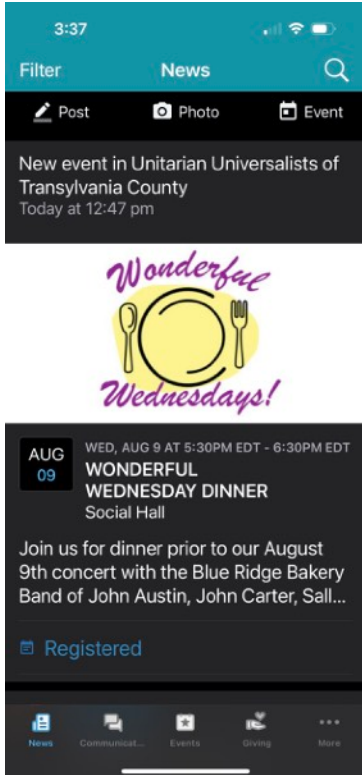




wayfinding



Getting Connected

RK Young

UUTC has a special software tool — app-based for your phone or tablet, but also available through a browser at onrealm.org. Many of you are already using this tool, but if you are newer to our congregation, you may not have gotten your hands on this, yet. However, if you have physically visited our campus, and filled out a Welcome Card, you are very likely to already be included in the directory, and all we have to do is get you logged in!

Why would you bother? Well, it sure makes it easier to get the phone number of someone you just met. Or to register for Wonderful Wednesday dinner, or to sign up for the WAC*ky Women's Art Circle, **or, if you have enabled text messages**, to get notifications for Fellowship on Tap! At the left is a (dark mode) image of the Newsfeed, where new events show up.

I find the magnifying glass to be my biggest help, as I can type in, say, "Sharon," and all the Sharons at UUTC will pop up. Then I can tap the one I'm looking for to get her address or phone number, and call, email or get directions straight from that screen. If you aren't yet using Realm, and just realized how nice it would be, give RK or Trisha a holler at 828-435-2781 so we can get you going with this great tool.

Social Justice Giving for August: El Centro

UUTC has been a consistent, reliable partner to our Brevard El Centro community for many years. From your cash donations, to Dignity Project contributions, to tutoring, to extra help for Youth Soccer, we strive to promote Worth & Dignity for this agency and the people it serves.

Empower, embrace, and connect the Hispanic community

Being the only non-profit where a Spanish speaker always answers the phone lends us the unique ability to connect our families to the broader community, while we work to increase English language literacy and equity in Transylvania County.

Even while our building was under extensive renovation, we were able to continue our mission and uplift families who call us.

38%

Impoverished Population is Hispanic

6%

Students are English Language Learning

- ✓ El Centro began in the early 2000's when a group of community members came together to recognize the value of Hispanic Americans to our community
- ✓ El Centro is a Latino-led nonprofit that serves the Hispanic community and connects them to resources
- ✓ El Centro has been the only primarily Hispanic serving organization in Transylvania county for its entire existence

Minutes & More

For the full Minutes, the Treasurer's Report, the Operations Report and the Minister's report, please visit the [Board's Page](#) and select the reports you wish to view. *NOTE: due to the Board's Meeting falling so close to publication, the link may not include these minutes at publication time.*



Present: Glenn Cockerham, Ian Cowie, Victoria Kerr, Phillip Thomason, Kay Webb, Gail Meyers, Michael Solomon, Rev. Bob Renjilian (via Zoom) and RK Young.

Minister's Report – Rev. Bob met with the Social Action Team and consulted in-between meetings about ways to invite new members to the team and encourage greater participation; he joined other UUTC folks at the NAACP Moral Monday gathering at the Courthouse on July 3 and spoke on inclusiveness. *(more @ the Board's link)*

Treasurer's Report – In Treasurer Mike Griffith's absence, consultant Gail Meyers we closed the 2022-2023 year with a budget deficit of \$4,594.52. However, due to Board action prior to the end of the year, we ended the year with \$24,000 in the checking account. Approved to serve on the Finance Committee this year (besides the Treasurer and Treasurer-Elect): Gail Meyers, Erin Lausch, Gypsy Richardson, Quim Moya, Judith Moore and Rick Laws. Thanks to these Members and Friends for their willingness to serve!

