

NUUSLETTER

The Newsletter of Holston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church
always available online at www.hvuuc.org

The mission of Holston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church is to promote spiritual growth, religious freedom, and ethical action.

December 2023

PO Box 8383 Johnson City, Tennessee 37615 (423) 477-7661

Headlines

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Up to date church info is always available at www.hvuuc.org

Save the Date

Dec 11 —Let's Chat Group

Dec 16—Yule Celebration

Dec 19 —Book Club

Dec 19—Sierra Club

Dec 31—Pancakes and Jam

Yoga with Tish Every Tues at 5:15

Find these events and more on our church calendar at the link below.

<https://localendar.com/public/hvuuchurch>

Upcoming Church Services - 11:00AM Sun

Dec 3, 2023

Festivals of Light

A beloved celebration of many traditions around this time of year from many faiths.

Dec 10, 2023, Rev. Sapp

The Variety of Religious Experience

There's an odd demarcation in the 3rd and 4th Sources of Unitarian Universalism. The third names "wisdom from the world's religions" as a source of inspiration and ethical guidance, while the fourth names "Jewish and Christian teachings" specifically. It seems strange to separate those out. But when you look at Unitarian Universalist history, it makes a certain kind of sense. And it challenges us with an important question, "Are we truly a post-Christian religion?"

Dec 17, 2023, Gordan Gibson

If the Grinch Had Been Raised a UU

The Grinch started out with poor values. He hated other creatures being happy. Everything had to conform to his desires. Would his values have been better with UU parenting and a UU religious education?

Dec 24, 2023, Rev. Sapp

Christmas in Story and Song

Come join us at our regular Sunday morning time to celebrate Christmas Eve the UU way with some classic Christmas stories and songs, and maybe something new that you haven't heard before!

Virtual Church on YouTube

All of our services are available on our YouTube channel. They are uploaded by the end of the day each Sunday.

Subscribe to our channel at:

youtube.com/c/HolstonValleyUnitarianUniversalistChurch/featured

And the Center is Love

Happy Holidays HVUUC Family! Like a lot of you I am in that strange and timeless headspace that exists between Thanksgiving and the New Year. I'm so grateful that there are longstanding rituals like our Festivals of Light celebration and Pancakes and Jam to give me grounding points in this season. And I'm so grateful for newly emerging traditions like the Giving Tree. Which, by the way, was on the front page of the Johnson City Press on November 28th. Here's the link to their article: https://www.johnsoncitypress.com/news/local-news/the-giving-tree-returns-for-second-year-of-holiday-generosity/article_16080516-8d76-11ee-be0a-6ba2340868ab.html

Our Giving Tree project and our annual community gatherings this time of year remind me that the center of everything we do is Love. We love each other and we love this community. It's even in our Vision Statement: "sharing love" is listed as one of the three main ways we collectively seek our transformation.

The Unitarian Universalist Association, the voluntary collection of Unitarian Universalist congregations that we are a part of, has been thinking a lot about Love too. We are currently in the middle of a process that is looking at reviewing Article 2 of the Unitarian Universalist Association bylaws, something we talked about quite a bit leading up to General Assembly this June. And they have put Love at the center of this new statement.

During that General Assembly, some amendments were proposed and passed in connection with this bylaw revision as part of our democratic process. And the first of two votes to put this bylaw revision in place passed. The next vote, which would make the change official, will come at 2024's General Assembly.

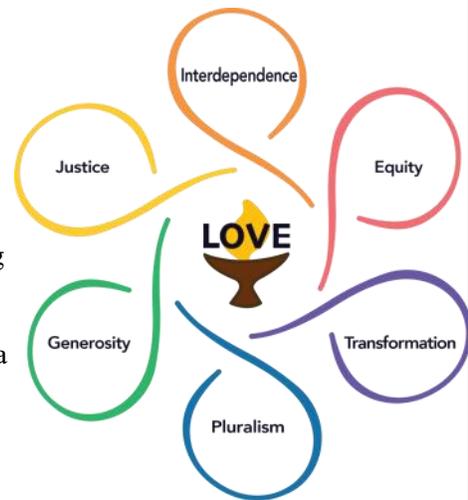
As you can imagine, incorporating the amendments and making sure the document is clear, is a process! The Article 2 Study Commission finally released their updated proposal incorporating the amendments, and it is available for our review. Here's a link to it: <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/final-proposed-revision-article-ii> Also included on that page is a letter from the Study Commission and the UUA Board to explain their process.

I am personally excited to imagine how our movement will continue to evolve as we name the values of Interdependence, Equity, Transformation, Pluralism, Generosity, Justice and Love as being central to our Unitarian Universalist identity. I remain committed to celebrating the historical importance and current relevance of our Principles as well, and don't expect them to fall out of our consciousness with this change. I'm grateful that freedom of belief and the self-governance of local congregations continue to be preserved through these proposed revisions. For me, Love has always been the center, and I'm so glad to work with you to build this church that loves everyone.

I hope you experience the magic, wonder and warmth of this season, especially when it is so cold outside!

