



Elderberries

Unitarian
Universalist
Retired Ministers
and Partners
Association

Volume 42 Number 3

Summer 2026

www.uurmapa.org

UURMaPA Fall Conference

Living into Aging and Spirituality

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October 19-20-21 are the dates for our next Zoom conference, and we hope to answer a suggestion we have received several times from UURMaPA members. After every conference, when we read comments and critiques, one theme appears repeatedly: Attendees asked for programming to address aging and spirituality.

And so, using Kay Montgomery's, *Landscapes of Aging and Spirituality*, **Bill Sinkford will lead a panel of contributors** whose essays were featured in that book. Drawing from their own work, Gary Smith, Susan Weston, and Lynn Strauss will update their perspectives of the process and the effects of age upon the spiritual lives of people and their partners. Bill Sinkford, also a contributor to the book, is uniquely situated to shape and direct the

discussion for our members.

Sadly, the book is out-of-print, but copies may be found in used bookstores and online. It is also available for Kindle readers.

Other, more familiar offerings at the conference will be **two sessions of connecting rooms**, one of which will be guided by prompts from the panel discussion of the theme. We will accompany **Duane Fickeisen** on his odyssey and join **Roger Rochester** as he unravels the threads of his life.

A worship service to open the conference will be produced by Fred Wooden, and the conference concludes with **a remembrance service** with Barbara ten Hove. Sarah Oelberg is composing short obituaries for our colleagues and partners who are no longer among us.

As of this writing, **two pods** for in-person social conferencing are confirmed: One in Kingston MA, and the other at the Seabeck Conference Center in Seabeck WA. In addition to the registration information below, **you must register separately if you intend to join these pods**. For the Kingston pod, [send a message to Judy Campbell](#). For the Seabeck pod, [send a message to Jaco ten Hove](#).

Fall Conference cont'd

Registration is now open, and the fee is \$60 until September 25th, when it increases to \$80. [To register, visit our website](#), and follow the link to our conference page.

Scholarships are available, and before you register, apply by [sending a message to the registrar](#).

If you have never attended a UURMaPA conference, the board invites you as their guest. Before

registering, [send a message to our vice-president](#), and tell him you're a newbie. Don't ignore your inbox, as we release more information about our activities at the fall conference.

Enjoy the end of summer and I hope you can appreciate it as Thoreau did: *'Many a forenoon have I stolen away, preferring to spend thus the most valued part of the day; for I was rich, if not in money, in sunny hours and summer days, and spent them lavishly; nor do I regret that I did not waste more of them in the workshop or the teacher's desk. —Walden*

Flash – New Editor was the Creator of UURMaPA!

Greetings from Grand Rapids MI, the new home of Elderberries because that's where I, Fred Wooden, live. As I write it is August 1 and being my first issue I am starting early because it will take a while to learn how to pedal this puppy.

First off, *kudo*i (plural of *kudos*) to George Buchanan of Peterborough Ontario for his service in this role for the last two years. He is looking over my shoulder for a while which is service above and beyond.

One way I am learning this task is by reviewing previous issues. So I started at the beginning, the oldest one in the archive, and found not only a pre-digital format but the beginning of UURMAPA itself. Under the typewritten banner of "UU- ELDER- BERRIES." As I read, it detailed the first great gathering, to be held at the Maria Assumpta Academy in Petersham MA.

I gasped, because I was the horribly young minister serving in that town in the early 1980s, and when Harold Hadley (or Arnold Westwood?) asked if there were a place in the area (the CVD for those who remember districts) I knew the Academy was available. Little did I know what came of that meeting. And so it happens that as I begin my service as editor with UURMAPA it so happened that the first issue promotes the very event I helped bring about forty-one years ago.

Speculations - August 2026

Dear friends and comrades, summer is winding down as we head for fall...I know that many of you are looking forward to cooler weather and bright foliage where you live...Here in Delaware, we have had lots of hot, muggy days where it was best to stay indoors to avoid high heat indexes that are more dangerous to we who are older...As I write we expect severe thunderstorms in our area with possible strong wind gusts...

Planning is already underway for the fall conference...You will read about it in this issue and it looks like another great program...Barbro Hansson had been the Conference Liaison for the past few years...However, her term ended and we are still in search for someone to step up for the

position...She has been kind to send us reports from the planning team to keep the board informed...We have revised the job description to pare down the responsibilities so that the position isn't overwhelming to a new person...If you like interacting with creative people, shaping how we provide conferences for our members, and are wanting to contribute to our board in a meaningful way, then contact Barry Finkelstein, nominations@uurmapa.org,

The new book that I mentioned was coming out has arrived...Edited by Diana K. McLean, *Defiantly Joyful Unitarian Universalist LGBTQIA+ Histories* brings together personal stories from LGBTQIA+ Unitarian Universalists, both laypeople and religious professionals, across a wide spectrum of identities and experiences. Rich with insight and anchored by a timeline of Unitarian Universalist LGBTQIA+ history more thorough than any previously available, *Defiantly Joyful Unitarian Universalist LGBTQIA+ Histories* honors the trailblazers who came before, while challenging and inspiring readers to consider the work still ahead and continue the fight...You can purchase the book for \$18 from the UUA Bookstore...Those of our members who contributed to this history are included in its pages...I look forward to reading it myself to deepen my appreciation for these pioneers.

As I mentioned in my last article, Janet Tillman and I joined six others on a pilgrimage to Transylvania in late June and early July...We were small enough that we had plenty of room in our van to spread out...We stayed in Kolozsvár for several days before traveling to Mészkő, the Alabaster City; Székelyderzs, UNESCO-protected fortified Unitarian Church dating to 14th century; Torda, the birthplace of religious tolerance in Transylvania...It is the home to the Monument of Religious Freedom and the Roman Catholic Church where the Diet of Torda took place in 1568...We traveled to Várfalva, a village which is part of the "Unitarian Horseshoe"...On the church's walls is the first known written instance of the word "Unitarian" (in Latin)...In total, we visited nine Unitarian churches and several other historical sites such as Gyulafehérvár, former capital of Transylvania where St Michael's Cathedral houses sarcophagus of King John Sigismund Zápolya and his mother, Isabella Jagiellon...If you ever have the time and resources you should see the birthplace of Unitarianism...The Hungarian Unitarian staff were most welcoming to us and the cost of the trip was very reasonable for the twelve days of travel.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the fall conference and at other events we will be offering throughout the year...Look for notifications in your emails...I also want you to go to Church Center and share your contact information with each of us...This is a safe, secure way to communicate with each of us...We are not updating the member directory on the website due to unscrupulous people stealing that information...If you have difficulty accessing Church Center, let me know.

I close with a poem by Mary Oliver entitled Patience:

What is the good life now? Why, look here, consider
the moon's white crescent rounding, slowly, over
the half month to still another perfect circle—
the shining eye that lightens the hills,
that lays down the shadows of the branches of the trees,
that summons the flowers to open their sleepy faces and look up into the heavens.
I used to hurry everywhere and leaped over the running creeks.

president's report cont'd

There wasn't time enough for all the wonderful things

I could think of to do in a single day.

Patience comes to the bones before it takes root in the heart as another good idea.

I say this as I stand in the woods and study the patterns

of the moon shadows, or stroll down into the waters that now,

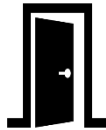
late summer, have also caught the fever, and hardly move

from one eternity to another.