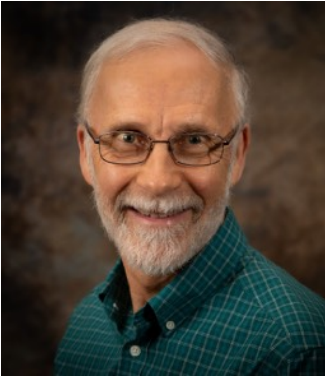
Operations Report — RK discussed safety, staffing and the first fundraiser of the year—HalloweenFest. In the area of staffing, Eloise Shepard has left UUTC employment (but not involvement), and Sue Gervais, our Michigan-based bookkeeper, is turning over the reins to Chelsea Caldwell. This protects UUTC's ability to offer the hours both Trisha Wesley and Chelsea need to do their work.

Old Business: Bank Signatory Documents—Kay Webb presented documents from First Citizens for each Board member to sign as required for check signing on UUTC accounts.

New Business: Compliance Statements – Prior to the meeting, Board members received electronic copies of the Conflict-of-Interest policy from the current Policy Manual and the current Safe Congregation Plan. Members who were present at the meeting signed these compliance statements indicating that they had received and read the aforementioned documents and are accountable to the contents of the documents. Absent members and staff will still need to sign these statements for 23-24.

New Business: Appoint Ministry Review Task Force — Prior to the meeting, Kay shared an overview of the process for the Ministry/Minister Annual Review with Board members. With the appointment of the M/M Review Task Force on the agenda for July, Ian contacted various individuals prior to the July meeting about serving on the task force; he provided a list of those willing to serve. The approved Task Force will be comprised of Ian Cowie, Phillip Thomason, Kelly Alwin, Phil Stewart and Trisha Wesley.

The next meeting of the Board is August 24, 2023 @ 5:30pm.



President's Corner

Ian Cowie

Newly elected UUA president, Dr. Rev. Sofia Betancourt, was asked if she could look ahead six years to when her term was completed and reflect. This is what she said:

I hope we still have vibrant brick-and-mortar congregations that promote grassroots efforts in the street, and support entrepreneurial ministries that don't necessarily look like what we've had for the last hundred years. I hope we interpret our faith in ways that are freer, broader, and more confident in expression. Ways that support our commitment to bearing witness in the world. Looking back at the end of my presidency, I'd like to be able to say that I helped empower UUs to live faithfully.

Considering our Mission to support individual spiritual journeys and to promote social, economic and environmental justice, I want to use this space each month to metaphorically slow the train of our busy lives to see how we continue to move forward fulfilling our mission and be more empowered to live our UU faith every day.

From the July meeting here are some of the issues board members are tackling.

Finances - We closed out our fiscal year in the black (July 22-Jun 23). But, with the understanding the fund that covered our shortfall needs to be reimbursed. It is good we have a budget approved by the congregation that supports fair wages, engages in our wider community, maintains a beautiful campus and provides weekly services that inspire. We are a strong, well-funded church with big ambitions. We need to address how we find new ways to increase revenue. The Board approved membership of a Finance committee that is charged to do just that.

By-Laws - Annually, the Administration Committee reviews and recommends minor changes to the by-laws; this is how the board develops policy that supports our values. It is much like maintenance on your car - after miles of travel, the oil needs changing, tires rotated, air filters replaced. Any changes to the by-laws need approval from the congregation. In the coming months there will be a special meeting to approve the changes.

Ministry Review - Speaking of maintenance, it is also time to review our ministry. We all play a part in our church from attending Sunday services, sharing meals with friends, volunteering in our community to help others. We need to know how this has an impact. We collect data from our friends and members through a survey. When you get the form, please complete and return. A newly formed task force will send out the survey and then provide a summary.

Safety - We cannot ignore the changes in our community. Forces far beyond our control are putting progressive churches like ours at a greater risk. This past week our neighbors at the Plano, Texas UU church were firebombed. Fortunately, no one was injured and damage was minimal. In the coming weeks, a safety task force will assess our safety protocol to find ways to better protect everyone who enters the doors of our church.

