



# The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Waynesboro

## Pulpit Exchanges

We have had guest ministers preach from our pulpit on three or four Sundays a year most years of the past decade. Some of those ministers seemed to some of you more theistic or Christian in their approach than I. Others, perhaps, were more staunchly humanist or atheist than perhaps some of you see me. And in neither case did we expect those ministers to preach anything other than their truth on a topic that moved them. We have invited guest ministers at different points in their career and of different ages, different genders, and with different backgrounds with openness to the variety of possibilities such diversity provides.

Twice in my first few years here, I exchanged pulpits with Rabbi Joe Blair, then serving Temple Israel in Staunton. I went on Shabbat to preach in their service, and on Sunday, Rabbi Joe came here. I had exchanges with Rev. Dr. Katie Low, chaplain and professor of religious studies at Mary Baldwin University. I went on a weekday to introduce the distinctives and commonalities of Unitarian Universalism to a freshmen class Dr. Low taught, then she came here the following Sunday to preach. Again, each of us preached our own truth, and our Fellowship, the synagogue, and the Mary Baldwin student body had the benefit of diversity.

What has not happened up till now in my ministry is a true pulpit exchange with a fellow settled Unitarian Universalist minister. I have invited guest Unitarian Universalist ministers

when I had vacation or study leave to fill, not when I was, otherwise, in the pulpit and could go to their congregation. On April 12, though, we will wade into the water of Unitarian Universalist pulpit exchange. Rev. Tim Temerson, minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Charlottesville, will preach here, and I will preach from his pulpit on the same day.

Pulpit exchange is a practice with deep roots in our movement. In fact, it goes back to the early years of Massachusetts Puritanism, where pulpit exchanges allowed autonomous congregations to be “in communion” with other autonomous churches, hearing compatible teachings from a variety of ministers. The Cambridge Platform of 1648, the agreement among early Puritan churches, paired independence with fellowship and communion among congregations. It was seen, conservatively, as a means of maintaining a kind of unity in teachings.

But as some of the grandchildren of the early Puritans took a more liberal approach to understanding the Bible, rejecting Calvinist doctrines such as original sin and predestination, the pulpit exchanges provided a challenge. The conservative Congregationalist congregations began refusing to accept pulpit exchanges with liberal ministers. And this became a religious crisis that played a significant role in the early-1800s’ split of the Unitarians and the

Congregationalists into distinct theological groupings and identities.

While the practice of regular pulpit exchanges ebbed and flowed in our movement, it constitutes a venerable tradition that can serve us well in the present. Each minister has their own strengths and interests with which to supplement each other, so exchange is a net benefit to us all. It may feel like an ordinary Sunday, but it is deep, meaningfully linking us together beyond our walls.

Peace and Blessings,  
Rev. Paul

### New Members

At our "New to UUFW" class on March 14, all five attendees signed our membership book. In the near future, we will be officially welcoming our new members: Lee Terrell, Jane Ellen Teller, Steve Van Sicen, Kurt Langberg and Mary Speed. And they will be featured in upcoming issues of the UUFW Newsletter. In the meantime, let's make them feel welcome and included.

### Understanding the SAVE Act

The SAVE Act has reached the Senate and will be debated in the coming days. It is the most destructive voter suppression bill in history. As currently written, it will:

- Require every voter to prove citizenship **in person**. This means a birth certificate with a name matching your current name, or a passport, in order to register to vote and to vote. Roughly half of Americans don't have a passport. Millions lack access to a paper copy of their birth certificate. Married

women and people who have changed their names must show proof.

- Force states to hand over their voter rolls to DHS.
- Expose local and state election officials to legal risk if they make an honest mistake regarding "show me your papers" in the chaotic registration and voting process.
- Force states to require a photo ID to register and vote. Virginia has had a liberal and acceptable voter ID list for many years.
- Require proof of residence. Lots of people move within their state but don't update their address or driver's license.
- Require voter-roll purges every 30 days.
- Prohibit universal mail-in ballots or at least require a voter to apply for each mail-in ballot they want to get. And you will need to apply in person as you will have to "show your papers."
- Require in-person registration and updating of previous registration as all proof of citizenship documents and updates need to be presented in person.

*This list was adapted from the Staunton Democratic Committee's weekly newsletter.*



*On March 8, the congregation celebrated Charlotte Shnaider's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and recognized her outstanding contributions to our Fellowship as pianist and choir director. Thank you Charlotte!*

