



NEWSLETTER

30 Days of Love

Facebook Livestream at 10:00am, Sunday

This week we tune into the national Unitarian Universalist "30 Days of Love" service. What if to "side with love" meant making bold, faith-full choices? What if it were even a little bit scary? This worship service brings together worship leaders and musicians from across the country to offer hopeful, moving, challenging reminders about what we, as Unitarian Universalists, are called to do, and BE, in the world.



Photo by [Lan Nguyen](#) on [Unsplash](#)



*“For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it”*

-Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

Letter from Your President-Elect

Bart Renner

I hope I will never forget how I felt when I first heard Amanda Gorman’s poem on inauguration day. I had just rushed out of my office after a packed morning of meetings and deadlines. I wandered around the sidewalks of Brevard with my headphones on, listening to the inauguration. Our new president had just been sworn in, but this change seemed so fragile. I was still reeling from what happened to

our nation’s capital building and I was nervous, worried and anxious. I have never seen this county so divided, our communities so stressed. I was so happy to see this change in leadership, but I wondered how could things change with so much anger, mistrust and spiritual darkness present in our country?

Then this amazing, brave young woman got up and apparently understood how to speak directly to my soul. As I listened to her beautiful, bold words, I walked past the new playground being installed at Silversteen Park, and I felt so much HOPE. Ms. Gorman gently reminded me that hope is not blind optimism but a muscle that we flex. Hope is a belief in a bright future AND an enthusiastic effort to achieve that bright future. Ms. Gorman reminded me that if it’s dark, then I can look to my community for light. And if I still can’t find that light, then, by golly, I’ll just start glowing myself and guide the way for others.

UUTC has been the light that many of us look to for support and understanding during these strange times. More than ever, I have needed a community to help carry the heavy load of grief and disappointment and to magnify the precious joys. I realize I’ve been lucky. This pandemic has been especially devastating for those of us...with more experience at living...who may not understand Zoom, FaceTime, Facebook chatting—the whole mess of ways that children, grandchildren, family and friends have been trying to keep in touch. But through this pandemic, UUTC has been a community of role models for my young children. It’s been the moral compass we needed, and it’s shown our children how to start looking for their own inner light.

We are in the process of sending out the letters asking everyone to participate in our annual pledge drive. We are boldly hoping to get 100% participation from all of our members. For some, this might only mean a pledge of a few dollars. For others, you might be able to pledge much more. Please keep an eye out for our letter. Take a moment to read UUTC’s message of hope and light as we start this New Year and consider how you can make sure our light keeps shining in our community. Thank you.

COEF Awards First Gifts Totaling \$9700



From Left to Right: Rivers Smith, Carolyn Smith, Joanna Bliss, Maureen Copelof, Caitlyn Murray, Barbara Grimm, Sarah Rogine, Jim Fatland, Maurice Jones. Photo by Jim Null

Even as the struggle continues under the weight of COVID-19 and its financial impacts, our community has to carry on with its projects and programs. According to Joanna Bliss, chair of the UUTC Community Outreach Endowment Fund (COEF) Committee, “There are so many programs within our county that provide services and functions to keep life here healthy, stimulating, and safe for both adults and children.”

Bliss added, “Those programs are more important than ever, and they need widespread support to continue their missions. UUTC’s COEF Committee is now in a position to make awards to a few of our county’s non-profits and programs. While the fund has financial limits, every donation helps. The Committee felt that each of these organizations contributes to the needs of our community.”

“As the COEF Committee reviewed our list of potential award recipients, we felt that STEP (Serving Together Empowers People) complemented the work already being done by Sharing House’s Power Up Program. STEP provides firewood and its delivery to homes throughout the area, and it also aids those unable to do their own much-needed home repairs.”

Rivers Smith, CEO, and Carolyn Smith from STEP WNC commented, "We're excited. This financial award means a lot to our non-profit and to the people we serve. It increases our ability to help and draws attention to our work and our goals. People who are interested in what we do can check our website at STEPWNC.org. There are opportunities for volunteering and donating, as well as recommending individuals that might benefit from one or more of our services."

As a part of the first disbursement of COEF moneys from this UUTC fund, the COEF Committee also named as recipients the Silversteen Playground Project and the Cindy Platt Boy & Girls Club. Like STEP, the former received \$3000 for their ongoing construction.

City Council member Maurice Jones said, "We appreciate UUTC's award. It's another example of the heartwarming participation within our community.

Volunteers and donors all prove once again that it still takes a village. It's a great example of caring, especially during the pandemic when so much is needed." City Council Member Maureen Copelof added, "The City is very grateful for this donation. The playground is open, but incomplete, so fund raising is continuing, and we welcome the support."

The Cindy Platt Boys & Girls Club received \$1000 for their Club library to increase its supply of fiction and non-fiction materials related to diversity education, both in print and other media. Caitlyn Murray, Educational

Director at the Boys & Girls Club, has changes in mind for the summer reading program at the Club. She stated, "In the past we've had a series of books that we use for each grade level and we have repeated their use each summer. As part of our planning since last summer, we agreed to concentrate on diversity in our media selections, including book and film choices. We'll be creating a full program based on works by authors of color. This award will provide wonderful support for that plan."

