
WORSHIP SERVICES

November Theme: HISTORY

Sunday, Nov 21, 10:30 a.m.
An Elegant Sufficiency

The way of overconsumption has become the norm in much of American culture. Conversely, the concept of “enough” is a spiritual practice that shines as a beacon for how we can lessen inequality and heal ourselves and our world. In this special service, we will hear stories from our elders who lived through the Depression, where scarcity changed the way they live in the world. Led by **Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage.**

Multiplatform Gatherings—
Please visit www.uucr.org/zoom for details on how to participate in our online worship services, to register for in-person worship, and for the schedule of our Faith Formation classes for children and youth.

Sunday, Nov 28, 10:30 a.m.
When Heaven on Earth Goes Terribly Wrong

This morning we delve into our Universalist history, where the ideal of manifesting heaven on earth brought about some challenging ideas and introduced dangerous social initiatives to our world. What still exists today from the seeds planted in that time? How do we embrace our history while also uprooting the harm? Led by **Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage.**

Multiplatform Gatherings—
see above.

(continued on page 2)

Quest

*The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Rockville:
A Welcoming Congregation*

Lifelong Spiritual Discovery Beloved Community A Just World

Volume LXV, Number 1-2
November 19, 2021

Editor & Publisher:
Adrian L. H. Graham

From Your Minister

by the Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage

For roughly over 600 days now, we have been living in and under pandemic conditions. 600 days. That’s a very long time, and no one has escaped some level of hardship, isolation, and the extreme challenges of this time. It’s been, to say the least. The very least. We have lost friends, loved ones, heroines and heroes, and so many touchstones of normalcy.



Our new normal has shifted. One morning when leaving my home, I realized that the daily checklist of things to make sure I had with me now included more items: wallet, phone, keys, glasses...and hand sanitizer, mask, and vaccination card. As a people of faith and conscience, we strive to make sense and meaning out of what seems almost impossible to understand. Big questions, such as what does this time mean for us, for UUCR, for our world?

Interestingly, the spiritual theme for November in “History” and December’s is “Joy.” History calls us to reflect on what has brought us to who and how we are, what influences shaped us, how our ancestors and those who went before us created the world that we now steward. We ponder the past with both gratitude and skepticism. While we are thankful that they, our ancestors, lived full and complicated lives, we ask: *Could they have conducted their lives differently? Better? Would we have, given the same circumstances?* When we engage the past and try to understand them better, we ultimately understand ourselves and each other better. For example, over the recent Veterans Day holidays, one powerful image always comes back to me.

(continued on page 8)

Quest deadline: **Thursday, February 2, 2022** at 8:00 p.m.,
for mailing on February 16, 2022.
Email queries and possible submissions to quest@uucr.org.

Quest

**Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Rockville**
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Ministerial Intern: Mathew P. Taylor

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(Worship Services continued from page 1)

Holiday Services & Events

Nov 25 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Thanksgiving at UUCR

[RSVP required](#). Contact: thanksgiving.potluck@uucr.org

Nov 28, Dec 5, Dec 12, Dec 19 at 5:00 p.m.

Advent Services

[Join us on Zoom](#). Link at uucr.org. Contact: advent@uucr.org

Dec 4 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Getting Ready for the Holidays Celebration

Details forthcoming!

Dec 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Holiday Party

Join the Pastoral Care Team in Founders Hall to celebrate and express gratitude for our staff!

Dec 21 TBD

Winter Solstice Ritual

Dec 22 at 8:30 p.m.

Blue Vespers Service

[Join us on Zoom](#). Link at uucr.org. Contact: vespers@uucr.org

Dec 24

Holiday Pageant at 4:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Service at 8:30 p.m.

Details forthcoming!

December Theme: JOY

Sunday Service Leaders:

12/5 Kirk Freeman (Chanukah & Mitten Tree)

12/12 Rev. Rebekah

12/19 Mathew P. Taylor & Wheel of the Year (Winter Solstice)

12/26 Rev. Rebekah (Poetry, PJs, and Pancakes; via Zoom only)

January Theme: INTENTION

Sunday Service Leaders:

1/2 Rev. Rebekah

1/9 TBD

1/16 Rev. Rebekah (30 Days of Love & MLK Sunday)

1/23 Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons

1/30 TBD



SHARING THE MINISTRY

Spotlight On...

