

Treasures Beyond Expectations

Our annual Stewardship Drive kicks-off Friday, March 3, 2017, with the theme, "Treasures of the Heart". The campaign will continue throughout the month of March.

When our hearts call us to be part of UUCS, we discover treasures beyond our expectations.

Pledge Drive Information: The Stewardship Drive is an annual event to raise money towards the operation and sustainment of UUCS.

How Does It Work? All members and regular attendees of UUCS are asked to make a financial commitment for the coming fiscal year July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 in the form of a pledge. Pledges may be submitted through the UUCS website at <http://newuusterling.org> under "Donate", or by completing and submitting a paper pledge form which can be found in the fellowship hall. Pledges may be paid all at once or over time throughout the year. All pledge payments are tax deductible.

Why Is My Pledge Important? While it is difficult to put a dollar figure on the value that UUCS brings to each of us and to the community beyond our walls, we know that our budget goal for next year is expected to be about \$270,000 for which the largest expenses will be our full time space and staff salaries. We support social justice initiatives, adult and child RE, guest musicians, and membership. We are committed to continuing to offer this level of commitment to our members and regular attendees, as well as to those who have yet to find their way to our door.

How Much Should I Pledge? We are a very socio-economically diverse community and therefore pledge amounts vary greatly - all size gifts are welcome. We encourage each of you to make a meaningful financial contribution within your means, and to consider the four commitment



Treasures of the Heart
UUCS 2017 STEWARDSHIP DRIVE

levels on the next page and how they relate to your membership. Consider your UU values in thinking about your financial commitment to this congregation, and please give as generously as you can. The "Every Member Giving Guide" suggests starting between 2% and 5% of your net adjusted annual income, which is your gross (before tax) minus non-reimbursed major medical expenses, care of parent(s), costs of higher education or child care, etc.

Questions? Please contact:

Kim Fitzgerald at kfitzger99@aol.com or 703-628-0325 or Joan Johnson at jojobelway@gmail.com or 850-319-6206.



Members of JUUst UUs and the choir say goodbye to John Kim on his last day at UUCS

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www.uusterling.org

22135 Davis Drive
Sterling, VA 20167
(703) 406-3068

Mail: P.O. Box 1632
Sterling, VA 20167

THE UUCS EVERY MEMBER GIVING GUIDE



Supporter: The congregation is a significant part of my spiritual and intellectual life that I want to support. My fair share financial commitment starts at 2% of my income and rises to 6% as my income and capacity rise.

Sustainer: The congregation is my central community. I am committed to sustaining the programs and ministries of my congregation. My fair share financial commitment starts at 3% of my income and rises to 7% as my income and capacity rise.

Visionary: My commitment is a clear demonstration of the unique importance of this congregation and of my spiritual principles. My fair share financial commitment starts at 5% of my income and rises to 9% as my income and capacity rise.

Transformer: I am deeply committed to the congregation; my contribution provides fuel for transformation and is a part of my spiritual practices in living out my UU principles. My fair share financial contribution represents 10% of my income.

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.

— Edward Everett Hale

Approx. Adjusted Annual Income	Supporter		Sustainer		Visionary		Transformer	
	Suggested % of Income	Monthly Pledge						
\$10,000	2%	\$17	3%	\$25	5%	\$42	10%	\$85
\$25,000	2%	\$42	3%	\$63	5%	\$104	10%	\$208
\$50,000	3%	\$125	4%	\$167	5%	\$208	10%	\$417
\$75,000	3%	\$188	4.5%	\$281	6%	\$375	10%	\$625
\$100,000	4%	\$292	5%	\$417	6.5%	\$542	10%	\$833
\$150,000	4%	\$438	5%	\$625	6.5%	\$813	10%	\$1,250
\$200,000	4%	\$667	5.5%	\$917	7%	\$1,167	10%	\$1,667
\$300,000	5%	\$1,250	6%	\$1,500	8%	\$2,000	10%	\$2,500
\$400,000	6%	\$2,000	7%	\$2,333	8.5%	\$2,883	10%	\$3,333
\$500,000	7%	\$2,917	8%	\$3,333	9%	\$3,750	10%	\$4,167

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: A SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND MEANING

Notes by Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

In January our Congregation experimented with its first “New Year, New You,” month of intensive community building classes and opportunities. Here are some of the fun details:

- 40 UUCS attendees engaged.
- Two small groups met online.
- Two groups offered single classes that have bloomed into mostly gatherings.
- The Poetry Slam class and Yoga class were taught by outside facilitators.
- Many new friendships and associations were formed.

