



UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF  
BLOOMINGTON  
NORMAL

Love Radically ● Serve Gratefully ● Wonder Daily

[A LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation.](#)  
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December 8, 2024

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## This Sunday's Worship Service:

### To Love as if it Matters

**Rev. Rebecca Gant and Jan Baird, Worship Associate**

Our commitment to embody the Love at the center of our faith is unwavering, even in challenging times. 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"?

[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

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

In this season, we are pulled by our love of the world and our heartbreak for it. What boundaries need to be in place for us to be in our integrity and live into our generous spirit?



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 8

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)  
10:15 AM – 11:15 AM Children and Youth Religious Exploration (Lower Level/Back Lawn)  
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM Congregational Meeting (Sanctuary)  
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM Bloomington Normal Meditation Group (Walker Room)

### Monday, December 9

11:45 AM – 1:00 PM Lunch Bunch (Fell Room)  
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM Social Justice Team Meeting (Online)  
5:30 PM – 7:00 PM PFLAG (Irvin Room, Online)

### Tuesday, December 10

5:30 PM – 6:15 PM Fairly Frequent Singers (Jr. High and High School) (Walker Room)  
6:30 PM – 7:30 PM Board Meeting (Irvin Room)

### Wednesday, December 11

4:45 PM – 5:15 PM Emerson Singers (up to 5th Grade) (Walker Room)  
7:00 PM – 8:00 PM Monthly Meeting of Many Paths CUUPs (Fell Room, Online)

**Thursday, December 12**

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM Rehearsal for Baroque'n Consort (Walker Room)

**Friday, December 13**

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM Over the Rainbow (Fell Room)

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!

## Central Illinois Pulpit Swap December 15

Reverend Jennifer Innis will be our guest preacher on Sunday, December 15. She is from Peoria, IL where she enjoys life with her spouse the Reverend Patrick Price and their children, Nate and Abby. She is happy to be the minister with the Universalist Unitarian Church of Peoria. She also is the Director for Spirit Play, a story-based program for young children in Unitarian Universalism. Rev. Innis is thrilled to offer worship with this beloved community while Rev. Gant is doing the same in Peoria.

# 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 were shared in a separate email). Paper copies are in the church ent  
If you have any questions please contact Larissa at [REDACTED].  
Please remember, Board meetings are open to attend, and you can contact your Board of Directors at [uubnboard@uubn.org](mailto:uubnboard@uubn.org)

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](mailto:LRE@uubn.org)

Y'all, I don't know about you, but I've heard a definite increase in complaining lately. I've noticed that when I'm complaining a lot, it's usually rooted in anxiety and not really about the topic of my complaint. There are a lot of reasons we complain. Complaining can be our reaction to change, stress, or uncertainty; complaining can be a way to seek validation. For some of us, complaining is how we ask for help finding a solution. For others, complaining is how we process information and it's really about "thinking out loud."

My young adult children learned long ago that when they complained to me about almost anything, I was going to respond with a suggested solution or try to guide them to a solution. That wasn't always what they wanted or needed. Now they will say, "I think I just need to talk this out with someone" OR "I really need help finding a solution." And if I complain to them, they'll ask me what I'm hoping to get out of the complaint.

If you find yourself on either (or both) sides of a complaint filled conversation, these resources have advice that might help.

1. [How to Complain Less](#) (short article)
2. [Managing a Chronic Complainer](#) (article)
3. [What to Say to Someone Who Complains to You](#) (Video)

## 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](mailto:LRE@uubn.org) to be added to the email list. You'll receive a monthly reminder and the link for the online gathering.

## 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](mailto: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

## 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.

- 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.
- February 2, 2025, 2-3 P.M. *Invisible Doctrine: The Secret History of Neoliberalism*, by George Monbiot and Peter Hutchison, Penguin Random House (Crown imprint), 2024. On economic ideology and public policy in the United States.

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, a re-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 Dec. 2, 2024, 105 families pledged \$337,388, 77% of our 2025 goal of \$438,204. There are about 40 families who have not pledged yet.

Compared to the same time last year, 117 families pledged \$355,012, 86% of the 2024 goal of \$410,618.

For the period 11/22 thru 12/2, only three 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

### 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

## Holiday Brunch and Fellowship December 22

Join the Membership Team for our monthly brunch and fellowship following the Sunday service on December 22. Bring some food to share if you can. More details and sign-up form in the next newsletter. We hope you will be able to attend!

Submitted by the Membership Team

## Call for Participants!

**Tuesday, December 24th at 4:30 pm**

We are planning the Christmas Eve service. Readers and musicians are needed. If you plan to do a Christmas Eve service and could be a reader, please contact Jan Baird at [REDACTED]. If you would like to sing or play a musical instrument, please contact Charlie Berggren at [REDACTED].

Submitted by Jan Baird, worship associate for December 24 service

## All-Ages Sober New Year's Eve Party

**Tuesday, December 31, 6-8:30pm, Fell Room**

Join us to welcome in 2025 with an All-Ages Sober New Year's Eve Party on Dec 31st from 6-8:30pm in the Fell Room! We'll have fun activities to help you set resolutions for yourself and for the church, games, a small-bite potluck, and mocktails. We'll also have an early-bird count down to 8pm, so you and yours can be snug in bed (or available for further festivities) well before midnight! Sign up for setup, clean up, and small-bite potluck at the button below.

For more information, please contact Kristen Krienert at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

-Submitted by Kristen Krienert and Alicia Wodika, the Good Vibes Crew

[Sign Up for NYE Party Here](#)

## Game Night for Adults - CANCELLED IN DEC

Game Night for Adults is NOT happening in December. William Wilson, Mars Scott, Babs Allen, and Pamela Morgan hope everyone takes time to play some games with friends and family this holiday season. We look forward to seeing you in January!!!

# 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 (Charlie) 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, an organization working to help move trans folks out of unsafe states and into safer states.

Have questions? Please call 309-828-0235 or email [office@uubn.org](mailto:office@uubn.org).



## 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 congregants, friends, and supporters can shop any days from November 11 through December 20 and we 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 [Narmstr908@aol.com](mailto:Narmstr908@aol.com) or contact the office by phone or at [office@uubn.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:LRE@uubn.org)  
Available by Appointment

Blair Broughton, Office Manager  
[office@uubn.org](mailto:office@uubn.org)  
Office hours vary. Please make an appointment: 217-722-3586 (call or text)

Charlie [REDACTED] Director

Bob Mangia [REDACTED] Choir Director

Molly Hjelle, AV Technician  
[avstaff@uubn.org](mailto:avstaff@uubn.org)

Anastasia Guzman, AV Technician  
[avstaff@uubn.org](mailto:avstaff@uubn.org)

Sara Kaeb, Child Care  
[office@uubn.org](mailto:office@uubn.org)

Adrienne Alt, Child Care  
[office@uubn.org](mailto: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](mailto: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

Kathy Packard  
Carolyn Moon and Pamela Morgan  
Camille Ehlers  
Kristen Krienert and Alicia Wodika  
Nancy Armstrong  
Carolyn Pitts  
Joan Banks

Religious Exploration (RE)  
Social Justice  
Worship and Music  
Pastoral Care

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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