



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

Festival of Lights

I have a collection of a couple dozen menorahs – *chanukiyot*, as they are called when you want to be clear that you mean the ones with the right number of candle sockets for Chanukah. Some of them are antiques I got on eBay when someone was cleaning out their parents' or grandparents' house and didn't need another *chanukiya* in their own home or just didn't share their grandparents' aesthetic sense.

Some I got new from Judaica shops. And I have one that was handmade of wood – with metal candle sockets and a gimmick: you can remove the outer two sockets to produce a seven-branch menorah that is not for Chanukah but is based on the ancient menorahs in the Temple in Jerusalem. Historically inaccurate, of course, but an interesting piece that I sometimes take out just to wonder why someone found it an innovation that needed to be tried.

Most are made to hold the small Chanukah candles while others fit standard Shabbat candles and a couple even need full-sized dinner candles. And all my menorahs are relatively inexpensive. No sterling silver in my collection, even though there are some truly beautiful silver menorahs for multiple thousands of dollars apiece. No, mine are simpler... for ordinary people in ordinary homes. They are suited to me.

Chanukah menorahs have a distinct focus depending on when, where, and for whom they were designed. In Israel, many of them

focused on the military victory in 168 B.C.E. over the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus Epiphanes, rather than on the miracle of the oil. Some are joyous explosions of light and design while others celebrate the hobbies or interests of the owner. Some are perfunctory. Some dutifully observe all the rules, while others throw such care to the wind. And some celebrate a vision of spiritual community yet to come, rather than history. Whoever you are, whatever your situation, you can probably find a *chanukiya* that “has your name on it.”

Since I have several *chanukiyas*, each year I have to decide which one or ones I will use. This year, I chose a small cast-bronze one that



was made in Israel in the early 1950s, not long after the newly recreated country's independence. On a whim, I did something a little different this time and stood a new cut-metal decoration with birds and the word “shalom” in Hebrew letters next to it. Old and new together in a uniquely beautiful

combination. And while some years I buy candles that are works of art in their own right, this year I just picked a box off the shelf at Target. These too are a delight to the eye and the heart.

The joy and the magic of the season doesn't happen because of the style of the menorah or the qualities of the candles. These are merely vehicles for transmitting the story of overcoming adversity and oppression in the quest to be authentic versions of oneself, honoring the right to practice the traditions – old and new – that are meaningful and life-giving within one's community of identity. It is a Jewish story, but one with broadly human applications. Happy Chanukah!

Peace and Blessings,
Rev. Paul

VICPP Day for All People

On Wednesday, January 18, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy will schedule in-person legislative visits (as well as workshops and plenaries). You will have the opportunity to participate in two legislative visits: one with your State Senator and one with your State Delegate. You will be trained on how to hold a legislative visit and then will have an opportunity to share your thoughts with them on issues like **limiting solitary confinement**, expanding access to **paid sick days**, increasing funding for **affordable housing**, and requiring **implicit bias training** for medical professionals. Additional issues may develop as VICPP tracks bill introductions.

The program for this Day for All People will begin at 8:30 a.m. at Centenary United

Methodist Church, 411 E. Grace St. in downtown Richmond and conclude at 3 PM. (Registration and a light breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m. We should figure on being on the road at 6:00 a.m.) There is a registration fee involved, which covers materials, breakfast and lunch—\$30 before January 1, \$40 after. VICPP will also offer virtual sessions.

If you decide to register and go to the in-person event, contact Steve Maxwell, our VICPP liaison, so we can coordinate ride-sharing. If you are interested, open this link to the registration site:

[2023 Day For All People - Virginia Interfaith Center](#)

VICPP has published "Fact Sheets" (talking points) on each of these focus areas. To read and review these, open this link:

[General Assembly 2023 - Virginia Interfaith Center](#)

Facility Update



You may have noticed some activity going on in our yard. The image is what our new playground structure will look like when finished. Right now, our

volunteers have partially assembled the structure and created its footprint in the yard, which will be mulched. After the holidays, work will continue until it is fully erected. If you would like to help with this project, contact Sarah Skaar at dre@uufw.org.