Board meetings are held monthly and are open to all Friends and Members. The August meeting will be held August 24, 5:30 pm at the church. You are welcome to join and be part of the discussion.

To learn more about : [President Betancourt's interview, UU World, July 6, 2023](#)

[Community UU Church of Plano Statement](#)

In Covenant, Ian

(NOTE: This is Rev. Bob's study time during the year, and so his column will reappear next month.)

Fellowship Opportunities-Time to Know Each Other!



Souper Sunday is a kid-friendly, congregational shared meal. It relies on volunteers who cook or bake and on others to attend and enjoy their gifts. It's a great time to sit down with someone you don't know as well and have a conversation. This event happens every 'Second Sunday' of the month. **Our next Souper Sunday is August 13th.** If you can bring soup or some other simple item to share for that day, please sign up this Sunday at the front counter—and thank you!



Fellowship On Tap is typically a “pop up” event, but has also been held in restaurants, where we need to set up reservations. Since Covid, we hunt for venues that are open air, usually in Transylvania County. **To be aware of these, you will want to join the Fellowship on Tap group in Realm,** where text and email messages are sent from. We shoot for at least monthly events. **Not yet on Realm? Drop by the office with your device and let's get you set up!**



Weekly on Tuesdays, we have **Fellowship on the Green.** If it's raining, we have this event in the social hall, but otherwise, we meet outside in the fresh air, sunshine, and zooming songbirds. Starts at 11:30am and runs until 1:00pm. Folks come and go as their schedules permit. Rev. Bob and RK anchor the tables and look forward to enjoying your company and conversation!



Wonderful Wednesdays are “Dinner and a Program,” with a more relaxed meal, prepared by volunteers. Dinner starts at 5:30pm, and the program starts at 6:30, leaving folks time to chat more than they typically have on a Sunday after church. Our next Wonderful Wednesday is **August 9th.** Programs are always stimulating, and this month we will enjoy a concert provided by **The Blue Ridge Bakery Band:** John Austin, John Carter, Mark & Sally Wingate. Mark your calendar!

Take a Retreat with UUTC... at The Mountain RLC!



This is a 3-day, 2-night fall congregational retreat for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Brevard. We welcome Members and Friends of UUTC of all ages. There will be fun and fellowship for all, including nature walks, arts and crafts, workshops, singing and music, and a Sunday service. Choose lodging according to your needs— UUTC's programming will mostly happen in the Lodge. The Mountain is very private, part of a unique biome. It's a beautiful place for a retreat. Eighteen beautiful people are registered, why don't you join us? [Register HERE!](#)

Small Group Ministries: For Caregivers

RK Young

Many of our Small Groups have their events listed on our website calendar. But some do not! One of those is our group for Caregivers — those individuals actively caring for family. If you've thought to yourself, "oh, I'm doing OK, I don't want to take space that someone else may need more than I do," well —disavow yourself of that. What is a faith community for if not to support you in what is a truly challenging role?

The UUTC Caregivers Group provides confidential support to those who are caring for loved ones who are no longer able to fully care for themselves. Currently, there are a few openings in the group. If you feel you could benefit from the care and support of other caregivers, please contact Ann Rabb at 828-553-4117.

As your administrator, I've had countless people tell me how grateful they are that this group even exists. Sharon Gublo and Ann Rabb have led this group for a couple or so years now, and it has truly been a healing balm for folks. It meets twice a month on Mondays in the Chalice House.

Other Small Groups!

Women's Group: Led by Janice Canon and Sandra Kirkman, this group meets on the **first and third Wednesdays of the month from 1:30 to 3:00pm in the sanctuary**. This, like the Caregiver's group, is a covenant circle and all discussion is kept in confidence.

Book Group: Exactly as described, this group selects a title, reads the book, and discusses it. **Meets monthly on the 1st Sunday**. To get on the email list, reach out to Krista Moore or Margaret Brown. **Meets in the foyer**.

Quiet Meditation Group: Exactly as described, this group meets weekly **in the Chalice House on Tuesdays at 5PM**. Arrive early so that meditation can start right on time. Contact Joanna Bliss or Judith Moore for more information, or arrive before 5PM!

