



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH OF
BLOOMINGTON
NORMAL

Love Radically ● Serve Gratefully ● Wonder Daily

[A LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation.](#)
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December 1, 2024

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This Sunday's Worship Service:

Hope in the Dark

Cindy Cotton and Claudia Kaufman, Worship Associates

The season of Advent begins with the theme of Hope. This December, when life feels unsteady for many, hope can help keep us centered and, perhaps, help each one of us craft a path forward.

[Sign Up for the Potluck Brunch Here](#)

Join us in one of the following ways:

- In person
- Telephone: 1-646-558-8656 and use meeting ID 949-975-206 when prompted.
- Click below to join on Zoom.

[Click Here to Join on Zoom](#)

[Click Here for Order of Service](#)

Upcoming Services

12/8 - To Love as if it Matters

Rev. Rebecca Gant and Jan Baird, Worship Associate

Many things changed on November 5, but one thing that didn't was our commitment to embody the Love at the center of our faith. As we gather with friends and family this holiday season, how can we be our best, loving selves? What does it mean to "Love as if it matters"?

**12/15 - Worship with Guest Minister Rev. Jennifer Innis and
Worship Associate Claudia Kaufman.**



Our services are shared live on zoom, and most-- except All-Ages services-- are recorded and posted on YouTube. You may be seen on Zoom or in the recording if you sit in a pew that is not marked "not visible on camera." If you are concerned about being visible on camera, please speak to Rev. Rebecca and we will find a way to accommodate those concerns.

Want to plan something at the church or do you have something you want people to know about?

Parish News Deadline: Tuesdays at 9 am

Note: The deadline for the 12/28 and 01/04 Parish News is 12/22 at noon!

[Event Registration Form](#)

[Communication Form](#)

This Week's Events

Sunday, December 1

- 8:45 AM – 9:45 AM Adult Choir (Walker Room)
- 8:30 AM – 11:45 AM Childcare (Preschool and Childcare Room)
- 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM Sunday Service (Sanctuary)
- 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM Children and Youth Religious Exploration (Lower Level/Back Lawn)
- 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM Our Whole Lives Information Session (Walker Room)
- 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM First Sunday Non-Fiction Book Group (Online)
- 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM Bloomington Normal Meditation Group (Walker Room)

Monday, December 2

- 11:45 AM – 1:00 PM Lunch Bunch (Fell Room)

Tuesday, December 3

- 5:30 PM – 6:15 PM Fairly Frequent Singers (Jr. High and High School) (Walker Room)
- 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM Drop In Covenant Group (Irvin Room, Online)

Wednesday, December 4

- 4:45 PM – 5:15 PM Emerson Singers (up to 5th Grade) (Walker Room)
- 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM Private Event (Walker Room)
- 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM Humanist Group (Offsite)

Thursday, December 5

- 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM Rehearsal for Baroque'n Consort (Walker Room)
- 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM Our Whole Lives Information Session (Walker Room)
- 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM True Colors Book Club (Fell Room, Online)

Friday, December 6

- 6:15 PM – 10:00 PM Private Event (Walker Room)

[To View the Full Events Calendar Click Here](#)



From the Minister's Desk

Rev. Rebecca Gant, Minister

Announcing the Good Vibes Crew!

Earlier this fall, I ran an article in the Parish News asking who might want to be part of a team that plans social events at the church. Kristen Krienert and Alicia Wodika responded (Thank you!) and they are up and running. They are calling themselves the Good Vibes Crew. Their first big event will be a Sober New Year's Eve party at the church on Dec 31 from 6-8:30. More info to come on that!

If you've been around the church for a while, you might be asking "So is this just a new version of the Fellowship Committee?" The answer is "Yes and No." This group- like the Fellowship Committee- will plan fun events that build community. They won't be doing all of the same events that the Fellowship Committee did, though, because times and personnel and volunteer capacity have changed. Please join me in thanking them and offering your support for the new energy they bring!

-Rev. Rebecca

Central Illinois Pulpit Swap December 15

My colleagues in Central Illinois and I are continuing our Pulpit Swap on December 15. It's good all around-- congregants get to see a new face and hear from someone different, and the ministers get to preach an old favorite or create something completely different! On the 15th, Rev. Jennifer Innis of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Peoria will be at UUBN and I'll be in Peoria. Looking forward to it!

