



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.

April 2024

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

April 5—Women's Night
April 8 & 22 —Let's Chat Group
April 14 & 28—Choir Rehearsal
April 17 —BoT Meeting
April 24—Wednesday Night Supper
April 26—Game Group

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

Apr 7, 2024, Cindi Huss
Domestic Violence Awareness

What is domestic abuse, and how can HVUUC better support survivors by creating a safe space for healing and holding abusers accountable? We will be addressing some hard but very important topics and acknowledge they can be triggering for some people. There will be childcare for children 3rd grade through high school in the RE building up the hill if your family would like to use it.

Apr 14, 2024, Rev. Sapp
Flower Communion

A widely celebrated Unitarian Universalist tradition, the flower communion is an interactive service that invites us to contemplate what we bring to our community and what we receive from our community. Please bring a flower. It can come from the store, your garden, or even the roadside. Additional flowers will be provided so please come whether you have a flower or not.

Apr 21, 2024, Rev. Jeff Briere
Guest and Host - Is tolerance passé?

Stephen Gallagher, a philosopher living in North Carolina, believes that tolerance is passé. He thinks "Tolerance is, by definition, one-sided. The tolerator graciously decides to tolerate the Other. The Other has no say in the matter, nor does the Other have the power to return the favor. Tolerance is thus a more or less naked deployment of power." Is he right? You decide.

Apr 28, 2024, Rev. Sapp
May Day Yesterday and Today

May 1 is International Labor Day. And yet, we never hear about this holiday here in the United States. We have a separate Labor Day in September. Did you ever wonder why? Come explore the Labor movement with us today in story and in song. And stay after church for our Annual Meeting!

Spiritual Development for Self and Others

Have you ever wondered what I do on days other than Sunday? If you've been curious, this newsletter series is for you. In this second article in the series we are going to be talking about the Ministerial Fellowship Committee's third competency, "Spiritual Development for Self and Others"

This is a broad category that encompasses both my own spiritual growth and self-care, as well as modeling and nurturing personal development within the congregation, with a special emphasis on making space to be a truly pluralistic community.

My own self-care has been an important learning point for me this year. Some things I do for my own spiritual development fit the mold of what folks might think of as "spiritual:" going on retreats, daily candle-lighting and meditating practices, hiking while breathing in the amazing Appalachian mountain energy, reading devotional books and ancient religious texts. But some of the things I do for my own spiritual development are a little out of the box: playing with a weekly game group not associated with the church, social media fasts, making mindful playlists, dumping paint on canvases and watching to see what happens. When you're a Unitarian Universalist, Spiritual Development can look like a lot of different things.

Watching the congregation do it's own spiritual/mindful development work is a privilege that I enjoy. I don't have to do much when you all are already so good with your religious education classes, covenant groups, book groups, and special interest gatherings like CUUPS and the Atheist Group. Even when we're not engaged in one of these specific groups, I remember what Unitarian Universalist staff person Connie Goodbread said: "Everything we do is faith formation. Everything we teach is Unitarian Universalism. The Congregation is the curriculum." Meaning all the ways that we interact and support each other helps us grow both individually and collectively.

Just today I was talking with one of the young adults in our congregation who reminded me that there are a lot of wonderful national Unitarian Universalist organizations for special interest groups and unique demographics that can also be part of our faith formation. Sometimes it can make a real difference to connect with Unitarian Universalists that share our identities and interests when there aren't a critical mass in our local congregation, so I want to end this article with a list of resources that might apply to you: (please note that while I'm giving you websites, you can also often find these groups on Facebook and other social media platforms as well)

Church of the Larger Fellowship: A Fully Online Unitarian Universalist Church that includes an extensive ministry to Unitarian Universalists who are imprisoned: <https://www.questformeaning.org/clfuu/>

Young Adult Revival Network: For Unitarian Universalists ages 18-39: <https://www.uuyarn.org/>

Diverse & Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries: For People of Color: <https://www.druumm.org/>

UPLIFT: A Monthly gathering for Transgender and NonBinary Unitarian Universalists: <https://www.uua.org/lgbtq/transnb>

UU Women's Federation: For organizing and supporting UU Women: <https://www.uuwf.org/>

Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship: For UU Christians: <https://www.uuchristian.com/>

UU Humanist Association: For UU Humanists: <https://huumanists.org/>

Unitarian Universalist Ministry for the Earth: Spiritual Grounding and Education for Earth Care and Climate Justice: <https://www.uumfe.org/>

And these are just the tip of the iceberg. If you feel the need for connection, learning and development that aren't yet part of our church's programs or listed in the Unitarian Universalist national offerings, come talk to me about it and I can probably help you find something.

