



wayfinding

New Year's Burning Ceremony

Facebook or YouTube Livestream at 9:00am, Sunday— Services at 9:00 & 11:00

Join us in the new year for a service of looking forward and looking back. We will have the burning ceremony of our notes of what we're leaving behind in the old year.

Speaker: Rev. Bob Renjilian

Tuning In Online

Find links to live-streamed programming on the home page of our [website](#). Beneath the banner, you will see links for both Facebook and YouTube. **These links work for ALL live-streamed events— at the time of the event.** To find events after the time of the live stream, subscribe to our YouTube channel. All programs are archived to this channel.



“

*“Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life’s desire.*

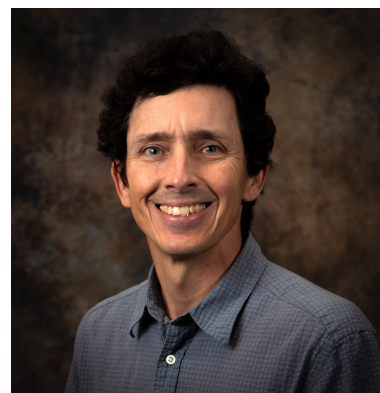
– John O’Donohue

(Excerpted from “For a New Beginning”

Children's Religious Exploration

Kevin Lausch, Director of CRE

The Children's Religious Exploration meets every Sunday morning during the **9:00 service only**. Two classes are offered, Chalice Children, aged 4 to 7, and Rainbow Kids, aged 8 to 11. Classes follow the UUTC guidelines of masking indoors. We are thankful that children over the age of 5 can now be vaccinated.



Director of Children's Religious Exploration, Kevin Lausch

TEEN/TWEEN BOOK CLUB

The UUTC Tween/Teen Book Club uses graphic novels (long form comic books) to teach UU values. Such books as John Lewis' "*March*" and "*The Witchboy Trilogy*" by Molly Knox Ostertag sparked discussions about civil rights, gender stereotypes and standing up for what you believe. **This month's book** is "*The Girl from the Sea*." Please RSVP to get a book FOR FREE to kevin@uutc.org. The meeting runs from 2 and 4 pm, January 15th.

OUR WHOLE LIVES

CRE offers the Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality and health program this winter and spring. The program is for 7th-9th graders and provides a comprehensive, scientifically based and LGBTQ+ positive sexuality education. The goal is to provide honest, accurate information that dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, and improves sexual and life decision making. The program includes weekly meetings and retreats and covers a professionally developed, age-appropriate curriculum. *Ed. — Enrollment for this session is now closed.*

Drive Down the Debt: Final Tally



Twenty-five gifts, totaling \$37,980, have been taken into First Citizens and paid in early principal payment. We will retire the loan 685 days early!

Just to help us all remember — your Board and Minister kicked off this challenge with \$18,100 in gifts — and 17 others kicked in \$19,880 to ensure that when we must tear down the structures on Varsity, we will have sufficiently paid down the mortgage that it will not be threatened by the lack of collateral (structures). Since early contributions reduce the amount of interest we pay on the loan, this effort is worth approximately \$65,000. The tax assessment for the yellow house is currently \$75,000, and the blue house is assessed at \$115,940. The success of this campaign, and our excellent credit history, should protect our mortgage when it comes time to make changes. Thanks to all! (Photo by [Visual Stories II Micheile](#) on [Unsplash](#))



Quiet Group Meditation

David Alff

Our Quiet Meditation Group meets weekly on **Tuesdays, from 4 to 5 p.m.** in the sanctuary. Please arrive promptly, so we can lock the doors and get under way.

All are welcome. Contact David Alff, david.alf@gmail.com.

