



# The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Waynesboro

## June: Fun and Frolic, or Fear and Foreboding

By Clint Nicely

Well UUs, here we are again—closing out May and stepping into June. Memorial Day is behind us, and we turn our thoughts (and plans) to summer relaxation—days at the beach, mountain escapes, or other vacations, including the simple *staycation*, when we relax at home and try to forget the demands and drudgeries of our daily routines. And while we celebrate and have our fun, we must also remember that, for UUs, June is an important month on many levels, an important time for us to reaffirm our commitment to supporting all people, especially those in the more traditionally or historically marginalized communities.

June, in the United States, is *Immigrant Heritage Month* and *LGBTQ+ Pride Month*, both of which represent significant commitments for Unitarian Universalists. The LGBTQ+ community, while having made significant gains and levels of mainstream acceptance in recent decades, still faces tremendous struggles for recognition and normalcy in today's culture and society—especially true for those in the trans community. And for immigrants, the challenges have never been greater. Rather than honoring and celebrating the cultural richness and diversity of our immigrant population, we see Border Patrol and ICE agents with free rein (perhaps free reign) to terrorize, exploit, and indeed deport, with utter disregard for human dignity and respect. Over half a million immigrants have been deported since the present

administration took office, while up to as many as eighty thousand remain in detention, more than twenty-five thousand of whom have absolutely no criminal record. (Stats are from government sources as compiled by *The Guardian*, but since the most recent government shutdown, concrete information is scarce.) At any rate, serious concern is warranted.

In June, several specific dates to consider include the following:

- **June 2 is *Native American Citizenship Day***, commemorating the Congressional legislation in 1924, which officially and legally granted US citizenship to Native Americans. Ponder that irony for a moment.
- **June 14 is *Flag Day***, when we celebrate the “history and symbolism” of the US Flag. Now, parts of that history and symbolism are being rewritten and reinterpreted by many of our elected leaders on a regular basis.
- **June 18 is the *International Day to Counter Hate Speech***, a day established and designated by the UN General Assembly to “raise awareness” of the dangers of hate speech and to “promote efforts to combat it.” This is a biggie for everyone, but especially for UUs, as it underscores the very essence of our values and principles. Sadly, and frighteningly, hate speech has become largely normalized, accepted, used, and promoted by many in our national populace today, with the president himself leading the charge.
- **June 19 is *Juneteenth Freedom Day***, a US Holiday honoring the day in 1865 when enslaved peoples in Texas learned they were

free, two months after the end of the Civil War. Imagine leaders masking the truth!

- **June 28 is LGBTQ+ Pride Day**, commemorating the 1969 Stonewall Riots. UUFW usually conducts a Pride service in October, coinciding with the large Staunton Pride event, and in June we also support local Pride events celebrating the LGBTQ+ community.

As for UUFW, in June we participate in the UUA General Assembly, we hold our Annual Meeting with the full congregation (June 14), and of course we continue with all the regular gatherings, faith, business, and social in nature. T. S. Eliot famously said, “April is the cruelest month.” For UUs, maybe it’s June instead. We want to celebrate summer – to vacation, to escape – but we also have our inescapable commitments and responsibilities as UUs, including to make the world a better place for everyone by living our principles. The key is that we not sacrifice relaxation, joy, and happiness at the expense of more serious concerns. At the same time, we cannot simply forget or ignore the foundational concepts of UUism, those values and principles which give our lives meaning and direction. Whatever balance you strike, you may find comfort in the words of poet William Carlos Williams: “In summer, the song sings itself.”

**Do You Know About SUUSI?**

*The Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute is an opportunity to spend a week with other UU’s from all over the Southeastern US. We have not promoted it at UUFW in recent years, but one of our new members, Jane Ellen Teller, has attended many times and offers this first-hand account of the SUUSI experience.*



SUUSI (pronounced SUE see) is a different kind of church camp--one you have to see to believe. It is an intergenerational summer camp offering workshops, crafts, nature trips, and nightlife.

**SUUSI 2026 will be held July 19–25, 2026 at Radford University in Radford, Virginia.**

Attendees stay in the Radford dorms (which are air conditioned) and enjoy meals together in the campus cafeteria. At SUUSI, you can choose what you want to do and make it your own.

Features include:

- **Activities for all ages:** Daytime programs and supervision for children (0-13) and teens (14-17) allow adults to enjoy their own activities.
- **Adventures in nature:** Aquatic and hiking trips in the surrounding Appalachian environment follow “leave-no-trace” principles.
- **Workshops and spirituality:** Volunteer-taught classes, minister-led talks, and evening worship services foster community and reinforce UU values.

I have always found SUUSI to be a peak experience with excellent services, music, workshops and so much more. Our own Bill and Lorain Harouff have been featured musicians there in past years, so ask them about what fun it is. For more details on the SUUSI experience, cost, and information on how to register, visit the website at [suusi.org](http://suusi.org).

Time and a Judgement  
 There will come a time  
 When Time,  
 Not God,  
 Will ask of you:  
 “What have you done with me?”  
 And your answer shall be your judgement.  
*Joe Good*