From the Board

Larissa Armstrong, Board President

Updates from the Board of Directors

The Board would like to formally thank Dick Hanson for his 20+ years of dedicated service as Buildings & Grounds Committee Chair. He is stepping down from the committee and working to transition knowledge to new people. We are very grateful for all he has done to help keep our church and its grounds beautiful and well-maintained for all of us to enjoy. When you see Dick at church, please thank him for all his hard work! Thank you Dick!

His departure means we need NEW RECRUITS for the Buildings & Grounds Committee. Larissa Armstrong will serve as interim Chair to help keep track of work that needs to be done and to help onboard new committee members. Brad Bell has graciously agreed to take on some of the initial maintenance tasks, but can not do all this work alone! We need YOUR help! Are you good at general maintenance outdoor tasks like raking, mowing, snow shoveling? Interested in helping with some regular checks that you can do monthly or quarterly (depending) when you're at church on Sunday and check off the list (like changing the thermostats seasonally, changing room clocks when the time changes, checking the sump pump periodically)? Do you have good DIY repair skills when a little dry wall needs patched or a door handle breaks or we need some fresh paint? Ideally our committee will have 4-6 people on it, along with additional folks to help with seasonal lawn care and snow removal. This will ensure no one feels over-burdened by the task of building maintenance.

If you are interested in helping us, please contact Larissa at [REDACTED] or catch her at church on Sunday. If we can't find adequate help, that means we'll have to pay outside people to do the work, and our budget deficit will continue to increase.

The Board is almost finished revising our Policies and Procedures Manual, a task required of the Board every few years.

Exciting news: After discussions with the Director of the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District (BNWRD), we received a free estimate from a plumbing group they are working with on a septic replacement program. After receiving the estimate to cap our septic tank and get hooked up to the sewer system (which will cost \$57,750 plus an additional \$34,500 to remove the sewage ejector in the basement and lower sewer invert to match the sewer in the basement), BNWRD offered to cover the \$57,750 costs, waiving \$25,000 and letting UUBN pay off the remainder in yearly interest-free installments of \$1280 over 25 years to pay off the balance. The Board unanimously voted in favor of accepting this offer. We hope to raise the additional \$34,500 from the congregation to cover the sewage ejector removal (more on that later), and the next step is talking with our neighbors at St. John's to ensure they are okay with us making a bit of a mess along the property line between our churches. We are very excited about this generous offer from BNWRD and felt it was too good to pass up.

We will share more details about this at the Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 8th at 11:30am (complete agenda and supporting documents for the meeting will be shared in a separate email).

If you have any questions please contact Larissa at [REDACTED].
Please remember that all meetings are open to attend, and you can contact your Board of Directors at [REDACTED].

In Fellowship,

The UUBN Board of Directors

Larissa Armstrong (President), Julie Prandi (VP), Chad Kahl (Secretary), Nancy Armstrong (Treasurer), Jill Enchelmayer, Karla Bailey-Smith, Richard Seehuus, Hubert Morales, and Brad Bell

Submitted by Larissa Armstrong

Religious Exploration

Terina Carter, Director of Religious Exploration, LRE@uubn.org



Bread Communion - Aebleskivers

photo credit Rasmus Gundorff Sæderup from Unsplash

My dad is 2nd generation Danish, and his father was an infant when he arrived in America from Denmark. My dad's grandparents wanted their son to assimilate in America as much as possible, and so they did not follow any Danish customs in their home. My dad was only 9 when his dad died and only 17 when his mother died.

When my parents married, they decided that they wanted to bring their ancestors' customs into their family (my mom is Swedish) and so my siblings and I grew up following many Scandinavian customs and eating lots of Scandinavian food - including Aebleskivers (Danish).

Aebleskivers are more of a pancake than bread. "Aeble" is apple in Danish and so sometimes people do put chopped apples in them or sometimes they are filled with strawberry or raspberry jam. They can also be covered with powdered sugar, or dipped in syrup or jam.

Ableskivers tend to be associated with Christmas, but my family ate them on any family holiday, and sometimes just because my dad felt like making them. My siblings and I have continued the tradition with our own families as well.