Yours in the Faith,

Richard Speck, president UURMaPA

Welcome to New UURMaPA Members



On September 3rd from 3-4:30 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time), UURMaPA will host our annual "virtual" welcome for all Newly Retired Ministers and Partners

This event is for all recently retired UU ministers and partners. There will be a brief introduction of what the UURMaPA offers our members. We will share information about what your Board is doing, the upcoming Fall Conference, special webinars that will be offered this year, and how you can be more involved in UURMaPA and some of our small groups. We will have time for questions for the members of your UURMaPA Board.

Invitations have been sent to all ministers who have retired this past year and their partners. We also invite any existing UURMaPA members to attend and welcome your new colleagues. All you need to do is email me and request a Zoom invitation. (vice-president@uurmapa.org)

Warmly,

Charles J. Stephens, UURMaPA V.P.

Passages

Since the last Board meeting, death notices were sent regarding the following beloved UURMaPA members: partner Helen LaFleur (1934-2025) and the Revs. Johanna Boeke (1937-2026), David Farrington (1940-2026), Charles Gaines (1936-2026) and Susan Archer (1946-2026). We will miss them.

passages cont'd

Charles and I have been working on matching up mentors with mentees in their regions based on the mentees' choices. In the process, we have run into some glitches, based on the facts that: the UUA had dropped sending us the "intent to retire " forms for some time (with Richard S.'s help, we are back on that list), we didn't have all the information we needed on some of the newer members (our lists of newer members on Planning Center has not been updated in awhile), and it turned out to be hard to find out where some of our newer members live due to the way our regional lists appear on Planning Center.

We are working the glitches and are hoping to plan our training for the mentors soon, before sending the mentors and mentees off to begin their regular one-to-one meetings. I am hoping that they can begin meeting next month... – **Joy Atkinson**, Passages Coordinator



CONNECTIONS

“We are hardwired to connect with others; it’s what gives purpose and meaning to our lives.”

-Brené Brown

There are numerous ways to connect with UURMaPA members. The many ways to connect are listed below starting in section 1 with Area Connectors. Descriptions of various Connection Groups and Support Groups are in sections 2-4. The Skill Sharing Network is in section 5, so keep reading until the end.

1. AREA CONNECTORS

I want to extend a big “thank you” to all the current Area Connectors serving seventeen areas. I also want to highlight the need for Area Connectors in eighteen of our thirty-five areas. Area Connectors are a vital resource that UURMaPA has offered its members for many years.

The chart below shows the Areas in need of Connectors. I hope there are UURMaPA members in these areas who will consider becoming an Area Connector.

Region	Area	Region	Area
1	BALLOU-CHANNING	3	WESTERN CAROLINAS
1	CANADA EAST	3	MIDSOUTH/TENNESSEE
1	CENTRAL MASS	5	ROCKY MOUNTAIN
1	MASS BAY NORTH	5	ARIZONA/SO. NEVADA
1	MASS BAY SOUTH	5	NO.CAL.INLAND/NO. NEVADO
1	CONNECTICUT VALLEY	5	NO.CAL.COAST/HAWAII
2	J. PRIESTLEY SOUTH	5	SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

2	METRO NY/NJ	5	WASHINGTON/ALASKA
3	EASTERN CAROLINAS	6	OVERSEAS

Area Connectors' responsibilities are:

- Welcome newly retired and new-to-Area UURMaPAns,
- Offer support to survivors at an Area UURMaPan's death,
- Participate in annual check-ins with UURMaPAns in their Areas,
- Facilitate other connection opportunities as reasonable based on the size of the Area and Area colleagues' spirit and energy, and
- Notify the UURMaPA Passages Coordinator of any partner deaths in their areas.

The above 18 areas await an Area Connector. Consider finding someone to be a Co-Area Connector with you. Having Co-Area Connectors helps lighten the load, especially for those Areas with many retirees or a large geographical range. If you would like to be an Area Connector or Co-Area Connector, or you do not know which area you reside in, contact Janet Tillman at connections@uurmapa.org to explore the responsibilities and rewards of being an Area Connector.

Go to <https://uurmapa.org/caring-network/> and scroll down to your area where you will find the contact information for your Connector if there is one indicated. I encourage those with Area Connectors to contact the Connector to learn about Area activities and to seek connection and support as needed.

2. CONNECTION GROUPS

Seventy UURMaPA members are currently participating in twelve Connections Groups.

Though self-governing as to format and schedule, most groups:

- Have 5-8 members
- Have a Convener/Facilitator
- Meet monthly on Zoom for a 90-minute session to
 - Open and close with a reading
 - Give each member 5 minutes to check-in or share "How is it with thy Spirit."
 - Spend remaining time discussing a topic chosen at the prior session and choosing the topic for the next session.
- Each fall and spring, members can choose to "depart with thanks" or re-commit for 6 months more.

Some groups are composed of retired ministers only, and some include both retired ministers and partners. To explore joining an on-going Connection Group, or forming a new one, email Janet Tillman at connections@uurmapa.org.

3. SUPPORT GROUPS *(Learn more about each group by contacting the Conveners directly.)*

- **Caregivers Support**

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Conveners: Makannah Morris, revs2uu@aol.com, Yvonne Strejeck, yesyvonne@gmail.com and Kathleen Ellis, kellis@uuma.org

A Zoom support group for UURMaPA members who are caring for another person that meets monthly. If you are a caregiver, you are welcome to join other caregivers for a check-in, sharing of resources, and caring for one another. Participants covenant for confidentiality. We encourage UURMaPA members to refer retired ministers or partners who are caregivers who they think could benefit from the support and experiences of fellow caregivers. For more information and to join the group contact one of the conveners noted above.

- **Grief Support**

Convener: Duane Fickeisen, dfickeisen@uuma.org

An on-line support group for UURMaPAs who have been recently widowed and are grieving the loss of their partner meets monthly. Duane Fickeisen says: *“For an hour and a half, we check in, catch up as we process our grief, and share resources. Each of us grieves in our own way. We offer a safe and confidential space to find support on our separate journeys.”*..UURMaPA members are encouraged to refer retired ministers or partners who have been widowed to the Grief Group to find support while on their grief journey. For more information and to join the group, contact Duane Fickeisen.

4. TOPICAL CONNECTION GROUPS *(Learn more about each group by contacting the Conveners directly.)*

- **Writing for Witness as Resistance Group**

Convener: Gail Collins-Ranadive, revgcr@aol.com

This group is for anyone refusing to shut down and shut up, as seniors are often expected to do, in response to the chaos, corruption, and cruelty of the current times. Group participants write on a chosen topic to access and then share their knowing, experience, and wisdom, thus creating a record of Truth against “mis and disinformation” we are subjected to daily.

Writing for Witness is an option for those who are no longer physically able to be on the frontlines in demonstrations, marches, and protests who have a wealth of experience and wisdom to share. For more information and to join the group, contact Gail Collins-Ranadive.

- **Partners Group**

Convener: Janet Tillman, connections@uurmapa.org

A partners’ small group is an opportunity for retired ministers’ partners to:

- Come together with other partners to discuss topics chosen by the group, share personal experiences, and establish a social network.
- Share information that is practical, constructive, and helpful.
- Offer support and encouragement to other group members and receive the same in return.

- Talk openly without worrying that remarks will have an impact on their minister partners in some way.
- Share joyful moments and have fun.

This group meets on 3rd Wednesdays from 2:00 – 3:30 EST. If you are interested in joining the Partners Group or convening a second Partners' Group, contact Janet Tillman.

- ***Penelope's Bones Book Discussion Group***

Convener: Holly Horn, hhorn@uuma.org

This group meets monthly (it started on November 17, 2025) to discuss *Penelope's Bones: A New History of Homer's World through the Women Written Out of It* by Emily Hauser. Published in 2025, it is a great combination of imagination, the very latest scientific research, scholarship, feminist, and queer analyses.

