders and celebrate our shared values.

Inspiring Workshops and Soulful Worship

Gain insights from influential voices in the UUA community and beyond. Be inspired to make a difference in the world. Explore important topics, share your perspectives, and learn from others to deepen your spiritual journey. Be a part of the change we want to see in the world. Discover opportunities for meaningful engagement on social justice, climate justice, and other initiatives. Celebrate the beauty of UU worship through dynamic virtual services that will uplift your spirit.



When

June 20 - 23, 2024

? Where

Your Home, Your Space, Your Connection!

P Engaging Discussions

Participate in meaningful dialogues on issues that matter. Engage with thought-provoking workshops and seminars led by visionary leaders. Explore your faith and perspectives with fellow attendees. Let's prove that distance can never dim the power of our collective spirit.

Register Now

Don't miss out on this remarkable gathering of minds and hearts. Secure your spot today to connect, engage, and empower yourself with likeminded individuals who share your faith.

Registration is available at uua.org/ga.

Register before March 1 for the lowest rate.

Rates will increase on March 1 and again on May 15.

Join us at the 2024 UUA General Assembly and be a part of this transformative virtual gathering!



Basket Contributions: As the UUFF ventures further into the 21st century, we are adding text giving to our options of ways in which contributions may be made to the Fellowship. Now that we have returned to in-person services, the text option will remain useful for those who cannot attend, or don't have cash or checks with them.

receipt via email. For future giving, simply send a text with the amount you wish to give, and your contribution will process automatically. Please visit <u>Vanco Payments</u> for more information. We hope this new way of giving will be helpful. As always, the missions of the Fellowship depend wholly on the generosity of our members and friends. Your support is vital, and much appreciated.

FXBG LGBTQ Youth Sanctuary: Our FXBG LGBTQ Youth Sanctuary will continue to meet at the Fellowship on the third Friday of the month from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Months into this ministry, we have learned a lot and have a fantastic group of LGBTQ Youth joining us monthly, and over 15 volunteers have joined us in making it a success. And there is room for more volunteers to join our team! If you want to learn how to volunteer, email UUFF Intern Minister Phoenix Bell-Shelton Biggs (they/them).

Insight Meditation Community of Fredericksburg: IMCF provides a comfortable and supportive environment for individuals seeking to meditate in a group setting and for those new to the practice of meditation. Join them at 7 pm every Thursday at the UUFF. <u>Click here</u> for more information.

UUFF Document Repository: UUFF has a Google Drive where you can access copies of all our Policies and Procedures, By-Laws, RE documents, and other important items. The Document Repository is meant for anyone at the Fellowship to view by <u>clicking here</u>, so that you have access to any important information.

What are you doing on March 23? You are invited to a VERY unique party here at the UUFF. We are going to be watching the movie that everyone is talking about - Everything, Everywhere, All at Once. Have you seen it? It is mind-blowing, to say the least.

I thought it would be fun and enlightening to watch that together with 50 of your closest friends - eat some great food - and discuss the implications of the movie. Does that sound like fun to you? Then March 23 is the party for YOU.

I will bring all the food. You are invited to bring your own plate and utensils and any adult beverage you prefer - but everything will be provided. FREE OF CHARGE! You just come, relax, laugh, discuss, eat.

I just need you to RSVP by Friday March 22 noon in order to give me time to get enough food. You can call/text me (540-360-8128) - email me (music@uuffxbg.org) or contact the church office by phone or email. Let us know how many are coming. We'll do all the rest.

Why am I (your music director) doing this? First, and foremost, because I LOVED this movie and want to enjoy it with you. Second - this will be a fund-raiser for the music department. We will take an offering at the party. Anything you give, over and above the cost of the food will go to the music department, so we can continue to provide you with inspirational music each week.

Will you come? Bring a friend or two? I promise it will be a mind expanding time. I hope to see you there.