Blessings to us all on our personal growth journeys! - Rev Tiffany

Upcoming News and Events at HVUUC

Let's Chat Covenant Group

The Let's Chat Covenant Group is looking for new members! We meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the week from 6:30 to 8:30 PM.

Previous Chats were about:

- Joy
- Shame and Scorn
- Your purposes in Life
- Experiencing your Vocation
- Empowering our True Selves

Contact Greg Kramer at letschat@hvuuc.org

Blue Plum

HVUUC will have a booth at the Blue Plum festival again this year on Friday June 7th and Saturday June 8th. If you would like to help plan for these days of fun, music and community art, we will have a planning meeting on Sunday April 21st at 12:30 at the REZ.

If you would like to volunteer at the booth, please email blueplum@hvuuc.org to sign up.

Coffee Hour

We still need volunteers for coffee hour!

See bulletin board calendar right next to the kitchen. Your help is necessary to maintain Fellowship hour Sunday schedule.

BIG THANKS to all the volunteers who made our weekly HVUUC Fellowship possible in 2023.

Email Coffeeshour@hvuuc.org

Flower Communion

April 14th

All these beautiful early spring flowers around the congregation and in our yards mean it must be getting time for Flower Communion! On Sunday April 14th everyone will be invited to bring their own flower to share, in this ceremony that celebrates the beauty of community.

Bring your flower on April 14th!

HVUUC Concerts—Andrew McKnight

May 4th, 6:00PM

Come enjoy an eclectic family-friendly performance by acclaimed singer/songwriter Andrew McKnight!

And come hungry, because we will be selling nachos, Mexican-style food, and non-alcoholic beverages!

(BYOB is ok for adults who want alcohol) Food is priced separately depending on order from menu.

Award-winning singer/songwriter, guitarist and poet from northern Virginia's Blue Ridge. Nationally-acclaimed singer/songwriter and guitarist celebrates rural America, weaving his masterfully crafted songs, humorous stories and poetic drama into a musical soundscape sketched with shades of Appalachia, tasteful slide and jazzy blues, feisty anthems, and rustic folk.

Emails musicdirector@hvuuc.org with questions.

First Friday Women's Group

April 5, 2024, 6:30-9:00

Host: Dian G.
Location: HVUUC

Women's night is for All those who identify as women to share time together. Come be uplifted, and uplift. Bring your favorite snack or beverage to share, but if life is running away from you, it isn't required. Your presence is most important.

Email womensgroup@hvuuc.org with questions.

Back-Up Nursery Volunteers Needed

The HVUUC Nursery is in need of back-up volunteers that could be available to fill in on Sunday mornings from 9:30 - 12:00, and at other events that call for childcare.

If you have a passion for caring for the youngest among us please reach out to Justin Ridley our DRE at dre@hvuuc.org

Treasury Report

As we end the third quarter of our 2022/2023 fiscal year, our income is \$27,404 ahead of our spending thanks to your continued support and the conscientious use of our funds. The summary table of our finances for the third quarter is shown below.

Treasurer Summary Report - Third Quarter 2022-2023

	Totals through third quarter, actual	Budgeted amount through third quarter	Totals through third quarter, actual minus budgeted
Income	\$145,936	\$132,138	\$13,798
Expenses	\$118,529	\$132,138	-\$13,609
Income minus Expenses	\$27,407	-	\$27,407

This quarter has been very active. We raised \$368 for One Acre Café with a fifth Sunday collection. Also, the Green Arts Festival raised \$120 for the Green Sanctuary fund, used for projects to reduce power usage in the church. Work has begun to install new windows in the Minister's and DRE's offices to replace rotting wood and improve insulation. Repairs have also begun to the damages in the kitchen and the Fred Ballroom from the flood that occurred over Christmas. We have been able to start this work with the money we have saved in our Capital Repairs fund, and happily, will be refunded from our insurance.

The full treasurer's financial spreadsheet is in the member's section of the church website. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at treasurer@hvuuc.org. - Deb Helmer.



