

TRI-UU NEWSLETTER

July-August Birthdays

- Diane Carlin
- Sandy Ogletree
- Maria Kelly
- Pat Felton
- Frank Kelly
- Aaron Coleman
- Karen Fletcher
- Peggy Roberts
- Orvilla Sheller
- Tom Zitkovic
- Mary Gretchen Lewis
- Tim McCusker
- Shelly Burnett
- Mary Troestler
- Bruce Andrews
- India Cothorn
- Phil Montague
- Shirley Loebel
- Sarah Reagan
- Kim Hummel
- Ivett Garza
- Anne McCusker
- Marie Lujanac
- Glenn Muller
- Alice Clardy Gardner
- Eileen McCabe
- Nancy Croce
- Billy Tyndall
- M-E Tyndall

Message from Reverend Kristina:

07/02 By the time you read this, I will be taking
 07/02 vacation and study leave time. I will have attended
 07/06 (and worked!) General Assembly and our annual
 07/15 Ministry Days as well. They were both from
 07/15 June 14-21, and I probably have some ideas of things to talk about or
 07/16 try when I return.
 07/16 Then I will be on a combination of vacation and study leave from
 07/17 June 21-August 1 (I return to the pulpit Aug 2, probably with lessons
 07/17 from GA and/or Ministry Days).
 07/18 June is what we ministers refer to as “the end of the program year” –
 07/23 much like an academic year, most of our programs take breaks in the
 07/26 summer. Across the country, people are traveling in this season, and
 07/27 Florida is no exception as people often try to escape the heat or
 07/27 spend time here with friends and family who are visiting. The
 07/28 program year begins again in September, although for Florida, it’s
 07/29 sometimes more October.
 08/04 I don’t have plans for my time away, although I’m hoping to do a
 08/10 little exploring of the area – something I haven’t been able to do given
 08/11 how unwell I was last year while waiting for, having, and then
 08/12 recovering from surgery. I’m still not entirely sorted out but hoping
 08/13 that will improve, too.
 08/13 Welcome to UUism will return again in the fall – please let me know
 08/17 if you have suggestions of topics!
 08/25 I have been trying to wrap things up before my leave and am looking
 08/27 forward to time to rest. I’m not sure what next year will bring yet, but
 08/30 I’m looking forward to finding out with you!



No Newsletter in August.
 Deadline for submissions to August-
 September TriUU Newsletter will be
 August 23.





SERVICE THEMES

July & August spiritual themes

July 5:

the Rev. Carole Yorke

Title: “The Art of Unclenching”

Releasing the grip we keep on certainty, outcomes, grudges on each other. Summer asks us to loosen up—sandals and shorts, schedules, shoulders. What about our spirits?

July 12:

the Worship Team of Tri-UU

Title: ”Show and Tell, Part 3”

Three people from our congregation will share a bit of their life stories. They’ll talk about moments that have shaped who they are. It’s a chance for all of us to listen, connect, and get to know each other a little better.

July 19:

the Rev. Carole Yorke

Title: “Sacred Noticing”

Wonder and Reverence in Everyday Life, without supernatural claims. Awe doesn’t require deities. Fireflies, first tomatoes, late night conversations can be enough.

July 26:

the Rev. Kathy Schmitz

Sermon Title: It’s Complicated

Description: In the modern world we often yearn for simplicity, and yet, we often find that things are more complicated than they appear at first glance. Today, we explore the UU value of Interdependence.

August 2:

the Rev. Kristina Spaude

To Be Determined

August 9:

the Rev. Kristina Spaude

To Be Determined

August 16:

Erin Powers

To Be Determined

August 23:

the Rev. Kristina Spaude

To Be Determined

August 30:

the Rev. Carole Yorke

To Be Determined



President's Message from Cindy Grossman: Why I Like Participating in General Assembly



Every year, Unitarian Universalists all over the country gather for our general assembly. Our denomination has been doing this for 64 years, since the year following the 1961 merger of Unitarians and Universalists. Since COVID, with a nod to the climate crisis, we have been gathering virtually in alternate years, so as to limit our carbon footprint. Even when there were meetings in person, there was always an opportunity to attend virtually.

I have attended the virtual General Assembly every year since 2020. One day it is my dream to actually attend a general assembly on site.

But this year I made the liberation best of it sitting in front of my iPad, participating as a delegate and taking in some inspiring worship services and speakers.

