

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harford County



Building Liberal Religious Community — Please Join Us!

May 2025

Our Sunday Schedule
Worship at 10:30 am
is now in-person and virtual via Zoom

May Services

Sheer Holy Boldness: Star Wars, the Feminist Ethic of Risk, and UU Communities

Rev. Sara Smalley

May 4

After much grappling with the state of the world this week and analyzing the words of activists, pundits, and theologians, here's my working thesis statement for what comes next: 2025 will be the year of the Return of the Jedi. But the real-world rebel alliance we're building is not a scrappy group of ragamuffins in over our heads.

In our coalition there are atheists, humanists, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, mystics, pagans, and more. We are policy wonks with political science degrees and crystal-toting dreamers with imagination. We are not wielders of endings, but creators of justice. We are builders of a new way.

Imagine That

Rev. Jaye and Jenn Blosser

May 11

"For each child that's born, a morning star rises and sings to the universe who we are." That line is from the hymn *We Are* by Ysaye Barnwell. Today we honor mothers and all nurturing parents and the hopes and dreams they have for their children. We cherish those children, who with their untrammelled imaginations may create the world anew.

Celebrating the beautiful diversity of all people, this service for all ages includes a flower ceremony—if you can, bring a flower. Because many people have plans with family members today, our usual second-Sunday potluck lunch is postponed until next week. This is a Service for All Ages

Lateral Thinking

Rev. Jaye Brooks

May 18

There are many forms of imagination. People may have creative imagination, or spiritual imagination, or imagi-

nary friends. And then there's lateral thinking, which is an almost dyslexic ability to turn imagination sideways or even flip it upside down. In this worship service, Rev. Jaye celebrates imagination in all its forms and especially the lateral version.

Our monthly potluck lunch is after the service today.

Annual Poetry Service

Worship Committee

May 25

"[T]he war that matters is the war against the imagination
all other wars are subsumed in it.
the ultimate famine is the starvation
of the imagination
it is death to be sure..."

From *Rant*, by Diane Di Prima

Please join us to celebrate our collective imaginings during the annual poetry service.

From Our Minister

Imagination. That's our worship and learning theme for May. And here we are, with our imaginations stretched far beyond what most of us previously considered possible and, for many, not in the direction we desire.



So here we are. If there is one vast lesson from recent days, it is that reality can far outstrip the imagination. And here's another lesson, perhaps less dramatic: fear affects what we imagine. Sometimes fear dominates, throwing mind and body into a state of churning panic. Sometimes fear instructs, alerting us to the need for sensible precautions. The human mind casts ahead into the future as if we can predict what will happen.

We may be wrong. We may be right. But to live sanely in the here-and-now, we must temper fear with the pos-

sibility of new learning—with the possibility that we can discover new ways to be fully human.

To be whole, we must have confidence in our own agency, in our ability to shape the future. Not hubris—not that prideful certitude of infallibility. But something more modest: what Lincoln called “a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people.”

Confidence is a form of hope that doesn’t predict an outcome—it’s a way of being. It is patience linked with the refusal to live from fear; the awareness of a need for change; and the determination to do what we can to make the future better for everyone.

About five years ago, the pandemic brought both human tragedy and proof of human courage and resilience. So many losses, yes. And yet we learned. People adopted strategies to keep themselves well and keep their communities together. We know to look to the future even though we must live each day as it arrives. We can manage our fears. We can *imagine* a better world.

If we can continue to imagine positive change—and if we act to be sure it comes—then we can be patiently, robustly confident in the ultimate justice of the people.

- Rev. Jaye Brooks

From Our President

First, I want to thank everyone for a very successful FY25-26 Stewardship campaign. Our treasurer has given me confidence we will fully achieve our pledging target! We have just a few more members to confirm over the next couple weeks. I want to give thanks to our amazing Stewardship team: **Hazel Hopkins, Lisa Nickerson, Marlene Lieb, Shawna Brinkerhoff** and **Sean McGrath**. I also want to thank our Stewards who helped to connect with our members including **Rob Lieb, Dyrck Van Dusen, Glenn Brown, and Kathy Kraft**. We would not have met our goal without their efforts.

