

THE FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF MIDDLEBOROUGH

25 South Main Street, Middleborough, MA 02346 www.uumiddleboro.org 508-947-1935 September 2024

We offer in-person and online worship services. The link to each service will be posted on our website every week.

Sunday, September 1, at 9:00 a.m. Vi Fairweather presenting *Thriving During Transition*

Soon we will begin our fall services with our new minister, Reverend Beau Rivers. During the next few months, we will be working to bring forth our gifts and the best in one another through interconnectedness and collaboration. In this service, Vi hopes to share some tools rooted in faith's highest values that will support our thriving during this transition. *Please bring a pen or pencil to this service.*

Sunday, September 8, at 10:30 a.m. Rev. Beau Rivers preaching Coming Home, Like Rivers to the Sea

Join us for our annual ingathering service when we reflect on our Summer blessings and welcome the start of the new church year with our traditional Water Ceremony.* The Chalice Choir will be singing *River of Peace*.

*Everyone is invited to bring a sample of water from a place that nurtured your spirit this summer to pour in our Common Bowl. A pitcher of church water will also be available for our virtual participants and anyone who did not collect or forgot to bring a sample of water to church, so all who wish, may participate.

Sunday, September 15, at 10:30 a.m. Rev. Beau Rivers preaching *The Winds of Grace*

Nineteenth century, Indian mystic, Rama Krishna said, "The winds of grace are always blowing; it is for us to raise our sails." But how do we raise our sails when grace comes disguised as loss, failure, or unwelcome change? How do we remain open to life, to love, and to the future when the present feels so uncertain and frightening? How do we allow ourselves to accept the gift of grace in its many guises? Special music will be presented by a youth duo, Isla Rowe on flute and Sydney Benard on clarinet.

Sunday, September 22, at 10:30 a.m. Marybeth Truran presenting Songs of the Earth, Sky, and Light

What do the cry of the osprey, the call of the whale, and the human heartbeat have in common? More than 100 lightning strikes resonate through the earth's atmosphere every second. Mycelia form vast networks of communication via streams of chemical and electrical impulses. Certain plants recognize their kin and vibrate auditory signals of distress. Our planet is a place of wonder, unfolding mystery, and intelligence. Yet it is imperiled by our human actions. Is there a way to find inspiration, perhaps even joy or hope, by listening more closely to the songs of the earth? How can a better understanding of sound, vibration and the possibility of change lead us forward? The Chalice Choir will be singing.

Marybeth Truran is a Jungian depth psychotherapist, with a practice in Bourne, MA. She is passionate about ecopsychology, sound therapy, and understanding the human psyche. She finds solace and inspiration from living by the ocean and is just a tiny bit obsessed with sailing.

Sunday, September 29, at 10:30 a.m. Rev. Beau Rivers preaching *The Heart of Belonging*

Research has shown a sense of belonging is essential to our physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. How does belonging differ from fitting in? What does it mean to belong in spiritual community as Unitarian Universalists? Music for this service is provided by Bet Giddings, pianist and vocalist.

Míníster's Message

September 2024

Greetings UU Middleboro! As your new minister, I look forward to greeting you warmly as we gather Sunday, September 8th to celebrate the start of the new church year and the beginning of our shared ministry! I want to thank members of the Search Committee (Jim Bonnar, Vi Fairweather, Lois Aldrich, Andrea Priest, and David Kraemer) for their tireless dedication in the search process and for recommending me to the Board as your next minister.

One of my primary focuses, this year, will be for us to get to know each other. You can learn about me and my ministry through my website at <u>beaurivers.org</u>, a <u>letter of introduction</u> to the congregation, a <u>press release</u> to the community, our shared work, and undoubtedly, through my sermons as we walk together on this journey called life.

I am extremely grateful to Vi for preparing a photo directory and hope you will attend one of our *Getting to Know You* cottage meetings in October. We will be announcing the dates soon! If you would like to meet with me privately, my office hours are Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and my days off are Mondays and Tuesdays. To schedule an office appointment, home visit, phone conversation, or Zoom meeting, simply text me at 207-712-0459.

