



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro

The RE Program's Community Connection Inaugural Event: Valley Mission Food Drive & Fun Day

By Erin Milnes

To help nurture the bonds with our community and reinforce the importance of service to and empathy with others, the UUFW Religious Education program has launched the **Community Connection Initiative**. At least every other month, we will partner with organizations in the SAW (Staunton Augusta Waynesboro) area to find worthwhile (and fun!) activities for our children and youth to plan and participate in. Our inaugural event will be a **canned food drive** (through Dec. 13) and **All-Ages Fun Day with [Valley Mission](#) in Staunton on December 14.**



Valley Mission strives to promote self-sustainability by providing case management, pastoral counseling, financial assistance and

onsite enrichment programs, including an after-school program and mental health counseling. Valley Mission serves more than 700 unique individuals each year—24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is the Shenandoah Valley's longest operating private homeless shelter, providing a temporary home, support and hope to our community since 1971.

To understand the critical and life-changing services Valley Mission provides, one need only read the [success stories](#) on its website. Stories about families, like Katie, mother of two with a third on the way with health complications. She found the support she needed to have a healthy pregnancy and delivery, keep her kids safely cared for, and find a job and an apartment. And stories about individuals like Wanda, an unemployed woman in her 70s with no family. Her belongings had been stolen at another shelter, and her car was in danger of repossession. Valley Mission helped her enroll in classes, get a job and save money for an apartment.

Our Community Connection event with Valley Mission has two parts: a canned food drive to feed the body and an all-ages fun day to feed the spirit.

The RE team has begun collecting canned food and will continue through December 13th. Valley Mission has asked specifically for *canned corn, green beans, carrots, mixed vegetables, and whole potatoes*. Standard or large Number 10 cans are all welcome. Please

place your canned donations in a bag marked “RE Valley Mission” in the Fellowship Hall lobby. If you prefer to donate a gift card, VM requested Food Lion or Walmart. Contact Melissa Hays for gift card donations.

The Valley Mission food drive is in addition to our ongoing collection for the emergency food pantry box and food bank. As you know, the holidays can be especially hard on housing-insecure families. Housing costs have increased in our area, so please consider donating an extra amount this year.

The All-Ages Fun Day will take place Saturday, December 14th, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at Valley Mission, 1513 W. Beverley in Staunton. We’ll bring a variety of games, toys, and activities (board games, Lego, dolls, balls, arts & crafts—bring your favorite!) to engage shelter residents young and old. (If possible, bring a game or toy that can be donated.) Fellowship adults are very welcome to join in the fun and help bring a little joy to a Saturday afternoon. Please contact Melissa if you would like to participate and for more details.

Let’s Welcome our New Members

Rev. Paul and the Membership Team held a “New to UU” class on Saturday, November 23. This class (or previous UU membership) is a prerequisite for joining the congregation. At the end of the class, five attendees signed the book to become UUFW members. They are Victor Monti, Ben Blankenship, Cal Hauptle, Amy Goodloe and Cynthia Eckles. Look for New Member Spotlights in upcoming newsletter issues. We will officially welcome them during a service in the near future.



Thanksgiving Prayers

At your family gatherings during the holidays, have you ever felt on the spot when asked to say grace? Keep these blessings handy just in case. This one is by Rev. Richard Fewkes (UU)

*For the sun and dawn,
which we did not create
For the moon and evening,
which we did not make
For food we plant
but cannot grow
For friends and loved ones
we have not earned...and cannot buy
For this gathered company,
which welcomes us as we are
from wherever we have come
For all things that come to us--
gifts of life and love and friendship--
we lift up our hearts and give thanks this day.*

This one is from Buckminster Fuller (UU)

*We give thanks.
We give thanks for being.
We give thanks for being here.
We give thanks for being here together.*

And this one is by Thich Nhat Hanh (Buddhist)

*In this food
I see clearly
the presence of the entire universe
supporting my existence.*

These prayers were published in 2021 on the website of the Unitarian Church North in Mequon, Wisconsin and linked to UUA.org.