Intern John and I count the first New Year, New You as a success. Some attendees of our congregation have the time and energy to commit to lengthy Adult Education classes like our “Evil, a Liberal Religious Investigation,” and “How Jesus Became God,” or ongoing Small (Covenant) Groups, but many prefer short term engagements. An intensive month for community building allows our congregation to focus our attention and provide a plethora of opportunities in a small time frame. The focus generates energy.

Do you have a suggested class or opportunity for our next New Year, New You? Yes, planning for next year is always ongoing. Share your ideas. We have a lot to look forward to!

UPCOMING EVENT!

Animals, Our Nature, and UUs: Bringing Our Principles to Life. Friday, March 24th, 7 - 9 p.m., Rev. Dr. Lora-Kim Joyner--inspiring speaker, wildlife veterinarian, UU minister, and trainer in Nonviolent Communication--will lead an interactive workshop for adults and teens to help us live compassionately and joyfully in a multispecies world. By nurturing our emotional, social, multispecies, ecological, and spiritual intelligences, we can experience greater belonging, beauty, reverence, wholeness, joy, and vitality. This is an opportunity to unearth the deep roots of interlocking oppressions, heal our sense of disconnection from life on Earth, and promote justice for all Beings with greater vigor and joy. Please sign up at the table in Fellowship Hall or online at www.uusterling.org on the home page under Upcoming Events.

NEW JUSTICE OPPORTUNITIES AT UUCS

Notes by Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

In the wake of the turbulent election season, our congregation resolved, through grass root channels, to provide more justice engagement opportunities. Many of you came to me and spoke to one another, asking ‘what more can I do?’ and ‘how can I be engaged?’ The results of these queries speak to an eminent empowerment. They show us that our questions and our calling do lead us to opportunities, when we share these questions and this calling in community. Allow me to share some of the many ways you can engage in Justice work at UUCS:



*Rev. Anya
Sammler-Michael*

- Animals and Nature Covenant Groups: Contact Andrea Soccio - alsoccio@yahoo.com or Andrea Gross: pasotrail@gmail.com.
- Action and Advocacy Covenant Group: Contact Rhonda Patterson - rpaterst@gmail.com.
- Feeding Hungry Children: A partnership with the Sterling Middle School and Backpack Coalition - Contact Joan Friedson: dutchess716@yahoo.com
- Justice Opportunities Email List: Contact Rhonda Patterson - rpaterst@gmail.com.
- Journey Toward Wholeness Transportation Team: Contact Michael Masiak - michael.masiak@gmail.com.
- LGBTQI Support Circle: Contact Meredith Keppel - akeppelgirl@gmail.com.
- Loudoun Interfaith BRIDGES Representative: Contact Yvonne Centala - ycornelia@yahoo.com.
- Refugee Support Team: Contact Zubair Suri - zubair.suri@gmail.com.

Beyond these ongoing efforts there are many single events and opportunities to engage. Watch your Illuminate, Weekly News and check in on the UUCS Facebook page. UUCS is a Justice Filled community.

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A NEW SPACE FOR OUR CONGREGATIONAL HOME

Notes by Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

We at UUCS are driven to realize a dream of permanence. Even now in our rented space, we have carved out a permanent home in our county. Our voice for justice is recognized county wide and our programs service our community in ways that would be wholly missed, should we cease to provide. Still, we dream of a home that has the visible trappings of permanence - that was designed by our creative will and can serve us for centuries to come.

A New Space Team has been working admirably to imagine a path forward. Ben Friedson, Kathee Myers, Paul Roche, Koren Barwis, and recently joined Raoul Drapeau are working every angle on our behalf.