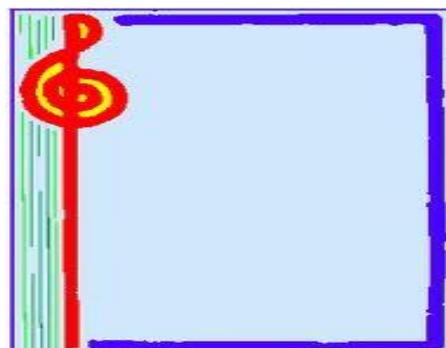
by Sarah Jebian, Director of Music & Arts

The themes for the first quarter's issue of Quest were *Possibility*, *Relationship*, and *History*, and these are all resonating with me right now. As I look forward to what's **Possible** for our music and arts program during the ongoing COVID pandemic, I must face the reality that all my planning ahead may come to nothing in the long-run because there are too many unknowns and things that are out of my control. As a super type-A, plan months (years) ahead kind of person, sitting in the middle of all this 'unknown' space is deeply uncomfortable for me. I want to know all the answers Right Now! And... at the end of the day, I know it's going to be ok because at the heart of whatever we do is the **Relationships** we have with each other. Just as we have done since March of 2020, we will continue to hold each other up and love each other through all the ups and downs, plans and changes of plans, successes and challenges that we will certainly face together over the next year.

I am also mindful of the fact that I won't be physically present with you as of mid-October as my family makes our move across the country to our new (fabulous!) home in Mountain View, CA. As I try to plan ahead for the immediate future, I know that you will be planning ahead for the inevitable time when you must find the right person to replace me as your Director of Music & Arts. Looking back at my time with you, I hope that I have expanded your understanding of what a vibrant Music & Arts program can look like when we extend ourselves beyond the walls of our church; when we use music and art to further our work for justice; when we invite as many people as possible to participate in the program in whatever ways they feel comfortable. I wonder how your **History** will inform your future? What will you choose to do next and who will you choose to lead you where you want to go? What's **Possible** in this next phase?

Whatever happens, know that I will carry you in my heart for the rest of my life. You have changed me in profound ways and helped me to grow into a new version of myself. I am forever grateful.

Love,
Sarah



SHARING THE MINISTRY

Possibilities of Autumn

by Carla Miller, Director of Religious Education

Since I can remember, September has been an exciting time of new beginnings and endless possibilities. In January, when the calendar tells me there is a new year to come, and culture tells me I should make resolutions, it seems artificial. Which may be why those resolutions don't last long? In September, as the school and church-school year begin, the children, and the child within, awaken to hopeful new possibilities. We look to a new year of learning and growth, of friendly teachers and good friends. Even as adults, most of us feel the back-to-school magic.



As a Director of Religious Education, in September I literally open doors into long empty rooms, readying spaces for the beginning of a new year of faith formation for our children and youth. I envision new groups of children gathering, new families visiting. The anticipation energizes me to action as we prepare for this new beginning. And, as with any new beginning, the possibilities of things going wrong haunts me, too. There is that anxious voice that says, “Will these new groups bond? Will the newcomers feel they belong? Will our children and youth find meaningful answers, envision meaningful possibilities for the world we might build together? And ultimately, *will it be enough?* Will *I* be enough? Will *we* be enough, to actualize these wonderful possibilities?”

This year, there are more anxieties in the autumn air than usual. We open the church door into a mist of uncertainties. “How will we stay safe and keep our community safe from another surge of COVID? How will we keep the children safe? Are we going to be in the classroom, outdoors, or at home?” When I struggle with which one will win—the joyful anticipation of my heart or the anxious voice in my head—I remember that we are a community of faith. At the heart of that faith is the ability to imagine and believe in the possibilities, and the ultimate reality, of goodness, peace, joy and love. To believe and work toward that better world, despite all the anxious, negative voices.

