

UU & you



Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship OF FREDERICKSBURG

February 2025

Pledge TO Love

7 pages
2-5 Editorials
6 Announcements and
Updates

It's Pledge Drive Season

Join us February 15th at 6:00pm

Let's celebrate the Fellowship with a pledge drive kickoff. This is a great chance to be with fellow UUs and show your support for the Fellowship. Each table will have a theme cuisine made by you! Lemonade and iced tea will be provided. You may bring your own alcoholic beverages. There will be live entertainment. Childcare will be provided. Volunteers would be appreciated for setting up and putting things away.

[Click to Reserve Your Table!](#)

If you have any questions please contact Curt Swinburne
cswinburne@earthlink.net.

We look forward to seeing you all there!

Can't make it? Pledges will be collected all month!





DAVID BROWN, MINISTER

If January is the month for looking back - remembering all the things that happened in the previous year, creating all those "best-of" articles and websites, then February is the month to look forward. Now, I "look forward" to February each year - but in a different way. I was born in February - so I look forward to my birthday!

I turn 64 this month and it only seems like yesterday when I was a wee lad.

For UU's, February is the month we look forward to our next fiscal year. Our fellowship uses July 1 - June 30 as its fiscal calendar year. So, in February we ask each of our members and friends to carefully consider how they can support the UUFF in our next year (starting July 1). If that sounds confusing - or if you are wondering why we start so early - it is simple.

Our fellowship is a community of people who donate their time and talents. We get together because we WANT to - not because we are required to. So things happen a little more slowly than in other organizations. During February, we ask each member and friend to make a pledge - to make an educated guess about how much money they are willing to invest in the fellowship in the next year.

Once we have those pledges, we then take a look at all the ways that this fellowship could make a difference in the life of our community, and we start prioritizing. This is always a tough decision process, because there are so many needs and so many ways that we can be a light in Fredericksburg. We don't want to say, "no" to any idea. But we must.

We have to be fiscally responsible, so we will only create a budget that reflects the giving abilities of our members and friends. We are asking everyone to be generous. Obviously, the more pledges we receive, the more good we can plan to do.

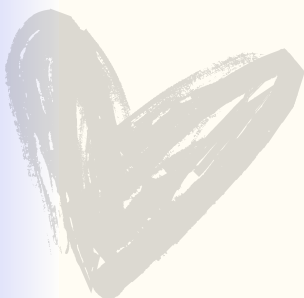
It's easy for people to feel like the only thing their church wants from them is money. I hope with all my heart you do not feel that way. What I want - what WE want is to make Fredericksburg a kinder, more loving place. That is why we are here. We come together to remind ourselves of how important this is. We learn better ways of living. We pool our resources together so we can do even more good. That is why we are here. That is why we ask you to pledge.

If you made a pledge last year - please consider doing even more this year. If you did not pledge last year - please start this year. Pledge something. Anything. It will help you be accountable. It will help you feel like you are part of something. If you like what we are doing here, then I am confident that you want to be part of something bigger than yourself - something that will help you, your family, and this community.

We are having a banquet on February 15 (my birthday!) where we will be talking about our budget. There will be live music and lots of fun. I encourage you to sign up for the table of your choice and come have fun. But you don't have to attend the banquet to pledge. We will be asking for pledges all month long.

This doesn't have to be a painful or uncomfortable time. It can be a time of joy - a time of hope - as we look to the new year. We need the UUFF. I hope you agree.

David Brown, Minister





KATHERINE PRESEREN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

A quote to ponder: “Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.” - Victor Hugo

We all have favorite songs, bands, and artists that we turn to for inspiration, comfort, joy, clarity - everything. Each week, when sharing special music with you, I aim to select music that expresses some of these complexities that can otherwise be difficult to articulate into words. It brings me a lot of joy. I’m looking forward to more joyful musical moments ahead in 2025!

The UUFF Musicians are officially back in the swing of things after the holidays and we have some great music planned for the coming months. Our choir will be singing again on February 2nd and March 2nd. The Handbells will be ringing next on February 16th and March 16th. You don’t want to miss it!

