



the
UNITARIAN
SOCIETY of
RIDGEWOOD

Resource Handbook 2022-2023



(image created by AI at deepdreamgenerator.com/ in the style of van Gogh's "Starry Night")

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An Invitation to Participate

Welcome! If you are new to Unitarian Universalism, you may be wondering what we believe and how we are different from other religious organizations. Unitarians do not begin by telling you what to believe. Instead we provide a supportive and loving community to help you make that journey in your own way. We work to internalize good values and then act on them in our daily lives and through social action. We offer stimulating Sunday services, an excellent religious education program for children and youth, and many educational, spiritual, and social activities for our adults.

If you are new to USR, please speak to any of us after the Sunday Service so we have a chance to welcome you personally and answer any questions you may have. We look forward to your participation in The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood. This Resource Handbook exists to help find your way through the many activities within our community. Please contact anyone listed here for further information.

Participation in the Society is open to all—members or friends—who will seek to follow our covenant (see *page 4*). Friends cannot vote in congregational meetings or serve in certain leadership roles. Membership is open without regard to gender, sexual orientation, age, education, history, race, ethnicity, national origin, economic status, physical or mental health, theology or other similar test as a condition of membership. No “declaration of belief” is expected either from a member or someone who would like to join. A member is expected to support the Society through time, energy, and money.

Rev. Sarah Lenzi, our minister, is available for consultation. Please contact the Society office for an appointment.

Mission Statement

Growing in mind and spirit,
We act together as a beacon for justice and love:
Transforming self and world.

—adopted May 17, 2009

Covenant

Led by our shared Unitarian Universalist values, committed to the search for truth, meaning, and justice, and determined to create a community of trust, warmth, and joy, together with love we covenant:

- to support this congregation with our presence, gifts, and service and to care for each other and the long-term well-being of our community
- to listen deeply to one another in a spirit of openness, acceptance, and trust
- to speak and act with forethought, honesty and compassion, considering not only the intent but also the impact of our words and behaviors
- to speak directly, whenever safe, to those with whom we have disagreements and to encourage others to do the same; seeking assistance from leadership as needed
- to include all people with gratitude for the differences among us, celebrating the richness of varied perspectives
- to attend intentionally to dynamics of oppression and prejudice in our interactions with each other and in our congregational system
- to participate in congregational votes and decisions, engaging in thoughtful dissent and respecting our democratic processes
- to ask for and to extend forgiveness to each other if we break these promises

This covenant is a living document to which we can refer in our interactions with each other, reminding ourselves of our shared promises. It invites ongoing learning and courageous acts of love and reconciliation.

—Approved by congregational vote at the Annual Meeting on June 13, 2021

Vision Statement

We will be a vibrant, religiously progressive community of all ages and stages of life. We will celebrate our differences and welcome all those who share our values.

The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood will be visible in the larger community as a voice of Unitarian Universalist principles and purposes. We will stand boldly in the forefront of the struggle for justice and peace, actively addressing needs in our local community and beyond.

We will steward our buildings and grounds, making them more accessible and environmentally sustainable. Our facility will have space to meet the needs of our growing membership and expansive lifespan faith development program.

We will welcome and integrate innovative practices and technologies that will enhance our ministries, administration, and outreach.

We will foster a sense of belonging and fellowship among ourselves through opportunities for celebration and dedication to supporting one another through respect and compassion.

—adopted in February, 2013

Welcoming Congregation Statement

We Are a Welcoming Congregation
The Unitarian Universalist Community
Welcomes and Celebrates
the Presence and Participation
of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Persons

—Adopted in 1998

Unitarian Universalism's 7 *Principles* and 6 *Sources*

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.
8. *[An Eighth Principle has been proposed--see next page--and may be incorporated into the Principles in some form in the next few years.]*

The Living Tradition we share draws from many ***sources***:

1. 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 that create and uphold life;
2. Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
3. Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
4. Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
5. Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
6. Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

Resolution on the “Eighth Principle”

Background:

A [grassroots movement](#) within the Unitarian Universalist Association is proposing an 8th principle be added to the seven that were adopted in 1985. That proposal is: “We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

Our congregation created a series of opportunities to discuss this proposal and it was clear there is strong support for the spirit and intent of the proposal. Individual UU congregations are adopting the proposal as written or proposals of their own design that fulfill that spirit and intent. Below is what was presented to and affirmed by USR in 2021.