Our religious ancestors believed in absurd improbabilities, like universal salvation by a loving god. Emboldened by that belief they worked toward visionary ideals, like the abolition of slavery, and women getting the vote. They had the audacity to believe these were possible, and the determination to carry on this work even when success seemed highly unlikely. Ours is an optimistic, forward-thinking faith, powered by people working together. Certainly if this faith community could meet the challenges of such overwhelming social problems, we in this congregation can find a way through a pandemic as well, and remain tightly bonded, as one community of all ages working together for a better world.

(continued on page 5)



SHARING THE MINISTRY

(continued from page 4)

It seems that the best UU answer we have in this time of change is “Let’s work together to make it so.” And when the question is, “Will we be able to offer an engaging faith formation program for children and youth?” the answer is Yes! We know that we can. In whatever form—online, outdoors, in classrooms—we will be there to gather with the children, share stories and laughter, love and values, and envision a better, safer, more just future.

If we ask ourselves, “Will our faith be enough to guide us, and our children, through hard times?” the answer is again, Yes, if we make it so. And we make it so by being role models of positive thinking and problem-solving, empowered by our belief in the goodness of life. As our forebears can be for us. Not models of perfection. Our religious ancestors messed up some things, too; their vision only went so far. So, being imperfect but forward-thinking, persevering role models, we will continue to work together living into the potential of the people that we can be, and guiding our children along this journey, on whatever platform we may use...

A Possibility that Might Energize our Children’s Faith Formation—and you might be a part of it!

The thematic approach we are now taking in faith formation classes for children and youth engages us in exploring the theme of worship each month. This format gives us more flexibility to adapt our plans to fit the needs, activities, and gifts of our particular congregation. It opens possibilities of connecting children and youth to the whole of the congregation in new ways. RE may be much more open to welcoming YOUR gifts and interests for short-term or one-time offerings.

In a recent coffee hour conversation, I discussed the possibilities with two of our adult members who do not have children in RE classes. They were excited about the idea of sharing an activity that they love with the children, and of bringing in some of our many other talented adults to lead a special activity in their field of work or interest. **Would you enjoy being an artist-in-residence for a day, or month? Would you enjoy bringing art, photography, scientific exploration, gardening, games, or music to the children for just one Sunday or two? Or a month-long project?** There are endless possibilities! These creative processes can be connected to almost any theme, if we plan ahead together to weave it into our session plans at least a couple of months in advance.

If you have an interest or skill that you think our children might enjoy and learn from, let’s talk about the ways we might bring them this experience!

Carla



SHARING THE MINISTRY

Planned Giving: Building and Endowment for UUCR

by Sharrill Dittmann, Planned Giving Chair

On October 31, 2021, UUCR celebrated All Souls Sunday, a day when we honor our family and those from UUCR who have passed before us. Their legacy and the love we hold for them are woven into the fabric of time. Traditionally, fall has been a time for Memorial Gifts “in memory of” to UUCR’s Endowment Fund. Please send all checks to the church office with the byline of the person you wish to honor. All contributions to the Endowment are personally recognized by the Planned Giving Committee.

The Planned Giving Committee's mission is to build a generous endowment fund to advance the vision, values, and voice of our UUCR community and the strength of our liberal religion in the future. The Committee was established by the Board of Trustees in 2006.

Legacy gifts—through wills, special gifts to the Endowment fund, or through other arrangements—are a wonderful opportunity for those who wish to make a large commitment to the future of our liberal religious faith and to UUCR. One of the most common ways to leave a legacy gift is through a bequest in your will.

Please contact the Planned Giving Committee at planned-giving@uucr.org about a variety of ways planned giving can take place. Contributors make donations on their own terms in accordance with arrangements made through their personal legal advisers. But the Planned Giving Committee has resources to guide you, as does the UUA. Please feel free to [contact me](#) for more information.

A Holiday Celebration

by Marianne Miller, Pastoral Care Team Member

Come one, come all on December 10 to a holiday party hosted by UUCR’s Pastoral Care Team to express gratitude to UUCR’s magnificent staff. All UUCR members and friends are welcome to join in the fun in person or via Zoom between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon. Andy Zatman will be at the piano playing holiday favorites, and light refreshments will be available in Founders Hall. Watch the e-weekly for instructions on how to pre-register to attend in person.