Join us as we celebrate St. Patrick's Day with a magically delicious Lucky Potato Feast at the Fellowship on Saturday, March 16th at 6:00p.m. The Friendship Committee will provide the baked potatoes, butter, and sour cream, and non-alcoholic beverages for this potato-y potluck. Bring the whole family, along with a favorite potato topping, side dish or dessert to round out the buffet, and/or your favorite beverage (alcohol is not discouraged – it is St. Patrick's Day Eve).

We will have Irish background music, and musicians are encouraged to bring their instruments if they'd like to share a song. A few activities and games will be on hand or you can bring a family favorite. All ages are encouraged to attend. We won't be offering childcare at this event, but parents are welcome to bring (and keep an eye on) even the tiniest tots. And since there's no better way to get to know each other, we'd like to extend a special invitation to those who are new among us. Join us, and get better acquainted at this relaxed, casual get-together celebrating food, fun and fellowship. Hope to see you there!

-Friendship Committee

Women's Night Out! ~ cisgender, transgender, nonbinary female presenting all have a seat at the table! Meets on the third Monday of the month at 6:30pm. On Monday, March 18, the group will meet at Harry's Alehouse Downtown, at 601 William Street in downtown Fredericksburg. Harry's has great burgers, as well as a variety of salads, sandwiches, and vegetarian friendly options. Check out their menu at https://www.harrysalehouse.com/harrysdowntown. No reservations necessary and no purchase required. Newcomers are especially welcomed. Check out the UUFF Women's Night Out! on Facebook. ~ Susan Lovegrove

Keynote speaker Rev. Dr Megan Foley will be there. Rev. Foley recently shared their thoughts on their website on "It's Time to Decide What Kind of World We Want to Live In" and will be speaking on similar topics.

There will also be a number of workshops, including but not limited to:

- 1.) Living UU Values for Antiracism Antioppressionism Multiculturalism through Personal and Public Policy Advocacy
- 2.) Creating Missions and Meaningful Community for LGBTQ and Gender Queer People that embrace and live our UU values.
- 3.) What Engages (or Disengages) Young Adults
- 4.) CUUPS/Earth Rising
- 5.) Five aspects of spiritual religious life
- 6.) Mindful Outdoor Experience
- 7.) Hinduism
- 8.) UU The Vote
- 9.) Five aspects of spiritual religious life

and more...

Registration info will be made available soon. Keep an eye on the next newsletter, or the UUFF Facebook Group for more information.

Save The Date: Mind-Body-Spirit Fair Back by Popular Demand: Sunday, Apr 23, 2023, 10:30am – 12:30pm Mark your calendars and plan to attend this special worship service of spiritual practices for all ages and abilities. Rather than the usual worship format, we will engage in different mind, body, and spiritual experiences inside the building and on the Fellowship grounds. Plan to stay an extra hour. We are looking for people to lead 20-minute workshops on a spiritual practice such as labyrinth walking, mindful meditation, chanting, drumming, poetry, graphic arts, mandala, nature walking, making prayer beads, etc. If you are interested, please contact Rev. Doug McCusker.

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Board Happenings from February 2024

- 1. Pledge update, how well the themed dinner went.
- 2. Approved the Art show contract.
- 3. Agreed to pursue the UUA Clara Barton award for Becky Reed for distinguished service.
- 4. Report on the conversation with Tyler Cole District Rep
 - a. transitions handbook
 - b. community conversations
 - c. grieving and celebrating Rev. Doug's departure

- campaign. Kit will call the UUA about timing of a capital campaign. We will continue this discussion in the next few months.
- 6. Discussed Rev Doug's retirement party to be held June 9th as a part of the annual picnic as our greatest attendance is at that event.



This Fellowship has an inspirational mission that is both inwardly and outwardly focused. We work to nurture learning, inspire spiritual insights, create compassionate relationships, and lovingly transform our community and the world. Our mission was built on the premise that if you focus outward to change the world through love and compassion, you become

the change that the world needs. And while some organizations' mission statements are just words, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fredericksburg constantly turns our words into action.