I am excited to be on this adventure with you and offer an adaptation of the words by John O'Donahue to reflect my hope for our shared ministry,

[May we] love to live like a river flows, carried by the surprise of [our] own unfolding.

Many Blessings, *Rev. Beau*

From the Parish Committee



Jeff Giddings, President

GET INVOLVED!

Welcome to the start of an exciting church year!

The Parish Committee has been working with our new Minister, Rev. Beau Rivers, to outline goals and plans for the coming year. We face challenges – attracting and keeping new members, streamlining our administrative functions and organizational structure, raising money for necessary repairs to the building, among others – but we can make headway on all of these goals if YOU get involved. Here are some of the groups and activities you might like to explore:

Music – the Chalice Choir, Song Circle, Caring Choir, special concerts and events Religious Exploration – programs for children, youth, and adults Social Justice Team Hospitality and greeters Tech Team – A/V, live streaming, network management Finance Team – stewardship, investments, fundraising, financial planning Building and Grounds Team Memorial Garden Team Communications Team (newsletter editors are especially needed!!) Covenant of UU Pagans Handcrafters Group Book Club Meditation Group Worship Committee

Use this link for more information, including names of contacts for each activity: <u>UU Middleboro Groups</u>

The Parish Committee is planning an event in the early fall to showcase these activities. Many of the teams and groups are eagerly looking for new members. Find something that moves you and GET INVOLVED! Meet people, make friends, and feel the satisfaction of contributing to the success of the church. It will make your experience at UU Middleboro infinitely more rewarding.



Presented by Linda Thompson on June 16, 2024

The Elsie Gaudette Award has been well written about and included in the <u>uumiddleboro.org</u> website with its history and pictures. Elsie was a human dynamo of energy, dedicated to serving this church in any and every way she could.

As is our custom, when a person who exemplifies the kind of dedication and love for this church comes to our attention, the Congregation speaks up and writes letters to nominate them for the Elsie Gaudette Award. It is a tremendous honor to be nominated and an even greater recognition to be chosen. There were many letters this year for our 19th honoree.

He will say he did nothing anyone else wouldn't do, say it was nothing special, he just felt he could help. But he did, and they didn't.

A church needs many volunteers with many diverse skills to keep the train on the track. Some skills are manual, some engineering, some custodial, some advisory, some supportive, and some cautionary, some vocal, some behind the scenes, and some professional. We have been lucky, because we have that guy!

Our guy has been a steadying influence in our church. His "real" job has been advising churches on financial and membership needs, guiding them to make good sense decisions. He has run informational workshops and discussion classes. He is an author and consultant and headed up a fine infrastructure Adult RE course alongside an earlier EGA recipient.

He has served as a Guest Minister on purpose and sometimes last minute. He is both entertaining and enlightening. He is not afraid to make us face our responsibilities and think long term. He helped set up a sound donation accounting system for FUUSM. Our website has been expanded and greatly improved in what has been his spare time.

Covid hit us one spring! What to do? Was that going to be what would silence UUs in Middleboro? NO. With Alan Melchior and Bob Waterman, he stepped up to organize the Tech Team, strengthening the underlying technology to livestream or record our church services and events. He continues to improve our livestreaming capabilities in building a new sound system.

When the Avis Clay Parlor Committee needed some muscle and help, he and others just stepped in to do what he could.

When our hardworking secretary, Valarie Ortelt, needs some help and guidance, he has been by her side to help with computer help or any other guidance needed.

His contribution to our Music program is legendary!! He is a very talented soloist, bass in the choir or whatever other part his wife asks him to do. He can sing, dance and cavort around in velvet as it strikes him.

And he is a proud son who loves his talented mother as she approaches old age. His love for her is so obvious and caring.

Though I may have missed some of the help he has provided, I am pretty sure you know who is this year's recipient of the Elsie Gaudette Award.

Please come forward, **Dan Hotchkiss**, and receive your just due.