Resolution:

WHEREAS racism and its effects, including the deep divisions in our world caused by inequitable and unjust distribution of power and resources, are embedded in all social institutions as well as in ourselves and will not be eradicated without deliberate engagement in analysis and action and undertaking personal and institutional commitments to end racism, and

WHEREAS the Unitarian society of Ridgewood has a long history of working toward and supporting anti-racism and racial justice,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we carefully examine our own conscious and unconscious racism, and the effect that racism has on all our lives, regardless of our color. Further, we must uncover our links and complicity with all types of racial and other oppressions past and present, and act accountably through acknowledgement, apology, repair and reconciliation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we approve the spirit and intent of the proposed 8th principle to accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions, recognizing that the words may be modified as this principle moves toward adoption by the 2022 General Assembly.

—Adopted at the USR Annual Meeting, June 13, 2021

Environmental Justice Statement of Conscience

BECAUSE we affirm justice, equity and compassion in human relations, the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part; and because we share the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; and

BECAUSE the concept of protecting the Environment of the Earth links the principles of liberal religion with the values of ecological awareness and racial and class justice, and

BECAUSE we support the free and responsible search for truth and meaning, and we recognize that the overwhelming consensus within the scientific community is that global climate change is real, and that the activities of humans are at least partially responsible, and

BECAUSE, global climate change seems to be producing an extinction event in nature, and over time, could potentially threaten all life on earth,

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, the Congregation of the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, hereby AFFIRM and DECLARE that:

We support sustaining the climate so that planet Earth will remain habitable,

We support and commit to the ongoing greening of USR as steps leading toward our long-term goal of Certification of USR as a Green Sanctuary,

We affirm ourselves as a Green Congregation, signifying our ongoing commitment to environmental justice, and to preserving, protecting and defending the Environment for all.

–Adopted by the USR congregation on June 9, 2019

From the Minister

Welcome to the new congregational year, friends! It is already shaping up to be an exciting and program-filled year, with many opportunities for gathering for social events, for spiritual deepening and in the shared pursuit of justice.

Unitarian Universalist Congregational life has always been about the people, the congregation, you, and what you want to make of our collective potential. We welcome you to consider what Circle of work inspires and fulfills you, and to get involved!

I also always say that congregational life, especially Sunday mornings, is like the gym. It may sometimes feel hard to get going and make it there, but once you do, you feel so much better. If you can commit yourself to a routine, you will find that Sunday services alongside all of the other opportunities we have, can change your life for the better.

Finally, a reminder that my door and my ears are always open. I am available for pastoral care for acute issues like illness or diagnosis or grief, or for conversation about your spiritual journey. Please just send me an [email](#) or contact the office (201-444-6225) to set up an appointment time.

It has been and remains a pleasure to serve with you all, and to keep on creating this community together. I am very much looking forward to this year and all that we can accomplish as we navigate our congregation's path forward.

In faith,
The Rev. Dr. Sarah Lenzi

From the Board President

“we are the ones we have been waiting for”

—June Jordan (1936-2002), American poet and activist

I’m so excited to see the Resource Handbook updated, especially as we enter this time of opportunity! The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood offers our resources to all who would join us “Growing in mind and spirit,” to “act together as a beacon for justice and love: Transforming self and world.” And the Handbook will help us to get more engaged in that mission.

Whatever drew you to USR—Sunday service, religious education, social justice work, human community, serving others, intellectual and spiritual growth, aesthetic pleasure—you’ll find here the resources to enhance those qualities in our community by deeper involvement.

The Rev. Terry Ellen, our minister from 1987-2000, remarked on the work of volunteers at USR – the “myriad aspects, fine touches, unseen efforts to respond to needs.” Terry reminded us that the Latin root of the word “volunteer” is “will” or “wish,” saying, “What impressed me most is that we together freely willed this whole venture into being, and even before that, we wished it into being.... The origins of that wishing, that yearning, in each of us is so important for me as to merit the adjective *sacred*.”

I think of this Directory as a prospectus, soliciting the investment of your time, talent and (*above all*) the treasure of your *heart* as a volunteer in the joint venture that is USR. Together we can make the coming program year one that we’ll look back on with satisfaction and gratitude.

Rev. Sarah invited us to step together over the threshold of this new year with these words: “*[find and hold fast] to that silken thread of joy underneath it all, even as we do the hard work of letting go and changing and growing and risking and experimenting. ...on the other side of this threshold is something deeper, something true, something vital, something real, something so desperately needed in this world: on the other side of the threshold is loving community that encompasses all things.*”

Together, we can make it be so!