Tree Day March 2024 was a success!

The TN Environmental Council reported that more than 100,000 trees were distributed this year. Since beginning in 2007, there have been one million native trees planted through their Tree Program. As a pick-up site, HVUUC contributed to this effort and improved the health of our surrounding environment by sending 555 tree seedlings on the road to new homes.

There were several extra seedlings included in our shipment and those were taken by volunteers. You may notice new additions to the HVUUC outdoor spaces this week.

Thank you to everyone who helped with bundling and distribution: Judy, Sue, Dana, Greg, Neal, Beth, Ellender, Seren, Doug, and Lori. Thanks also to everyone who helped in other ways and contributed supplies! See you next year!

HVUUC Walking Trail

The idea of a walking trail on church property has been around for many years. There had been a couple of earlier unsuccessful efforts to cut one. In 2019, Charlie Mattioli took the lead in organizing a group of church members to plan, flag, cut and develop a trail that would be 5-8 feet wide and follow easy terrain. The trail starts in the far left-hand corner of the church's front parking lot, winds through the woods to the lower parking lot and ends in front of the church.



The nature trail is meant to serve several purposes:

- 1) To enjoy nature and the grounds surrounding the church.
- 2) To encourage exercise
- 3) To stimulate meditation and relaxation

The Nature Trail has a series of short meditative quotes from well-known writers on small plaques posted on trees to encourage thought and appreciation of the natural world. It also has a number of benches where one can rest, relax, and just enjoy quiet and beauty.

A group was formed called the Pathmakers to develop the trail. The following people were in that group: Charlie Mattioli, Mike Frisch, David Kashdan, Tish Kashdan, Ray Hatch, Greg Kramer, Fletcher Margeson, Joseph Viola, Alex Stollberg Lance Klosterman, Tom Burns, Frank Shuler, Richard Boyd, Denee Mattioli, William Kaufman, Charlie Stuart, Mary Williamson, Charlie Miller, George Cross, Betty Kramer, Bryan Kleske, and Brandy Hayes.

After flagging the path, this work group and sometimes other volunteers, cut trees, bushes and tall grass and cleared the path. The power lines along West Street on our property were being cleared of trees by the power company at the time and they gladly deposited many piles of wood chips in our lower parking lot which we used to cover the entire trail. Charlie Mattioli and Lance Klosterman used their tractors to deposit it at various places on the trail where it was then spread by wheelbarrows and rakes by our many volunteers.

When Covid hit in early 2020 the work slowed but continued as there were plenty of outdoor spaces to complete projects. The benches were built in Charlie Mattioli's shop and varnished for protection. George Cross and Charlie dug holes and placed them in concrete along the trail. It was completed in 2020 and continues to be used and enjoyed by many church members.

You can find a virtual tour through all four seasons of our walking trail on our Youtube page at this link:

https://www.youtube.com/live/3gVLI92w3_E?si=jV95gwa9iWWbn5UL

Social Justice News and Initiatives

The following Statement has been released by the Unitarian Universalist Association. It is provided for your information only.

HVUUC has not, to-date, made ANY public statement on the Middle East situation. Any HVUUC public statement would require compliance with our church's Bylaws. As such, the procedures for a Social Justice Call to Action Meeting would be in place at which time the entire congregation would have an opportunity to vote.

UUA Condemns Violence Against Gaza, Urges Immediate and Total Ceasefire

February 14, 2024

This statement was developed by the Office of the President and other senior national staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), grounded in the values of Unitarian Universalism and in conversation with previous resolutions, statements, and actions passed by General Assembly, the UUA's democratically-elected governing body.

There are crystallizing moments in the course of history when, in spite of the differences that exist among us, our common reverence for life demands that we speak with moral courage and clarity on the side of love. As people of faith and conviction, Unitarian Universalists share a belief that every human life is sacred, endowed with worth and dignity from the moment of birth, with no person more deserving of freedom and flourishing than any other. Our living tradition has long maintained that the only hells that exist are those that we create for one another, here on earth.