Submitted by Andie Nielsen

Sacred Rest

Sunday, December 15, 11:30-12:15, Church, with childcare

Sunday, December 22, 4:00-4:45, Online

During these monthly gatherings, we'll hear a reading from Rest as Resistance by Tricia Hersey; rest together; reflect on rest as resistance in a capitalist society, and leave with a "practice to resist grind culture" from [Tricia Hersey's Rest Deck](#). Bring a favorite blanket (we'll have some to share). Send me a note at LRE@uubn.org to be added to the email list. You'll receive a monthly reminder and the link for the online gathering.

Our Whole Lives (OWL) Information Sessions

Sunday, December 1, 11:30-12:30, with childcare

Thursday, December 5, 6:00-7:00, with childcare

Do you have a child in Kindergarten, 1st, 4th, 5th, 7th, or 8th grade? Just curious? Stop by one of the information sessions to learn more about Our Whole Lives, including our plans to offer the program soon. You can preview the lessons and books, ask questions, and indicate interest. Know someone in the community who shares our values and wants inclusive sexuality education for their children? Invite them to attend.

Winter Solstice Bonfire

Saturday, December 21, 6:00, Church

Bundle up and join a bonfire celebration of the Winter Solstice. Hot chocolate and bonfire snacks will be set up outside. RSVP to LRE@uubn.org for snack planning.

For an instant, in the stillness,
the chiming of the celestial spheres will be heard
as earth hangs poised
in the crystalline darkness, and then
gracefully
tilts.

- Rebecca Ann Parker

Childcare Sub List

In anticipation of my sabbatical (February - April), I'm putting together a list of people willing to sub as needed in childcare. Subs fill the Safe Congregation role of the second adult in the room. You would be contacted by Blair or the RE Team if one of the Childcare/Preschool staff is sick or needs a morning off. Send me your name and contact information to be added to the list.

Gnagey Library Updated

Check out the updated Gnagey Library! 3 large tubs of books have been removed from the collection to make room for more up to date and relevant titles! We've reconfigured the space to make it more welcoming for hanging out, playing a game, reading a book, or working from church.

Ready to spend your Christmas book money somewhere other than Amazon?

The church has a virtual storefront on Bookshop: <https://bookshop.org/shop/uubn> Bookshop supports independents like Bobzbay in downtown Bloomington through online ordering and shipping to your home. If you purchase through our virtual storefront, the church will receive a small percentage. Not all titles are available but I'm finding that most are.

Online Small Groups

Email Tom at [REDACTED] or text/call [REDACTED] to join any of the following Zoom discussions as participant or listener. You will receive the Zoom link the day before the session.

The purpose of the **First Sunday Nonfiction Book Group** is to educate ourselves in order to take actions toward justice for all in public policy.

- December 1, 2-3 P.M. *Autocracy, Inc.: The Dictators Who Want to Run the World*, by Anne Applebaum, Penguin Random House (Doubleday imprint), 2023. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize.
- January 5, 2025, 2-3 P.M. *The Message*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Penguin Random House (One World imprint), 2024. Includes his analysis of the Gaza situation.

LET US READ A NOVEL (LURAN) #9 *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain, 1884, will meet for the fourth and last time on Monday, December 16, 7-8 P.M. on Zoom to discuss chapters 29-42, which ends the book.

In early January, I will send an email to the registrants for LURAN#10 *James*, by Percival Everett, Doubleday, 2024, are casting of the Huck Finn story from the point of view of the runaway Jim. Then we will organize the reading and discussion schedule for the book. 10 registered

The next Share Your Writing session will be toward the end of January, TBD. Any kind of writing in any stage of development is welcome. 6 registered.

Announcing a new discussion focused on a book about climate change: *What If We Get It Right: Visions of Climate Futures*, by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, Penguin Random House, 2024. An opportunity to reflect on individual and collective approaches. Register by sending me an email by January 1, 2025, to give yourself and the world a new year's gift of thought and action. 2 registered.

Stewardship

Emile Garneau, Chair

Pledge Drive Progress

As of Nov. 26th, 102 members pledged \$333,708, 76% of our goal of \$438,204. There are about 40 members who have not pledged yet.

Compared to the same time last year, 111 members pledged \$348,672, 84% of the goal of \$410,618.

