



Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Bennington



April 2024 UU Bennington e-Newsletter

Our monthly newsletter is made possible by submissions from our UUFB community and beyond.

Deadline for submission of content for the May 2024 edition is noon on Sunday, April 28. Please send all submissions to uubenningtonnews@gmail.com.

If I don't hear from you, you may hear from me!

Sue Andrews

Our Mission

The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bennington is to create and nurture a spiritual, ethical and welcoming community which celebrates personal growth, diversity of beliefs, and freedom of expression.

From Rev. Barbara's Couch

One of the issues that continuously confront residents of both Bennington and Rutland is the many people who are without housing in our communities. That is a challenge for towns and cities all across our country, as we all know. But the UUA is doing something about it in Boston! I'm copying a press release from earlier this

month:

On March 1, 2024, the United Way announced a coordinated effort with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), the Black Refugee & Immigrant Community Coalition, and the Greater Boston YMCA among other community-based organizations, to provide temporary emergency housing and support to approximately 25 families with children who have an urgent and immediate need for shelter in Boston. UUA Executive Vice President Carey McDonald said of the decision to join in this emergency effort, "In our faith tradition, Unitarian Universalists commit to uphold the inherent worthiness and dignity of every person, to embrace interconnectedness, and to strive for justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Those values are fundamental to our religious practice, and they call us to take action in the face of oppression, injustice and suffering. All children deserve a safe place to sleep. As a religious community headquartered in Boston, we consider it an act of faithful witness to use our facilities to do our part to support families in need, including migrant families who are simply seeking safety for their loved ones. We hope other building owners will take seriously whether their space can also be used in this way."

This work is carried out through the United Way's SafetyNet Shelter Grant program, which is available to families who have been determined eligible for the state's Emergency Assistance (EA) family shelter program but could not be immediately placed in an EA shelter due to a lack of availability.

This is an exciting development: it's our faith in action. We moved our headquarters into a large and efficient 24 Farnsworth building in 2013. Until recently, the top floor of that building sat empty, but now, it's providing safe housing for around 25 families! UU churches nearer to Boston are gathering supplies for those who are living there, mostly diapers, and baby supplies clothes. I don't know what we in Vermont could do to support this work,

but being inspired would be a good start! More than that, we can continue the efforts that each of our congregations makes to assist those in our own communities who are need of shelter, food, clothing, and companionship. We can't provide all of these things, but whatever we can provide is a real help, and an way of living out our faith.

In Rutland, Comfort Zone, which is part of Companions in Wholeness, was the recipient of our half-plate of over \$550 in November and December, and it accepts donations of used clothing as well as food. In Bennington, our weekly involvement with Community Café offers a warm meal and a time of companionship to many, and in November our special contributions went to BROCC, which provides a variety of services. There are many other options for service – and it's great to know that our denominational headquarters is actively taking part, opening their/OUR space In Boston!

So this month, kudos to the UUA, and to our congregations, both for the work that we do, and for the work that our energy, care and dues enables the UUA to undertake!

Shalom and Salaam,

Rev. Barbara

President's Notes

The auction was a great success, thanks to intensive efforts by Julie Haupt, Fronia Simpson and Janet Groom, and to the many people who helped out by making donations, buying offerings, setting up and cleaning up, making food, doing publicity, and taking care of various chores. The benefits will keep rolling in as over the coming weeks we enjoy the items and events we bought. The funds will make our budget balance nicely for this year.

For next year, we look forward to having a tag sale in the

summer, so please find and save things you want to part with. There is not space in our building to store them, so keep them a little longer. The Putneys are offering some storage space if you really need to move some things out of your home.

The proceeds from the summer tag sale plus another fundraising event (maybe an auction?) are figured into our proposed budget. This budget will be sent out in about a week so that we can have an informational meeting with the congregation on April 7 after the service. Once everyone has had any questions answered and finds the budget to be fair, each household will be contacted to discuss pledges. We hope that you will respond generously to fund the Fellowship for another year.