UUCS currently serves 120 families. Before we have the capital to buy our own space, we will need to serve over 150 families. We are growing into that goal, but it is still a few years away. In the mean time our New Space Team is working with our landlord to find us the best deal possible. In addition they are exploring ways to manage and transform our space to better serve our growing congregation. In addition our New Space Team hopes to have a set of strategic goals to present at our Annual Meeting that will help us all envision the next few years of development. We will need to consider a Capital Campaign and we will work to secure every grant and loan possible.

Are you interested in this project? Please contact Ben Friedson to share your ideas or even better, lend your energy to this work: benfriedson@hotmail.com



Caption: UUCS joins in the Martin Luther King Day Observance and March in Leesburg, VA. Our group of 14 is pictured here with our congregational banner and signs made by our Religious Education children.

THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!

Membership development and congregational growth are essential to ensure that Unitarian Universalism remains an option for those seeking it's community, intellectual and spiritual freedom and affirmation of human goodness and unity. The ways we attract and welcome newcomers, sustain our current members and engage in outreach need to grow out of our own particular heritage and our core Unitarian Universalist values.

Over the past few months UUCS has hosted multiple membership book signings, held three "Your Faith Home" lunches and engaged in monthly Inquirers classes. The membership committee has helped prepare for two services, supported UU Adult and RE classes, participated in outreach events such as Sterlingfest, Lift Every Voice and the Jazz Poetry Slam. Since September 2016 we have had 16 people sign the membership book! Our congregation is growing and we need your help.

The UUCS Membership Committee performs key functions like greeting and welcoming new visitors, following up with new people, attending congregational events which support membership and nurturing existing members. We participate in outreach events, sharing the mission and vision of our congregation. The membership committee is currently very understaffed and needs people who are outgoing and friendly and ready to engage more with UUCS. We're looking for someone to lead the team, as well support with greeting, outreach and data. If you are a people person who is looking for a way to contribute in a big way to UUCS, please contact Karen Hawley at kubbie@hotmail.com.



Maggie and Molly Lum perform at the UUCS Talent Show

BON VOYAGE

The four Lawing children left January 30th with their mother, Nikki, and arrived at their new home near Austin, Texas on February 1st.

Nikki has fond childhood memories of that area and a grandmother and aunt who live in Austin. The children are now attending public school. They enjoyed meeting the principal who wears cowboy boots and gives all the kids hugs. Nikki said they saw a horse walking down the street the first day but that the kids were disappointed not to see more cowboys. With McDonald's and so many other familiar sites, Texas didn't look all that different.

The children took with them some books and toys, many memories of outings provided by folks at UUCS, and the warm feeling of being doted on by more people than had been in their lives over the past six years or more that their father had been ill.

We at UUCS will remember their fondness for drawing cartoons, as their dad did, and their youthful irrepressibility.

We wish them well and hope they stay in touch!



We'll miss you, Bradley, Nick, Charlotte, Christy, and mom Nikki!

FROM THE 2017 STEWARDSHIP DINNER



The UUCS youth choir, Tenuto rocked the Stewardship dinner, as did some members of JUUst Us!



The Stewardship Kick-off Dinner on March 3rd included a presentation commemorating Rev. Anya's 10th year with our congregation. Koren Barwis, President of the Board of Trustees, presented Rev. Anya with a gift.

GET TO KNOW OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Bruce McCosar

Bruce joined UUCS on February 12th, 2017.

He joined because this congregation gave him a spiritual home during one of the toughest times of his life. McCosar is an American Indian name. Bruce's father is Muscogee (Creek) Nation. His first ancestor by that name was Cosa Fixico, who had the nickname 'Mac'.



New member Bruce McCosar

On the Trail of Tears, his name was anglicized to Mac Cosar. Everyone in the world with Bruce's last name is related to him. You can find Bruce UUCS at the 9:30 Sunday service, and often at other UUCS events.

Lisa Lermite

Lisa joined UUCS on February 26th 2017. She joined for community, connectedness and spirituality. Something you might not know about Lisa is that she is a health and wellness teacher - yoga, nutrition and natural remedies. You can find Lisa at Sunday service and Wednesday night youth choir (so far!).