One of my favorite worship services was the one commemorating Juneteenth. It invited participants into a shared spiritual experience where we could witness an honest rendering of history through story and song. Rev. Verdis Robinson from the All Souls Congregation in New London, CT weaved together the pain of bondage and the hope of justice and liberation with a resounding performance of the Black National Anthem, **"Lift Every Voice and Sing"** and ending with the UU hymn, **"We Are"** (our ancestor's prayers) showing an inspiring photo montage of UU Ancestors of Color. I will never sing that hymn again without thinking of those glorious people. This was indeed a an example of heart-centered worship that took us emotionally and spiritually toward a sense of wholeness and connection inspiring us

to grow and face the fight for justice with courage and community. The business of being a UU was conducted in the first two days of the assembly. The delegates voted to affirm an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) opposing rollbacks to environmental protections, public lands rules, and the endangerment finding. In the upcoming year, our congregations are asked to review the statement of social witness and to participate in advocacy and educational programs to advance the cause. More information is available [here](#).

A second AIW was voted down because, while well- intentioned, it failed to consider partner organizations that were currently working in the area of immigration advocacy. A responsive resolution, **"Reaffirming Our Commitment to Immigrant Justice and Relationally Grounded Organizing"** was passed to signify UUA's commitment to relationally grounded organizing and solidarity work.

There was also a responsive resolution passed calling on the Association to provide resources to recruit, train, and cultivate youth leadership and attendance. (Unfortunately there were only six youth in attendance at this virtual General Assembly.)

The UUA General Assembly also passed a responsive resolution asking the Commission on Appraisal to fold the Southwest Asia and North African (SWANA) region concerns into its work so that we can better

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President's Message (cont'd from p.3)

acknowledge and respond to the moral injury and unresolved suffering tied to those crises.

Several awards were presented at general assembly, including the President's Award for Volunteer Service presented to Minnesota Unitarian Universalists — honoring the 26 congregations, the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA), Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU), and the many individuals and organizations who answered the call to public witness and community defense during the ICE crisis in Minneapolis this spring.

The speakers are always a highlight of General Assembly. I particularly enjoyed the presentation by the Presbyterian minister, Rev. Liz Walker from Roxbury, MA. She is the author of the book, *No One Left Alone: A Story of How Community Helps Us Heal*. Rev. Walker discussed her own trauma as a teenager integrating the Little Rock junior high school. In Roxbury she facilitates a community-based "Can We Talk..." model that uses listening, storytelling, shared meals, and safe space to help people process pain together.

Every year, the Ware Lecture features a prominent speaker of moral conscience. Pr asking for some people evious featured speakers have been: Martin Luther King Jr., Cornel West, May Sarton, Naomi Klein, Mary Oliver, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., and Holly Near.

This year's Ware Lecturer was Episcopalian Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop of Washington, D.C.. Many of us remember Bishop Budde asking President Trump to have mercy for immigrants and other marginalized people when she presided at the inauguration day service at the National Cathedral. Bishop Budde has recently written a book, entitled, *How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith*. Most UU's at General Assembly were impressed with the obvious Research about Unitarian Universalism that Bishop Budde did in preparation for her talk. Her talk focused on interfaith partnership, human dignity, and the protection of immigrants and trans children.

Once again, our general Assembly focused on the theme of "Meeting the Moment" of these times. UUA President Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, asked us to:

- Stay involved;
- Show up for our neighbors;
- Stay in community with each other even when it's hard;
- Be nimble;
- Work in partnership; and
- "Let the perfectionism go! There is no time to fight among ourselves when our values are being polluted in the world!"

It was certainly a week to inspire us to action born of our UU values!

Next year the UU General Assembly is in San Jose! Wouldn't it be great if a number of us could be there in person?!!

Cindy Grossman



MESSAGES

From Joyce Mills...

BUS BRIGADE PROJECT ON THE MOVE



This project is our way of enhancing the success of children when they are prepared for the classroom. The Bus Brigade project collects school supplies for children in need within the Marion County Public schools during the Summer break. Over the years, Tri-UU has made a significant impact by supporting hundreds of children through this initiative. Our collection period typically runs from July 1 to August 20. A detailed list of required supplies will be accessible next to the mini bus on the table in the foyer, with updates on requested items throughout the summer.