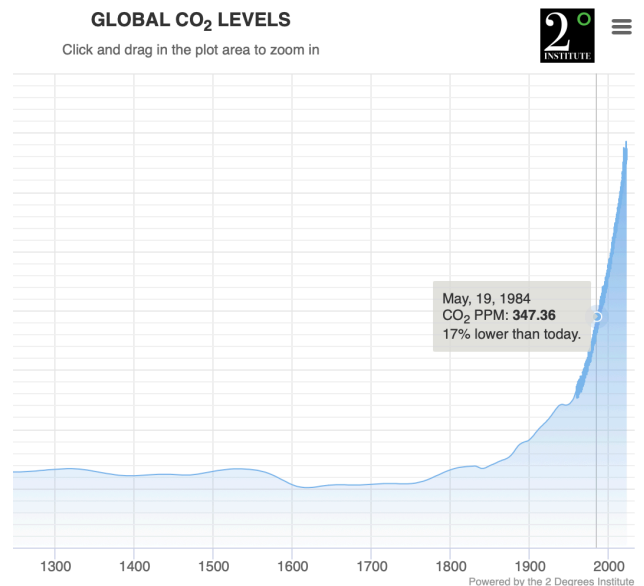
Air Quality by the Numbers

As of this writing, we have not heard of a single case of Covid contracted at UUTC. There are those who have realized they HAD Covid when they attended a service (having contracted it somewhere else), but no new cases have been traced back to UUTC. This success has a lot to do with our masking policy, but also the air exchange system, which for all but Sunday mornings, has kept the concentrations of carbon dioxide **below** the level (600ppm) at which airborne disease is transmitted.

On Sundays, though the numbers have risen above 1000ppm on a few occasions (usually because of hot-air-blowing choir members), we have never topped 1200ppm (at least, we don't have documentation of it if we did). Thank you ushers, for the trouble of documenting these measurements—your work has been useful in seeing how effective the system is. Normal background concentrations in outdoor ambient air range from 250-400ppm. The lowest documented measurement at UUTC in the social hall was 309. You can check the CO2 detector yourself at the thermostat controls for any of the three systems in the building. It is the smallest of the 3 instruments, and its digital display switches between the ambient air temperature and the measurement of carbon dioxide parts per million.

According to the National Institutes of Health, tuberculosis (another virulent, airborne disease) will not transmit at anything lower than 600ppm. The Social Hall and Foyer pretty easily stay below this number. You can feel pretty confident that masked meetings are safe in these spaces.

This month the choir will sing on the **16th** and **23rd**, if all goes well. If you have concerns about being present when the choir is singing, maybe skip in-person attendance and tune in remotely.



[Global CO2 levels from ice core samples](#)

Author & Climate Series



RK Young

Long-time UU Bill Thomas and his book *Dam It, No!!* will kick off our Author Series in January on Tuesday the 11th. “The story of saving the Horsepasture River in Western North Carolina from a dam by getting the river designated a National Wild & Scenic River, told by the man who led the effort.” Jim Hardy will again lead this interview and discussion. If you have not attended one of these, either in person or online, they have been delightful! Bill and his wife Shirl are due to move soon, so do make an effort to come hear from Bill while you still can. We were not going to have programming for either series in January, since weather frequently intrudes on our “plans” in January, but we wanted to get this in before Bill and Shirl left town. UUTC has purchased a copy of Bill’s book for our library.

On February 15th, Board President-Elect Alice Wellborn is coordinating a special program on “**Children’s Literature Builds Resilience — Social Justice + the Joy of Reading.**” She will have a panel to speak on this topic, including some faces many of you will know. And then on March 15th, Jim Hardy will return to interview Don O’Dell about his book, *How the Bible Became the Bible*. In general, Author series events are held on the third Tuesday of the month.

Our Big News with the Climate Series is that we have secured a partnership with Conserving Carolina, and they will provide programming through UUTC once a quarter. Their first time on campus will be **March 8th**, on the topic **Climate Change Resiliency & Adaptation**. The Climate Series will generally be scheduled on the second Tuesday of each month (but skipping January).

As previously, all these events will be hybrid, and we will share the stream link with our partners if they desire to link the programming to their own websites.

Who Are We Now?

