



# The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Waynesboro

## The Evolution of Earth Day

This week, the world celebrated Earth Day. It has been described as the largest civic event on the planet. But that has not always been the case.

Prior to 1970, pollution was rampant. A factory could send clouds of toxic smoke into the air and dump toxic waste into our waterways, and nothing could be done. There was no EPA, no Clean Water Act, no Clean Air Act and no Endangered Species Act.

The first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970. It was started by US Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin. After a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California in January 1969, he had the idea to launch a nationwide, environmentally-focused teach-in on college campuses, drawing inspiration from the anti-war movements against the Vietnam War occurring on campuses around the country. Nelson recruited Denis Hayes, a young activist, to help bring the idea to the public. The first Earth Day involved a network of activists, organizations, and millions of people participating in events and activities around the country. Their demonstrations worked, and Congress authorized the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency in December, 1970.

In 1990, Earth Day went global when events and activities in 141 countries mobilized more than 200 million people. In 2009, the United Nations designated April 22 as International

Mother Earth Day. As recently as 2020, over one billion people worldwide participated in Earth Day actions.

The theme for Earth Day 2024 is "Planet vs. Plastics." The theme focuses on a push to end plastics to support human and planetary health, with a goal of 60% reduction in the production of all plastics by 2040.



*2024 Earth Day poster contest winner.*

Earth Day, and now Earth Month, is a time for individuals, communities and companies to reflect on their own behaviors and look for ways to reduce their negative impact on the environment. The sources for this article include the official [Earth Day website](https://www.earthday.org), the [Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth](https://www.uufw.org), and the [EPA](https://www.epa.gov). These and many other online resources have information and ideas to help us act to save our planet.

**New Member Spotlight**



**Shannon Mills** and her children, Chad and Coraline, came to UUFW after first watching many of our YouTube services during COVID. That’s how she found out about us. She and her family moved to Fishersville from Fredricksburg about a year ago.

Shannon describes her family as similar to the Brady Bunch. She and her husband, Chad Sr., have six children between them. They each had two children when they married 14 years ago. The two oldest, Kylie and Silas, are the same age and in college. The next two, Dana and Tristan, are also the same age and in high school at Wilson Memorial. Chad Jr. and Coraline are middle and elementary schoolers.

Shannon grew up attending a UU church in Northern Virginia. She studied early childhood education in college and for many years taught in private kindergartens. She has also served as a director of day care/kindergarten programs. Shannon is currently homeschooling Chad while considering her next career move. A caregiving person at heart, she has an interest

in moving from children’s services into the area of services for the aging population.

For leisure activity, Shannon makes yarn on her own spinning wheel. She also enjoys crocheting and painting. In the past she loved dance, including ballet, tap and modern dance.

Shannon is excited about being more involved with UUFW and hopes to one day interest her spouse and older children in visiting our Fellowship.

**Talking About the World**

The latest *UU World* just came out. Members of Unitarian Universalist congregations get the magazine for free. If you have just signed the book, you will probably get a copy of the next issue. In the meantime, there is a copy available in the lobby if you want to check it out.

There used to be a group that met to discuss the stories in the latest issue of *UU World*. The current issue looks particularly rich for discussion. If anyone would like to revisit this idea, The Adult Education and Enrichment Team would be happy to help you get started. We could assist with finding a date, publicizing the event, even give you some ideas for facilitating the discussion. If you are interested in restarting this group and would like assistance, email us at [adultee@uufw.org](mailto:adultee@uufw.org).

**On Trash Day**  
 When things go wrong don't be bitter,  
 Don't let your mouth be a trash emitter,  
 Count to ten and reconsider.

When your script goes awry be a good actor,  
 Don't let your brain be a trash compactor,  
 Adversity can be a benefactor.

*Joe Good*