With love,

Jack Lohr, President, Board of Trustees

USR Governance

USR's **Board of Trustees** is elected by the congregation and adheres to a set of [bylaws](#) approved by the congregation. The Trustees plan and set policy, entrusting responsibility for our congregational life to [Circles](#) of volunteers. Each Circle is led by a Facilitator who coordinates its work in line with USR's Mission and Covenant. Facilitators serve for a maximum term of three years and move on, unless the Board approves. Trustees for 2022-23 are: Jack Lohr, President; Mary Mogerley, VP; Chris Dunnigan, Treasurer; Kirsten Huze, Secretary; Donald Campolo, Trustee; Craig Hertenstein, Trustee; Hetty Hirshman, Trustee; Rev. Sarah Lenzi, Minister.

Nominating Committee is elected annually by the congregation. Its role is leadership development and selecting nominees to the Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee. This year's committee are Liz Kempey, Chair, Ed Wardell, Kathy Smolen, Libby Ortiz and Margaret Summer.

The standing committees of the congregation are the [Committee on Shared Ministry](#) (Judd Seals, chair, Rev. Sarah Lenzi, Lois Parker-Hennion, Kathy Smolen, Charles Walter and George Witte), [Safe Congregation Response Team](#) (TBA, chair, Jack Lohr, President of the Board, Rev. Sarah Lenzi, Minister, Jeanne Nametz, DRE, Ben Grossman and Dan Summer) and **Planned Giving Committee** (Ira Mendelsberg, chair, Ed Collins and Peter Duran).

Note on our new(ish) governance structure:

It's intended to be permission-giving. We hope to see many flowers blooming! Let's try lots of things, and know that some will succeed in ways we never expected, and others may flop. We want to let go of any possibly burdensome traditions that don't garner enough enthusiasm to pull together a team to make it happen.

Change is hard! Using new structures has a learning curve. We will tend to fall back into old patterns, or plunge off on our own without including others who might enjoy being part of a project. But if we use the circles, we may be surprised and delighted to see where they allow us to go!

Please contact any trustee, circle coordinator or committee chair to find out more about the ways that you can become involved.

—Jack Lohr, President for the Board of Trustees

Safe Congregation Response Team

The Safe Congregation Response Team (SCRT) is part of the The Governance and Well-Being Circle, forming part of the foundation of our shared work. The SCRT is responsible for creating and implementing a broad array of safety policies at the congregation. These include policies related to: the safety of our building, sexual harrassment and disruptive behavior, the prevention of child sexual abuse and the response to allegations thereof, first aid equipment and its use, alcohol consumption, and responses to fire or other emergencies. The SCRT also helps to administer the background checks in use for all those who come into contact with our vulnerable populations.

With a philosophy of respect and inclusivity for all, the SCRT maintains and updates the extensive set of policies in accordance with our ever-expanding understanding of how to keep our community as safe as possible. The policy in full can be found on our website.

The SCRT is a confidential, committed group of individuals who are also positioned to provide counsel and resources for individuals and families. Lay SCRT members are selected by the current team, and appointed by the Board for renewable one year terms, with no limit on terms. They are joined by the minister, DRE, and President of the Board. If you need to contact the SCRT for any reason, please email us at:

SCRT@uuridgewood.org. The team for 2022-2023 consists of: Ben Grossman, Dan Summer, Jack Lohr, Jeanne Nametz, and Rev. Sarah Lenzi.

Committee on Shared Ministry

The Committee on Shared Ministry (CoSM) is part of the Governance and Well-Being Circle, forming part of the foundation of our shared work. The CoSM's work is threefold. The CoSM:

- provides a sounding board, offering critique, affirmation, questions, and guidance, to the minister
- assesses the work of the minister every 3-5 years per the letter of agreement and assesses the work of the congregation in other years
- works to ensure healthy communication across the congregation, providing a place for folks to bring comments, celebrations and concerns, as well as stepping in to assist with mediation and support when necessary

CoSM members are selected by the current Committee, and appointed by the Board for renewable one year terms, with no term limits. The CoSM can be reached at cosm@uuridgewood.org. The CoSM for 2022-2023 consists of: Judd Seals, George Witte, Kathy Smolen, Lois Parker-Hennion, Charles Walter and Rev. Sarah Lenzi.

