



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Franklin, NH

Spectacles

MAY 2023

From Our Minister



A colleague recently shared a [blogpost](#) another UU minister recently wrote, based on her experience with dying congregations. One of the questions that the author, Rev. Peggy Clarke, asks congregational leadership, is this:

“Do we have the theological grounding to offer what people need? Not the energy, not the staff. That’s not the question. Does our theology meet the needs we and others have right now?”

In a denomination that prides itself on its theological diversity but also bears, at times, tremendous discomfort around theological sharing, the question feels to me a bit like a challenge. And yet, I think that is the point. If any congregation is to continue to exist as a *religious* organization, it must offer a theology

that meets the needs of people, today and in times to come.

Rev. Clarke goes on:

“If the answer to this last [question] is no, it’s time to accept that you are a social club, not a relevant/necessary religious community. This is fine. Consider ways to revamp both your message and your expectations while realigning your resources for the social programming the people in the room want. You aren’t going to grow, but you can commit to each other in a way that can be lovely and sustain you until there are just a few of you left.”

So where do we stand at UUCF? Do we have the theological grounding to offer what people need? Are we a social club? Are we a relevant and/or necessary religious community?

While we never asked (or considered) this question directly in the canvass surveys, it has been a powerful experience to hear from different folks about what is meaningful to them about UUCF and what they envision for our future. From these and other conversations I have had with members over the past two years, I would say that as a congregation we are split; for some, we may even be split within ourselves. Inreach and outreach are *always* polarities in dynamic tension within congregations. But let’s talk about it.

Members really value the relationships and connections that UUCF has fostered. Some of those relationships preceded UUCF, but have deepened through involvement in this community. I think of Howard showing up to visit for his first Sunday, only to be greeted by his childhood friend Susan! Other relationships, as far as I can tell, started at UUCF, but expanded beyond official church functions to things like attending storytelling events together, or playing dominoes. Yet there is still a significant joy to coming together at the meetinghouse to play games, as we experienced last month. Your love of playing together is palpable and generative, and weaves itself through the congregation and the larger community, making itself especially known over the years in places like Franklin Footlight Theatre and Sant Bani School.

And that pleasure in being together in no way excludes the value that many place on being a voice of liberal religion and values in Franklin. I have been thanked by countless members for my participation in the Franklin Anti-Hate group, for speaking up at a school board meeting, and for attending political events at the State House, where I have encountered a couple of you. Most of us share a love of the earth and of caring for the soil, as evidenced by nearly a third of the congregation participating in the *All We Can Save* book discussion last year, your own numerous gardens, and your pleasure in caring for the grounds of the meetinghouse. You all care *deeply* about what is going on in the world around you, even as you differ in what you think is the best thing for us, as a congregation, to do about it. I've noticed my own voice steadily become more political, in quiet response to both an openness and hunger I sense from many of you.

Rev. Clarke closes her blogpost with a few more questions she thinks crucial for congregational leadership to consider. The final one is this:

“If our message is salvific for us, can we let it propel us to pray with our feet, getting out into the world to spread the good news? (One prerequisite: we have to stop being afraid of evangelism. If our message is liberating, people will want to hear it.)”

I share the fear many of you have expressed about ‘proselytizing.’ But the thing is, if we have a theology that offers the world something it needs, it’s time to believe in ourselves and our theology and share it with others. Not ever to say “this belief is better than that belief,” but rather to share that this spiritual community, its practices and teachings, has, perhaps, helped you face some of the greatest challenges of being alive today. By spreading a message that all have inherent worth and dignity, and affirming the value of those who have most often been marginalized and felt this denied to them. By sharing with others our joy and our playfulness, and naming, with pride, that UUCF is a place where that is cherished and expanded.

May our love boil over and infuse our lives and community with a grounding theology of belonging amidst a fearful world. May we believe in our individual and communal gifts, and with them, may we dare to bless the world.