Donated supplies will be distributed to schools in the Belleview area, with some contributions also benefiting the children at Shepherd's Lighthouse this year. Please note that only new supplies are accepted.

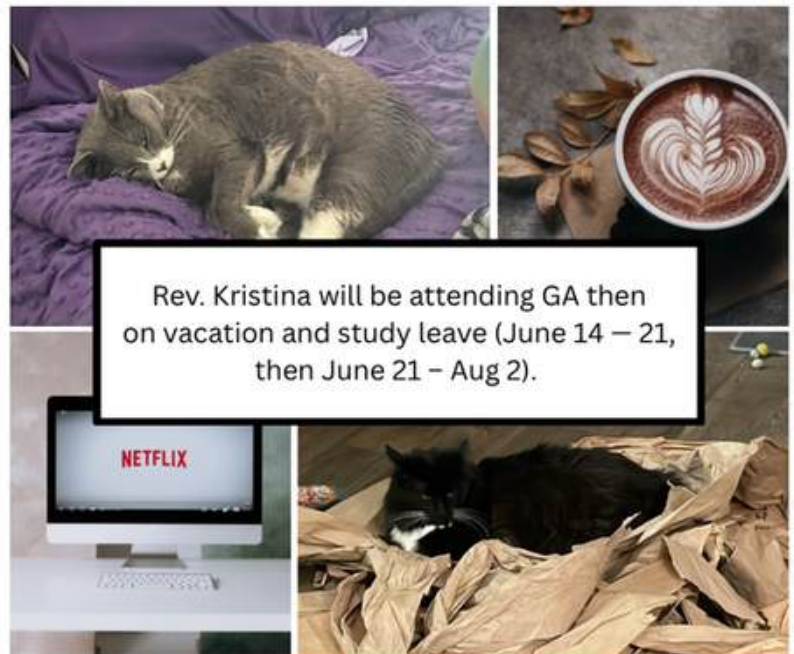
Some of the requested items include pencils, pencil cap erasers, pens in various colors, pencil cases, individual white boards, colored pencils, plastic Duo-Tang folders in assorted colors with prongs and pockets, and index cards. Composition books, 3-ring binders, 1" and 2", glue sticks, colored paper, graph paper, copy paper to use with computer lessons.

If you have used office supplies and want to donate those, bring them to Tri UU. Joyce Mills will find a home for them.



Rev. Kristina will be attending General Assembly (June 14-21) and then on vacation and study leave (June 21-Aug 1). Contact Cindy Grossman for general concerns or Nancy Garrison for pastoral concerns during this time.

As always, Rev. K will not be contacting you during this time, especially not for gift cards or "urgent" requests by email or text. I will definitely not be visiting secret cancer patients.



Rev. Kristina will be attending GA then on vacation and study leave (June 14 – 21, then June 21 – Aug 2).



FYI

COMING AUGUST 11, 10:00 AM- 12:30 PM

New to Unitarian Universalism?

New to UU is Tri-County Unitarian Universalists' orientation class – a warm, low-pressure gathering for anyone curious about Unitarian Universalism or interested in getting to know our local congregation. Whether you are brand new to UU and still figuring out what the chalice symbol means or a longtime UU just trying out TriUU, Rev. Kristina Spaude and coordinator Helene K. will meet you where you are.

In a single session, we'll cover a brief history of Unitarian Universalism, what it means to belong to a pluralistic covenantal faith and the story of TriUU itself. We'll go through our Mission, Vision, and Covenant of Right Relations, explain how membership works (if and when that interests you), and tour the property – Chalice Room, solar array, pollinator gardens, and all.

We send some material to review in advance, but there's no pressure to join. Just coffee, conversation, and room for your questions.

Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Location: Tri-County Unitarian Universalists, Chalice Room

We hope to see you there! For more information or to RSVP, please sign up in our sanctuary or contact Helene Kirschbaum at helenekirschbaum@gmail.com



The relationship of a student with a teacher, between members of a sangha, between friends, and among community members—all help us to develop in ways we couldn't on our own. Some aspects of ourselves don't develop except under the right circumstances.

Barry Magid, "No Gain"

Contributed by Marie Lujanac



TRI-COUNTY
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

The Green Team is Busy as Usual

from Bruce Twiss

TriUU's Green Team has been looking into a new project to offer Fair Trade products to the congregation.