Over the last couple of months, I have frequently had people ask me about joining one of our performing ensembles - we would love to have you. Come join us for a rehearsal and see if it’s a good fit for you. There is no experience necessary; we can get you up to speed! If you have the desire to learn - then you are welcome. Please reach out with any questions you may have!

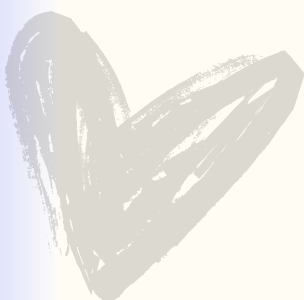
Music rehearsals take place on Wednesday nights: Handbells from 6:30pm - 7:30pm and Choir 7:30pm - 8:30pm. These groups perform on Sundays once a month. Participating in a musical ensemble is a great way to meet new people and spend time with friends; not to mention the chance to be a part of something bigger than yourself - priceless.

Are you a musician who’d like to be considered for a performance during a Sunday Service or Coffee House Sunday? Send me an email and let me know!

Please reach out if you have any questions about our Adult Choir and/or our Adult Handbell Ensemble. Feel free to chat with me in person or send me an email: music@uuffxbg.org

Musically yours,

Katherine





JACKIE WHITE, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

“Come as You Are”

Inclusion lies at the heart of Unitarian Universalist values, forming a cornerstone of our commitment to justice, equity, and compassion. It’s more than acceptance—it’s about ensuring all individuals feel valued and respected within our spiritual homes. By embracing inclusion, we create a sacred space where all voices contribute to our collective growth.

This commitment is vital in youth education, where we shape the future of our congregations and the world. Inclusive environments in Sunday school and youth groups teach empathy, justice, and solidarity with marginalized communities. These spaces show young people that inclusion requires active listening, learning, and continuous action.

Centering inclusion in youth education aligns with our core values and empowers the next generation to carry these ideals forward. Young people in inclusive communities grow into leaders who challenge prejudice, advocate for equality, and understand that true strength lies in diversity.

Brené Brown emphasizes that true belonging requires individuals to be authentic and stand up for their beliefs, even if it means standing alone. She distinguishes between "fitting in," which involves conforming to others' expectations, and "belonging," which necessitates self-acceptance and authenticity. Her insights on belonging resonate deeply with Unitarian Universalist values, as they emphasize the importance of authenticity, empathy, and engaging in difficult conversations to create meaningful inclusion.

She says: "True belonging doesn't require you to change who you are; it requires you to be who you are."

In this month of inclusion remember to show up as you are and to create a space for others to do the same.

Jackie White
DEO@uuffxbg.org



KIT CARVER, INTERM PRESIDENT

Sanctuary Congregation

Recently there have been numerous questions about the Sanctuary Congregation. In short the Sanctuary movement is faith and immigrant communities coming together to protect and stand with immigrants facing detention or deportation. It is publicly declaring that walking beside immigrants and refugees is a matter of faith.

We first became a Sanctuary Church in 2017. In 2018 we had a woman come to us for sanctuary and we found her long-term housing and assistance from a sister church. We provided financial assistance and weekly transportation for her 3 children to and from her sanctuary in Maryland. She now has a green card and lives independently. It took well over a year.

We were approached by a member of the UUFF in November. This member has family who are undocumented. The question was could those family members come to the UUFF in case of emergency. We said yes. Then began a discussion during BOT meetings about what that actually means.

Realizing that the new administration says they will not honor traditional sanctuary places (churches, hospitals and schools), we can still have rights. ICE tried to enter an elementary school in Chicago and was forbidden entry. Knowing those rights is extremely important.

Our minister has reached out to other local faith communities. He has made some useful connections. We are not the only church wrestling with this. We now have resources in English and Spanish for educating individuals about the laws.

We have had reports to the BOT about history, law and possible complications. For example, In order to house people long term we require a safe kitchen passed by the health department. Getting commercial appliances goes a long way toward that goal. The new appliances will be delivered in February. We also need a full bath. We don't have that yet but we do have a place.