The group meets on the THIRD Monday of every month from 1:00pm – 2:30pm Eastern time, 12:00pm, Central time, 11:00am Mountain time, 10:00am Pacific, to discuss one chapter at each meeting. Since there are sixteen chapters, this group will go on for a while.

Anyone can join at any time; all you need to do is read the one chapter under discussion for that month. To get involved, find out what chapter is up, or to get more information, contact Holly Horn.

- ***UU Mystics Group***

Convener: Lilia Cuervo, cuervouu@comcast.net

The group's purpose is to help its members nurture and enhance their spiritual life, especially by being attentive to the first source of our UU living tradition, *the direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.*

The group meets monthly via Zoom, on the 4th Thursday, at 4 pm Eastern Time, 3 pm Central Time, 2 pm Mountain Time, and 1 pm Pacific Time. Facilitation of the meetings rotates among the members. To join the group or get more information, contact Lilia Cuervo.

5. UURMAPA SKILL-SHARING NETWORK

Four very generous UURMAPA members are sharing the following skills.

- ***Spanish Lessons – Jeff Jones***

On April 2, 2026, Jeff began Beginning Spanish I that went through May 21. Beginning Spanish II ran from June 4 to July 23. Beginning Spanish III will be in September and October with Beginning Spanish IV offered in January and February 2027. These classes are taught in eight-week cycles.

Each class is 2 hours long, with a 10-minute break in the middle. The classes are 2-4 p.m. EST on Thursdays.

Jeff estimates that 4 hours of preparation per week are necessary to get the full benefit of the classes. He also asks those taking the classes to give two hours per week to serve the immigrant community. It

is completely on the honor system, and no one needs to tell him what they are doing, although sharing experiences and ideas on serving the immigrant community could be beneficial to all in the class. You simply must agree to it as part of signing up for the class.

Each class can have 6-10 participants using Zoom. The classes are very interactive and fun. If you already have Spanish skills, Jeff can assist you in determining which session would be best for you. He also plans to teach Intermediate Spanish in 2027. If you are interested in learning Spanish contact Jeff at jeffjonesuu@aol.com.

- ***Composting/Recycling – Jaco ten Hove***

If you are tossing out your household kitchen waste—such as coffee grounds and eggshells—and you are not recycling yard waste, such as leaves and grass clippings, you are wasting all the good stuff! All these items, which end up in a landfill, belong in your compost bin. As an experienced and certified *Master Composter/Recycler*, Jaco can offer counsel and coaching on composting/ recycling from general guidelines and pep talks to specific habits and routines that improve the odds for keeping your waste out of landfills. Join Jaco in his new ministry: *Waste Diversion*. Contact Jaco at bthishere@gmail.com for more information.

- ***Appreciating Technology + Tips on Maintaining an Old Building – Norm Horofker***

Norm is a retired mechanical engineer with plant management experience. He is happy to share his optimism for appreciating the present and the amazing future of technology. Norm also has experience maintaining old buildings. Contact Norm at nhorofker@aol.com to begin a conversation about technology or that old building you are maintaining.

- ***Sustainable Investing – Jim Zacharias***

Are you invested in oil? Do your investments include tobacco and guns? Most of us simply do not know where our money is invested. Many funds are not transparent about the screens they use to choose investments. As a result, we may unknowingly support industries and practices that go against our values. Jim believes there is a way forward. In his retirement Jim explored how to live sustainably — without worrying that his money is working against what he holds sacred. That search has been worthwhile, and Jim is glad to share what he has learned. If this resonates with you, Jim welcomes a conversation and wants to hear your story. You can contact Jim at jzacharias1@gmail.com.

Do you have a skill to share? If you would like to add a skill/talent/hobby to the Skill-Sharing Network, contact Janet Tillman at connections@uurmapa.org. You can also go to the UURMAPA website at <https://uurmapa.org/resources/> to learn more about the Skill-Sharing Network.

I hope you will take advantage of one or more of the many ways to connect with other UURMaPAN's.

Janet Tillman, Connections Coordinator

Join in a Common Read!..

From Christine Robinson

While UURMaPA is currently a group of mostly white people, more and more younger UU ministers and spouses are people of color who we want to welcome into our association...One of your UURMaPA Board goals for this year was to educate ourselves and all UURMaPANs about barriers to that welcome...Some barriers are summed up in words like microaggressions, othering, privilege, and model minorities"...new words or words used in a new way in this century...They name some of the many ways that White people, mostly unintentionally, but still hurtfully, speak and act in ways that are not welcoming to people of color.

We are starting this self-education effort with a Common Read, inviting all UURMaPANs to read a book and talk about it together...

AI for UURMAPANS

Our new colleague, the Rev. Emma Farrell, whose last job before her call to the Unitarian Church of Palatine, IL, was helping the University of Arizona set policy and curriculum around this new technology of Artificial Intelligence...She is a knowledgeable and lively speaker about this important subject, has given special thought to how AI might (and shouldn't be) used in ministry, and can talk about the social and ethical issues this new technology is bringing....ready or not! Into our world...Her seminar for the UUMA got rave reviews, and she has agreed to offer an intro seminar to UURMAPANS...Keep up with your World, and with your working colleagues!..

The Seminar will be held on September 22, on Zoom, at 2Eastern, 1Central, noon Mountain, and 11Pacific time...Check your email for registration details...

Book Corner

Trouble in Paradise: A Story of Ministry in the Aftermath of Clergy Misconduct, by Sarah York – by Dan Hotchkiss

Clergy misconduct has received a lot of attention from the UUA and UUMA over the last twenty years. Less attention has been paid to the long-term effects of misconduct on affected congregations—and on the ministers who serve them afterward. Sarah York's *Trouble in Paradise* addresses that neglected terrain through an account of her eight-year ministry at the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara following the disclosure of misconduct by her predecessor.



York's ministry began after she accepted a call supported by an 88% vote of the congregation, a level that she recognized as less than strong. She and the congregation knew about her predecessor's misconduct but expected they could move beyond its effects more smoothly than proved possible.

It was not long before York learned that groups of influential members, some with close ties to her predecessor, were meeting privately. Troubling patterns—including family-systems “triangles”—repeatedly occurred. After a period of relative calm, a new church administrator began making power plays among lay leaders. At the end of York's eighth year, the board and congregation voted to discharge her as minister.

Like so many stories about congregations, this one is full of baroque details. York reports that the administrator was a former Episcopal archdeacon who had been defrocked for past sexual misconduct. Hidden connections among staff and lay leaders keep coming to light. York says quite a bit about a group of men who continued to be loyal to her predecessor, illustrating how loyalties and relationships can complicate a congregation's response to harm.

The case has many exceptional features, but its underlying patterns will feel familiar to experienced observers of troubled congregations. Several of those patterns deserve special attention.

One is that the effects of trauma are more divisive and persistent than leaders want to recognize. The strong desire to restore normalcy can hinder needed healing steps, such as apologies, restitution, and acknowledgment that people's strong reactions arise not only from their shared experience but from differing social locations, personalities, and histories. Congregations need to create a shared story—a way to say, “This is what happened to us.” But this is slow work that calls on everyone to stretch their sympathies.

Another pattern is that congregations often hire new ministers and staff reactively—looking for an antidote to the harm caused by previous staff members while taking the positive contributions of those staff members for granted. Replacing such reactive motivations with more balanced, forward-looking ones takes time.

For ministers, one of the hardest patterns to accept is that when a ministry approaches its end, lay people generally pull close to their friends who will stay—and distance themselves from the minister who is leaving. This can hurt a minister even when a parting is amicable. In a difficult ending, it can take the form of harsh political alignments and side-taking.