For the period 11/22 thru 11/26, no new pledges were received. Please pledge now, if possible. The Stewardship Committee: Linda Johnston, Nancy Armstrong, Jack Pace, Claire Hedden, Rain Johnson, Emile Garneau

Social Justice Team News

Chad Kahl, Team Lead

Prison Ministry News

Holiday Cards for People Behind Bars

Spend a few minutes after Sunday service in the Fell Room on 12/1 to write a card with a short message (sample messages will be provided!) We have thirty addresses and cards all ready to go! We will use the church for the return address.

Chalice Circle at Logan

Marie-Susanne joins Cindy Cotton to lead this Chalice Circle! It is scheduled twice a month, although it has been frequently cancelled in the last several months because of a shortage of staff at the prison. Since Logan is slated to close after a new facility is built, lots of staff are leaving now and it is hard to hire new people. Cheers for Marie-Susanne and Cindy; as well as for prison pen pals like Deborah Niemann, Barb Dallinger, and Brad Bell!

Announcements

UUSC Report on Use of Disaster Relief Funds

In worship a couple of months ago, we collected donations for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's work to support those hit by hurricanes Helene and Milton. Here's what has happened so far with those donations:

- Eleven mini-grants of \$3,000 each were given to congregations across Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina for immediate use, primarily to support delivery of bottled water and propane.
- Eight grants totaling \$156,500 were awarded to congregations in Bradenton, St. Petersburg, Venice, and Lakeland, FL; Augusta, GA; as well as Asheville, Hendersonville, and Black Mountain, NC.

If you would like to learn more about the UUSC and its work in disaster relief, more information is available here: <https://www.uusc.org/ways-to-give/erf/>

If you'd like to donate, here's the donation link: <https://www.uua.org/giving/disaster-relief>

Thinking About Getting Married Before the Inauguration?

Given the uncertainty in the country, many queer couples who had already been planning to marry feel a greater urgency to get it done. The church would like to help you do that!

Use [this form](#) to communicate with Rev. Rebecca about your wishes for your ceremony. Ceremonies will happen at two-hour intervals on December 14 and 21.

We will provide an officiant (Rev. Rebecca), our sanctuary, and piano music for no cost.

You bring your license and the people you would like to witness your ceremony.

After you fill out the form, we will be in touch with you about open times.

Once we have reserved a date/time, we will ask for a \$100 deposit to hold your space—we will return the deposit to you on your wedding day. Forfeited deposits will go to Pink Haven which is an organization working to help trans folks out of unsafe states and into safer states.

Have questions? Please call 309-828-0235 or email office@uubn.org.

Coming December 8: New Member Recognition

If you feel you are ready to become a full-fledged member of UUBN and are ready to sign the membership book, we invite you to join us on Sunday, Dec. 8, for our New Member Recognition during worship. It is a short ceremony to recognize folks who have joined us recently.

If you want to participate or have questions, please contact Blair at office@uubn.org or [309-828-0235](tel:309-828-0235). We also request a photo of yourself and a short bio (limit 125 words) by November 26.

Call for Participants!

Tuesday, December 24th at 4:30 pm

We are beginning to plan for the Christmas Eve service. Readers and musicians are needed. If you are interested in participating in the Christmas Eve service and could be a reader, please contact Jan Baird at jan@uubn.org. If you are interested in singing or playing a musical instrument, please contact Charlie Berggren at charlie@uubn.org.

Submitted by Jan Baird, worship associate for December 24 service



2024 HOLIDAY FUNDRAISER

Shop at Crossroads from
November 11 - December 20

Identify our organization's name at the register
when you checkout to have **15% of your pre-tax
purchases donated to UUBN!**

Giving Th♥nks,
Giving Back 2024



Giving Thanks, Giving Back

2024 Holiday Shopping Partnership with Crossroads

We are pleased to announce we are again partnering with Crossroads Fair Trade Goods & Gifts in the "Giving Thanks, Giving Back" shopping fundraiser! This holiday season the campaign will run from November 11 through December 20! This means UUBN congregants, friends, and supporters can shop any days from November 11 through December 20 and UUBN will receive a 15% rebate on the pre-tax amount.