Nearly two years have passed since we shut down for Covid in March of 2019. Given what we’ve all been through, your staff and Board can’t pretend that none of us have changed, or that what we consider most important has remained the same. With a Mission “to support individual spiritual journeys and to promote social, economic and environmental justice,” it’s time to check your pulse and see what you most value.

Earlier surveys focused on UUTC programming and what could be provided, safely. This time, we have a very short survey for you about what you consider to still be worthy of your support — in our larger community. With fewer volunteers stepping up, we need to make sure that whatever we do, it really targets the work you all wish to be associated with, and that your values are represented.

[**Please take the survey now!**](#)

Letter from the President

Bart Renner

I still remember the first time I was asked “what are you going to Major in at college?” At that time it really seemed like someone was asking “who are you?” I did not know myself well enough yet to answer either of those questions. I checked to see if I could get a degree in “running around in the forest.” Yep: wildlife biology, forestry, dendrology, herpetology, ornithology, ... so many “ology’s” that sounded good to me and seemed to offer a promising path toward my goal of getting paid to have “picnic lunch breaks.” I decided I wanted to be an “ecologist”. I liked how ecologists had to have a mastery of a wide variety of the “ology’s” and then also understand how those “ology’s” come together and interact with one another.



Board President Bart Renner

This career path has led me to wearing many different hats during my professional life. Perhaps one of the most important of those hats is the one I wear right now as the president of this board of trustees at UUTC. Our principle of “respecting the interdependent web of life” is an ecologist’s mantra. I love that we see ourselves- our human systems, agriculture, industry, development, etc- as part of all the other ecosystems we see around the world. From that perspective, I see the work that we do at this church as a fantastically important part of the community ecosystem here in Transylvania County, and beyond.

Consider how UUTC nourishes so many different aspects of the “ecosystem of support” here in our county! Every month we select a different charity that aligns with our values to support their efforts. Examples include [The Sharing House](#), [Bread of Life.... Receive direct donations from our church](#). In addition, we have an endowment fund that supports a variety of causes — starting last year. This year we selected 3 different organizations whose efforts were boosted with our support. They included: El Centro, the African-American Storyline project and Student Visits to HBCU’s. Other examples include The Dignity Project, which provides personal hygiene products and other items essential to personal dignity to at risk populations. We also work with Conserving Carolina, the Cooperative Extension, and a wide variety of other community groups that align with our values.

A few years ago I was taking a soil ecology class. I was having a fantastic time learning how to isolate different microscopic soil critters and observe them through the microscope. I had just discovered a really cool little spider/crab/alien looking thing that was swimming around. It was clear, so when it ate something I watched it’s food pass into its body and get digested. I felt a special connection with this amazing little varmint. But then it’s movements suddenly started to get more erratic and panicked, and then all of the sudden it just shriveled up and stopped moving. I realized then that the bright hot light from my microscope had dried up the tiny drop of water that little soil critter was living in. I mourned the loss of my special soil critter and thought about the billions of them that were all having a huge impact on how well the plants in their soil grew, and on the health of the animals that ate those plants, and on the air those animals breathe, and so on, and on, and on.

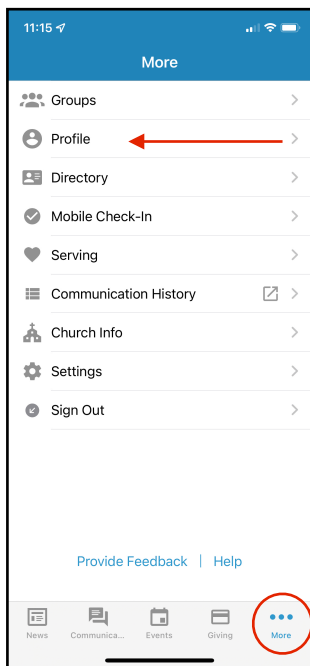
The work we do in this community through our partnerships reverberates throughout the world in ways that not even the best ecologist could understand. Here at UUTC we are doing a great job of having a positive impact on our community ecosystem, and if my little soil critter friend has taught me anything, I'd say we're all important, no matter how small we may be. You are too! (And hopefully whoever is watching you is aware of their microscope bulb). So please let us know, if we can partner with you, your organization, your mission, whatever it may be. UUTC is excited to be a positive part of the ecosystem of support in this county and beyond.