As I begin the process of leaving you all for retirement, I am starting to reflect on all that we have accomplished together over the almost 9 years that I have served as your minister. Guided by our mission, we slowly and surely transformed individually and collectively. I know I did. Many people have left, and many people have joined. Through it all, we remained true to our mission. The Fellowship now is completely different from the one that I fell in love with and came to serve. And I still love you all because the transformation that I speak of has spiritually deepened us with service as our guide and love at our core. We loosely followed a strategic plan to transform, and yet it happened along the way. We overcame the adversity of the pandemic by keeping our focus on our mission. We said goodbye to our long serving staff members and welcomed new people by keeping our focus on the mission. Soon, you will replace me with a new minister. And if you keep your focus on your mission, you will not only survive, but you will also thrive.

Right now, we are in that magical time of reflection and dreaming that we call the Stewardship Campaign. It is a special time of the year because it brings us together around a collective goal. A financial goal that powers our ability to serve our mission. It's an "All Hands on Deck" effort that deepens and broadens what it means to be part of a transformative community. It reminds us that each of us plays a critical role in the success of this Fellowship. You're using your money to lovingly build something that transforms our community and the world. By making your pledge of financial support, you are declaring your allegiance to the mission of this community. You are building something that will last for future generations. Thank you for all that you do for this Fellowship. If you haven't made your pledge yet, please click on this link [MISSION] to join the the transformative power of making our dreams a reality.

Yours in Fellowship and Love, Rev. Doug McCusker

Loved Ones,

I am sitting at the hospital bedside of my dear friend Ray Davis. He fell while at his home and has been in the hospital for five days. I have been in this hospital too often in the last couple of years, first with his wife Natalie and now with Ray. Natalie died in December. The family is asking for a Hospice referral for Ray today.



This makes me think back to how I met these folks and how I came to love them so. Ray was the long time registrar for Stafford County and Natilie worked with the schools. I first met them in that capacity. I really got to know them in the UUFF.

Ray lived in Stafford County for a number of years in a big house with a very big flower garden. Natalie was the vision, Ray was the workhorse. Natalie had a fish pond built by Ray in the shape of a fish. They hosted tea parties on the porch overlooking the beautiful gardens and pond with a stream that Ray also made. The parties were a part of the At Your Service Auction. They had their 50th wedding anniversary at the Fellowship and invited everyone to it. I remember how they danced. Their connection to each other was an inspiration.

I am very sad to see Ray and Natalie pass from this life, but I am also so very honored to be a witness and comfort person to the process. They are the family I have chosen. The UUFF is the family I have also chosen. It is strange that through the years I have come to love all the UUFF people. There has been a revelation that I have learned that I can love individuals that I don't particularly like. I can love them for their steadfast support they show others and not like them for the way they communicate. If I had not stayed with the UU all these years I doubt my heart could have learned this lesson.

I pledge each year, not for the minister and not for the programs, I pledge to this community that I love and believe in. I hope you, the reader, can be so blessed.

So get your pledge in. It has to be done every year so the Fellowship can plan its budget. Whatever your reason is, just do it. Please.

~ Kit Carver, President BoT

RE Happenings Mandolin Restivo

Embracing Transformation this Spring

Dear Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fredericksburg Community.

As we welcome the arrival of spring, a season that beckons us towards inner and outer transformation, I find joy in sharing the latest updates about our R.E. Program Springtime Reflections:

Whatever your theological grounding, from theistic beliefs to humanism, spring holds a universal call for renewal. We may be inspired to spring clean our homes, develop new routines, or emerge from our winter cocoons and spend more time with families and friends. Some of us will feel the ease of seasonal depression lifting as the extended days provide us with more Vitamin D. As we witness the natural world awakening, we are inspired to engage in our own processes of rejuvenation.