Love, Rev. Tiffany

minister@hvuuc.org



Upcoming News and Events at HVUUC

First Friday Women's Group

1st Friday Women's Group
DECEMBER 1ST 2023

Gathering at the home of Cynthia G.
6:00 to 9:30 pm

Sharing our favorite childhood memories!!! You are welcome to bring your knitting or crochet project with you. As usual bring your favorite beverage or snack to share.

Reminder:
1ST FRIDAY WOMENS GROUP
JANUARY 2024

SILLY SECRET SANTA GAME NIGHT
Further information in next months issue.

the box. One of our elves will happily do the shopping for you.

If you know of a business or group that would like to donate, please have them contact us at givingtree@hvuuc.org

Christmas Caroling

Please join us for an afternoon of Christmas Caroling to our homebound loved ones. Soup will be provided for Carolers during coffee hour. Carpooling is encouraged. We will provide song books. Please dress festive!

We will leave the Church around 1pm to head to Kingsport and then from Kingsport to Boones Creek and then to Johnson City. Contact Reverend Tiffany or Charis, our Music Program Director with any questions at minister@hvuuc.org and musicdirector@hvuuc.org

The Giving Tree

Join the Social Justice Committee in restocking and supplying gifts for "The Giving Tree" in Kings Common park in Johnson City.

The HVUUC Giving Tree has items on it for those in our community who are in need. We will be restocking the tree until January 7. If you would like to be involved with restocking the tree, please contact givingtree@hvuuc.org.

The collection box is in the Fred Ball Room. Items needed (new please):
caps

- gloves
- scarves
- underwear
- socks (all sizes)
- men and women's hygiene products

Please leave items unwrapped. You may put items in clear ziplock type bags (this helps) or leave them in the box unpackaged.

Also, monetary donations are also accepted. Please put money or check in an envelope in

Pancakes and Jam

Our beloved New Years tradition returns! A group of our HVUUC men and others volunteer to cook a pancake breakfast with common breakfast sides. Alongside the eating, is an informal show of talent, and if musicians choose, it wraps up in an on-the-spot jam session.

This is friendly for all ages, and kids (and kids at heart) are welcome to come in their jammies.

The Pancakes and Jam event is a relaxed time of community in place of an official morning service.

*To help with food preparation and kitchen camaraderie, please contact macho@hvuuc.org.

*To volunteer for an act - musical, poetry, whatever, of any age, contact pancakesandjam@hvuuc.org. Deadline for inclusion is December 30th.

Did You Know HVUUC Has an Endowment Fund?

The purpose of HVUUC's Endowment Fund is to promote the long-term financial health of the church. It accepts gifts and bequests "in order to enhance the Church's ability to carry out its mission." The Endowment Fund is entirely funded by members and friends of the church.

Typically, donations fall into one of two categories:

Bequests from wills, in which a person leaves a gift to the church's Endowment Fund. A commemorative grant to honor a marriage, birth, graduation, death, or other important life event. This can be a great way to acknowledge an important occasion in your family or a friend's, while contributing to HVUUC's long-term financial stability.

When the Fund receives a commemorative gift, the Endowment Fund Committee is happy to write a letter to the family, letting them know of your grant in their honor.

The money in the Fund, currently around \$148,000, is invested and managed by the Endowment Fund Committee (appointed by the Board of Trustees). Each year, the Fund provides the church with a payment equal to 4% of the average of the Fund balance for the prior three years. The intent is that such payments can occur in perpetuity, and the value of the Fund (and payments to HVUUC) will grow as additional gifts are made. For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the Fund provided the church's annual operating budget with \$6,374.

Please consider including the HVUUC Endowment Fund in your will. And feel free to write a check, however large or small, any time but especially if something happens in your life or a friend's life that is worthy of recognition.

Checks can be dropped into the Sunday collection plate, mailed to the church directly from your bank or investment account, or as part of the minimum distribution from your IRA (if you are over 72 and must make an RMD) ...just make sure that the check is labeled "HVUUC Endowment Fund" so it doesn't get confused with funds intended for the annual operating budget.

HVUUC Endowment Fund Committee
David Kashdan (Chair)
Deb Helmer
Greg Kramer
Frieda Love
endowment@hvuuc.org

How We Incorporate Music at HVUUC

Looking Forward to a New Year

Hello,

My name is Charis Carter and I have had the privilege of serving Holston Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (HVUUC) as our Music Program Director (MPD) for the past four years. We find ourselves in a stable place here at HVUUC yet change is a part of our consistency.

I joined the church as a volunteer in 2019 and our congregation was being led by an interim, or temporary, minister Reverend Jeff Briere. At the time, Michael Luchtan, an incredibly talented multi-instrumentalist was leading the 'special music' in the services and Jeff's wife, Kate Briere, was leading the Choir. Special Music was composed mostly of groups at this time and it was not rare to hear the choir execute a complex song or hymn as special music.

Each service is carefully crafted by HVUUC Ministers and collaboration among staff and volunteers and is essential to the integration of our culture and an accurate representation of our values as a congregation made of up individuals with varying styles and preferences.