Planned Giving Committee

This Committee promotes awareness of and encourages giving to the USR Endowment Fund and counsels congregation members as to the methods and means by which gifts may be given. The Endowment Fund was established in 2004 and has been maintained through bequests and gifts from members and friends. The Fund's objective is to support and advance the purposes and objectives of the Society. Current balance is around \$360,000 invested in a diversified portfolio. Approximately 4% of fund assets have been distributed annually in the form of grants as requested by members and friends, most recently to Citizens for Swimming and the Northern NJ Sanctuary Committee. The Fund is managed by the Planned Giving Committee which was recently reorganized, with Ira Mendelsberg, chair, Ed Collins and Peter Duran.

Caring Team 2022-2023

One of the central tasks of congregational life is mutual care.

Congregations have always been, and continue to be, places where folks can receive direct aid, create community, and turn in times of struggle and celebration. Here at the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, we have a Caring Team that works with Rev. Sarah Lenzi in order to provide the mutual care so vital to congregational life. There are three levels of care identified, that the Team can provide, and processes for each. In addition to these, the Team also provides periodic opportunities for learning and growth in the areas of listening, story-telling, and care-giving.

There is a monthly Caring Team meeting with the current Facilitator of the team (Georgetta Walsh) and with the Minister. If you are interested in becoming part of the Team, please contact the office, Rev. Sarah, or Georgetta. If you have a need or would like to receive care from the team, please contact Rev. Sarah, the office, or Georgetta.

Georgetta: georgettaluke@optonline.net

Rev. Sarah: slenzi@uuridgewood.org

Ann: usr.membership1@gmail.com

Levels of Care and Volunteerism

Level One:

This a large network of Caring Team folks who are willing to provide rides, meals, cards, small recognitions of life events (e.g. flowers upon a death or a baby hat upon a birth). These volunteers are contacted on an as-needed basis, with a care to spread out the work among many so that we can maintain a consistent, not-burned-out provision of care.

Level Two:

This is a smaller, vetted group of Friendly Visitors. A Friendly Visitor makes phone calls or offers visits twice a month to an assigned congregant. These visits are designed to reduce loneliness and isolation, increase connection to the community, and also provide new and up to date information about a congregants' needs.

Level Three:

This is a group of trained Pastoral Associates. These are the folks who are deployed in times of acute need, in situations of great gravity, e.g. hospital or hospice visits, grief visits, etc. These are done in direct conversation with and alongside the pastoral care given by Rev. Sarah.

Processes

Level One:

1. A need is communicated directly to the Rev. Sarah, Ann, or the Caring Team.
2. The Facilitator of the Caring Team emails Level One volunteers as a group or reaches out to individual volunteers to find a match for the need.
3. Need fulfilled.

Level Two:

1. Through direct communication or expressed concern, an ongoing need is identified in a congregant's life.
2. The Friendly Visitors are notified, and one offers to serve as point person for the congregant.
3. The Friendly Visitor makes calls/visits twice a month, checking in with the full Friendly Visitor Team once a month when evaluations and recommendations for continuing tracking will be considered.
4. In time, a Friendly Visitor might change from one congregant to another, or take a break from visits/calls.
5. Monthly assessment will determine if a congregant's needs remain ongoing or if they can be switched out of Level Two.

Level Three:

1. An acute event happens and the Caring Team learns of it from the congregant or from someone else.
2. Rev. Sarah and trained Pastoral Associate volunteers make a plan on how to offer care for the duration of the incident.
3. Care is provided, and at the monthly meeting assessments are made about whether to switch the Level Three congregant to Level Two.

Governance: The Circles

Asset Management

The Asset Management Circle maintains the strength of the finances, oversees the upkeep of the facilities and grounds, and increases congregational stability through coordinated fundraising efforts and the cultivation of planned giving.

Fundraising activities in the past have included a Service Auction, online art auction, garage sale, and Holiday Market.

Another part of the work of Asset Management is the annual Pledge Drive, with participation of the Board of Trustees.

For more information and to get involved, please contact the Asset Management Circle facilitator at assets.usr@gmail.com

Congregational Connections

The Congregational Connections Circle fosters a sense of community and care within the walls of USR, helping Congregants to connect to each other and access the support they need.

Activities that are included in this circle's purview include:

- Brown Bag Lunch group meeting noon, Wednesdays, in Anderson.
- Caretakers of Adults Group, Tues., 1:30, on Zoom.
- Covenant Groups that are part of USR's small group ministry, where participants develop the spiritual practice of deep listening.
- Women's and men's groups that have met for years, and a new men's group that opened in spring of 2022.