Revamped Sunday Morning R.E. Program

I'm excited to share a significant transformation in our Sunday morning Religious Education (R.E.) program. The classes have been realigned to mirror the topics explored in our worship services. This intentional integration creates a more cohesive experience for our entire congregation, fostering deeper connections and shared understanding. In the past month, we delved into discussions around equity and justice, aligning with the themes explored in our services. From learning about Malcolm X to embracing the platinum rule of treating others as they wish to be treated, our students have engaged with powerful narratives, including the story of Mr. Rogers and his role in ending segregation in public pools. We've also explored the intersection of joy and justice. (If you want to have a lot of fun, just bring some balloons to the R.E. program on a Sunday morning).

This month, our collective focus shifts towards the theme of Transformation. In R.E., Our classroom topics will include mental health, personal transformation, the meaning of Easter, the significance of Ramadan, and the joy of the celebration of Holi.

Youth Group Lock-In and New Advisors

For our older students, the Youth group is hosting a lock-in on March 1st - 2nd. Your participation and support are warmly welcomed, whether through providing food or helping with clean up – contact me if you would like to help. Additionally, I am delighted we have two new volunteer youth advisors who will play instrumental roles in enhancing our youth program.

Safe Zone Training on March 3

Mark your calendars for the Safe Zone training on March 3, taking place in the main hall after service. This workshop offers personal and congregation-wide growth opportunity, equipping us to become better allies and accomplices to LGBTIGA+ youth. As we undergo this training, let us keep the memory of Nex Benedict in our hearts. The work of creating safe spaces for youth in our congregation is sacred, life-saving work.

In the spirit of continual transformation and shared growth, Mandolin Restivo

If you are interested in important UU and interfaith dates coming up in March, here is a list:

Interfaith:

- Lent (Christian) Feb. 14 March 28, 2024
- Purim begins (Jewish) March 23-24, 2024 (more here & here)
- Holi (Hindu) March 25, 2024 (more here and here)
- Ostara/ Spring or the Vernal Equinox (Wicca/Pagan) March 20 (more here)
- Ramadan (Islam) Mar 10 Apr 9, 2024 (more here and here)
- The Annunciation (Christian) March 25
- Palm Sunday (Christian) March 24, 2024
- Maundy Thursday/Holy Thursday (Christian) March 28, 2024
- Good Friday (Christian) March 29, 2024
- Easter (Christian) March 31, 2024

Unitarian Universalist:

- James Reeb dies (1965) March 11 (more here and here.)
- Susan B. Anthony's Death March 13
- Climate Justice Month March 22 to April 22
- Viola Liuzzo dies (1965) March 25

Sunday Discussions are intended for people who enjoy discussing controversial public policy issues. The group meets from 12-1 pm on ZOOM on the first, third and fifth Sundays of the month. Participants are encouraged to suggest controversial



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Monthly Theme – Transformation

Make a bit of room. Leave a little space. That may not sound like anything radical or revolutionary. But it turns out that it is one of Life's favorite ways to make us into something new. Watch out for all the heroic talk about striving and perfecting, struggle and control. Much of the time, transformation is a much subtler art. It's about stillness, listening and waiting to be led, not fighting with yourself and others to make sure you are in the lead. In short, when it comes to transformation, the message of spirituality is "Be careful with what you've been taught and told about transformation because much of it takes us in exactly the wrong direction." Our challenge as communities of transformation is to remind each other to take those different tacks. Such as: It's about breathing rather than becoming better. It's about patience not perfection It's about depth not dominance. It's about attention not improvement. That part about attention instead of improvement is especially important. It's so easy to get transformation mixed up with fixing. And fixing is transformation's biggest foe. Trying to purify or perfect ourselves is the surest way to stay stuck. The pursuit of purity and perfection focuses us on our inadequacy and inferiority. So, friends, this month, leave some room on that dance floor of yours. Keep your eyes peeled. See attention and attending as your greatest assets and tools. And when that unexpected guest reaches out its hand, don't be afraid.

~ Soul Matters Packet

All Services

Dual Platform: In-person and Streaming Live **YouTube:** <u>UU Fellowship of Fredericksburg</u>

Mar 3

Life Under Construction: Excuse the Mess

When we look back on our lives with all the twists and turns we've taken, it's hard not to notice how many coincidences and mysterious situations occurred that seemed to put us in the right time and place to take advantage of things that changed our lives. What's going on? Is it true that "everything happens for a reason?" Are things happening to us or are we actually making things happen? Let's unpack these questions and see where it takes us for the things yet to happen in our lives.