Bruce Twiss introduced the idea, and Kim Hummel researched and wrote an article on Free Trade coffee and chocolate for the TriUU newsletter. Alice Gardner followed through and purchased some Fair Trade coffee for sale to the congregation.

If the congregation likes it, The Green Team will supply Fair Trade products on a regular basis.

In the meantime, Susan Elwell has been caring for the TriUU Butterfly Garden located just outside the main entrance to the sanctuary. Growing things require upkeep to maintain their appearance and keep out the weeds. The job is not glamorous but requires continual attention to thrive.

Finally, the TriUU roof solar system has been working as planned and is already saving the congregation money for electricity supplied by Duke Power.

During the daytime, the solar system collects energy from the sun and converts it into electricity. At night, the congregation's electricity needs are supplied by Duke Power. We hope the surrounding community follows our lead and expands the use of solar power in the future.

Kitchen Update

from Gretchen Lewis



Thank all of you who have helped with coffee hour and potlucks. Your food contributions and work in the kitchen have helped our congregation have time to be together and form connections

I do need to clarify one thing. Our kitchen is not set up to cook. We can keep food cold or warm, but we cannot cook. Please prepare your food at home before bringing it to church. Thank you for your understanding.

The Fair Trade Coffee Basket

Have you noticed the basket of different kinds of Fair Trade coffee in the basket in the foyer? You can also find information on cost and where to buy it there too. The main purpose of the coffee basket is to raise awareness.

If you are a coffee drinker at our Sunday morning coffee hours, then you are already drinking Fair Trade coffee. If you can't resist the aroma of the coffee in the basket, you may purchase some. Bruce Twiss says that we are only adding a dollar to the purchase price.



TriUU Green Team and Fair Trade Coffee: Why It Matters

By Kim E. Hummel

The familiar, slightly bitter scent of brewing coffee wafted through the church kitchen as volunteers prepared for Sunday social hour.

Soon, the room filled with the quiet rhythm of conversation and the clink of ceramic mugs.

Scenes like this unfold every week in Unitarian Universalist congregations across the United States. And TriUU, through **The Green Team**, is trying to make Fair Trade coffee available to its congregation. Coffee is among the most widely traded foods in the world. Yet the farmers who grow these crops often receive a pittance of the final retail price.

A farmer in Guatemala might sell coffee cherries to a cooperative for only a few dollars per pound. Months later, roasted beans from the same harvest appear on grocery shelves in North America at many times that price.

What Fair Trade Tries to Do

Fair Trade programs emerged in response to these problems in the global commodity system.

Coffee farmers frequently face unstable prices. A sudden drop in international markets can erase an entire season's income. When prices fall too low, families may struggle to cover everyday costs for fertilizer, school fees, or medical care.

Fair Trade certification tries to soften those shocks. Participating farmer cooperatives receive a guaranteed minimum price for their crops. If global prices fall below that level,

the minimum price provides a financial floor. When prices rise, farmers can still benefit from the market.

Farmers also receive an additional payment called the **Fair Trade premium**. Members of each cooperative decide together how to use the funds.

In some communities, the money supports school construction. In others, it helps build medical clinics, improve roads, or purchase new processing equipment.

Fair Trade certification includes labor and environmental standards designed to reduce child labor, improve workplace safety, and encourage sustainable farming practices.

The goal is not simply higher prices.

It is stability.

For small farmers working within volatile global markets, stability can mean the difference between surviving a difficult harvest and abandoning the crop altogether.

The Role of Unitarian Universalist Congregations

Unitarian Universalist congregations have been visible in promoting Fair Trade products, particularly coffee.

Much of that work takes place through the **UU Coffee Project**, introduced at the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in 2001.

The initiative formed a partnership between the **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)** and **Equal Exchange**, a worker-owned cooperative founded in 1986.

Through the **UU Coffee Project**, congregations buy these products and serve them during coffee hours, fundraising events, and community gatherings.

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Fair Trade Coffee...

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A portion of every pound sold contributes to the UUSC Small Farmer Fund, which provides grants and technical assistance to farmer cooperatives facing economic instability or climate-related challenges.

Challenges Within the Fair Trade System

Fair Trade certification requires inspections, documentation, and annual fees. Farmer cooperatives must cover those costs to maintain their Fair Trade status. For some of the poorest producers, certification can block participation in the program.