We are watching in real time as the people of Gaza exist in a human-made hell that grows more unimaginable every day. At this point, 28,000 Palestinian civilians have been killed and nearly 70,000 have been injured by Israeli attacks in Gaza since Hamas attacked Israeli citizens on October 7. The medical infrastructure in Gaza has been decimated, and the Israeli government continues to prevent humanitarian aid, including food and water, from reaching refugees. And this week, the Netanyahu administration has announced the forced evacuation and ground invasion of Rafah, where 1.3 million displaced Palestinians have set up a massive tent city as a last refuge. The UUA first joined the call for a ceasefire on October 17, rooted in our historic positions as an organization; nearly four months later, this situation could not be more urgent.

In their January 26 emergency interim ruling, the International Court of Justice found that these atrocities in Gaza plausibly constitute genocidal acts and issued an immediate order to the Israeli government to "take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II," the United Nation's Convention on genocide. While the UUA has historically affirmed the importance of the Genocide Conventions, we know there is a wide range of opinion among Unitarian Universalists about how this terminology is used today. What should be clear to all of us, however, is that the Israeli government's forced displacement, punishment, and intentional inflicting of suffering and death upon children and civilians in Gaza is a moral catastrophe that our faith demands we condemn and resist.

In that spirit, the Unitarian Universalist Association reiterates our condemnation of the Israeli military's ongoing violence against Gaza and joins again with the growing chorus of voices across the globe urging immediate and total ceasefire, the provision of massive emergency humanitarian aid, and the safe return of all hostages and prisoners.

This terrifying moment calls all people of faith and conscience to do everything in our power to push our governments to interrupt genocide, address humanitarian crisis, avert multinational war, and weave just and lasting peace across the globe.

As longtime proponents of the crucial work of the United Nations and its official agencies (see resolutions from 1965, 1969, 1972, 1981 and 2010), the UUA is grateful for the nuance and thoroughness of the UN International Court of Justice's January 26 findings. We decry the Israeli leadership's ongoing rejection of all ceasefire proposals and outright flouting of the ICJ's findings and directives in its ongoing military assault.

The UUA further condemns the US government's unabated complicity in the crisis in Gaza, from providing massive military aid to Israel to slashing funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian Refugees. Without international pressure, the Netanyahu administration will undoubtedly follow through on their vow to achieve "total victory" by decimating the entirety of Gaza. We call for the US government to stop funding Israel's military machine, and to leverage its unrivaled influence upon Israel and in the world community to intervene and stop the attacks on Gaza.

Each day the assault on Gaza continues brings us closer to the brink of calamitous international war. Tensions continue to escalate among nations, and violence has already transgressed national borders and international waters. As a faith community that has historically advocated for peaceful resolution of conflict and protection of international law, we believe it is imperative that the global community respond decisively to mitigate ongoing harm and prevent further catastrophic loss of life. This terrifying moment calls all people of faith and conscience to do everything in our power to push our governments to interrupt genocide, address humanitarian crisis, avert multinational war, and weave just and lasting peace across the globe.

In that spirit, we offer our prayers to all those working to mitigate harm and stop the atrocities, from journalists and doctors and humanitarian workers on the ground, to Israeli citizens and Jews across the diaspora faithfully engaging and courageously protesting the right-wing Netanyahu regime, to global multi-faith and secular movements advocating for ceasefire. We urge Unitarian Universalists to listen deeply, especially to the voices of Palestinians whose lives and communities have been the vast majority of casualties of this war, and to think critically about the ways the United States is complicit in enabling this disaster to continue.

Like many, we dream of an enduring peace in the Middle East. Israelis and Palestinians deserve real and lasting safety, as do all people in the Holy Land. Long-term diplomatic solutions that honor international human rights and religious freedom are essential. However, in this critical moment we must pressure our leaders to turn back from this precipice of unspeakable violence, or this dream will not have a future.

We call upon all Unitarian Universalists to open our hearts and be present to the depths of human suffering in this moment – not just by one group, but by people of many nationalities, identities, and religions. We commit to identifying and mitigating the evils of anti-Semitism, anti-Arabism, and Islamophobia in our own tradition and to address their toxic legacies wherever we encounter them. Our faith rejects all forms of nationalism and supremacy, and insists that we struggle for multiracial, multi-religious democracy in our own nation and across the world. We encourage all Unitarian Universalists to take action in solidarity not only with global movements for ceasefire, but with liberatory pro-democratic movements of all kinds that are working toward a future that contains the conditions of possibility for a true and enduring peace.

Caring Team

March Coordinator: Judy Tucker

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