Sarah York, whom some will remember by her former name, Sara Moores Campbell, is well qualified to tell this story. A student of Rabbi Edwin Friedman, she was coached and counseled through the Santa Barbara experience by Alban Institute consultants Ed White, Speed Leas, and Roy Oswald, and supported by a circle of close colleagues. In her helpful foreword, clergy misconduct specialist Deborah Pope-Lance describes work she and others did in the 1990s to adapt the concept of generational trauma from Holocaust studies for ministry in congregations.

York's book offers a valuable case study for afterpastors—ministers called to serve congregations after a damaging pastoral transition—and those who support their work. I appreciate her tone of self-examination. She openly identifies the choices she now questions, and each chapter has discussion prompts to provoke give-and-take among participants. As a congregational consultant, now mostly retired, I'm especially interested in testing the usefulness and limits of terms and concepts York uses to interpret her experience, such as generational trauma and the concept of an afterpastor. When is a given term useful to help a congregation understand a moment in its history, and when is it not? *Trouble in Paradise* cannot answer such questions by itself, but it offers case material that can help ground future thinking.

Clergy memoirs about congregations are rare, in part because of the likelihood that those described will feel unfairly treated. York acknowledges that risk directly: "I did not want to write this book," she writes, and it took her twenty-five years to do so. Although she uses pseudonyms for most participants, the congregation, dates, and documentary quotations make the setting readily identifiable.

The value of a document like *Trouble in Paradise* lies less in its cast of characters than in the light it sheds on an experience too often left unexamined. I have read few ministerial memoirs that combine York's erudition and candor with such frank acknowledgment of the limitations and imperfections of her own efforts in a role offering little prospect of worldly glory. If there are book reviews, this is a nice place to put them. Sometimes there is poetry or other submissions.

Dan Hotchkiss, the author of Governance and Ministry (3d edition published February 2026), has served as a parish minister, as ministerial settlement director for the UUA and senior consultant for the Alban Institute. Currently Dan blogs at danhotchkiss.substack.com, works on a website for readers of his book at governanceandministry.com, and sings with the Solstice Singers of Cape Cod and the choir at UU Middleboro MA.

Christmas is coming! Need a gift? What Reviewers say about [A Time for All Ages](#), by W. Frederick Wooden

"In these pages we see how Christmas can touch broken places in our lives life in unexpected ways...."

"...a remarkable set of stories, with vivid characters drawn from every level of society, all of whom are caught up in a variety of situations that test the differing spiritual potentials in each of them. I can think of no similar collection of stories that so successfully addresses this level of human consciousness with such spirit and grace.

Deadline for the next Elderberries is November 10, 2026.

Please submit items via email: elderberries@uurmapa.org

Obituaries

Nancy “Nana” Kratochvil,



March 15, 19370 - June 7, 2026

The Reverend Nancy “Nana” Kratochvil’s life contained a series of chapters where different skills blossomed throughout her life. She loved books and learning, she was an artist and accomplished business owner, a loving mother and grandmother, an activist, and a revered minister, passionate about social justice. It could well be said that service was her calling...Her steely convictions and rebellious spirit could be challenging, yet she had a zest for life, she shared her love easily, and she questioned life deeply, all qualities that helped her to take action and press forward despite tragedies...She was certainly tested in life, yet she pursued new dreams. Nana died peacefully on June 7, 2026, at Arington Senior Living in Macon, Georgis at the age of 89.

When Nancy was nineteen, she married Richard Roy Florey, together they welcomed 3 children and built a life that took them to many places throughout Richard’s military career, including four memorable years in Germany, Nancy found much fulfillment in raising her family and devoted countless hours to volunteer work, generously serving the communities she called home...

In the mid-1970’s Nancy relocated to Mississippi where she married Michael True. Her artistic talents blossomed at this time, using her skills as a seamstress, costume designer and intricate needleworker. The expertise she developed reflected her remarkable attention to detail, organizational ability, and creative spirit. Here her ability to blend her talents and service to others was reflected in the business she started, Nana’s Custom Clothing.

It was during her time in Mississippi that Nancy was forced to draw on her courage when her beloved 27-year-old daughter, Kathleen, was violently killed. Nancy found a safe sanctuary at a UU church, allowing her to be very angry and to search for the whys of violence, especially that of men against women. In the wake of this personal tragedy, she asked herself, what is my role in this now changed world? She often said that finding the Unitarian Universalist Church in Jackson Mississippi changed her life. There, she found people who talked about social justice, who welcomed her questions, and who encouraged her to think deeply and act courageously.

In 1984, Nancy married John Rogers Kratochvil II. Their years together were filled with love until tragedy stuck six years later when John and Nancy sustained extensive injuries in an automobile accident which, sadly, took John’s life. Following a prolonged recovery, Nancy embarked on a new calling by entering Meadville Lombard Theological School, a dream that she and John had of doing together. It may have been at this time that she felt the name Nana suited her more. Nana studied feminist theology and wrote a persona mission statement of desiring to spend the rest of her life

helping make her corner of the world a safer place for women and children. And, true to her calling of giving love to the world, she was eventually able to add the word “men” to that statement.

Nana earned her Doctor of Ministry with Distinction from Meadville Lombard and went on to serve as a full-time minister for the Unitarian Universalist Church in Muskegon, Michigan. Her faith guided every aspect of her life, and she was known for recognizing the needs of others and quietly stepped forward to meet them with compassion and dedication.

After retiring from ministry, Nana moved to Macon, Georgia to be closer to her family. She quickly became an active member of the Arlington Senior Living community, helping to establish a resident group through which she formed many cherished friendships. She also became involved with High Street Unitarian Universalist Church of Macon, sharing her time, talents and servant’s heart through volunteer work whenever she was able.

Nana left deep memories of the support, strength and sacrifice she gave students, encouraging them to continue to discover new things, an attitude she held for herself as well.

Nana was preceded in death by her parents, Paul and Irene, a loving husband, John Rogers Kratochvil, II, beloved daughter, Kathleen Ann Florey, and stepson Andrew Kratochvil...Nana is survived by her children, Richard Ray Florey II, and Tina Shoemaker and her adopted daughter, Stacy Kawamura, her siblings, stepchildren, grandchildren and great-grandchildren

Daniel Bull



MIDDLETOWN, CT –Dr. Daniel Bull passed away in Middletown July 8, 2026. Born in Highland Park, MI, on July 5, 1939, he was the son of Hilliar and Doris (Newell) Bull, brother to Joanna and the late Richard Bull...

Dan excelled academically, earning a Ph.D. in Biochemical [Engineering](#) from the [University of Michigan](#). He met and married Johanna Kemmler in Ann Arbor. The couple lived in Michigan and Oklahoma and eventually moved to [Montclair, NJ](#), for Dan's employment as a senior researcher at Hoffmann-LaRoche, Inc. and Johanna's as a nurse at Montclair Community Hospital. In 1975, they adopted Lisa from Seoul, Korea. In 1977 Johanna passed away after a battle with lupus. A single parent for nearly a decade, he met and married Rev. Jan Carlsson in 1986, who brought daughters Shana and Sarah Adelman into their family.

A highly accomplished scientist, Dan spent over 40 years as a biochemical engineer; founded his own company, Hyperion Research; and earned two patents for the Infinity Shaker, which appeared on the cover of Scientific American...A man of many interests, he played the trumpet and piano, raced cars at Connecticut's Lime Rock Park; and earned his black belt in karate at the age of 50. He was a lifelong music lover and an avid reader.