Sheila Mullineaux

Treasurers' Report

The Board has approved a budget for 2024-2025 to be submitted to the Fellowship for voting prior to the annual meeting.

Thanks,
Jim and Sherri

Upcoming Budget

We're getting ready for our annual pledge campaign, to be held in April. This will allow us to finalize our proposed budget for the June annual meeting.

On April 7, following the service, we will have an informational meeting about the budget and other upcoming business. Prior to that the draft budget will be sent to members and those friends who pledge.

In the days that follow the budget session, volunteers

will be in touch with UUF members to secure giving plans for the 2024-25 year. Those pledges, while not binding, give the board important information as they finalize the budget and present it for approval at the annual meeting.

Submitted by Chuck Putney

Do you have photos to share for upcoming Newsletters or social media? We would love to share them. The file size must be less than 5000 KB.

[Click Here to Send Your UU Bennington Photos!](#)

Schedule of Upcoming Services

April 7 - Verne McArthur "Singing as Worship"

April 14 - Anthony Hoogs "Artificial Intelligence"

April 21 - Dan Bergren "Communicating the Environment: Through songs, poems and essays"

April 28 - Rev. Erica Baron

April Special Collection

The Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG) is the recipient of our April Split Plate Special Collection. You can either put a donation in the basket on Sunday or mail a check directly to VPIRG at 141 Main Street, Suite 6, Montpelier, VT 05602.

Founded in 1972, the Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG) is the state's largest nonprofit consumer and environmental advocacy organization. For fifty years, VPIRG has brought the voices of everyday Vermonters to public policy debates concerning the environment, health care, consumer protection, and

democracy.

VPIRG's mission is to promote and protect the health of Vermont's people, environment, and locally-based economy by informing and mobilizing individuals and communities across the state.

As a 501(c)4 nonprofit advocacy group, VPIRG conducts non-partisan public interest advocacy to support priority public interest issues and campaigns and seeks legislative and policy solutions that make Vermont an even better place to live. VPIRG advocates and organizers use independent research, policy analysis, public outreach, and grassroots mobilization to design and implement effective strategies for each of our campaigns.

Spring Membership Muttering & Musings

Most recently, the Membership Committee has focused on strengthening the Team Sunday approach. We now have two folks at each assigned task for many reasons, the primary goal being a group of six to help each other every Sunday. Not all of us are physically able to serve in this capacity anymore; yet we need to face that together as we continue to care and share with and for one another. A Board member is assigned as a resource if needed.

As chair of this committee, I have recently been writing to our less active or inactive members to inquire about their level of interest in participation. This is a humbling process. To balance the “are you ok; it appears that we are lost to one another” with the practical yet difficult question of “is it still ok to count on you”. UU & You is very much an alive commitment in a shared ministry project. Sometimes it's really hard, and sometimes we each need to reassess — to lean in or step back.

As I quarterly do the shuffling of task requests, I try to make the assignments fit the tasks. I am open to suggestions and assistance. I have much gratitude for the support given to me by Judy Murphy, and to Fronia

who is my editor in chief, and to my first helper and back-up, Janet.

Bruce Squires, Lisa Le May and I now comprise a brief and hopefully a spectacular Nominating Committee. We will be responsible for providing the Board with our suggestions for two Board positions. How does this inner-sanctum process happen? How do we discern who might have an interest, the time, an untapped skill, and a wish to serve in another capacity? Is there another mouse in the house who needs encouragement? Search your soul and skill inventory. If a spark of interest arises in you, send an email to all of us this week or at least by April 10th. Our decision and choice of nominations needs to be made very soon. The Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month. There's a plan afoot to provide hybrid access to Board meetings. It's a two-year commitment.

In solidarity,

Joan <joandornhoefer@gmail.com>

Team Sunday Assignments for April-June 2024

Please make note of the dates assigned below. If a date is not good for you, reach out and switch with someone. If changes are made, please contact Joan Dornhoefer or change the posting in the Meetinghouse.