Dinners for Eight Signup

by Spence and Nita Hines

If you aren't on the mailing list for Dinners for Eight, now is the time to ask to be put on it! Once you are on the list, you will get announcements about the monthly Dinners for Eight so you can decide if you want to participate. Getting on the list isn't a commitment to go to all or any dinners - just an opportunity to get notices.

What are Dinners for Eight? Dinners for Eight have no didactic purpose - they aren't designed to be political, spiritual, motivational, self improving or even educational--just fun. Once a month, we gather in small groups in our homes to rekindle our friendships, find new ones, share a meal and mostly, talk ;-). As covid recedes, there will be zoom options as the world situation and personal preferences dictate. Currently, Dinners for Eight are in summer recess but will restart in September.

To get on the mailing list, just send an email to us asking to be on it: dinners48@uucr.org. Feel free to call if you'd rather - we're in the directory.

SHARING THE MINISTRY

Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship at UUCR

by Laura Shay & Jay Karow

Laura Shay and Jay Karow are co-leading a small group Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship (UUCF) at UUCR starting this Fall. UUCF small groups and chapters are found in many UU congregations throughout the country: www.uuchristian.org. The plan is to meet the first Sunday of every month at 9:00 a.m. prior to the 10:30 a.m. service. So far, we have met on October 3 and November 7.

The possibilities are endless! Inspired by the wonderful service lead this summer by Ginny Folsom, Jim Blue, and Connie Bertka, we plan to move forward in a scientific framework of observation, exploration, discovery, communication, and application as we gather together as a community to unravel the evolving scholarship, faith, and tradition of our Christian roots. If you are interested, please join us on December 5. Join the UUCF group on Realm, or contact one of us for more information.



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CONGREGATION OF ROCKVILLE

Advent Services

SUNDAYS AT 5PM

November 28, December 5,
December 12, and December 19

Join us on Zoom
www.uucr.org

For more information or to get involved,
please email advent@uucr.org.



SHARING THE MINISTRY

(From Your Minister...continued from page 1)

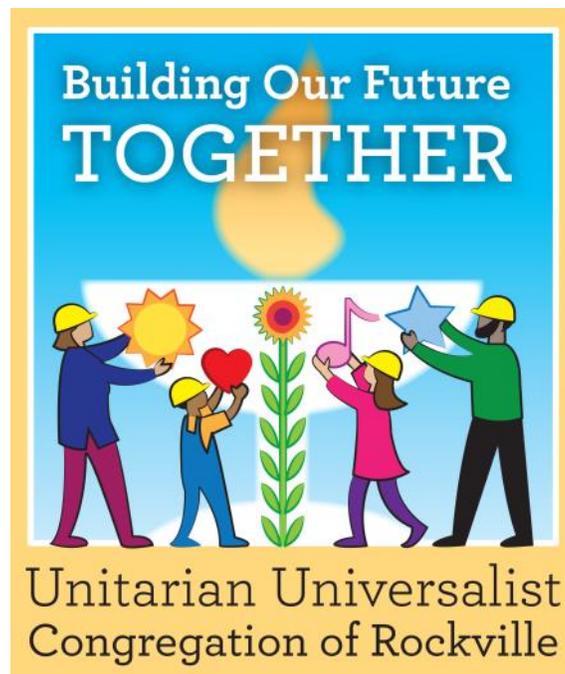
It's a picture of the first female chaplain, Chaplain Alice Mae Henderson, who was commissioned in 1974. As the first female chaplain and the first Black female chaplain, she was the *only* one for some time. I think about her service and what it took for her to persevere, to serve with honor and distinction as the first female chaplain under tremendous pressure to be better than the best, just to be considered basically competent. Her history is part of my history, as also one of the small percentage of female chaplains that have served since Chaplain Henderson to today.

So how does that relate to "Joy"? I'll tell you. "Feeling good is not frivolous, it is freedom," writes spiritual leader and writer adrienne maree brown. Joy is feeling good. There is tremendous freedom in that, because our world and lives continue to be complex and hard and embracing JOY is a way of claiming spiritual agency. Joy is delighting in what we have been given, the ways we have survived. Delighting in the ways that our ancestors survived and made a legacy of their own. Delighting in the small blessings of connection, family, a good TV series, and even a glorious fall day, resplendent with the yellows, reds, and oranges of the trees turning, the leaves cascading as the sun dances across the sky. Feeling good is not frivolous, because it is necessary to our survival. Joy is necessary to our survival.