The Board will be working to finalize our FY25-26 budget by our May 27 Board Meeting. We will present the budget for congregational approval at our **Annual Meeting on June 29**. It’s important that we have a quorum at this meeting, so please mark your calendars.

During our March board meeting, we agreed to begin the process of identifying a search committee for our next minister. Rev Jaye will be with us through next year, but the search process will begin over the next few months.

As part of this process, we will be reaching out to the congregation to get your feedback on who you would like to see on the committee. Once we compile your feedback, we will work with the nominating committee to finalize the members. Thank you for your active participation in this process.

During our April Board meeting we will review guidelines for responding to a visit by government immigration representatives. While this may be unlikely, we want our church leaders to be knowledgeable about the proper response and options available as well as local resources to contact if needed.

As always please feel free to reach out to me at any time with your questions or feedback. You can reach me after service or at any time on my email at president@uufhc.net.

*Yours in service,
- Mark Davis*



What’s New in Faith Formation

Imagination & NEW Opportunities for Youth!

This month, our theme invites us to explore the deep and world-shifting power of *imagination*. At its best, imagination is more than fairy tales—it’s a tool for liberation. When the systems around us uphold injustice, it is our sacred task to imagine new ones—systems rooted in compassion, equity, and collective care. This is the invitation at the heart of our Program for Children and Youth this month: to play, to dream, and to envision a better world.

Over the three Sundays we gather in classes this May, children and youth will explore how fantasy and make-believe can help us name and reshape the real-world injustices they experience and witness. Through storytelling, games, discussion, and creative projects, we’ll reflect on how the world *is* and imagine how it *could be*—because believing in liberation, and building it, starts with dreaming big together!

And we’re excited to announce a new addition to programming for our middle and high school youth! Beginning this month, we are adding a **Second Hour Youth Gathering** every Sunday after worship, from **11:45 am to 12:45 pm**! Now that more and more of our youth are expressing an interest in assisting with the worship service on Sundays (such as serving on the tech team), the RE Committee wants to ensure that they don’t miss out

on time to gather with their peers and reflect on their faith, values, and big questions. And of course, if youth want to attend class during service as well, they're more than welcome!

This new gathering also opens the door for more adult volunteers to connect with and support our youth, especially those who have other Sunday morning commitments. We can't wait to see how this grows. Here's to joyfully imagining a new part of our program—together!

- Jenn Blosser,
Director of Faith Formation



Volunteers of the Month

This month we honor the teens who have joined the tech team to help bring the services to our screens, either in the sanctuary or for the Zoom participants. Many of us don't even need to use the hymnals since the words to the hymns are displayed for all to see. We thank the following teens for their special contribution to our services:

Savannah Brinkerhoff
Hannah Johnson
Maya Johnson
Connor Magrath

The Nursery is Now Open!

UUFHC now has a fully functioning nursery during Sunday services. Elleigh, our new sitter, joins Jersey Dunstan in caring for our little ones. Stop by the nursery and take a few minutes to welcome Elleigh and introduce yourselves! For information on childcare policies contact Jenn Blosser, dff@uufhc.net.



Join Our Family Fellowship Group

Family Fellowship Group has had an amazing start in the past few months. We are gathering feedback from participants to find out if it's practical to have regular meetings over the summer or if we will just try to gather for a few special off-site events (First Friday, Bel Air BBQ bash, maybe a swim day?)

Keep an eye out for more information in the Thursday NUUwsbytes and feel free to share any feedback and/or suggestions for activities with

Erin Gallagher (emgallagher81@gmail.com),
Shawna Brinkerhoff (treasurer@uufhc.net) or
Sue Knause (susan.knause@gmail.com).

And remember, you don't have to have children to participate in Family Fellowship activities.