Submitted by Joan Dornhoefer <joandornhoefer@gmail.com>

Team Sunday
April-June 2024

	OPENERS	GREETERS	CLOSERS
April 7	Sheila & Ray	Janet & Tordis	Jim & Sherri
April 14	Joan & Kara	Stephanie & Fronia	Jerry & Renee
April 21	David & Diane	Lois & Bill	Joan & Matt
April 28	Julie M & Gael B	Bill C & Sue A	Julie & Tim
May 5	Kara & Jim	Linda & Chuck	Julian & Joan
May 12	Stephanie & Janet	Kathy & Bruce	Mangsen Sisters
May 19	Julie M & Gael B	Lisa & John	David & Diane
May 26	Jerry & Renee	Stephanie & Mary Ellen	Joan & Matt
June 2	Julie & Tim	Judy M & Fronia	Wendy & Mason
June 9	Janet & Joan	David & Diane	Jim & Sherri
June 16	Julie M & Gael B	Judy & Bruce	Kara & Jim
June 23	Jerry & Renee	Silvia & Lisa	David & Diane
June 30	Joan & Karen D	Tordis & Mary Ellen	Julie & Tim

UUFB CARES: Caring Committee Update

The past month has been very full for the Caring Committee, and we are grateful to have so many helping folks from UUFB who really care. We always have a mixture of regular weekly commitments to visit members by phone and in person, including Selma M., Magdalena U., and Nancy S., as well as plenty of in-the-moment needs to fulfill. This month there were several calls for help with errands and appointments and transportation, and so many UUs jumped in to provide rides and support.

We made food deliveries to Chris H. after her knee surgery, and are just beginning a meal sign up to help John and Lisa L. after their deep loss. We have reached out to some who don't need food, but are glad of our support, such as for new member Cindy M, whose husband is facing lymphoma. And we try to keep track of whoever is in and out of the hospital (too many of us!) and send cards and care, such as recently for Stuart B. and the Silvia and Ed D.

On a lighter note, we have a birthday card outreach, and hope that all of you let us know when your birthday is. (Send info to kathyduhon2@gmail.com)

This winter a few of us began visiting Jerry Walker, who recently moved into the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington. His daughter, a UU and DRE from Maine, reached out to us on behalf of her Dad. He is delightful to spend time with and really appreciates the company, as he is away from his home and family, and has been lonely. We make visits about once a week.

Our Caring Committee meets by zoom once a month, usually the second Monday at 7 p.m. Our next meeting is scheduled for April 8th, but stay tuned in case there is a delay. If you are interested in becoming involved, you can contact Kathy Duhon or Judy Murphy, for now, and in the future, our amazing chairperson, Lisa LeMay, and co-chair Silvia Dauenheimer. We are trying to give them some time before returning to their many duties on this committee.

Thanks to the great folks who help make this a truly caring congregation.

Kathy Duhon and Judy Murphy

2024 Auction

Hats off, applause, and heartfelt thanks to everyone who

donated goods and services and to everyone who purchased those goods and services. Thanks to all the bakers for the delicious spread. A very special thanks to Janet Groom our auctioneer extraordinaire! The 2024 UUFBA Auction was a rousing success. Although a final tally is not yet in hand, we can confidently say that the auction exceeded the goal of \$2,000 by almost twice that amount. So far we have deposited \$3,650, with more to come!

Fronia and Julie

Safety Team Update

The safety team has completed the improvements to the building that were required or recommended by the town building inspector.

In case someone has unexpected mobility issues, it would be helpful to have a wheelchair, so let me know if you have a used one that you could sell or donate to us.

We're planning to have fire drills in the near future and first aid training that will be available to anyone who wants to attend.

Sheila Mullineaux

Speaking of Religion

The sudden death last week of a dear friend, at 42, was an unwanted reminder that few of us are likely to know when our lives will end. She had many plans for the future. All of her plans and hopes disappeared in a moment.

One of my core beliefs is that life is for living. We should be concerned with how we live, not how we will die. I believe that death is final and all that remains are the memories of the people we leave behind, the impact of the good works we have done, and the damage we have

done. Period.