What a wondrous feeling to be gearing up for a new church year, full of promise and possibility! In addition to worship, there will be workshops, concerts, fundraisers, caroling, Music Sunday, and Song Circles (second Friday of each month.) We have many fine performers in our music program, singers and instrumentalists. Our first goal is to build a musical community that gives us connection not only to one another, but to the spirit of love, awe, and generosity. Alleluia!

Chalice Choir rehearsals start on Tuesday, August 27 from 7:00 to 8:30 in the Parish Hall and continue every Tuesday afterward. This group of dedicated singers provides musical offerings every other week, starting with our Ingathering Service on September 8. High school students are welcome to jump into our Chalice Choir. Please note: Rehearsals are a requirement. Contact me for more information.

Special music on "Non-Choir" Sundays includes ensembles and soloists from our church community. During the year, we also feature "family choirs" that come together the morning of the service. This is a great starter group into choral singing.

All our singers, including choir alumni and family choir participants, are eligible to sing in a Caring Choir. Different groups sing carols at the Council on Aging, provide programs in nursing homes, and visit special members and friends who request the ministry of song. The size of the group depends on the program and needs of the recipients.

Our collective dreams come alive through the careful planning of the Music Committee. This open group of music enthusiasts, chaired by Bet Giddings, meets (usually by Zoom) the first Wednesday of every month. We welcome new members. The first meeting will be September 4 at 7:00. Please contact Bet Giddings or me if you would like more information and a Zoom link.

Happy New Church Year, Susan Hotchkiss, Music Director



We are a place of growth and creativity!

At UU Middleboro we strive to create a program that allows our children to explore their ideas and faith in a safe and nurturing environment. We draw our curriculum from the Tapestry of Faith on the UUA website for both the children and the youth. We work hard to allow for the children to enjoy faith, fellowship, food and fun! Registration is rolling throughout the year and is available here. <u>Religious Exploration Registration</u> <u>Form (google.com)</u>

Earth Advocates!

Our children will be "Earth Advocates" this year. We believe children possess an inherent ability to feel wonder and appreciate the world's awesome plants, animals, spaces, processes, textures and patterns. Together we will explore, observe, engage and rest in this wonderful world. This year's curriculum dives deep into our 7th principle: "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." We will have an opportunity to create an updated covenant on September 15 during our first class together.

The Group Formerly Named "Youth Group"

Our Youth Group will be working together to identify their own experiences and perspectives and to seek out, care about and respect those of others. They will be naming their group together at our first meeting on September 22 from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Babysitting Available!

Nursery Care continues to be available for babies and toddlers under five years of age each Sunday morning from 10:15 to 11:45. Child care is also offered during other church activities.

Registration

Please be sure to register your children for the program. We will need updated (or new) information to ensure we know the children as best we can as our class time goes by fast, and we always want to make sure we have the right snacks! The registration link is here: <u>Religious Exploration Registration Form (google.com)</u>

Kelly Lownds, Director of Religious Exploration



TEEN LGBTQ+ PEER SUPPORT AND SOCIAL GROUP

Every Monday 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

ADULT LGBTQ+ PEER SUPPORT AND SOCIAL GROUP

Every Monday 7:15 – 8:15 p.m.

36 North Bedford Street, East Bridgewater, 2nd floor, 2nd door on the left

This group is an opportunity to get to know your peers, support one another, share challenges, celebrate, seek support, play games & be; 978-809-2245, speak or text to "J"

LGBTQ+ OLDER ADULTS & ALLIES – LUNCH AND ENTERTAINMENT

Thursday, September 5 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Bridgewater Senior Center, 10 Wally Krueger Way

To reserve a space, call 508-697-0929 or email seniorcenter@bridgewater.org

PEACE, JUSTICE & EQUALITY VIGILS

Every Saturday 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Church Lawn

We continue scheduling weekly ½ hour vigils on Saturday mornings from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon on the church lawn. All are invited to join in. Contact Dody Adkins-Perry (<u>adkinsperry@gmail.com</u>).

