



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

Transforming the New Year

By Tim Adkins

As a religious humanist, I've never quite found a winter holiday that speaks to me on a deep, spiritual level—that is, until I started transforming New Year's into my own, personal holiday and created a bunch of traditions. For example, every year I give my apartment (and now house) a deep cleaning, because I don't want to bring last year's trash (either literal or metaphorical) into the new year. Another tradition that I started was choosing a single word to be my theme for the upcoming year. Last year, I was fortunate enough to introduce many of you to this practice, and we heard back from many of you about the words you were choosing for the year. (My word for 2020: *authenticity*)

Part of my New Year's tradition is also reflecting on the past year. And really, how much do any of us want to look back and reflect on the year that was 2020? It was a rough year for just about all of us. But when reflecting on the past year, I do it through the lens of my word of the year: Was I being authentically me? There were times during 2020, when faced with a tough decision that I relied on asking myself, "Which choice is more authentically me?" Years down the road, when I reflect back on 2020, sure I'll remember the masks, but I'll also remember it through the lens of my word for that year.

But enough of the year that was 2020. I know I'm ready to move on and I bet you are too. So what's my word for 2021? *Roots*. I made

a major move this year to Oklahoma City, and assuming all goes well, just days into the new year I will officially close on a house and become a first-time home owner.

It's time for me to set down roots in my new neighborhood and my new town. But I can take roots further: I want to explore my own family's roots more, in order to better fully understand my own cultural story. I want to explore the roots of my beliefs more, and examine the sources that drive my actions. (Also, I want to garden. Now I've finally got the space to do it!)

What's your word for 2021? What's the one word you hope will define your upcoming year?

Tim Atkins is Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration for the First Unitarian Church in Oklahoma City. His article is reprinted from the [Braver/Wiser](#) section of the UUA website.



Nineteen hearty souls met near Dayton for the annual UUFW New Year's walk, followed by chili and cornbread outside and socially distanced.

New Member Spotlight

The UUFW is pleased to welcome Kristin and Stephen Maxwell to their new spiritual home. They moved to Staunton in April and bought a house at 813 Churchville Ave. in June.



Kristin was raised in a non-religious household but had exposure to Episcopal service practices through her primary school attendance at St. Agnes School in Alexandria and her participation in a

church choir. Stephen was raised in a household where regular attendance at church and Sunday school was expected. His mother taught Sunday school and his father was superintendent of the Sunday school and a member of the vestry at Trinity Episcopal Church in Portsmouth, VA.

Stephen was introduced to Unitarianism and Transcendentalism at UVA, reading sermons as part of an American Lit class, and had an “ah-ha” moment, but that seed remained dormant for several years before he suggested to Kristin that they check out a service.

Following a move to New Jersey in 1976 and a few years after they married in 1974, the Maxwells began attending UU services at the fellowship in Morristown, NJ. They have moved around a lot during the ensuing years and have been members of UU congregations in Newton, NJ, Middletown, NY, Cherry Hill,

NJ and Miami, FL. They have been most involved in the last 20 years, serving as board members and in other leadership positions, and immersing themselves more and more in philosophy and social activism.

Stephen and Kristin are both retired from careers in insurance and counseling respectively, although they have a small antiques business, which is in the process of being reestablished in Staunton. They have one daughter, Alicia (who they hope will relocate from NJ to VA to be closer), and two small, elderly dogs. They are very fond of traveling internationally. Stephen is very active in his Scottish clan society. Kristin pursues her love of cooking, and both enjoy decorating their house and working in the garden.

Member News

Walter Lazenby’s oldest daughter, Brenda Lazenby, passed away on January 6 in Texas.

The father of Chuck Guest (Erin Milne’s husband and Charlotte Shnaider’s son-in-law) has died of Covid-19. Chuck is in California caring for his mother who is ill with the virus.

Resolution

Saying good-bye to a year
Of struggle, isolation -

And silence, so much silence -
Again we turn the page,

Add a unit, remember;
And promise, fervently promise

That in this new year
All voices will be heard.

Joe Good