- Erin Gallagher

Additions to the Service Archive

Rev. Jaye's sermons have been added to our online Sunday [Service Archive](#), which means you can view just the sermon in addition to the entire service. In addition, AI technology has been used to transcribe the sermon as text, which you can download and read at your leisure. A portion of the sermon archive is shown here:

UUFHC Service Archive	
Date:	Apr 6, 2025
Presenter:	Rev. Jaye Brooks
Sermon:	Waiting for Passover Order of Service Sermon Sermon Transcript
Abstract:	Whether we celebrate Passover or simply honor it, let's consider the difficulty of waiting for trouble to pass and the necessity of sustaining our lives with joy—even in difficult times.
Date:	Mar 30, 2025
Presenter:	Rev. Jaye Brooks
Sermon:	A Sacred Trust Order of Service Sermon Sermon Transcript
Abstract:	In the words of youth poet laureate Amanda Gorman, Fear is love trying its best in the dark. Today we explore connections among fear, love, and widening the circle to welcome others in. Widening the circle—for Unitarian Universalists—it's a sacred trust.

Clicking the "Sermon" link will play a video of the sermon, and clicking on the "Sermon Transcript" link will download a PDF transcription of the sermon.

A New Year of Flea Markets

Saturday, May 10 is the date for UUFHC's first flea market of 2025. We are now accepting member donations for the UUFHC table in the coat area. You, your friends or your neighbors might be interested in a spot to sell things no longer needed after spring cleaning.



Volunteers are needed for the flea market even if just for a few hours. Contact Cindy Veidt for more information. This fundraiser is a great way for us to reach out to the community.

Support the Health & Hygiene Pantry

The Community Outreach Committee would like to invite families to help stock our hygiene pantry on Sunday mornings. There will be sign-up in the "stock closet" location in the Fellowship kitchen. Members of the committee are happy to answer any questions. Contact Maureen North, mnorth417@gmail.com or Erin Gallagher, emgallagher81@gmail.com.

When you are shopping, remember to pick up a few items for the pantry and drop them off in the basket in the far corner of the cloak/coffee room. We are especially looking for the 12 most-shopped items: Bath soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, deodorant, tampons, maxi pads, laundry soap, dish soap, disinfectant spray and toilet paper. Travel sizes are fine, too. It's easy to order from the Amazon Wish List at [Pantry Link](#). Your order will be delivered to a committee member's home and delivered to the Fellowship.

No other church or organization to my knowledge has a Health & Hygiene pantry in Harford County, and we are much appreciated by those in need.

Come Join the Artist Corner!

Member Becca Slentz is starting an artist corner for anyone in the congregation interested in creating items to sell at our annual Holiday Bazaar. An added benefit is the fellowship of other congregational artists.

We will meet every third Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am to 1:00 pm in one of the RE classroom. The May date will be May 20. For more information, contact Becca at beccatymel@gmail.com.

May Membership Anniversaries

Happy Anniversary to the following members who joined UUFHC during the merry month of May!

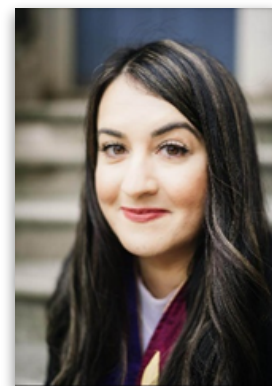
Leigh Faunce	1997
Nancy Gerick	2024
Valerie Greene	2017
Ronald (Ron) Henry	2017
Quintin Paul Seadler	2011
Richard Townsend	2018

New UUA Primary Contact

Due to a couple of upcoming staffing shifts in the Central East Region team, I've taken the opportunity to reorganize our regional Primary Contact assignments. (Your UUA [Primary Contact](#) is your first stop for any communications, questions or resources you may need from the UUA.)

This letter is to let you know that **starting July 1, 2025 your congregation's Primary Contact will be Rev. Sana Saeed.**

Sana will be reaching out this summer to (re)introduce herself and get to know your current leadership. Starting in July, she can be reached at ssaeed@uua.org. In the meantime, you can continue to reach out to your current primary contact, Lenore Bajare-Dukes lbajaredukes@uua.org, with questions, concerns and celebrations, and she'll loop Sana in as appropriate.