POSTCARDING PARTIES

Wednesday, September 11 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Thursday, October 5 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. Parish Hall

We will have postcards from Workers Circle on which we will write messages to swing-state voters who have been identified as often not voting, encouraging them to get to the polls. We mention issues but not candidates. Bring colored pens if you have them, and let Lois Aldrich know you are coming–or just stop by! Lois will mail the cards all at once in October. If you can contribute postcard stamps (preferably not flags), they will be much appreciated. But we will be grateful for your participation in any case! We will have light refreshments. Contact Lois with questions: <u>lois.aldrich63@gmail.com</u>

BRIDGEWATER'S SOCIAL JUSTICE CHOIR INVITES NEW SINGERS

The Social Justice Choir of Bridgewater will again be exploring issues of civic engagement through song and action. All ages, abilities, and political affiliations are welcome. They will rehearse weekly on Thursdays, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m., starting **September 24**, at the Rondileau Campus Center, Room D17E, at Bridgewater State University. Contact the director, Dr. Sarah McQuarrie, at <u>smcquarrie@bridgew.edu</u>

LIVING LEGACY PROJECT 2024 EDUCATION SERIES ONLINE WHO KNEW? CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS WHO LED THE MOVEMENT FROM BEHIND THE SCENES Wednesday, September 25 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Join us for an enlightening series of webinars that shed light on the unsung heroes of the Civil Rights Movement. These five activists worked tirelessly behind the scenes to advance the cause of racial equality and social justice. Living Legacy Project · 2024 Education Series (lglforms.com)

NEW MOON MEDITATION ON ZOOM

with Natalie Johnson Tuesday, September 3 6:00 – 6:45 p.m. https://zoom.us/j/99239543300

This month's New Moon falls in the sign of Virgo and appears just after Mercury comes out of retrograde, with the Sun and Moon opposing Saturn. As we prepare to experience another turn of the Wheel in just three weeks,

this New Moon provides us with an opportunity to slow down, to hit the reset button on our lives if necessary, and reassess before we come into balance at the Equinox.

During the Mercury retrograde, we were encouraged to make big changes and, hopefully, we were able to do that. Now is the time of final tweaking, of fine-tuning, of getting rid of the last bit of clutter whether that is physical or mental or emotional. Soon we will step into another season and the beginning of the eclipse cycle, so we will want our energies clear in order to fully participate in what awaits us.

Virgo offers the gift of silence, of determining for ourselves our sacred nos and sacred yeses and sticking to them with love, honoring ourselves while being in service to the greater good.

Join us this night as we gather under the New Moon and plot our course for the coming season. All are welcome.





ROTARY CLUB INSTALLS PEACE POLE ON CHURCH LAWN



UU Middleboro thanks the Middleboro Rotary Club for the new Peace Pole they have installed on our front lawn. A dedication ceremony will be held on Sunday, September 15, at 12:30 p.m. on the church lawn. The Rotary Club and other community representatives will participate. The Social Justice Team will provide refreshments after in the Parish Hall. Church and community members will be invited to attend.

Photo credit: Lois Aldrich



BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP ON ZOOM

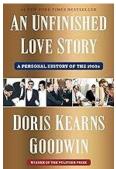
Monday, September 16 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

The UU Book Club continues to meet on the third Monday of the month. Book Club members will be emailed the Zoom link a few days before each meeting.

Our selection for September is *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Ed Priest will be facilitating this discussion.

If you are not on the Book Club's email list, but would like to join us for the discussion, please contact Lois Aldrich (<u>lois.aldrich63@gmail.com</u>). New and old members are welcome.





FULL MOON MEDITATION ON ZOOM

with Natalie Johnson Tuesday, September 17 6:00 - 6:45 p.m. https://zoom.us/j/97145794998

This Full Moon falls in the sign of Pisces, the sign of the fish, cosmic birthplace to dreamers,



empaths, and those who are antennae for the emotional expression of the Universe.

We are encouraged at this time to marry the gifts of the Virgo New Moon - discernment, perception, laser like vision - with the more mystical, emotional, visionary qualities of Pisces in order to create a balanced persona that will take us into the uncertain future that lies just ahead. We are approaching the Fall Equinox and are encouraged to embody opposites at this time: dark and light, male and female, rational and emotional. We have all grown up immersed in a world of duality. It is time to shatter that illusion and to make way for inclusion.