Customers **MUST** state to a volunteer at the cash register that their purchase should be applied toward UUBN. This is very important because there are several participating groups able to shop at the same time for an extended period of time.
In addition to helping UUBN earn money to assist with our projects, the purchases made provide a life with dignity and a consistent income to the artisans whose products are sold in the store. In addition to impacting the lives of the artisans, it enriches the lives of their families and communities as well. **SHOP OUR VALUES...SHOP FAIR TRADE!!**

For more information, please contact Lin Hinds at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

-- Submitted by Lin Hinds



This Month's Community Plate Recipient
INtegrity Counseling

INtegrItY Counseling is a community-based, non-profit counseling agency located in the heart of Bloomington's west side. INtegrItY enables a growing team of concerned professionals to partner in providing counseling, outreach, and community education on topics such as grief and loss, addiction, parenting, and coping skills for those with mental or emotional disorders. Their vision is "Stigma free mental health support for all." They serve all members of the community, regardless of race, gender, belief, orientation, or economic status. They do not have a set fee for counseling, but instead, use a "pay as you can" method and ask clients to contribute what they are able to afford for counseling.

To donate to INtegrItY Counseling, make out your check to INtegrItY Counseling and deliver to the church. Donations can also be made via the Breeze Online Giving website by clicking the button below or from your smartphone when you [download the app](#). Our subdomain is uubn.

[Learn More!](#)

[Donate Here](#)

STEWARDSHIP

Pledges from our members and friends support the ministries of the church. If you haven't made your pledge for 2025, here is the link: <https://uubn.org/wp/make-pledge/>

If you need to adjust your pledge, email Nancy Armstrong at [REDACTED] or contact the office by phone or at office@uubn.org.

Communications are confidential.

Ongoing Group Gatherings

Covenant Groups:

Lay-led small groups that meet once a month to deepen and expand the ministry of the congregation through spiritual and emotional connection. Email [Terina](#) to join a small group.

Monday Lunch Bunch:

Want to start your week with good company and lively, informal conversation? Join us in the Fell Room with or without your lunch. No reservations required. All topics are welcome. We light the chalice at 11:45 AM and release the flame at 1:00 PM. Coffee and tea provided. Hosted by the Membership Team.

Contacts

Staff

Rev. Rebecca Gant, Minister

minister@uubn.org

Available by appointment. Click this link to see when she's available:

<https://calendly.com/revrebeccagant/30min>

Terina Carter, Director of Religious Exploration

LRE@uubn.org

Available by Appointment

Blair Broughton, Office Manager

office@uubn.org

Office hours vary. Please make an appointment: 217-722-3586 (call or text)

Charlie

Director

Bob Mangia

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Molly Hjelle, AV Technician

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Anastasia Guzman, AV Technician

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Sara Kaeb, Child Care

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Adrienne Alt, Child Care

office@uubn.org

Board Information

President: Larissa Armstrong

Vice President: Julie Prandi

Secretary: Chad Kahl

Treasurer: Nancy Armstrong

Directors: Karla Bailey-Smith, Brad Bell,

Jill Enchelmayer, Hubert Morales, and

Richard Seehuus.

Monthly Board Meetings are in Irvin Room and Online at 6:30 on the Second Tuesday of each month. All are welcome to attend. Contact the the board for the Zoom Link.

Contact the board at
uubnboard@uubn.org.

Trustees

Jack Pace, Paul Packard, and Brad Boesdorfer

Committees

Aesthetics
Building and Grounds
Committee on Shared Ministry
Finance and Stewardship
Denominational Affairs
Memorial Garden Stewards
Safety

Doug Johnson
Dick Hansen
Janet Tulley
Emile Garneau
Nancy Armstrong
Debby Funk
Julie Prandi

Teams

Membership and Outreach
Right Relations
Community Concerns
Good Vibes Crew
Green Sanctuary
Helping Hands
History
Religious Exploration (RE)
Social Justice
Worship and Music
Pastoral Care

Kathy Packard
Carolyn Moon and Pamela Morgan
Camille Ehlers
Kristen Krienert and Alicia Wodika
Nancy Armstrong
Carolyn Pitts
Joan Banks
Erin Ripley-Gataric, Terina Carter
Chad Kahl
Claudia Kaufman, Rev. Rebecca Gant
Rev. Rebecca Gant

To obtain contact information for the leads of these groups please see the [online directory](#) or [email the office](#).



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