Realm & the Connect App – UUTC's Directory

RK Young

It may seem “too techie,” but it's here to stay. Privacy laws matter!

In reality, Realm is much more than a directory. It's a calendar of events for the groups you belong to, a notification system to allow group leaders to reach all group members in a timely fashion, and a reporting tool to allow tracking of your financial gifts. It's even more than that, but we'll start there!



Very quickly— **the one thing you need to do this month TODAY** is to login to Realm, find the **Profile** setup (*under the “more” menu on iPhone*), and tap or click the pencil icon to edit your privacy settings. Some of us select “**viewable by everyone in the church**” because (as staff knows) people don't sign up to this unless they are actually truly interested in being part of UUTC. But if that seems too risky (even though it's exactly the same as sharing a printed copy with those same members), at least select “**people in my groups.**” That way, if you are part of, for instance, the Meditation group, and someone else in the Meditation group wants to ask you out for coffee, **THEY CAN FIND YOU**. If your privacy setting is “**Church Staff Only,**” and Loving Hearts wants to send you a card, they have to call the office to get your address.

Both Eloise and I can help with this— if you are using an Android device, email Eloise and she'll be in touch. If you're on an iPhone, give me a call at 828-577-8164... let's get you properly connected!

So now you're connected, you've set your privacy so others can actually find you... where's that promised directory? Directly under the Profile option! At least, on your phone. In a browser on your laptop, Directory shows up in the left column as soon as you log in. Once you click that, use the search field to find who you are looking for. Both old and new members may appear, and our newest members likely won't have photos, yet. We're working on it!

The advantage to having the smartphone app is that once you are in the directory and have found who you are looking for, you can dial from directly within the app, or email, or get directions to their home if you're attending a Circle Dinner. So get logged in and set those privacy settings!

UUTC Community Outreach Endowment Awards

(This article was presented to the Board of Trustees by Joanna Bliss, member of the Endowment Committee. —Ed.)

The Endowment Committee has selected the following projects for awards in this cycle.

Student Visits to Historically Black Colleges and Universities

(funding will go through Transylvania NAACP): Sheila Mooney, Chair NAACP Education Committee.
Assistant manager: Rebecca Wynn.

There will be one additional chaperone (male). All three chaperones/coaches will be TCNAACP members. This opportunity will be available to students from all parts of the county. There is an immediate need for the project, and the actual trips would begin in early spring, but preparation of the students would begin in late December or early January.

It has been clear to many of the Transylvania County Schools counselors that their African- American high school students often have very little experience with campus visits and rarely have a clear idea about what the schools have to offer them. It is the hope of many school officials that those students could experience the same campus visits and evaluations as their white fellow students. It is also extremely important that our county's African-American students become knowledgeable about HBCUs.

Each trip will involve 6-8 students who are in their Junior Year of High School and have been recommended by an administrator or current teacher. Each trip will be to 3-5 schools, and the students participating will have four "at-home" sessions before the actual trip. At those sessions they will select the schools to be visited and work on various components of the trip—questions to be asked, areas of interest, background of the institutions, scholarship potential.

This is a pilot program. Grants will be sought for continuation of the program after completion of the pilot effort. The cost of the pilot program is \$4400, which includes van rental and gas, two nights lodging for students and chaperones, meals, and a small stipend for the three chaperones.

The Committee selected this project because there is currently no program for helping Black students in Transylvania to learn about HBCUs and to experience campus visits.



El Centro – Tools for Expanding Programming:

Sellers Shook, Executive Director and El Centro Board

The board of El Centro has identified the Homework Club, expanding programming and a website as the top priorities for the coming year. Funding tools for programming expansion will enable meeting these goals in 2022.