The topic for a Sunday Service is typically chosen months in advance. This is done with all the moving parts in mind. Our Services are constructed: of a speaker who crafts and delivers a sermon, a Religious Services Committee Coordinator, a sound engineer that operates the board and sets up equipment for all aspects of amplification, a computer and camera operator, a video producer, an office manager that handles (so much), coffee hour attendants, and further volunteer greeters. At least half of these folks are an integral part of crafting a service.

What about Music?! My goal as the MPD is to involve you, our congregation, as much as possible. I send out quarterly emails to folks that have signed up to receive the emails. These emails provide a list of opportunities involving music at the church. You can select a hymn or a song, or volunteer to perform one that has already been chosen. You are also welcome to contact me anytime throughout the year about involvement in our Music Program. Am I the only person you talk to about music? No.

HVUUC relaunched our Music Committee in 2023 after a hiatus during Covid. We meet at least once a month and discuss all things music, design and implement various programs, and provide music, audio, and volunteer support to other events with the church. Currently, most of our members are occupied with matters outside of the church, so we've decided to take a break until January 2024. We are thrilled to be inviting new members to join our committee or just stop in for a visit starting this January. Keep an eye out for announcements for opportunities to do so. Interested parties can email musicdirector@hvuuc.org.

What about the Choir?

Our choir is fairly fluid. We do not have a consistent choir director as we are reliant on volunteer choir directors at this time. The choir has access to our spreadsheet that shows the hymns for each week. We will often run through the hymns on a needs basis. Sometimes it's several weeks in advance and sometimes it's right before the service around 10:30 am. And then there are times that the choir does not feel they need to rehearse for months in a row and they simply get up and sing the familiar songs each Sunday. There are other times when we have special or more demanding pieces that require more from the choir and a volunteer choir director for said project. We would love to have you sing with our choir and for our congregation.

Thank you so much for your time, energy, and attention. I look forward to hearing from you!

In Gratitude and Passion,

Charis Carter, MA
Music Program Director
HVUUC

Social Justice News and Initiatives

Peace Works Focus Group

Noel Marshall and Bob Warner led a group of peacemakers to Costa Rica the end of October.

The group brought suitcases of clothing, shoes and even a suitcase of soccer cleats to the children of LaCarpio - the largest poverty community in Central America populated by 25,000 Nicaraguan refugees.

We shared songs and art activities as well as a delicious meal together. The children put a play about the true story of Peace Pilgrim (www.peacepilgrim.org) who walked over 25,000 miles for peace criss-crossing the United States. The grandmothers put on a play about surviving domestic abuse. You can learn more about the Costa Rica Humanitarian Foundation here (www.crhf.org).

Noel Marshall and Bob Warner were among invited to be guests on the international celebration of Peace Pole Day November 22nd.

We shared our experience doing a flag ceremony at the Peace Pentagon in Southwest Virginia as well as doing a flag ceremony and planting three peace poles in Costa Rica.

Our peacemakers group also served as judges for the annual International Peace Pals art contest with entries from over 120 countries. (www.peacepalsinternational.org).



Social Justice Committee representative Lori K. (right) presents Yogev Von Kundra of the Appalachian Peace Education Center with a check for \$1,109.25, HVUUC's October 5th Sunday Collection to support the great peace work of APEC.

BIG thanks to all who contributed, living HVUUC's commitment to our principle of peace.

Caring Team

Caring Team December coordinator is

Alicia Culbertson

Contact caring@hvuuc.org to communicate any needs in our congregation.



THE CARING TEAM CARES ABOUT YOU



Kitchen of Hope

If you would like to help, please consider donating either money or food items that can go in a lunch bag. We serve twice a month, but the Kitchen of Hope serves 6 nights a week.

To donate money:

Mail a check to - HVUUC PO Box 8383, Gray, TN 37615 memo: Kitchen of Hope

Via Paypal - <https://hvuuc.org/donate> (please indicate it is for Kitchen of Hope)

To donate food: Contact Kim at KOH@hvuuc.org

Website Member Log In

There is information on the website that you need to log in to see. Scroll to bottom of the home page and click on "Members Area". If you need the password, email office@hvuuc.org.

Once you log in, you can get a recent member directory, read the board policies and procedures and board meeting minutes, and get a reimbursement form or our tax exempt certificate.

Grocery Cards Available for Purchase

Food City and Ingles grocery cards are available and can be mailed or delivered to you!

Cards can be delivered to mailboxes in the Johnson City or Kingsport area, and possibly to others areas. Of course, the cards could also be mailed.

We will happily accommodate your needs so that we can continue to generate a wee bit of income for the church.

If you are interested, please contact Dottie and Richard at grocerycards@hvuuc.org.

Thank you for continuing to participate!

2023-2024 Board of Trustees

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Director of Religious Education: Justin Ridley DRE@hvuuc.org

Music Director: Charis Carter musicdirector@hvuuc.org

Office Administrator: Jessica Bowman office@hvuuc.org

Video Tech Support: Donnie Barnett tech@hvuuc.org

Submissions for each month's newsletter are due by the last day of month to newsletter@hvuuc.org.