After 30 years in Montclair, they moved to [Scituate, MA](#) for Jan's work as a Unitarian Universalist minister. With a backyard habitat for the local bird community, he became a bird enthusiast. The couple then moved to [Red Hook, NY](#) and finally to [Middletown, CT](#), near where Jan began a new ministry. In his later years, Dan became a serious writer, publishing seven books, novels and nonfiction. Dan and Jan savored trips abroad and visits to family and friends. In every town, they found the local coffee shop where he wrote and they connected with the community.

Multi-faceted, with a dry sense of humor, progressive in his values, Daniel Bull was a loving husband, father, and stepfather. Ever curious, he revered the wonders of science.

In March of this year, Dr. Bull suffered a devastating fall at home, rendering him quadriplegic. After months in hospitals and rehab, he passed away peacefully in hospice at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown, with his daughter by his side.

Dan is survived by his wife, Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull; daughter Lisa Bull (Rob) Lemon; grandchildren Oliver and Sophia; stepdaughters Shana Adelman and Sarah Adelman; son-in-law Robb Kidd; grandson Forrest; and sister, Joanna Bull.

A celebration of his life was held in Middletown on August 1. To share memories or send condolences to the family, please visit www.doolittlefuneralservice.com.

George Crandall



PORTLAND, OR – George Miller Crandall died on June 9, 2026 at The Watermark at the Pearl retirement community in Portland. He was the husband of Rev. Marilyn Sewell.

Born July 16, 1937, he was raised in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, and attended the University of Arizona in Tucson, where he met his first wife, Laura Ann Chesnut (Ann Crandall).

After he obtained degrees in both Civil Engineering and Architecture, and started a family, he and Laura Ann moved to Portland, OR, in 1967, where their second daughter was born. George began working for Skidmore, Owings and Merrill...With that firm, he was

a major architect in the 1983 design of the iconic Big Pink Skyscraper, the second tallest building in the city.

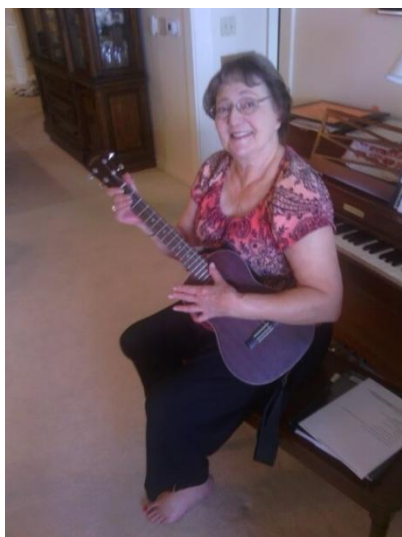
George and Ann moved to NW Portland and lived there for many years. George worked for the architectural firm, Fletcher Farr Ayotte (1989 – 1998), and started an Urban Design firm, Crandall Arambula, PC, in 1998.

He was passionate about design, art, cities, mass transit, the environment, the coast, running, and sailing...He influenced the design of several of Oregon's walkable towns and cities.

With the death of his wife, Ann, in 2007, George remarried, to Rev. Marilyn Sewell in 2009...George is survived by Marilyn and her family; his daughters, Robin Crandall, and Laurie Crandall; and grandchildren, Dylan Ludiker (Calista), Nolan Ludiker, Macy Bass, and Paley Bass...A memorial service was held June 20 at First Unitarian, Portland.

George Crandall is pictured here in an open space which he designed.

Rev. Marjorie Montgomery



December 2, 1935 – April 20, 2025

The Rev. Marjorie Montgomery died on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2025 at the age of 89...Born on December 2, 1935 in Buffalo, New York to Florence and Edward Wesp...She raised Lutheran where she cultivated a love of church music.

Graduating from the Friends School in Wilmington, DE, she proceeded to Wellesley College, from which she received a bachelor's degree in music, focusing on piano and organ performance. Through Ivy League choral group exchanges, she met her future husband, Dr. Joseph Terence Sams. After 16 years of marriage and the birth of three children, the couple divorced. Her son Philip notes that this was difficult for his mother, but formative in her move toward ministry.

She would co-author the book *Living through Your Divorce*. Residing for a time in New York City, she taught private piano lessons and worked as a church choir director and organist while pursuing an Minister of Religious Education degree at Union Theological Seminary.

Philip describes their mother's high energy—overseeing family vacations, Easter egg hunts, birthday parties, and more, while serving as RE Director and Minister in Training at First Church and completing her M.Div. degree at Southern Methodist University. Marjorie found new love with Robert Duane Montgomery. Theirs would be a marriage of 43 years. With this marriage, Marjorie gained two stepdaughters, Janelle and Stacy. Everyone looked forward to their family holiday and the many UU conferences in Maine and New Hampshire.

As an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister, Marjorie served First Church in Belmont, MA and guest lectured at Harvard Divinity School. Returning to Texas, Marjorie served as Minister of the First Jefferson Church (now All People's Church) UU. Upon retirement ten years later, Marjorie did a stint as interim minister, guest preached and was active in her local community and the UUA...

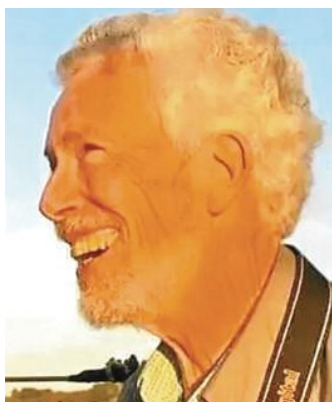
In 2008, Marjorie and Duane joined the Trinity Terrace Retirement Community, where Marjorie lived fully into her final days. She was a mainstay in the choir and at the piano. She organized discussions,

musical performances with deep ties to both church and her community. In Philip's words, his mother "poured out her love through her actions, every day."

Marjorie was predeceased by her husband Duane, her former husband Dr. Joseph Terence Sams, and her beloved daughter Valerie. She is survived by sons Philip and Richard, stepdaughters Janelle and Stacy, granddaughters Natalie and Jessica, and her sister Barbara Murry.

A memorial service was held at the Trinity Terrace Retirement Community on May 8, 2025...Donations in Marjorie's memory may be made to the charity of one's own choosing...

The Rev. Charles Flagg



March 2, 1941 – February 15, 2023

The Rev. Charles Fobes Flagg died on February 15, 2023 in Warwick, RI as the result of Alzheimer's Disease...Born in Portland, Maine to Mary Brewer Nash and Joseph Presley Flagg, he was the first of two sons. Charles attended Deering High School where he first honed his skill as a photographer, opening up a lifetime of exploring shadow and light, form and line, from behind the lens of his camera.

He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1963, majoring in sociology and minoring in psychology. It was during these years that Charles began questioning the conventions of his Episcopalian upbringing...He was gifted in his writing, both prose and poetry, and made use of these talents as he continued his studies at Crane Theological School, Tufts University where he prepared for a career in the Unitarian Universalist Ministry. In 1966 Charles was granted a Master of Divinity degree and was ordained in 1966 by the Nora UU Church in Hanska, MN...He resigned from that church in 1973 as he was called to the Westminster Unitarian Church in East Greenwich, RI. He then served for sixteen years at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist in Bridgewater, MA...His final ministry from 1994 to 2015 was with the Unitarian Society in Fall River, MA...When he retired, he was named Minister Emeritus.

A parishioner wrote: Charlie, you married us 36 yrs ago on June 14th, Flag Day. This has always been a special topic we share with friends. You welcomed our children into the church and gave a beautiful service for my mother after her death. You were a part of the milestones in our lives. You will be a part of our lives forever.

In addition to ministry, Charles enjoyed photography, music, singing, bicycling, nature and church history...He also served the association and community in many capacities

In 1977, Charles married Cynthia Judge and moved to Jamestown, RI...One of Charles's frequent comments was "I love our life here in Rhode Island." Even Alzheimer's failed to darken his kind, loving, and gentle ways.