Rev. Sana Saeed has been Congregational Life Staff for the Central East Region of the UUA since 2020. Previously, she was an Intern Minister for UU Ministers Association (UUMA) and was the President of Diverse Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM). She's a graduate of Harvard Divinity School. She lives with her partner and beloved puppy Rumi in the Philadelphia region.

The Central East Region staff assures us that the mission is to support congregations in good work for our faith.

*- from email by Rev. Dr. Megan Foley
of the Central East Region*

General Assembly Ware Lecture Announced

The Unitarian Universalist Association is thrilled to announce that **Imara Jones** will take the stage as the Ware Lecturer at the General Assembly in Baltimore. The Ware lecture takes place annually at General Assembly on Saturday evenings, and this year it will be held Saturday, June 21 at 7:00 pm in Baltimore.



Imara Jones is an award-winning journalist, thought leader, and change maker. She has won Emmy and Peabody Awards and is the creator of *TransLash* Media, a cross-platform journalism, personal storytelling and narrative project, which produces content to shift the current culture of hostility towards transgender people. As part of her work, Imara hosts the WEBBY-nominated *TransLash Podcast with Imara Jones* as well as the investigative, limited series, *The Anti-Trans Hate Machine: A Plot Against Equality*. In 2020 Imara was featured on the cover of *Time* Magazine as part of its New American Revolution special edition.

Imara has been featured regularly in The Guardian, The Nation, MSNBC, CNBC, NPR and other media. She holds degrees from the London School of Economics and Columbia. She also serves on boards of many gender equity and anti-violence organizations. She goes by the pronouns she/her.

You'll never have a better opportunity to attend the UUA's General Assembly live, since it is scheduled to take place in Baltimore at the Baltimore Convention Center, June 18-22. Please register by May 15 to get the lower adult rate of \$475 (after that, the rate is \$540 for the entire General Assembly). There are reduced rates for youth who have completed 9th grade, and a rate of \$300 to attend a single day.

You can browse the website www.uua.org/ga to find registration information, as well as all the wonderful programs, workshops and worship services scheduled throughout the day. And it's a great way to meet other UUs from all across the continent.



The Anniversary of the Great Baltimore Sermon

For many years, UUs from all over Maryland made the pilgrimage to First Unitarian Church Baltimore on the first Sunday in May to celebrate the anniversary of William Ellery Channing's famous sermon, *Unitarian Christianity*, given there for the ordination of Jared Sparks (who for awhile was a tutor for a Havre de Grace family). Tens of thousands of copies were sold afterwards, making it one of the most famous sermons delivered anywhere. The tradition of traveling to Baltimore is no longer, but I always think of William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) at this time of year.

As a young boy in Newport, Rhode Island, Channing attended a Congregational church, whose minister was a disciple of fiery preacher, Jonathan Edwards, and this didn't appeal to young Channing, who described the theology as stern and appealing. He also heard an itinerant preacher preaching a gloom and doom sermon, and was surprised that his parents just resumed their normal life afterwards.

Eventually Channing studied at Harvard and graduated first in his class in 1798 and went on to study for the ministry. During the early years of his ministry, dissension was brewing among New England Congregationalists about Unitarian vs. Trinitarian beliefs. Channing did not want to be divisive, and it took him until 1815 to come out on the Unitarian side. He wrote a letter that led to him becoming the spokesperson for liberal congregations and their ministry.

Channing gave a sermon in Baltimore defining Unitarian Christianity at the time to counter conflicting reports of what these Unitarian ministers believed. He described the Bible as "a book written for men, in the language of men whose meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books." He defended the use of reason in religion.

As far as the concept of Trinity was concerned, Channing stated that nowhere does the word for God mean three persons, and the doctrine of Trinity is confusing and distracts the mind from communion with God. Also, Channing rejected the doctrine of predestination. He believed that God had made human nature, with its capacity for moral choice and ever increasing understanding, akin to the divine.

For 20 years, Channing was minister at the Federal Street Church in Boston. But his health led him eventually to give most of the pastoral duties to an associate. He traveled to Europe for the sake his health, but al-

though his health didn't improve, he learned a lot from his travels. When he returned home, he was in great demand as a speaker, including preaching against slavery. Channing was considered the most influential American religious leader whose works were known abroad.