Rather than either/or, we can welcome both/and. This is the way of the future, and the future is here now on our doorstep. Humanity is standing at the threshold, and it will be up to us to find the courage to step over and into the new brighter world that we will all create together.

We invite you to join us this night to explore these ideas and to make yourselves ready for the next big step. All are welcome.

PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING



Wednesday, September 18 6:30 p.m. Parish Hall

All members and friends are invited to attend the Parish Committee meeting.



CUUPS MABON RITUAL Monday, September 23 7:00 p.m. Parish Hall

Tonight we celebrate Mabon, the second of three harvest festivals, the time when we acknowledge in earnest the fruits of our labors. Harvesting, winnowing, separating the wheat from the chaff, putting things by to ensure we will have enough to see us through the lean times of winter.



Although most of us no longer depend on what we have grown for our own

survival, some of us are busy drying, canning, and freezing the bounty that Mother Earth has gifted us, and in doing so, honor the Old Ways. It is a time to be grateful for what we ourselves have brought forth or for what we have gleaned from others.

It is a time too to honor the turning of the Wheel once again as we honor the Equinox, the time when light and dark are equal. It is a time to reflect on what is or is not in balance in our own lives and to pause to make small changes in how we are living to ensure that we come into balance before the cold winds blow and that we offer gratitude for all that we have been given, for all that we are and for the opportunity to share with each other and the Earth in sacred reciprocity.

Please join us this night as we honor the harvest and the time of balance. We invite you to bring a poem or reading appropriate to the occasion and also something to share as we enjoy a simple feast at the conclusion of the ritual. CUUPS members, please wear ritual garb if possible.

All are welcome.



You may use the sign-up sheets on the Parlor table or email <u>andreapriesto@gmail.com</u> or <u>office@uumiddleboro.org</u>. Instructions will be emailed to you. Thank you for participating in this ministry.



Please Note:

The details in this Newsletter are up-to-date as of the publication, but there may be changes/updates, so be sure to check the weekly "UU Updates" for any updated information. If you are not subscribed to receive the "UU Updates," visit the website at <u>uumiddleboro.org</u> and use the link at the bottom of the home page.

Save the Date! Don't Miss Our Super Fun

4th ANNUAL UU ROAD RALLY

Saturday, October 19

8:00 a.m. to about 2:00 p.m.



UU Middleboro is once again hosting a Road Rally on Saturday, October 19. Up to 20 cars can participate, and each car carries a team of two to four people. (Hint: Four is easier than Two!) Each team follows directions to navigate a slightly tricky course over public roads. The team's challenge is to use clues to answer questions while safely following all traffic laws along the way.

Cars will "launch" from the Middleboro Town Hall Parking Lot at

three-minute intervals starting at 9:30 a.m. Teams with the most accurate combined scores for time, mileage, and answers will be awarded trophies and medals. Entertainment (Ed Priest) and snacks will be provided to contestants at the grand awards ceremony on our Main Street lawn. We're talking trophies and medals! See John Mullen with any questions.

OUR MISSION:

To create and sustain a welcoming and caring community that embodies our UU principles, inspires spiritual growth without dogma or creed, and promotes and serves racial and social justice.



Parish Care

Parish Care help is available to assist with meals, transportation, emergency babysitting, and hospital visits during illnesses or other family emergencies.

We are a diverse, active and caring community; and we welcome your questions and your participation. You are always invited to call or visit our minister to discuss any matter of concern to you.

Lay Ministry Coordinator: Lay Pastoral Minister: Lay Pastoral Minister: Parish Care Coordinator: Minister: Susan Curtiss Sue St. Germain Dave Kraemer Mal Marvill Rev. Beau Rivers

Parish Committee

President: Vice President: Treasurer: Assistant Treasurer: Parish Clerk: Members At Large: Jeff Giddings Viola Fairweather Stephen Larrett Nancy Backus Lois Aldrich

Jim Bonnar Diane Reed



CHURCH CALENDAR

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING (in person) August 21, 2024

Present: Jeff Giddings, Vi Fairweather, Stephen Larrett, Rev. Beau Rivers, Jim Bonnar, Diane Reed, Nancy Backus, Lois Aldrich

Guest: Susan Hotchkiss

Meeting called to order by Jeff Giddings at 6:40 p.m.