If someone comes to us we will have to have 24/7 supervision in the building. People will have to monitor our entrances. We have to assist with achieving legal status. We need a lawyer on speed dial. We don't have that yet. We will have to feed them, counsel them, perhaps provide translation services. This puts in a new light on the fact that we are being offered Spanish lessons starting February 8.

The UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) has sent notification that we cannot be upfront with our communications about this. No Facebook posts. They recommend that we use encrypted messaging. We absolutely need to continue the conversations but not on a public forum. This month the BOT is ready to vote on this and possibly set up a task-force to prepare us.

Will we be ready if someone comes to us? Probably not, but we will learn and we will cope. We will also work together like we always do.

Kit Carver, President



MARYANNE BROWN, GUEST EDITORIAL

Transform Lives through Community Meals

In these difficult and uncertain times, many of us are looking for concrete ways to lift up our community. Consider joining the UUFF team that participates in the Community Meals at St. George's Episcopal Church in downtown Fredericksburg on the fourth Monday of each month. Our volunteers prepare nutritious dinners for the food-insecure of our area, typically welcoming and serving 100 guests. We have streamlined the work of prepping, serving, and clean-up to make it as easy as possible on our volunteers, and have experienced members to help the newcomers. We are on site from 2:30-7 pm, with dinner served from 5 to 6 pm. Whether you can stay for the entire shift or just assist us for an hour or two, your help makes a world of difference.

We are especially in need of coordinators for the monthly meals, and would like to develop a rotating team so that the work can be shared. With a set menu and ingredients delivered to the church kitchen, coordinators will just need to manage the workflow on-site, and strive to insure a seamless dinner service.

Our efforts are both fulfilling and fun, and we'd love for you to come and be a part of this rewarding experience! To sign up or for more information, contact the UUFF office at office@uuffxbg.org.

Hope to see you there!

Q: How many Unitarians does it take to change a light bulb?

A: We choose not to make a statement either in favour of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey, you have found that light bulbs work for you, that is wonderful. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your personal relationship with your light bulb. Present it next month at our annual Light Bulb Sunday Service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, 3-way, long-life, and tinted, all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence.

And the winners are....

CARNIVORE

- 1-Jake Carver
- 2-Eileen Carson
- 3-Josh Blum

HERBIVORE

- 1-DAVID BROWN
- 2-DICK ROOP
- 3-CHRISTIE BAYHA



Do you have an event you want to be publicized?

Reach out to Wendy Von

Der Pool at

Events@uffxbg.org

Want to volunteer with Youth Sanctuary?

Complete the Safe zone training

February 16th 12:00-2:00pm

Sign up today

Success! UUFF First Committee Fair

**DID YOU FIND A
COMMITTEE? THERE IS
STILL TIME TO JOIN.
FIND A LIST OF OUR
COMMITTEE CHAIRS
[HERE](#)**



Soul Matters

Living Love Through The Practice of Inclusion

*Meditation - Marginal Wisdom Leslie Takahashi Morris
Full piece at*

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/marginal-wisdom>

*...The day is coming when all will know
That the rainbow world is more gorgeous than monochrome,
That a river of identities can ebb and flow over the static,
stubborn rocks in its course,
That the margins hold the center.*

Article - Preemptive Radical Inclusion, CB Beal & Justice and Peace Consulting

<https://justiceandpeaceconsulting.com/preemptive-radical-inclusion/>

“Preemptive Radical Inclusion means that we challenge what we already believe, the systems that have worked for us and we enjoy, and lean into learning how other people experience those systems. Practicing PRI means we have to change. In fact, it’s a sign that we are practicing Preemptive Radical Inclusion that we notice it is we who change... Preemptive Radical Inclusion is not a box to check off in a planning process, e.g., “put out a “call for diversity,” so check inclusion done.” Instead, it is a lifelong practice. It is not a thing to do, but a way to explore and perceive. It is a way to examine privilege, to take on responsibility, set aside control, and to work for justice...”



NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND

PLEASE SEND ALL SUBMISSIONS TO OFFICE@UFFXBG.ORG BY THE DEADLINE.

CONTRIBUTORS WILL RECEIVE A CONFIRMATION EMAIL OF ARTICLE SUBMISSION WITHIN 48 HOURS.