The final beneficiary for this fiscal year will be the Davidson River School's \$2700 Farm to Table Project, which will include gardening and cooking programs. Students will also be aided by UUTC volunteers led by the Social Action Team throughout this educational effort. Davidson River School's principal Barbara Grimm added, "We, too, are grateful. It allows us to have another meaningful

program that works toward our goal of helping our students develop both knowledge and practical experiences related to sustainable living.”

The [Community Outreach Endowment Fund](#) Committee is a committee of the Congregation, currently filled by Joanna Bliss, Jim Null and Roberta Miller. You may click the link if you wish to contribute to the fund.

*“Building community is to the collective
as spiritual practice is to the individual.”*

—Grace Lee Boggs

Read Us Something Special!

Alice Hardy

Join us! Add your voice and face to our ever-growing “Bank of Readers Project!”

- Choose up to four readings (poems, parables, Sunday service elements, short stories) which you would like to share with the congregation.
- Email Alice Hardy (hardy542@gmail.com) and she will put you on the schedule to be videoed.
- Go to UUTC on that date and time and our wonderful videographer (R.K.) will greet you with a (masked) smile and help you make a great video of your reading.
- Beginning Tuesday, February 16th at 10:00 and continuing through each following Tuesday readers will be scheduled. If Tuesday is not a convenient day for you call Alice (862-6969) for other arrangements. Only two or three readers will be scheduled on each filming day.
- Readings are often included in weekly newsletters or inserted into Sunday services. It is fun for everyone in the congregation to see you and so many others that have been and will be part of our “Bank of Readers Project”



It has been far too long since we have all been together. Share something you love with the rest of us and we will all feel better!

SPIRITUAL EXPLORERS

Spiritual Explorations will resume [on Thursday, February 25, 1:30 to 3 p.m.](#) via Zoom. We'll be meeting thereafter on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays, [1:30 to 3:00.](#)



Photo by [Jametlene Reskp](#) on [Unsplash](#)

We'll be using the book by Barbara Holmes, [Race and the Cosmos - Second Edition](#). Make sure you order the second edition which came out January 28, 2020.

The book is \$19.95 available on Amazon. Alas, no Amazon Prime free shipping. Shipping is \$4. We are advised to order the book very soon.

Please sign up with Cantey Carpenter, canteycarpenter61@gmail.com

Carol Flake, Earle Rabb, Jean Rowe, and Cantey Carpenter (class communicator)



The Valentine Project

Kevin Lausch, Director of CRE

Thank you to the families of Brit Boessel, Lauren Agrella-Sevilla, Virginia Watkins, Katie Van Iderstine, and Rabbit Krueger for making the Valentines Project happen. These hard working moms and their kids made 25

valentines for members of the church. We appreciate your help!

Youth Book Club

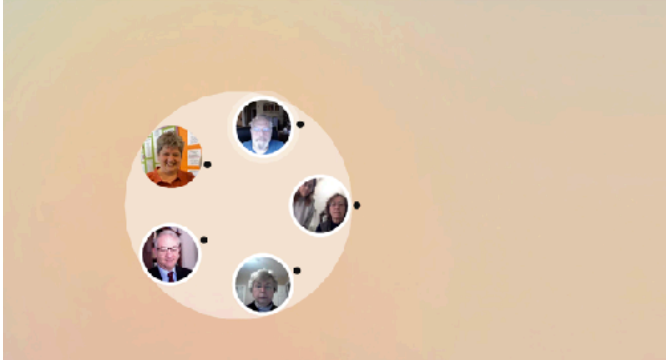
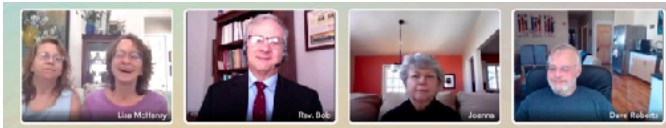
Our Youth Book Club will be starting soon and is open to any youth in the 6th grade and above. We are starting the Book Club with the graphic novel, *MARCH: BOOK ONE* about the life of civil rights leader John Lewis. The book club meets once a month to eat snacks and have a fun talk about the books and how they relate to UU principles. Don't worry, no book reports or tests for this club! Contact Kevin for more information.

Monthly Gatherings

There will not be a monthly gathering in February due to the rising Covid numbers. We hope to have a family gathering in March. Do you love homemade valentines day cards created by kids? So do we! That is why we are calling all families with children to make homemade valentine cards for UUTC members who live at College Walk or are homebound.



Virtual Coffee Hour Returns to Wonder



[THIS LINK](#) will take you to a “room” called UUTC Coffee Hour. **No password. No questions.**

Get yourself in here! 11:00am Sunday!

Wonder can be used on a smartphone, but you will wish you hadn't. Your best experience is going to be on a laptop or computer and **you will need to be using the Chrome browser.**

Come give it a try!