Charles is survived by his wife, Cynthia Flagg; three daughters from his first marriage Mary (Molly) Kingsbury, Helen Morris and Nancy Flagg and their families; two stepsons, Jon Nelson and Kurt Nelson and their families; fifteen grandchildren and step-grandchildren, and his brother David Flagg (Barbara).

Charles was cremated with a private funeral service...Donations may be made in his memory to any Human Rights Charity of your choice...

Rev. Weston Stevens

February 15, 1932 – May 11, 2025



The Rev. Weston Stevens was 93 when he died on May 11, 2025...He was under hospice care and surrounded by his loving family. Born on February 15, 1932 in Watertown, NY to Austin and Olive (Springsteen) Wes had a long, rich and filled with much love and service.

A graduate of Watertown High School and Harvard Divinity School, Wes served our association for over 55 years...His wife Barbara said that one of Wes' goals was to become the minister of the First Universalist Church of San Francisco. He served there as Interim Minister for two years. In addition, he served over a dozen other congregations in the United States and one in England...He was named Emeritus at two churches, when he left UU Church in Tarpon Springs, Florida and when he left the UU Church in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Married to Barbara Carr for 58 years, she says he "was my best friend and love of my life. No one called him Weston, except me. I used it when I wanted to get his attention." Before Wes died, each of their three children (Julie, Heather and David) came to visit him so that he was able to tell them of his deep love for them. Wes was like that: his abiding love and appreciation for all people was apparent with everyone he met.

Wes was a wordsmith, a prolific writer of prose and poetry. He wanted his sermons to be enduring, ones that spoke to the heart of the human condition. His writing were published in the Reader's Digest, The Churchman and in Norman Vincent Peale's book "The Healing of Sorrow."..Much of his unfinished last book was written beside a summer campsite at Three Mile Bay on Lake Ontario. He believed everyone should have such a spot: a place to nurture and renew one's soul. He chose a large, old tree to stand against as he completed his morning meditation.

Wes is survived by his wife, Barbara; his daughters, Julie Arguelles (Mark) and Heather Wright (Clint); his son David Stevens (Rachel); and four grandchildren: Danica, Drew, Lily and Taegen...He was predeceased by his brother and sister-in-law, John and Catherine (Kay) Stevens...Donations in Wes' memory may be made to the charity of one's own choosing...

The Rev. Jeremy Bringham (1943-2026)



The Board of the UU Retired Ministers and Partners Association offers our condolences to the family and colleagues of the Rev. Jeremy Bringham, who died on July 27, 2026, at the age of 82.

Jeremy is survived by his wife, Selma Dannenfelser Bringham, brothers Larry (Mary) Bringham of Cincinnati, OH and Daniel (Donna) of Canandaigua, NY, his children Emily Bringham of Iowa City, Elizabeth (Mark) Smejkal of Cedar Rapids, and Sophie (Bill) Nicholson of Casa Grande, AZ. He also leaves behind eleven grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

A memorial and visitation will be held on Saturday, August 8, 2026, at Brosh Chapel and The Avacentre, 2121 Bowling St. SW in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Visitation begins at 10:00 followed by the memorial service at 11:00.

In Lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to: Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist, 4980 Gordon Ave. NW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52405, Iowans for Gun Safety, Linn County UNA-USA, the African American Museum of Iowa, or Interfaith Alliance of Iowa. UURMaPA will contribute \$50 to the UUMA Endowment Fund in honor of our colleague's ministry.

Rev. Richard Boeke



1931 – May 24, 2025

The Rev. Dr. Richard F. Boeke died at the age of 94 in Alexandria, Virginia...He was a lifelong advocate for peace and interfaith understanding and a Unitarian Universalist minister for many, many years...Perhaps it is fair to say that he had many well-lived lives. His ministry took him far and near, in many forms and shapes.

Dick was ordained as a Southern Baptist minister and went on to serve as a Chaplain at an Air Force Base in Orlando, Florida. He was on duty when a bomber crashed, killing four airmen. Richard visited one of the airman's widows. Through her anguish, she asked, "Chaplain, my husband wasn't baptized. Do you believe he's going to hell?"...Southern Baptist training had provided Dick with a clear answer. But it was one he realized he did no longer believed..."No, I don't," he replied. When he left the Air Force chaplaincy, he also left the Baptist ministry...He soon found a home with the Unitarian Universalists and thus began his journey among us. He served churches in California, Nevada, and England...In 1973, Dick was called to be minister of the First Unitarian Church of Berkeley, where he served until 1995...

Dick's ministry was shaped by a love of travel. A work assignment in 1963 led to an epic around-the-world adventure. He established enduring and deep relationships with religious and civic leaders all along the way. These relationships were instrumental in bringing in the organizations of Rissho Kosei-Kai and Tsubaki Shinto Shrine as members of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), an organization which was) central to Dick's ministry. He met his wife Johanna ("Jopie") in 1964 at an IARF conference and they married in 1965.

A hallmark of Dick's ministry was to involve his churches in the world, while also bringing the world outside into the church. His assortment of regular spiritual practices was as diverse as his global friendships: from writing a daily poem, to finishing each shower with a cold blast of water, regular visits to a tree friend, and "Monday Banana Days" where he would have a banana for breakfast and lunch in solidarity with those who hungered. A global citizen with a deeply creative and curious intellect, Richard touched lives on every continent.

Memorial contributions may be made to The International Association for Religious Freedom.
<https://iarf.net/support-us/>

Rev. Dr. Natalie M. Fenimore



The Reverend Dr. Natalie M. Fenimore left us a rich legacy of leadership. She put her love into action through her work as an educator, parish minister, worship leader, mentor, past president of Liberal Religious Educator Association and member of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change. She has served as a Trustee for both the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association and the Starr King School for the Ministry. She touched many lives in her life, from the youngest to the oldest. And she asked us unsettling questions, calling forth our commitment to each other as UU's. Her influence shaped our faith.

Natalie received her Master of Divinity and her Doctor of Ministry degrees from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. For her Doctorate degree, her area of study was Narrative Theology with an emphasis on Story and Faith Identity Development for African American Unitarian Universalists. In her response to the 2022 Berry Street Essay, Natalie stressed, "Narrative Theology requires both diverse stories and a commitment to reflect on the complicated stories of complicated humans. We can find a grounding in this shared, communal complexity – leave no one out on the path to wholeness." As well, after returning from her trip to Poland on behalf of the UUSC to visit shunned Ukrainian war refugees who were LGBT+, Roma, and Africans, she wrote of the necessity for "all to tell their stories while we hold our core values of love, compassion, freedom, justice and peace."

Natalie was Lead Minister and Minister of Lifespan Religious Education at The Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, New York. She served as a director of religious education, parish minister, and minister of religious education in UU congregations in Maryland, Virginia, and New York since 1998. A past president and a Good Officer of the Liberal Religious Educators Association, she also was an author of UU Religious Educating Curriculum and Renaissance Modules, meditations, and readings...

She left us this striking meditation, "Having Been the Other":..

May what we know of suffering, redemption and salvation bring us to Love.
Having been the *other*, may our hearts exclude no one.

Having been the slave, may we long to be no one's master."

On June 22, 2025 the UUA awarded Natalie with the 52nd Annual Angus H. MacLean Award for Excellence in Religious Education for sharing with Unitarian Universalism her honesty, grace, and wisdom, for centering religious education as a core practice in serving congregations, for mentoring others, for championing Associational change, and for the sum of her service to this faith in love and struggle.