*Welcome Lermite family!
Lisa, Hunter, Layla, Raleigh, Noelle, and Sienna*

INTERFAITH HYPOTHERMIA PREVENTION SHELTER

Giving the Gift of Warmth to the Homeless during Christmas Week

For the third consecutive year, our congregation supported the hypothermia prevention shelter hosted by Epiphany Episcopal Church in Herndon during Christmas week. In 2017, the shelter will be held from the afternoon of December 24 (Christmas Eve) through the morning of December 31 (New Year's Eve).

UUCS is one of several interfaith and community groups that came together to support the shelter. It was a volunteer-intensive effort, requiring Epiphany to fill 180+ volunteer time slots throughout the week to house 55 guests per night. Volunteers helped with a myriad of tasks: setting up the shelter, transporting guests to and from the shelter, preparing and serving dinner, breakfast, and a bagged lunch, providing entertainment and companionship, being on hand overnight, and closing the shelter in the morning. The shelter was open to homeless men and women from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. each day, except Christmas, when it remained open all day and included worship services for those who wanted to participate. While Epiphany hosted the shelter, it was operated by FACETS, a Fairfax County-based poverty relief organization. FACETS organizes a series of hypothermia shelters at different faith-based institutions across Fairfax County from November to March, with each institution hosting and staffing the shelter for a week. Last year FACETS hypothermia shelters served 365 individuals. The organization also works to find permanent housing for those individuals experiencing homelessness in our community.

Yvonne Centala, a three-time volunteer at the shelter, observed, "You or I could have one catastrophic illness or lose a job and find ourselves unable to pay for shelter. 'There but for the grace...' Perhaps we cannot cure or find a job for someone else, but the least we can do is to provide a warm meal and shelter from winter's cold so people can go out the next day to face the world a little comforted."

This past Christmas, we saw a tremendous outpouring of support from our UU community, with many folks volunteering or donating cash and goods for the shelter. With your help we prepared and served a delicious dinner one evening, and volunteers also covered several other shifts during the shelter week. Our RE youth made beautiful ornaments to decorate the shelter and our congregation donated many lovely and warm scarves, hats, and gloves for the shelter guests. Thank you again to all who served and donated! Our holiday season was all the richer for this opportunity to serve.

For information about the hypothermia prevention shelter, please contact Sharon Coviak (202-750-1250; sharon.coviak@gmail.com) or Rhonda Paterson (202-888-1538; rpaterst@gmail.com). To learn more about FACETS programs, visit <http://facetscares.org/programs/>.



RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

All ages celebrate the holidays

Throughout December, all ages celebrated the holidays with fun, service to others, and the discovery of deeper meaning. We kicked off the month with the annual Decorating Party. Everyone who attended enjoyed great food and then helped decorate the sanctuary or made gifts and ornaments to take home.

The High School Youth Group served both the congregation and our neighbors during December. For congregants, they created a special treat to celebrate Hanukkah. The latkes, or potato pancakes, they made disappeared quickly. From serving at UUCS, the group moved to helping our neighbors by hosting the Mitten Tree. The people who visited the Hypothermia Shelter during Christmas week received the scarves, gloves, and hats and appreciated the warmth of this gift.

Children also supported the Hypothermia Shelter. They made ornaments for the shelter's tree. The ornaments helped make the week more festive for the people staying at the shelter and those who volunteered.

On December 18th children and adults helped present the Las Posadas pageant. Children helped relive the story of Mary and Joseph looking for an inn and adults shared their own stories of looking for a place of welcome. As the stories unfolded, the congregation reflected on the experience of immigrants, refugees, and others who have been turned away. Through these many holiday activities, all ages lived out our mission to Seek, Love, and Serve Boldly.

Building Bridges and Coming of Age

The 6th-8th graders have been learning about a number of world religions. They have also been building bridges with their neighbors by welcoming guests and visiting local faith communities. So far, they have explored Islam, Eastern Religions, Judaism, and Christianity. In addition, they attended a session led by our Women's Earth-based Spirituality group. The group visited the ADAMS (All Dulles Area Muslim Society) Center, Beth Chaverim, and Galilee United Methodist Church. Through these many experiences, they have discovered that developing religious literacy helps them better understand and have compassion for their classmates and their neighbors both nearby and around the world.