The death of someone who had the potential for a long and productive life in particular makes me wonder (even in my 70s) what I need to take care of today or tomorrow. What burned bridges should I try to rebuild. What friend with whom I was once close should I contact? Can I make my family life better? How can I make the communities in which I live healthier and better places for all community members? Are there still things I need to do?

While we all may have regrets for past actions, we should not let regrets for things we cannot change get in the way of doing things that are important today and tomorrow and next week. There is truth in the motivational poster that says "Today is the first day of the rest of your life."

Given that most people, don't know how much time we have should give us a sense of immediacy. A recently retired friend said "It would be much easier to plan for the future if I knew how much time I have left."

The best case scenario is that no matter what age someone is, we shouldn't stop doing the things that are important to us, our loved ones, and to our community.

None of us, of course, are able to do everything we want. Maybe our time is limited by work or caregiving. Or some of the things we would like to do depend on having more money than we have. Things can get in the way: my poor vision means I cannot drive, but I can still walk, read, paint and go places with the help of family and friends.

I grieve for my young friend who has died. But I rejoice in the memory of her humor, hard work, caring for others and love. It inspires me.

Submitted by Chuck Putney for this newsletter and for the Bennington Banner "Speaking of Religion" Column

Community Action for Severe Weather Preparedness

Vermont Interfaith Action's local organizing committee, Bennington Organizing and Action, invites you to a Community Action on Sunday, April 14th, from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm at 2nd Congregational Church (115 Hillside St). Doors open at 5:30pm This Community Action will present the research of BOA on the issue of severe weather preparedness in Bennington; especially how it impacts our most vulnerable populations: the unhoused/insecurely housed, the financially vulnerable, youths, elderly, and medically compromised individuals. We will present our research to the public and make requests of our public officials to improve and expand our current response to severe weather events. We request your attendance and support of this important event. Contact Martha Mackey at 802-651-8889 or martha@viavt.org for more information.

Watching the Almost Total Eclipse

On April 8 at about 3pm, the skies will darken as the moon covers almost all of the sun. Records of observers of earlier eclipses say that in the brief near-darkness, colors look different and animals, birds and streetlights respond as though it is night. It's a once-in-a-lifetime event that's not to be missed. It's a chance to feel and understand that we're part of a universe that's much larger than what we usually experience. As long as it's not actively raining at that time, we can get outside and be part of the event. Let's gather to see it together. We'll have pinhole viewers and free eclipse glasses to protect our eyes. Let me know if you plan to come so I know how many pairs of glasses to get. Watch the Thursday announcements this week for more details and plan to come!

Sheila Mullineaux

An Approach to Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is growing in both its impact on society and its risks. It is used to compose text, monitor online activity and assist with searches of the web—to mention just a few of the more evident uses.

Dr. Anthony Hoogs, who has been working in the AI field for decades, will speak on "Can Ethical AI Reduce the Risks of AI?" on Sunday, April 14 at 2 p.m. The talk is co-sponsored by the Bennington Branch of the American Association of University Women and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. He will discuss what AI is, the risks it poses, and what the AI community is doing about them.

The session is free and open to the public at the UU Meetinghouse, 108 School St., Bennington. The building is handicapped accessible.

Dr. Hoogs (Judy Kniffin's son in law, by the way), is Vice President for AI at Kitware, where he leads Kitware's Computer Vision Team with more than 60 members including 25 PhD's. For more than three decades, he has supervised and performed research in various areas of computer vision including: ethical and explainable AI; remote sensing; media forensics; event, activity, and behavior recognition; deep learning; object detection, recognition and tracking; and content-based retrieval. He has led dozens of projects, sponsored by commercial companies and government entities including US US Department of Defense research programs and commercial entities. His projects range from basic, academic research to developing advanced prototypes and operation systems. He has been the overall Principal Investigator on multiple large Defense Department programs, where he was responsible for overseeing collaborations with more than 25 universities and more than ten commercial subcontractors. Previously at GE Global Research (1998-2007), Dr. Hoogs led a team of researchers in video and imagery analysis on projects sponsored by the US Government,

Lockheed Martin and NBC Universal.

