



The CommUUnicator

**Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro**

Paths We Take

By Carla Throckmorton

We all have paths we follow. Little jaunts that lead us hither and yon. Quests down large roads with important goals that unfold questions, doubts, memories of choices we made, failures and accomplishments. Questions answered, questions left unanswered that in their turn uncover questions leaving us seeking answers. In the pursuit of those answers, we are led down different paths and roads we could never have imagined. Woven into life's journey is a spiritual journey we all are undertaking, even if we are unaware, a search for a guiding spirit, a power larger, wiser, smarter than ourselves. A seeking to be closer to God.

My family did not go to church, my father was a self-proclaimed atheist—he claimed as a scientist he couldn't be anything else. Mom didn't talk about it, perhaps the subject just didn't interest her. She did support my seeking information and experience. As I matured, Dad and I had many discussions about God. Dad claimed there was no God, I said perhaps there is.

My spiritual journey started when I was a child though I wouldn't have termed it so. It was a seeking, a curiosity, why, how does that work and why do you believe that? I talked to neighbors about their religion or faith. I read abbreviated bibles they gave me. I went to a few churches with friends as I grew. I understand the need for tradition, ritual, a gathering of like hearts and minds, a

community. I longed for that but didn't find it until I was in my forties. My trying out different religions was like trying on a sweater that people said was beautiful, comfortable, warm and would protect me; but it didn't fit. I continued seeking.

I've taken a few Bible study classes and read the Bible—there's a scary book. Beautiful, ugly, wise and bigoted, a history of human behavior, rules to live your life by, the Bible has motivated some of the worst human behavior and some of the best human behavior. Is it a matter of focusing on what appeals to you in the Bible and acting accordingly? Is it a matter of upbringing? Why do some search for answers to spiritual questions?

I used to envy people who wrote or talked about a spiritual epiphany or knowing that God was guiding them. I didn't doubt the validity of their experience, I just never came close to feeling that way. I realized I didn't need an epiphany; I had a solid connection with God. I could see and feel God in myself, nature and the people around me. My messages from God come through other people. Sometimes I get a feeling that says listen, pay particular attention to the moment, it is important, listen. Though I've never seen an angel or heard guiding voices I know I get help all the time. That's when I do my best work. I have so much to learn. I was blessed with a curiosity and a drive to pursue a spiritual quest even when I didn't know what I

was seeking. I hope I will continue to seek God's path and learn how to be closer to God until the path of life leads me to that final mystery which none of us understands: death.

A New Way to Pledge to UUFW

By Peggy Anders, Treasurer

Recently, at the request of a member, the UUFW Board of Directors studied the possibility of accepting investments of publicly traded stock and mutual funds as donations. The Board agreed to make this possible, and in December 2023, we opened a brokerage account with United Brokerage Services, Inc. It is a registered broker-dealer and subsidiary of United Bank with a location in Waynesboro.

Many shares have grown in value in the last few years as the Stock Market has recovered from the slump during the Covid epidemic. If a stock or mutual fund you have owned for more than a year has increased in value since you bought it, using it as a donation will save you the tax you would owe on the gain if you sold it. As a nonprofit organization, UUFW can accept the shares in a transfer and is not required to pay taxes when they are sold. Your donation has full value as a pledge.

For example, here are two ways you could pay your pledge with stock valued at \$2000 for which you originally paid \$1000.

1. **Sell the stock at a profit of \$1000 and pay \$200 Federal tax, then donate the remaining \$1800 to UUFW.**
2. **Donate the stock worth \$2000 in a direct transfer to the UUFW brokerage account and avoid paying tax on the gain.**

In summary, donating stock or mutual funds to UUFW can be a win-win for both the donor and the Fellowship. It will help you to meet your pledge goal and also provide you with a tax benefit. Contact me at treasurer@uufw.org if you are interested in learning more about this new opportunity.

Shenandoah Valley Equality Gathering at UUFW

Our UUFW member, Mike Drumheller, is hosting the monthly potluck of Shenandoah Valley Equality in the Fellowship Hall on Friday, February 9 at 6:30 p.m. He has invited UUs to attend this family-friendly event. It is open to both new and current members of SVE and allies of the LGBTQ community. Just bring a dish to share and BYOB.

The goals of SVE as stated on its website are:

- to gather and communicate important community information;
- to collaborate with allies and LGBTQ-friendly organizations;
- to organize events within the greater Valley area for social and educational networking with LGBTQ people;
- and to advocate for full LGBTQ equality, dignity, and inclusion in the Valley, state, and national communities.

Mike has been a member of this organization almost since its beginning in 1995. He says it was his first real contact with the gay community when he was still struggling in the closet. If you are interested in learning more about this organization and how to become a member, check out the [SVE Website](#). You'll be pleased to see that UUFW is on their list of affirming religious communities.