In February the group focused on social justice. They hosted a few congregants who are involved in social justice, and they are choosing their own social justice project that they will complete this spring.

The social justice project is one of the requirements for Coming of Age, a program that is similar to confirmation or bar or bat mitvah. Coming of Age is a recognition of their transition from childhood to adult. Participants learn about



Members of our RE classes present the annual La Posada pageant.

Unitarian Universalism and UUCS and consider their own beliefs. The program will end with a ceremony at the 9:30 service on May 21. During that service the participants will share their statements of belief and the congregation will celebrate their completion of the program.

If you would like to find out more about the Coming of Age program, contact Linda Weaver (re-director@uusterling.org).

Growing and Learning: PK-5th

In their religious education classes, children in PK-5th grade have gained compassion for others, built confidence in themselves, practiced relationship skills, and acted on their values, all while having fun and creating community together. On any Sunday you may find them learning how to share or how to work as a team while playing a game, thinking about their own Big Questions as they retell a story, discovering an answer as they create art, practicing how to ask for or offer forgiveness through role playing, or learning about a local issue and taking action to make the world a better place for others.

That's a lot in 45 minutes a week! This time becomes even more meaningful for your child and your family if you find a few minutes to build on these experiences at home. The easiest way to do this is to check out Explore, the weekly RE e-newsletter for families, and choose a question or a simple activity each week. If aren't receiving Explore and would like to or if you are looking for something more for your family, contact Linda Weaver (re-director@uusterling.org).

If you haven't done so, please make sure to register your children, from birth through 12th grade, at <http://uusterling.org/learn/childrens-religious-education/childrens-re-registration/>. Registering and sharing information with us helps us serve your family.

UUCS MEN'S GROUP



14 intrepid UUCS men descended upon the Worldgate theaters to see "Arrival." Lunch at Tara Thai preceded the movie. When you see a movie about extraterrestrials, it helps having Steve Dick and Mark Lupisella along for the ride! Any men who would like to come on the next ad hoc adventure, please contact Paul Roche at proche195@hotmail.com to be added to the email list.



Choir and band perform together at John's last UUCS service as Music director

CHOIR NEWS

John Kim was our choir director and accompanist for just over a year and a half, but in that short time he brought a youthful exuberance to the choir and UUCS. Working with Kris Adams, he expanded our walls. We sang with Kris and our jUUCSt UUs rock band, the children's choir and the new Tenudo, the Gay Men's Chorus, and UU Accotink's choir, and we ventured out at Christmas time to sing carols for UUCS members in two retirement communities. We will miss him as moves on to serve as music director for a larger church.

In this transition time as we search for a new director, the choir will continue to meet for rehearsals on Tuesday evenings, lead the congregation in hymns, and perform some of our favorite pieces. Come join us if you would like to share in our music ministry.



John Kim gets into the spirit of Thanksgiving!

HONORING REV. ANYA SAMMLER-MICHAEL



The theme of the 2017 Stewardship campaign is Treasures of the Heart. At the kickoff dinner, we contemplated stewardship, what we hold dear, what we treasure. We also honored the 10-year anniversary of Rev. Anya joining our congregation.

From Rev. Anya's interview process when she was just 30 years old to how she "blew everyone's doors off" in the first annual Inova Run with Team Samantha to holding up slices of "cheese food" in an early sermon, stories of Rev. Anya were amusing, diverse, and moving. Rev. Anya was presented with a handcrafted tin memento etched with the UU chalice and her years of service.

Rev. Anya is a gifted teacher, listener, and leader. As we transition from a pastoral church to a program church, Rev. Anya cannot continue to be the center of our universe, but she will always be at the core of who UUCS is. Please take a moment to thank her for her decade of service to UUCS.



(Above) JUUst Us rocked the Stewardship dinner, as did some members of the youth choir, Tenuto!

(Below) Some treasures of UUCS: Dave and Barbara Mendoza, Jean Ault and Lisa Jones-Bateman