Current programming is with elementary school children. Expansion of the program to middle and high school students, as well as helping Latino adults, will be possible as follows:

A projector and DVD player will be used to expand programming to middle and high-schoolers, as well as to host seminars for Latino business owners. The projector will also be used to train tutors for a collaboration with the Blue Ridge Literacy Council, and other tutor training to refine the Homework Club. Chapter books and workbooks will expand student use. The website will be a tool to create a newsletter, accept donations online, and show the fruits of El Centro's labors to donors. The website will also showcase community projects, execute a better social media plan, and overall communications and marketing. Cost of tools for expansion is \$1800.

The Endowment Committee selected this project because Latino students have been disproportionately impacted by pandemic school closures and access to online classes. This project allows El Centro to reach middle and high school students. The project also expands fundraising opportunities and visibility for El Centro.

The African-American Storyline Project

(funding will go through the Community Focus Foundation of Transylvania County): Nicola Karesh

This project has two areas of focus. The first is "Faces Of Freedom - 2022" It is a performance art event that will showcase a film related to our community, spoken word, Afrocentric fashion, dance and art from diverse youth and adult local talent. The plan is to do this during Black History Month, assuming that assembling is allowed. If not allowed, the program will be presented online. This event will involve a group of young girls from the African-American community who currently seem to have little or no engagement in the cultural and historical background of their community. Due in part to COVID cancellations, there have been fewer opportunities for this type of exposure. This is the program's major event and project for the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022.

The other focus of the project is "Bringing History and Community to Life," which is a collaboration with youth and adult community members to record and share area Black History.

This includes video to be recorded to give voice to 39 historical markers that cover local Black history in Transylvania County. This will be another opportunity for mentoring students from the Black neighborhoods and involving them in the history and culture. They will be filmed with adults from their neighborhoods who will share their knowledge of the history. This effort will include 29+ Rise & Shine scholars in celebration of their 25th anniversary in 2022. The finished product will be shared with the community in various ways – by social media, at the Faces Of Freedom event and in the newspaper.

The cost of this two-part project is \$4000, which includes videographer, costumes for the Faces of Freedom event, mementos for Rise & Shine students and staff, and stipends for project management, instructors/mentors, and scriptwriters.

The Endowment Committee selected this project because it will give more visibility to Black communities within Transylvania County and increase awareness of the often overlooked Black history here.

The total of the three awards is \$10,200. At 4.6% of the Endowment Fund balance as of June 30, 2021 (\$222,489), this is within the 3-5% guidelines. It also satisfies the requirement not to reduce the Endowment Fund balance below 90% the nominal value of the fund as of June 30, 2021 (\$161,730).

Winter Reflections

Rev. Bob Renjilian

Each new year we start with fresh intentions. I like the idea that we are open to setting our fresh approach as we learn and grow. This past year we had several people sign the membership book, folks who made a change in their intentions to seek us out and become part of this community (despite COVID-19). Being open to new religious paths, with intentionality, is a major focus for Unitarian Universalists. Welcoming newcomers must also be with deliberate visibility, and so (for the first time since I've been here) we're planning a new member welcome in an upcoming service.



The winter brings a change of habits too. Whereas we'd been having Fellowship On The Green picnics each Tuesday up through December (if it wasn't raining), we're taking a break in January and February. Perhaps you are outdoors less time now too. That means more time to read books while snug and warm inside (may you have moments like that - because "busy" is a 4-letter word and is otherwise over-encouraged in other seasons). Maybe winter brings a chance for reflecting on life, and you'd like an appointment with me, for pastoral care. I encourage you to be intentional about how you use this season without the warm-weather distractions of other times.