To learn more about our great Unitarian forefather, William Ellery Channing, visit www.uudb.org/channing-william-ellery.

- Kay Saucier

Chalice Lighter Corner

The Central East Region's Chalice Lighter Program provides grants to Congregations for several purposes. Past Chalice Lighter grants have helped support calling ministers and other staff members, building a permanent facility, supporting initiatives to get the word out about Unitarian Universalism, and upgrading current facilities, and especially since COVID, improving technical equipment to provide for greater outreach. UUFHC has been the recipient of Chalice Lighter Grants in all these areas.



This spring, the First Unitarian Society of Syracuse in New York is the grant recipient. The grant will allow them to upgrade their technology so that they can bring a life-saving message to the wider community. Since 2017, FUUSS has held a "Building the Beloved Community Beyond the Binary Conference" annually. The grant not only enhances FUUSS technology, but will provide for greater outreach.

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse has been holding the Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary conference since 2017. This one-day event has grown over the years from a small community gathering of 40ish people to a multi-platform event with 120+ people in person in Syracuse and 100+ offsite in other congregations in the southern region as well as people who attended as individuals from their own homes. This year, with the help of the UUA and a Chalice Lighter grant First UU Syracuse will be taking the BBCBB event nationwide.

You are invited to become a Chalice Lighter to help congregations grow and to help spread the word of Unitarian Universalism and the wonderful programs. In this time when community is especially important, the grants help us spread the word. Typically there are three calls per year, and members give an average of \$20 per call

per person. But you can choose the amount you wish to donate. You can pay when the call comes out or pay for all three calls in the Fall. Either way, you will still get the newsletter informing you of the grantee and how they will put their grant money to work. Email and snail mail options are available.

Contact Beth Casebolt, bcasebolt@uua.org or call her at (740) 232-9048 with any questions or to join.

- Kay Saucier

Climate Justice Revival

The UUA's "Climate Justice Revival: Reimagine Together from an Extractive Age to a New Era," launched on September 28 and 29, 2024, and several members of UUFHC participated in the launch.



"We wanted to spark a shift from what I would call transactional and extractive relationships in our organizing that really lead to burnout, to cultures of organizing that are more nourishing, more relational, and more joy-filled," said Rachel Myslivy, Climate Justice strategist for the Unitarian Universalist Association's Side With Love Organizing Strategy Team.

The launch was basically a "sit and get event" where people tuned into the video presentation and did a few activities, but is moving to a model where congregations can be creative.

The Revival is organized around five learning objectives: imagining a thriving future, making connections, building capacity, nourishing relationships, and charting a course. Many congregations have become energized around this topic, with sermons, dialogues and even activities for children. Some congregations are studying the effect of climate change on the particularly vulnerable ethnic minority communities.

To learn more about the Climate Justice Revival, go to <https://www.uuworld.org/>. You will see the link to the article on Climate Justice Revivals as well as other articles written since the UU World Magazine came out. You can also receive an email, UUWorld Wayfinder, that will bring you up to date. Just email world@uua.org to be put on the subscription list.

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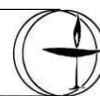
Building Liberal Religious Community
Please Join Us!

Sunday Services: 10:30 am; coffee follows

Please visit us online at www.uufhc.net



Please note: Next Newsletter deadline is Sunday, May 11, 2025



Minister:	The Rev. Jennifer Brooks
Director of Faith Formation:	Jennifer Blosser
Church Administrator:	Karen Kurrle
Newsletter Editor:	Kay Saucier
Webmaster:	Rick Saucier

Fellowship Office Hours (Karen Kurrle):	
Tues & Thurs:	10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Wed (Home Office):	10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Minister's Office Hours:	
Sun, Wed & Thurs:	Afternoon

Director of Faith Formation Office Hours:	
Thurs:	10:00 am to 3:00 pm
Tues, Wed & Fri (Home Office):	10:00 am to 3:00 pm

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Wayside Pulpit

If... you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning.

– Catherine Aird, *His Burial Too*