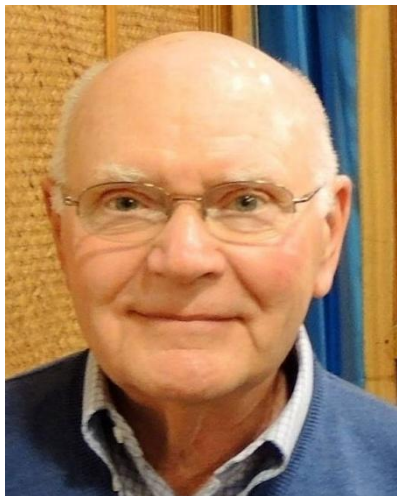
Natalie died on April 15, 2026, at the age of 68. She was preceded in death by her parents, Ralph and Lovie Carroll Maxwell. She was raised in Detroit, Michigan. She and Charles Fenimore married in 1982. Their children are John and Helen Fenimore. She was also stepmother to Paul and Rachel Fenimore. Natalie is survived by her immediate family and by a sister, Hermanetta Smith, of Detroit.

A Memorial Service and Celebration of Life was held on Saturday, May 30, 2026, at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, 48 Shelter Rock Road, Manhasset.

Donations in her memory may be made to "The Rev. Dr. Natalie Fenimore Scholarship Fund" at Starr King School for the Ministry, 414 13th St Suite 700, Oakland, CA 94612.

Notes of condolence may be sent to Chuck Fenimore c/o Unitarian Universalist Congregating at Shelter Rock, 48 Shelter Road, Manhasset, NY 11030.

Rev. John Rex III



May 14, 1940 -May 14, 2025

The Rev. John Rex III died peacefully on May 14, 2025 exactly 84 years after he was born on May 14, 1940...He was born in Syracuse, NY and raised in Mt. Kisco. Academically gifted, he was high school valedictorian and in 1962 earned his B.A. at Bowdoin College. Soon after, he headed to Ethiopia, where he served in the Peace Corp for two years...It was a transformative experience that catalyzed his lifelong global consciousness.

With an M.Ed. from SUNY Buffalo, he taught high school English. Unitarian Universalism became his spiritual home. Eventually drawn to ministry, John earned his M.Div. from Starr King School for the Ministry in 1995, bringing care, commitment and a deep sense of

integrity to every community he served. He lived, worked, and traveled in many parts of the world...He was especially committed to supporting international Unitarian communities and interfaith efforts around the globe. His global perspective shaped John's ministry, forging his affinity for interfaith and international connection. He traveled worldwide, seeking community and solidarity across continents.

John also enjoyed the quieter joys of life: bridge, watercolor painting, and classical music occupied leisure hours. In the tenderly adapted words of Rev. Michelle Buhite, who presided at John's celebration of life at the UU Church of Amherst, NY, : "When John Rex walked in these doors in 1977,

he experienced Unitarian Universalism for the first.. time.....He became an active member and...in 1991 entered Starr King School for the Ministry. John was ordained by UU Amherst on April 9, 1995, and went on to serve UU congregations in Virginia and Florida, as well as ministries representing the UUA in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. ...My experience of John was that of a man who lived a life of integrity, seeking after knowledge and all that life had to offer. In recent years his world became smaller, but his passion to teach others to engage in what he labeled cultural intelligence only grew.”

John was predeceased by his son, Christopher, his two sisters, and his parents...He is survived by his daughter Anne and her family, including grandchildren Gwen and Drew and his former wife, Barbara, his many nieces, close friends, colleagues and godson, Abhimanyu.

Memorial donations may be made in John’s memory to the Southern Poverty Law Center...

Rev. Sandra Douglas Fitz-Henry



November 23, 1939 – July 8, 2025

The Rev. Sandra (Sandy) Douglas Fitz-Henry died peacefully at home on July 8, 2025 surrounded by her loving family...She was born in Boston, MA on November, 23, 1939,..the daughter of Olive Bowditch and David McVickar...A native of Boston, childhood homes included Rochester, NY; Nashville, TN; Santa Monica, and Malibu, CA where she gathered many experiences and stories that she would later share with her own children as they moved from place to place.

As student at Reed College, she met her future husband, Terrance (Terry) Fitz-Henry. Amid the couple’s extensive travels, she taught art at the international People’s College in Denmark, studied painting in California, and noticed and appreciated art wherever she found it. In 1970, she and Terry moved to Oneonta, NY where they raised their family. Sandy’s love of art and multi-media painting continued. While absorbed as wife, mother, and community participant, Sandy served as Director of Religious Education at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta, during which she heeded a call to ministry. In 1995, she received her M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School. Soon after, she accepted a call to ministry at the Murray Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Attleboro, the congregation she served until retiring in 2012.

Sandy was deeply committed to the Unitarian Universalist tenets: justice, equity and compassion...She dedicated herself to these principles as she ministered to the Attleboro congregation and its greater community.

With a gift for attentiveness to the life specifics congregants, family, and friends ...Sandy was also a virtuoso story-teller, sharing tales of Rochester’s Victory Gardens, ghost stories about the family home in Waterford, Maine, and the California wildfires. Retiring to her family home in Waterford, Maine, Sandy was most at home outdoors, especially Maine’s beaches, which she frequented with family and friends.

Preceded in death by her former husband, Terry Fitz-Henry, Sandy is survived by her children Katherine, Erin and Matthew and their families, including grandchildren Kalyn, Devin, Colin, and Charlotte; and her sister, Mole Schaefer.

Memorial gifts in Sandra's name may be given to the Unitarian Universalist Association at <https://uua.org/giving/friends>

Rev. MARGARET (Meg) A. BARNHOUSE



(1955–2026)

We offer our condolences to the family and colleagues of the Rev. Margaret “Meg” A. Barnhouse, who died on January 13, 2026, at the age of 70.

Meg was born on August 30, 1955, in Philadelphia, PA, to Katherine Hamilton and Donald Gray Barnhouse. She attended Baldwin School in Philadelphia, a private girls' prep school known for its liberal and academically rigorous environment. During high school, she began exploring earth-based spirituality. Meg went to Duke University, where she double

maored in psychology and political science in 1977. During her junior year, she spent the spring semester in Jerusalem studying Hebrew at an ulpan, a school for new immigrants. She navigated this experience on her own and traveled home through Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Austria at her own pace, gaining independence and profound insight.

From an early age, Meg felt called to be both a minister and a counselor. She pursued a Master of Divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary, NJ, where she blossomed into a raving feminist theologian and majored in preaching, winning the Grier-Davies Prize for her class. She graduated in 1980 and was ordained in 1981, beginning her ministry at the Presbyterian Church. Her first professional ministry was at Converse College, a women's college in Spartanburg, SC, where she served as a Chaplain. Meg administered grants, organized speakers, and programming for the students, and simultaneously worked in the Spartanburg community to establish the first shelter for battered women, serving as President of the Board for four years. She also taught courses in Church History, World Religion, Human Sexuality, and Public Speaking while doing her counseling practice.

Since 1981, Meg had been preaching at a local Unitarian Universalist (UU) church, a community where she immediately felt at home. Reading UU history paralleled the inner evolution she had undergone. In 1991, she attended UU Women spirit, a women's spirituality conference held at The Mountain in Highlands, NC. Over the years, as her life unfolded through marriage, birth of sons, divorce, pastoral counseling, and her coming out as a lesbian in 1995, she found the Presbyterian Church too limited and rigid for the breadth of her beliefs. In the late 1990s, she transitioned to Unitarian Universalism.