Love,
Rev. Ariel



Upcoming UUCF Sunday Services

May 7th, 10am ~ Rev. Sara Dendy-Green
Musician ~ Libby Danahy

May 14th, 10am ~ Rev. Ariel Aaronson-Eves
Musician ~ Paul Hubert

May 21st, 10am ~ Rev. Linda Goodman
Musician ~ Libby Danahy

Bread and Soup Sunday



May 28th, 10am ~ Rev. Brendan Hadash
Musician ~ Robin Charles



COFFEE HOUR

Face masks are **REQUIRED** when at the communal food table during Coffee Hour.

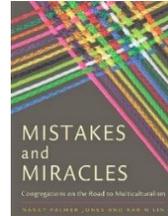
Sign-up sheets for **Coffee Hour** and **Flowers** for the sanctuary are located in the Fellowship Hall. Please sign up.

Upcoming Parish Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 9th at 5:30pm via Zoom (PC meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month). If you would like to attend, please contact Erin, em41385@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

2022-23 Parish Committee Members

Kim Donovan, Chair
Erin Metcalf, Clerk
Cindy Clarenbach, Treasurer
Lisa West
Gail Morrison



Mistakes & Miracles Book

Discussion group will meet May 2nd and 16th in person at UUCF, 4:00pm.



Franklin Community Day is **Saturday, May 13th**, 10 am-2pm at Odell Park. UUCF will once again have a table and be having a tie-dye t-shirt party! Thank you if you have signed up to help that day. But no worries if you didn't get your name on the sign-up sheet. You can still come by to help or just say "Hello," between 10am and 2pm.



UUCF is taking part in the **Franklin Community Wide Yard Sale on Saturday, May 27th, 8am-2pm**. Set up for the Yard Sale is Friday, the 26th in the evening. Donations of gently used items appreciated. **NO electronics, please**. Volunteers are needed. Let Susan know you will be able to help out!
sdhaines57@gmail.com



Anarchism Reading Group

"Anarchists are simply people who believe human beings are capable of behaving in a reasonable fashion without having to be forced to." From "[Are You an Anarchist?](#)" by David Graeber.

"One of the most important lessons I also learned from anarchism is that you need to look for the radical things that we already do and try to encourage them." From "[Black Anarchism](#)" by Ashanti Alston.

The group will meet on **Thursday, May 25th, 6pm, at UUCF** to discuss "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" by Jo Freeman/Joreen. You can find the reading here:
<https://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/tyranny.htm>

Contact Charlie at charleschapple@gmail.com if you are interested or have any questions.



Anti-Hate Group of Franklin

meetings are held at UUCF. Please be watching for date and time of the next meeting. These meetings will have a period devoted to sharing concerns and offering possible resources, and an education portion, focusing each month on a different aspect of intolerance and hate, facilitated by various individuals. Some initial topics include "steps to de-escalate conflict", "how to be an ally", "definitions of Hate Crimes as determined by Federal and State", etc.

"The Motto, Mission Statement and Objectives of the "Citizens Task Force Against Hate" are all still valid:

Motto: "Franklin Welcomes All"

Mission Statement: To promote inclusion and acceptance; to educate regarding intolerance; and to provide resources to victims of hate

Objectives:

1. Create safe spaces for those experiencing hate
2. Inventory community resources and prepare glossary of terms
3. Determine appropriate actions
4. Offer educational opportunities around diversity and inclusion
5. Commit to self-reflection



UUCF has a Facebook Page!

UUCF has a Facebook Page that is posted to at least once a week to announce the upcoming Sunday service and often more than once a week with other pertinent posts. If you have a Facebook account, please check out our Facebook Page often, like our posts, and share them. Liking UUCF posts and sharing our posts will allow for more exposure to those who might not know about us.

<https://www.facebook.com/UUCFranklinNH/>



The Parish Committee asks that folks leave parking spaces open out front for those who need easier accessibility into the Meetinghouse and for new guests. If you are able, please park in the back of the building or in the parking spaces to the right of the building. Thank you.



Twin Rivers Food Pantry collects empty aluminum cans and plastic bags. They can be placed under the food collection table in the sanctuary.

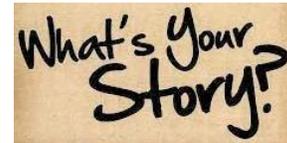
Monetary donations may be sent to:
Twin Rivers Food Pantry
2 Central Street Unit C
Franklin, NH 03235
Attention: Daisy Blaisdell



Hannaford helps in MAY and so can you!
During the month of May, Franklin **Bread and Roses** will receive a \$1 donation from each purchase of the \$2.50 reusable **Fight Hunger Bag** at the Hannaford store located at 952 Central Street, **Franklin**.