Dr. Hoogs received a Ph.D. in Computer and Information Science from the University of Pennsylvania in 1998; an M.S. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1991; and a B.A. magna cum laude from Amherst College in 1989. He has published more than 100 papers in computer vision, pattern recognition, artificial intelligence, and remote sensing.

Submitted by Chuck Putney

Tony Lu in Concert April 6

A solo concert of piano compositions in the style of Bach to Rock will be performed by Tony Lu on Saturday, April 6, at 7 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse, 108 School St., Bennington.

Tony will perform works inspired by the great composers in the last three centuries. These short solo piano works are in the style of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Franck, Faure, Scriabin, Debussy, Joplin, Glass, as well as jazz and Rock and Roll. He will talk about the historical background and stylistic elements of each piece, including those by some lesser-known composers. Admission is free. Donations are welcome.

Tony Lu holds an M.M. in Piano Performance from Austin Peay State University and a B.A. in Mathematics, History, and Music from Bennington College. He is an active faculty member at Sonata and Summer Sonatina International Piano Camp, located in Old Bennington. Tony gives classes in music history, theory, classical improvisation, musicianship, and piano literature in addition to lessons and chamber music coaching. As an active piano faculty member at Cardigan Mountain School, Canaan, NH, Tony teaches students of all ages and levels both in-person and online. He has been involved in extensive collaborations in chamber music. He has performed at Park-

McCullough Historic House, Bennington Center for the Arts, Third Street Music School, and Lincoln Center in NYC. Tony gives lectures, masterclasses, and concerts across the US, from Hawaii to Florida.

Tony's research areas include classical keyboard improvisation pedagogy, piano solo and duet transcriptions of symphonic/chamber works, and 20th/21st century neoclassical solo literature. He often performs his own transcriptions and improvises cadenzas in concerts.

A Night of Music with Peter Mayer

The UU Society of Schenectady is thrilled to host Peter Mayer in concert on Saturday evening, April 6th, at 7 pm. Peter is the composer of our much beloved hymn 'Blue Boat Home' and is a wonderful singer songwriter based in Minnesota. Suggested donation for tickets is \$25 for adults, \$5 for under 13. If you are a person of means, we invite you to contribute a little more to help offset the cost of tickets for folks who might find \$25 a bit daunting. Questions may be directed to Kristin at clc@uuschenectady.org.

Contributed by Rev. Barbara

Ideas for Circle Dinners?

The social committee would love to have more ideas for circle dinners and some brave people to host them. If you have ideas and worry that you need some help to put it together, Kara is glad to help.. Just let her know, email knotartist.kl@gmail.com or call 281-743-7035.

April Birthdays

Bill Christian April 14

Please let us know when your birthday is - submit

to kathyduhon2@gmail.com.

Thanks, UUFB Caring Committee.

Services Are Recorded

Recent Sunday readings and talks are available as audio recordings. A link is provided on the Sunday Service section of our website, www.uubennington.org

Helpful Links & Community Information

If you see something below you think might be helpful to someone you know, share this newsletter with them - you can also share the external website link, too! Thank you for helping out your community by sharing resources they might find beneficial!

Are you a Young Professional seeking other YPs in the southern Vermont Community? Click here to connect via Shires Young Professionals!

New to Vermont? Want to help welcome newcomers to the Green Mountain State? Check out the Vermont Welcome Wagon Project!

Click Here for a List of Bennington County Resources!

Click Here to Discover Bennington County Food Resources!

Learn More about the UU Faith - Visit the Unitarian Universalist Association!





Share This Email



Share This Email



Share This Email

Contact Us

802-440-9816

Info@UUBennington.org

www.uubennington.org

UU Bennington | 108 School Street, PO Box 1015, Bennington, VT 05201

[Unsubscribe uubenningtonnews@gmail.com](mailto:unsubscribe_uubenningtonnews@gmail.com)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by sueandrews@uubennington.ccsend.com powered by



Try email marketing for free today!