A Course in Miracles: A Course In Miracles (ACIM) is not a collection of dogmatic, doctrinal, and credal statements. The Course is a very practical approach to changing one's perception in order to move from physical "sight" to true "vision" as seen by the Christ already in each of us. Since the 1970s, A Course In Miracles (ACIM) has helped people of all stripes develop a spiritual discipline that opens them to a visceral experience of the Peace of God. Don O'Dell and Bill Saedlow lead the class, and each has studied the Course for years. All are welcome. **Meets Thursdays at 4PM in the Chalice House**.

Dream Group: This covenant group requires commitment, and you need previous experience in dream work. **Meets in the Chalice House on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 1:15pm**. Contact Carol Flake.

Thursday Men's Meeting: This group meets **in the Social Hall weekly at 9AM on Thursdays**. Drop ins welcome! This group shares together in person only. This is a covenant circle—confidentiality expected.



Shoulder to the Wheel

RK Young

Transylvania County is in danger of being swallowed into factions that all believe they are on the side of Right. Some folks believe this is a Left and Right issue, but it's really much deeper than that. Hate often is promoted as a means of gaining power, and since directed anger *feels* powerful, the "messiahs" pushing this thought gain power through the emotions that are cultivated.

Today, Saturday, July 29th, was supposed to have been the date of a fund-raising Drag Show at UpCountry Brewing, in the Lumberyard. Online intimidation, with an image of an automatic rifle, got law enforcement involved (both City Police and the Sheriff's Department condemned this), and the event is now postponed. UpCountry Brewing, after conferring with law enforcement, realized it needed to have a plan in place to deal with threats. I will be showing up to drink beer at UpCountry Brewing because they deserve our support for what used to be a 'non-event' — fundraising through "womanless weddings" used to be common in Transylvania County. If you'd like to join me, I'll be there fairly early today, July 29th — say, 5:30pm.

Likewise, intimidation is playing a role in the movement of Moral Mondays from the courthouse to rotating venues. Some attendees (those with darker skin) were being followed home. This type of behavior will only get worse if it is permitted to continue. You have to stand up to bullies if you wish to retain your rights to "be" in the world. And for that, you need to be prepared, and you need as many people as possible pulling together. Money won't push this over the finish line. It takes the courage to put our feet on the ground in places that are "less comfortable."

Sunday mornings are a time when we gain the joy to fuel us for these battles. We sing, we hug, we gain the joy of each others' smiles. But to deny that we are IN a battle to keep Transylvania County a place where all are free to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is delusional. If persons of color can't raise their voices in the public square, they are not free. If teachers can have books banned as if those books were as dangerous as guns, they are not free. And if our LGBTQ+ neighbors can't (in this case, just *playfully*) assemble, they are not free. If children and teens can be bullied into suicide for their gender identity, then they have had EVERY freedom denied them.

John F. Kennedy said **"Things do not happen. Things are made to happen."** There are groups in this county that are making things happen. We are not one of them, yet. We are letting things happen. It takes more than 3 or 4 people at school board meetings to be taken seriously. It takes more than 15 people at a County Commission meeting. We may have to take time off from our more pleasurable pursuits to invest in ensuring that all people in Transylvania County have the ability to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In early July, Rev. Bob spoke to us of the historic involvement of Unitarians at the founding of this nation, and how Unitarian ministers have helped to keep government honest in that regard. We needed that message to remind us of moral authority. Guest speaker Rev. Shelly Webb last week talked of Isaiah's "fast." We needed that message to remind us of the work that does not end...which is our moral obligation.

Which brings us back to UUTC. Being courageous will make us more of a target. I will be calling some of you after my vacation and asking if you can serve— as a Greeter, on the Facilities Team, as an Usher, or on the Social Action Team. We are drafting a plan to ensure our own safety as we move forward. But we have to have our own boots on the ground and pushing in the direction of a freer Transylvania County. Buddha said that "the root of suffering is attachment," and some folks are painfully attached to a world in which power (and free expression) rested only in the hands of a few.

Let's get our shoulders to the wheel—we are not without power.