Mar 10 Transformation as a Community Practice By: Rev. Doug McCusker

The last thing that organizations and groups want to do is change. It is built into their systems to preserve stasis. This provides the least stress, especially for those with power. And yet, as the Buddhists teach us, everything is impermanent. The world is constantly evolving. As a religious community, we are constantly seeking to refine how we serve each other and the world. Inevitably, this leads to a deepening of our relationships and an internal shift of transformation. We can resist, or we can embrace transformation as a spiritual practice.

Mar 17 Cultivating Transformative Prophetic Spirituality By: Phoenix Bell-Shelton Biggs

Join us in exploring the intersection of faith and activism as we delve into ancient wisdom and contemporary relevance. We will discover the power of prophetic spirituality to ignite personal and societal transformation as we learn how our UU faith calls us into Prophetic action.

Mar 24 Ageism Unmasked: Exploring Age Bias and How to End It By: Tracy Gendron

In this eye-opening presentation, Dr. Gendron begins by exclaiming to the audience, "Everything you know about aging is wrong." This provocative and admittedly hyperbolic statement opens the door to a broader understanding of the myths, misconceptions and manipulations we have come to accept about growing older. Using her sharp wit and real-world examples, Tracey transforms decades of research about age discrimination into a thought-provoking and often humorous conversation and provides actionable steps toward overcoming ageism within ourselves, our communities, our policies, and our culture.

Mar 31 Is There Resurrection Without Death? By: Rev. Doug McCusker

Our body is our only home in the universe. It is our house of belonging in the world. To spend time in silence before the mystery of our bodies brings us toward holiness and wisdom. Easter is a season to reflect on our internal resurrection within the one body that we know. And to celebrate the conduit of our souls that connect us with others. Join us for Easter, Flower Communion and Transgender Day of Visibility. It will be a full day of celebration.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the UUFF is to nurture learning, inspire spiritual insights, create compassionate relationships, and lovingly transform our community and the world.

VISION STATEMENT

To be a catalyst for spiritual growth and social justice with service as its guide and love at its core.



OFFICE ADMIN HOURS:

Work from Home Hours: Monday: 10:00am-3:00pm

Office Hours:

Tues/Fri: 10:00am-3:00pm Thurs: 11:00am-4:00pm

MINISTER OFFICE HOURS:

Office Hours:

Wednesday/Thursday 10:00am-6:00pm Sunday: 9:30 am-2:00pm

Work from Home:

Friday/Saturday: 10:00am-4:00pm

INTERN MINISTER OFFICE HOURS:

Office Hours:

Thursday: 10:00am-4:00pm Friday: 10:00am-4:00pm Sunday: 9:30am-2:00pm

DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE HOURS:

Office Hours:

Thursday: 1:00 pm – 5:15 pm Friday: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Sunday: 8:30 am-12:30 pm

UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF FREDERICKSBURG 25 Chalice Circle, Fredericksburg, VA 22405

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Minister: Rev. Doug McCusker 703-203-7558	
Intern Minister: Phoenix Bell-Shelton Biggs 615-784-9648	
Office Admin: Matt Grissom 540-310-4001	
Dir. of Lifespan Rel. Ed: Mandolin Restivo 862-596-1569	
Music Director: David Brown 540-360-8128	
Treasurer: Ron Wasem	
Custodian: Hannelore Montgomery 540-842-7018	

President: Kit Carver	540-907-8395
Vice Pres: Mindy Littleton	540-288-1010
Secretary: Sarah DeWees	540-368-0785
Connie Moore	
Thomas Mertz	937-623-2642
Susan Park	540-775-2148
Adele Uphaus-Conner	571-216-2929
Steve Walk	
Sage Briggs	Youth Member

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