And I will tell you what is bringing me joy these days—you are! Every week since we moved to multi-platform worship, people are reconnecting, please are returning, families are coming back in person! We connect in virtual spaces, we connect in person. Physically distanced and yet spiritually close.

We have embraced multi-platform, despite the hiccups and bumpiness—you continue to affirm our covenant as a spiritual community. You have shown up with heart, compassion, and patience. And so much grace. As we say, "Grace abounds!" Your gifts, your love and care. Your blessings all bring me joy, for which I am truly thankful.

Rev. Rebekah



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Economic Justice through the Years at UUCR

by Steve Lapham

I'd like to thank members of UUCR who've assisted in an ongoing struggle seeking justice for my neighbors and myself. Your help has come to me in recent months and, as I think of it, over the decades.

UUCR's roots in housing and economic justice go way back. I recall the late **Charlie Eisenhower** working with county agencies and nonprofits to repurpose hotels as safe, clean, transitional housing for families on the verge of homelessness. Today there are a number of these places in Montgomery County. We need more such housing for people in this pandemic era.

My current struggle is this: we are under attack by our own homeowner's association in Quail Valley, a neighborhood of 592 homes just south of Montgomery Village. Sadly, the HOA has fueled housing insecurity. Families relate that they have fled the neighborhood due to HOA harassment. I've published blogs, as well as a piece in Maryland Matters, "[Pandemic: A Boon for Debt Collection Attorneys](#)." What we see here is a local example of a nation-wide problem. There's an abusive HOA industry (of for-profit property managers, debt collectors, and other vendors) enabled by bad state laws.

In our neighborhood, the QV Friendly Team of 50 families strives for a more compassionate and responsive HOA. For example, we've met twice with Delegate Leslie Lopez to discuss the problems and to seek reform. We show up at all the HOA board meetings. We encourage each other.

Over time, we see how the social justice concerns we have at UUCR are connected in a web to one another. Housing insecurity. Ethnic cleansing. Racism. Attacks on free speech.

Former UUCR member **Pam Bailey** (then Rasmussen), who now lives in DC, founded [We Are Not Numbers](#), which posts online essays and documentary films by Gaza youth, as well as [More than Our Crimes](#), which advocates for current and former convicts in the U.S. who committed violent crimes in their youth.

I recall the late **Alonzo Smith** leading the Social Justice Committee as we drafted, "[Affirming Our First Amendment Right to Boycott](#)." That statement was published by *MarylandMatters* in December 2017.

Any American is free to join the [BDS](#) (Boycott, Divest, and Sanction) Movement, a Palestinian civil society-led nonviolent action for Palestinian Human Rights. The attack on freedom has only intensified in various US states—and in Israel, which has just declared six human rights groups to be "terrorist organizations." Arguments in a suit challenging Gov. Hogan's edict are slated to be heard in December 2021.

Participating in those discussions in the Social Justice Committee back in 2017 has been helpful to me today. In a recent essay, I claim First Amendment rights as I reject a cease and desist letter. The HOA is telling me to stop publishing the lived testimonies of my neighbors, which are true stories of HOA abuse. I refuse.

You set a good example. I look around and see how members of UUCR are fighting the good fight: educating their kids, and other people's kids, during a pandemic; advocating for undocumented immigrants; supporting elderly neighbors undergoing surgery; and registering new voters. I'm grateful to belong to a religious community where we practice "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large."

Steven Sellers Lapham is a member of UUCR, a board member of UUs for Justice in the Middle east, a member of the Steering Committee of Voices from the Holy Land Film Series, and founder of Quail Valley Friendly Team. The views expressed in this article are not necessarily those of UUCR as a whole.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Building Relationships through Building Houses

by Karen Pittleman

Can you hold my ladder? Would you mind helping me carry this 2x6? Fourteen members of UUCR returned this summer from our twelfth year of building houses with Garrett County Habitat for Humanity. After missing our week last year due to COVID, it was wonderful to once again roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Garrett County Habitat for Humanity (GCHFH) has built 76 houses since 1983. These homes have been built on donated land, using contributions of materials, money, volunteer labor, and a requisite number of hours of labor by the potential homeowner and family. The completed homes are sold to families at cost with a 30-year, no-interest mortgage. Families are selected based on need, ability to repay the loan, and willingness to partner with GCHFH. Mortgage payments received from homeowners are recycled directly into a revolving fund that GCHFH uses to build additional homes.