UUCF's Bread & Roses team: Debbie Steadman, Pauline Chabot, Pat Sleeper, Pam LaCroix, Jack Shepherd, Denise Steadman, Jeff Perkins. Missing from picture: Susan Haines and Steve Theberge.



We want to learn more about our members and friends!
Please submit a short story about yourself so we can all get to know you better. Send it to Cindy at hope@metrocast.net by the 27th of the month.



A statewide, grassroots, LGBTQ+ advocacy organization.
<https://www.facebook.com/603Equality>



Mission: Amplifying Unitarian Universalist voices and values in the public square throughout New Hampshire and beyond. <https://www.uuactionnh.org/>



UUCF voted to be a Level 2 Sanctuary Church in support of Manchester UU, which is a Level 1 Sanctuary Church.

Sanctuary/Asylum Newsletter
Sanctuary Coalition of Southern NH
APRIL 2023

Holy Week is a sacred time for Christians. The devastating death of Jesus, which at first brought grief and sorrow to his followers, subsequently gave them hope and joy. Even in the worse of circumstances, there is room for hope. That spark of hope changed the world.

Our asylum seekers each have been through a devastating time in their lives. They have come here with hope, looking for safety. Even after arriving here, their journey is still difficult. What sustains them? Hope.

What we are doing together is giving our seekers a place to stay until they can move out on their own to follow their own path. We are grateful that we can help them on their journey.

Although Chris is still in KY taking care of his brother's children until surgery and recovery are completed, donations to our Asylum Fund will help us to continue to support Chris. Because

there are no Market Basket grocery stores in the state of KY, we are sending money to Chrisma for groceries as well as money for incidentals. We're hoping he will be able to return to Manchester in May.

Checks can be sent to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Manchester, 669 Union St., Manchester NH 03104. Please put in the memo line: Sanctuary/Asylum Fund.

Credit card donations can be made through our website, www.uumanchester.org, either directly or through Paypal. Select "Give", then "Donate today!" then click on the DONATE button at bottom of page, and finally go to "Add a Note", specifying Sanctuary/Asylum Fund.

For more information, please reach us sanctuary@uumanchester.org

~ Liz Alcauskas, Sanctuary/Asylum Committee,
Unitarian Universalist Church of Manchester

Happy May
Birthday



Paul Hubert ~ 1st
Charlie Chapple ~ 17th
Owen Baroody ~ 18th
Paul Duncanson ~ 21st
Emily Burr ~ 25th
Gail Morrison ~ 27th



The month of May is here, which means it's time for us to remind you about **No Mow May** — part of the larger “no mow” movement to get people to make their lawns pollinator-friendly. To start, that means letting the grass grow longer and introducing native plants and flowers that attract essential creatures like bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Eliminating chemicals from your landscaping routine is also an important step. If you're hesitant about losing that crisp, freshly mowed look on your lawn, never fear: “There are plenty of very low-growing flowers where you can still mow and the flowers will still be there,” Smithsonian Gardens horticulturist Melinda Whicher told The Washington Post. [Click here to learn how to do “no mow” right](#), and [here](#) to see some beautiful examples of mow-free lawns that have swapped out grass for plants like moss. From <https://nicenews.com/>

Link to Directory: It will bring you into the folder containing the directory. Double click on the filename Directory Update 2022. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19ctaNjZXqhb1afpmqfjN5vlx05mfsVSg?usp=sharing>



Pledges may be mailed to
UUCF
PO Box 562
Franklin, NH 03235

UUCF Mission: We are a liberal religious congregation that provides a welcoming sanctuary to all. We support the spiritual growth of our members and the needs of the local community as we seek to make a better world.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Franklin
PO Box 562
206 Central St.
Franklin, NH 03235
(603) 934-2141
uucfranklin-nh.org

Do you have news to share? Kindly email your submissions for UUCF's Spectacles to hope@metrocast.net by the 27th of each month.



April 14, 2023 Game Night