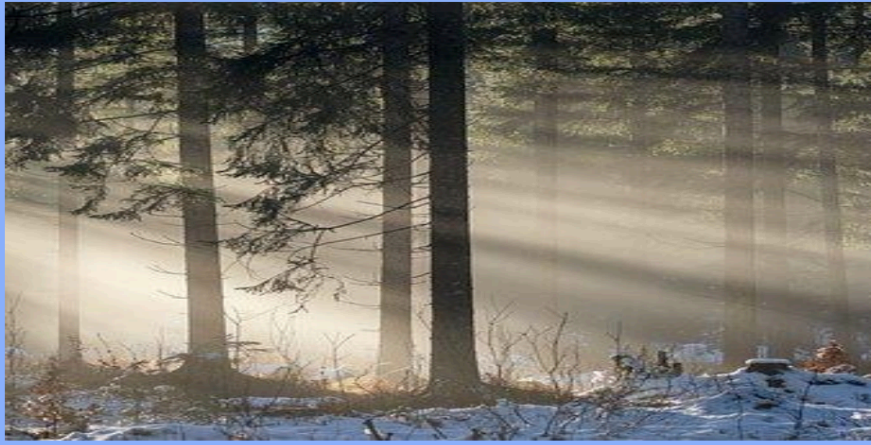
Photo by [Pavan Trikutam](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Please also be intentional about your health. That's usually ok for most members, but we've got the usual assortment of folks who have changing bodies with age or injury. If you are the type to ignore signals in your body that something needs attention, let it float up to awareness and empower yourself to get it checked out. Again, call me or engage LHHH if we can be of support.

And I have hopes this year that we will not have a death from COVID-19 in the congregation. Last year we did have such a loss, but now we have so many more tools at our disposal (better masks commonly available, vaccinations and boosters, newly approved meds that can be prescribed upon diagnosis). May you be well, may all be well. We can be respectful of endemic conditions, and skillfully apply best practices with confidence, rather than the high burden of fear for our lives that (I, at least, but I suspect most of us) carried last January 1.

Happy New Year!

Rev. Bob Renjilian



January 2022 at UUTC

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Tuesday 1/11 @7pm 	Read Wayfinding newsletter for event details! Also check your UUpdates!		Current UUTC Office Hours: Mondays 10-1 Tuesdays 10-1 Thursdays 10-12	December 31 Wayfinding Newsletter	1 New Year's Day
2 9:00 am streamed 9 & 11 in-person service	3 4:00 pm Moral Mondays @ Courthouse, Rain or Shine	4 9 am Men's Grp Zoom 10-12 Grow Getters 3:45 NAACP Education Meeting 4-5 Quiet Meditation Group	5 1:30-3 Women of UUTC	6 3 pm French Conversation Grp	7 Check email for UUPDATE	8
9 9:00 am streamed 9 & 11 in-person service 2 pm On Being (attendance limited)	10 4:00 pm Moral Mondays @ Courthouse, Rain or Shine	11 9 am Men's Grp Zoom 10-12 Grow Getters 4-5 Quiet Meditation Group 7 pm Author Series (Bill Thomas, "Dam It, No!: Saving the Horsepasture River")	12 6:30 pm Poetry & Meditation Class (closed)	13 3 pm French Conversation Grp 5:30 pm Rainbow Alliance	14 Check email for UUPDATE	15 3 – 5 pm Youth Graphic Novel Club, The Girl from the Sea
16 9:00 am streamed 9 & 11 in-person service 12:30 Soul Matters Discussion**	17 Martin Luther King, Jr Day 4:00 pm Moral Mondays @ Courthouse, Rain or Shine	18 9 am Men's Grp Zoom 10-12 Grow Getters 4-5 Quiet Meditation Group	19 1:30-3 Women of UUTC	20 3 pm French Conversation Grp	21 Check email for UUPDATE OWL Lock-in	22 OWL Lock-in
23 9:00 am streamed 9 & 11 in-person service	24 4:00 pm Moral Mondays @ Courthouse, Rain or Shine	25 9 am Men's Grp Zoom 10-12 Grow Getters 4-5 Quiet Meditation Group	26 6:30 pm Poetry & Meditation Class (closed)	27 3 pm French Conversation Grp 5:30 pm Board Meeting	28 Check email for UUPDATE	29
30 9:00 am streamed 9 & 11 in-person service 3:30 Book Club discussion	31 4:00 pm Moral Mondays @ Courthouse, Rain or Shine				**To receive the monthly reading packet for Soul Matters, email RevBob@uutc.org . Discussion is 1/16	