Each summer since 2009, approximately fifteen UUCR members have made the trek to Garrett County to participate in a week-long work camp. A local church opens its doors to house us and each night a different local church welcomes us for a bountiful, homemade meal. A typical day starts out with breakfast, coffee and conversation at our home church. After making brown bag lunches, the group carpools to the worksite about fifteen minutes away. The day is spent on a large variety of projects, which vary from year to year. This summer, while one group completed installation of soffits and three-quarters of the exterior siding on a house, another built a shed for the backyard of that same house. Other years, groups have laid flooring, hung kitchen cabinets, installed molding, completed trim work, hung doors, painted, and more.

The week flies by. On Friday, the group has a chance to look at the work that has been accomplished and know they have made a contribution to GCHFH and the community they serve. But, at the end of the week there is also a chance to reflect on the relationships built over the course of the week—getting to know each other's back stories while working side by side hanging siding or painting window trim; meeting potential homeowners and hearing the story of how their families will be impacted by moving into an HFH house; and learning faith traditions from members of a Mennonite or Church of the Brethren community whose church families have made us a delicious, homemade meal and take the time to sit with us in fellowship.

Maybe you can participate next year?



SHARING THE MINISTRY

Letters of Forgiveness

by Rev. Rebekah

Have you written a Letter of Forgiveness yet? There's still time! It is a holy and sacred thing to bear witness to the pain that we carry - the ways in which we have fallen short of our highest aspirations, who we strive to be in the world, with each other. We are complicated and complex beings, we make choices each and every day that nurture goodness, Love, wholeness and healing...and/or work against the good with broken promises and falling short.

An apology is an acknowledgement of the reality of pain - mine, or someone else's. It is a grieving. Any encounter with reality is an encounter with truth is an encounter with God, with the holy spark of creation, with the spirit of life. And this is how we go deeper. Go deeper into ourselves, our relationships; to build and rebuild what we thought we were, into who and how we can be. The World needs better humans.

We weave this sacred process into the life of this congregation with Letters of Forgiveness. If you would like to write out your story (it is a good and holy thing to write), you are welcome to craft a Letter (or Letters) of Forgiveness - either asking for forgiveness or extending your forgiveness, or a combination of both - and send it/them to UUCR.

Whose forgiveness are you called to seek? Why?
What do you need to say to this person or people?

Who do you need to forgive? Why?
What pain, hurt or anger do you need to let go of in order to forgive
this person or people?

You may write your letter of forgiveness and mail it to UUCR with the label "Forgiveness" written somewhere on the envelope. Your letter will not be opened or read, unless you address the letter directly to Rev. Rebekah. We will collect your letters from now until the end of December to give you ample time to reflect.

Then, on December 21, 2021, all of the letters will be gathered up and cast into a sacred fire during the Winter Solstice, when the nights are at their longest and we are looking forward to the light again. Your letters will be given up in the fire — along with everyone else's letters — as a collective act of liberation and peace.

This "Letters of Forgiveness" project is a gift to you — a way to be freed of the shame, guilt, or hurts that may be weighing down your spirit. We forgive in order to draw closer to alignment and wholeness, as a spiritual practice for the good of us all.

Send your letters to:

UUCR % Forgiveness
100 Welsh Park Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Forgiveness can be a holy, righteous and healing thing. May you embrace the spiritual practice of Forgiveness, both given and received, and be free.

With heart,

Rev. Rebekah

Quest

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DATED MATERIAL

Unitarian Universalist Principles

As a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association, we covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

In addition to these Seven Principles, the members of UUCR voted to support the UUA in moving toward incorporating a proposed Eighth Principle that may be as stated below:

- Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

Our Mission and Vision

The mission and vision of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville is to
Practice Courageous Love.

Our Values

Lifelong Spiritual Discovery ~ Beloved Community ~ A Just World