The Rev. Barnhouse served as an interim minister for the UU Church of Spartanburg, SC, from 1996 to 1998, providing inspiring leadership and fostering social action in the community. She initiated many

projects, which included adopting a city elementary school in a high-poverty area, introducing the Welcoming Congregation curriculum, and addressing a pending amendment referendum on the SC ballot on same-sex marriage. In 2002, she served as a contract minister for the Greenville UU Fellowship, SC, and later accepted a call from the UU Church of Spartanburg as settled minister, serving until 2009. She was then an interim minister at the UU Congregation of Princeton, NJ (2009–2011) and a senior minister at First UU Church of Austin, TX for eleven years. In 2022, the Austin church honored her as their minister emerita.

The Rev. Barnhouse was equally involved in denominational affairs, serving as a keynote speaker at the Midwestern Annual Women's Conference and the Northeastern District Conference. She served as guest minister for the Thermal Belt UU Fellowship, Tryon, NC. She travelled to different UU churches and fellowships in the Southeast, preaching and giving workshops.

She brought an exciting mix of feminist spirituality, knowledge of world religion, and a spirit of fun to her ministry. She was skilled at conflict resolution, very dynamic from the pulpit, and compassionate in pastoral care and counseling.

Her writings appeared in newspapers all over Spartanburg County, the Asheville Citizen-Times, on WNCW radio, on NPR's Weekend All Things Considered, and in the UU World. She authored the Meditation Manual in 1999 and was a certified pastoral counselor.

For a hobby, Meg wrote novels and radio commentaries, held a second-degree black belt in American karate, played the drums and guitar, and enjoyed singing.

Meg is survived by her wife, the Rev. Kiya Heartwood; their two sons, Sam Barnhouse Durrett (Emily) and Ned Durrett (Emilee); and five grandchildren, Piper Leigh, Hollis, Willow, Vance, and Early. She is also survived by her stepmother, Bethie Barnhouse; her sisters, Ruth Story and Lucy and Joana Barnhouse; her stepsister, Mindy Cardenas; her stepbrother, Miguel Cardenas; and her nephew, Aidan, and niece, Lillia.

Two memorial services were held. One was held on Friday, February 27, 2026, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brazos Valley, 1719 E 29th Street, Bryan, TX 77802...A second service was held on Saturday, February 28, 2026, at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, TX, 4700 Grover Ave, Austin, TX 78756. Replays of those services are on the church websites and social media pages.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brazos Valley.

The Rev. Joyce Harkleroad Smith

September 13, 1928 – May 23, 2025

The Rev. Dr. Joyce Harkleroad Smith died on May 23, 2025, at the age of 96...The daughter of William and Pearl Harkleroad, Joyce was raised in Salina and Whitewater, Kansas in a family of modest means...Despite living through the challenges of the Great Depression and World War II, she earned a Bachelor of Art in Political Science 1950 from the University of Kansas.

Shortly thereafter, she married Dr. Vernon L. Smith. While raising their three children, Joyce pursued a call to the ministry. She earned a Bachelor of Divinity in 1967 and later a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1984, both from Meadville Lombard. Joyce was ordained to the Unitarian Universalist ministry on November 5, 1967. She served many congregations as a parish minister, interim minister and worked at the UUA for about five years. Through her many ministerial roles here and abroad, she nurtured congregations through growth, transition, and transformation. She supported clergy and lay leaders during a pivotal time in the association's development...Joyce was instrumental in expanding the visibility and leadership of women in ministry.

Among her many achievements, Joyce was a member of the board at Meadville Lombard Theological School, Chicago, 1974—1978, Vice President Unitarian Universalist Ministries Association, and President and Vice President Unitarian Universalist Retired Ministers and Partners Association...As many can attest, Joyce was a powerful preacher. She delivered both the Berry Street Essay at 1988 General Assembly and a few years later preached the sermon at the Service of the Living Tradition.

Joyce lived at a senior living community in Kansas City, Kansas for nineteen years after her retirement...While there she remained active and engaged. She participated in

many on-campus activities, starred in several plays, and worked at the volunteer tax help site.

Donations may be made to the Unitarian Universalist Association 24 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA..02210 or to Meadville Lombard Theological School 180 N. Wabash Ave., Suite 700, Chicago, IL 60601.

Notes of condolence can be sent to Eric Smith at smith990@gmail.com or to Eric Smith, 2950 Dean Parkway, Apt. 1406, Minneapolis, MN..55416...

Rev. Charles “Chuck” A. Gaines..



The Reverend Charles “Chuck” A. Gaines was a remarkable and inspiring colleague and mentor with great integrity. His ability to draw out the capacities of others and his genuine humility endeared him to many. Chuck’s devotion to Unitarian Universalism and its growth were noteworthy. Additionally, he was a strong supporter of gay and lesbian ministers very early on and facilitated pulpit opportunities during his time as the UUA Director of Extension that began to open doors for others.

He was born in Detroit MI on Jan 25, 1936, earned a bachelor’s degree from Tufts College and a Master of Divinity degree from Crane Theological School, Tufts University in 1961. While at Crane, he was employed as Director of Religious Education at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Lawrence, MA. While there, he met Carolyn Hawkes, and they married in 1959.

Chuck was ordained at the First Universalist Church in Hardwick, MA and was the last minister to be ordained as a Universalist before the merger that created the UUA. A few years later, he was called to the First Unitarian Church in Milford, NH, and was the first fulltime minister in eighteen years. While there, he participated in the March from Selma to Montgomery..in 1965...He went on to serve for 17

years at First Parish Framingham, MA. During this time, he participated in the March for Women's Rights in NYC in 1969.

Chuck had a desire to serve beyond parish ministry and during his time at the Framingham church, he was appointed to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and served on it for nine years, the last four as Chair. He also participated in the UUA's Minister in Loan Program whereby a settled minister was sent to a fellowship for six weeks to provide ministerial leadership...Chuck also served congregations in Corpus Christi and Fort Worth, TX, Las Cruces, NM, Vancouver, WA, and Groton, Cohasset, and Acton, MA.

In 1984, Chuck represented institutional Unitarian Universalism at the first gathering of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender UU ministers and students, when no one else heeded the call...Soon afterwards, he joined the staff at the UUA headquarters as Ministerial Settlement Director, a position held from 1984 to 1990 and in which he boldly promoted women, people of color, and LGBTQ ministers for settlement in congregations. When he encountered resistance, he introduced a programmatic response requiring congregations to examine and strive to overcome their own systemic and personal biases during the settlement process. That response seeded the ground for a program called Beyond Categorical Thinking that continues to evolve to this day, enriching Unitarian Universalism.

In 1988, Chuck received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Meadville Lombard Theological School, then took the position of Director of Extension and was responsible for church growth and new congregational ministry programs, areas he excelled in. He delivered consulting workshops on growth in Prague, Czech Republic as well as in Great Britain, Denmark and Germany.

It surprised no one when in 2018, he received the Annual Award for Distinguished Service to the Cause of Unitarian Universalism with these words: "Throughout your ministry, you have demonstrated the inclusive values of Universalism and upheld the broader vision of a social gospel made manifest in our daily relationships, our institutions, and our work in the world."

July 4, 2026, Chuck died peacefully with his family by his side, and is survived by his wife, Carolyn Hawkes Gaines, three children, Lynda Gaines, Stephen Gaines and Susan Gaines Duncan and their families.

A Memorial Service will be held at the First Parish in Framingham, MA on Saturday, October 24, 2026.

Memorial donations may be made to the Memorial Fund, First Parish in Framingham, 24 Vernon St, Framingham, MA 01701, or to the Memorial Fund, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4831 E 22nd St, Tucson, AZ 85711.

Notes of condolence may be shared at <https://neptunesociety.com/obituaries/tucson-az/charles-gaines-12958607>