Other pressures complicate the landscape. The expanding number of ethical labels in stores can confuse consumers. Many shoppers struggle to understand the differences among various certification programs and what each one guarantees.

Retail prices remain another challenge. Fair Trade products often cost more than conventional alternatives, limiting demand in price-sensitive markets.

Why Fair Trade Still Matters

Coffee is a small comfort for millions of people.

Behind those familiar flavors stand farmers across Latin America, Africa, and Asia whose livelihoods depend on unpredictable global markets.

Fair Trade coffee connects UU congregations to farmers thousands of miles away.

Sometimes the most ordinary rituals carry the widest reach.

Meet the Moment: Spring Wave Cohorts Are Here

This spring, the UUA is offering a new round of Wave Cohorts — small, guided learning groups where UU leaders and congregations explore a shared topic together. These waves are part of the **Meet the Moment Movement**, the UUA's multi-year effort to help congregations understand the moment we're living in and respond with courage, clarity, and shared purpose. Waves aren't committees or classes. They're learning journeys — structured, time-limited, and grounded in real congregational needs.

Spring Wave Cohorts include:

- * *Creating Hubs of Climate Resilience*
- * *Grow UUA Lay Leadership Within & Beyond Congregations*
- * *Outreach: Public Storytelling and Marketing*
- * *Strategic Risk Assessment and Engagement for Ministers*
- * *Sustainable Staffing Strategizers*
- * *The UU Racial Justice Ecosystem*
- * *Worship: The Collective Practice of Meaning Making*

If you're curious about any of these topics — or if you'd like to bring back new tools and insights to strengthen our congregation — consider joining a wave. They're open, accessible, and designed for leaders at all levels.

More information and sign-ups will soon be available at: www.uua.org/meetthemoment (uua.org in Bing)

If you're interested in joining a wave or want help choosing one, let me know — I'd love to connect.

Myra Symons (Myrafly@yahoo.com)



TRIUU IN ACTION

The Flower Ceremony



Someone brought flowering milkweed to our Flower Ceremony, and Rev. Kristina discovered these hitchhikers at home a few days later! She returned them to our Pollinator Garden soon after. There were at least 3 of these monarch butterfly caterpillars in the bunch.



The TriUU Book Club

The TriUU Book Club meets the last Monday of each month at 1pm at TriUU. On July 27 we will discuss *Heartburn* by Nora Ephron (1983, Fiction, 179 pgs.)

A witty, semi-autobiographical novel about a food writer navigating her husband's infidelity while pregnant. Ephron mixes humor, recipes, and sharp insight into love, betrayal, and starting over.

On August 31 we will discuss *The Book for Troublesome Women* by Marie Bostwick (2025, Fiction, 380 pgs.)

In 1963 four women form a book club after reading Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. Nicknaming themselves the Bettys these four friends have no idea their impromptu club and the books they read together will become the glue that helps them hold fast through tears, triumphs, angst, and arguments--and what will prove to be the most consequential and freeing year of their lives. *The Book Club for Troublesome Women* is a humorous, thought provoking, and nostalgic romp through one pivotal and tumultuous American year--as well as an ode to self-discovery, persistence, and the power of sisterhood.

If you would like to receive book club emails, please contact garrisonnancy@yahoo.com

Tri UU Camping and Kayak Club Update

Five of us from TriUU plus three more family and friend made a last minute beautiful 5 and 1/2 mile paddle from Silver Springs State Park to Rays Wayside with 6 kayaks and 2 paddle boards on Tuesday, June 9th ! We invited a few more to join us but it wasn't possible with such short notice!

It was a perfect trip with the temperature lower than usual in the mid-70s to low 80s, overcast, comfortable breeze, lots of nature and very few kayakers on the water!

We may try to squeeze in one or two more trips this summer and then start up again in late September / early October.

If you would like to join us for a future trip or have questions, feel free to email

Deb Anderson at Debbieraha@gmail.com (352-454-9353) or Brenda Nelson at Nelsonbrenda164@gmail.com (352-446-5487)

Deb Anderson



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JOIN US

Tri UU Camping and Kayak Club

(cont'd from p.11)



Kayakers on Silver River



A friendly egret



Lunch break
for the kayakers



TRI-COUNTY
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SUNDAY SERVICE JUNE 28, 2026

"TriUU Coffee House" Exploring our UU shared values



Deep Discussion - Myra and Bruce