Welcome extended to FUUSM's new minister - Rev. Beau Rivers!

Check-In Topic: What are you looking forward to in tonight's meeting?

Opening Words: Reading provided by Rev. Beau Rivers.

Meeting Minutes: Motion to accept minutes from July 17 PC meeting made and approved.

Updates:

In an effort to save time at our meeting, Jeff Giddings distributed a list of updates prior to the meeting that require little, if any, discussion (see attached).

The following items required further discussion:

- Treasurer's Report: Stephen Larrett asked if the PC had any comment on the Treasurer's Report for July, 2024 which consists of a report on checkbook activity, including the Minister's Discretionary Fund. The PC expressed satisfaction with the report.
- Peace Pole installation ceremony (see SJT report). Lois Aldrich informed the PC that she is waiting to hear from the Rotary on confirmation of the September 15 date for the Dedication. Social Justice Team will be providing refreshments.

Decisions Needed:

• Covid Policy - Jeff informed the PC that Dan Hotchkiss had asked that we review the COVID statement on the front page of the church's website to see if an update is warranted. Dan also suggested that the "box" that contains the statement was no longer needed and could be moved to a different location on the website. The PC agreed to retain the statement box for now but Dan, as webmaster, has the authority to move the statement to the location he deems most appropriate.

Jeff noted that the statement box also includes a link to our COVID policy, which needs to be reviewed and updated. Jim Bonnar reported that the CDC is no longer identifying risk levels by color. Jim suggests that the reference to color level be removed from the statement and that the statement be modified to state, "If you are sick, please stay home. If you have had COVID but no longer have symptoms, please wear a mask for the first five days that you are out in public." The PC agreed with this modification. Jeff Giddings will speak to Dan about adding this language to the website.

- Memorial Garden Policy Susan Hotchkiss provided the PC with copies of a revised Memorial Garden Policy as well as a planning document. The PC reviewed the policy. Motion was made to approve the policy as written and accepted. All agreed that the Memorial Garden Committee will be responsible for administering the policy.
- Newsletter At prior PC meetings, the PC had discussed whether or not there is a need to continue to produce a monthly newsletter. Val Ortelt has largely been responsible for creating the newsletter, based on information she receives from the minister and various Committee members. This question arose because Val's duties as Office Administrator have significantly increased over time, and there is a need to streamline her workload. Plans are currently in place to produce a newsletter for the month of September.

The PC discussed how to proceed going forward and what options there could be to discontinue the newsletter and still ensure that the congregation receives needed information. Much of the information in the newsletter is available in other places, such as the church's website and the UU Updates. Some information, such as the minister's monthly service schedule, is not. Rev. Beau Rivers mentioned that she knows of other UU congregations who use software called *Breeze Church Software* to produce a newsletter and perform other administrative tasks. The link to *Breeze* can be found at https://www.breezechms.com/. Stephen will research further.

Suggestion was made for a task force to be coordinated to further look into whether or not to continue the newsletter and what options may be available. All agreed that this matter be fully processed with the congregation, as the newsletter has been a staple for this church for a very long time. Jeff agreed to contact people who may be interested in participating in the task force.

• UUA Retirement Plan -- UUs are being asked by the UUA to update retirement plans per new UUA rules and pass a resolution adopting a new plan. Jeff will review this new information with Rev. Beau.

Retreat: Reminder that the Parish Committee Retreat is scheduled for this Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Lunch will be provided. Jeff will forward a revised draft agenda to the PC prior to the meeting. One of the priorities to discuss is funding options for the \$50,000 that is needed for building repairs. Jeff will include a list of funding options with the retreat agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Submitted by Lois Aldrich, Parish Clerk