To get involved, please contact the Congregational Connections Circle at connections.usr@gmail.com

Covenant Groups

Covenant Groups are USR's small group ministry program, where participants have the opportunity to develop the spiritual practice of deep listening. The format allows room for thoughtful and careful speaking. Meetings give an opportunity for participants to learn and practice sharing and non-judgmental deep listening while considering life issues that matter, deepening understanding of faith and values. Confidentiality is strictly adhered to and guidelines for participation are reviewed and clarified for new members by the Facilitator. These guidelines are included in the Covenant Groups "Handout" which is shared with individuals expressing interest in the program.

Covenant groups meet monthly and topics are typically aligned to the monthly Sunday services themes. "Topic Sheets" for the theme which are used for the monthly meetings are developed by the Facilitators. There is a Facilitators' Handbook and training is provided by Rev. Sarah before an individual can serve as Facilitator. Lois Parker-Hennion and Bea Cronin are current facilitators.

The number of Covenant Groups depends on the level of interest, with each group including around 10 participants. There is "rolling" membership, where people can leave and new participants join. But each Covenant group has had a core of the same individuals, with one or two leaving and one or two joining over the course of the year. Meetings have continued via Zoom, allowing participation by individuals who have moved out of the immediate area. Each group chooses a service project, most recently collections on Reeb Porch for the food pantry of Center for Food Action in Mahwah and for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate).

The Covenant Groups program has served an important purpose at USR, and lives have been touched by participating in this special experience. It is often cited as a very positive experience by participants and has allowed for deep connection.

For more information, contact Bea Cronin: 201-739-3473.

Governance and Well Being

This Circle serves the vital functions of governance, policy, budget, safety and congregational assessment, as required by the bylaws, in order to maintain the health of the organization, the safety of the membership, and the well-being of the Mission and Covenant.

Governance and Well-Being touches on all the other circles, so they are always eager to hear from anyone who would like to get involved in USR and help find the right circle for their time, talent, and interests.

To get involved, please contact George Witte of the Governance and Well-Being Circle at govandwb.usr@gmail.com

Spiritual Development

This circle welcomes all who are interested in the work of Sunday Service, music, art, or lifespan spiritual development (including children's RE). Spiritual Development creates opportunities for congregants and friends to deepen their spiritual life.

For more information and to get involved, please contact Laura Krag, the Spiritual Development Circle facilitator, at spirits.usr@gmail.com

Welcoming and Participation

The Welcoming and Participation Circle increases, internally and externally, awareness of what USR has to offer, helps visitors learn about and participate at USR, and shepherds people as they become fully integrated members and congregational leaders.

The Circle has divided its work into these "buckets":
Spreading the word about USR:

Developing a core message for all communications and better understanding who we want to target

- Website
- News placements and publicity
- Social media
- A virtual bulletin board
- PR by getting on the list of Ridgewood churches

Welcoming visitors:

- Involving everyone in welcoming and membership
- Greeters at the doors
- Coffee hour interaction
- Making the newcomer table more prominent
- Updating and revising bulletin boards outside the USR kitchen
- Updating the physical signage around USR
- Converting guests to members by connecting guests to their interests and others with shared focus. Using REALM pathways

Membership:

- Engaging members in meaningful ways to match them with their interests. Perhaps a time and talent drive
- Particular attention to families – especially with young children
- Develop leaders through training and finding skills and interests
- Checking on members who are falling away from USR – needs to be owned by everyone
- Lay leadership positions
- Nominating Committee – part of the process for turning guests into members and members into leaders

For more information and to get involved, please contact the Welcoming & Participation Circle facilitator Jeff Summerville at welcoming.usr@gmail.com

Wider World

Wider World Circle reaches beyond the walls of USR to work for and advocate for social justice causes, to strengthen relationships with other religious and justice organizations, and to connect to the larger world of Unitarian Universalism.

This most active Circle, reflects [USR's concerns with social justice](#), and Interfaith work. For a list of Wider World's interests [Click here](#)

For more information and to get involved, please contact Wider World Circle facilitator Marilyn Maney at widerworld.usr@gmail.com

Environmental Justice

Contact Marilyn Maney for more information about this subgroup of Wider World Circle which operates with this Mission Statement: *We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. The Environmental Justice Committee seeks to learn and teach about the sustainability of our planet, to find ways to create a sustainable way of life, and to pursue avenues to protect the majesty and awe of nature. We recognize that inequities exist and that often those with the least power are the most impacted by environmental destruction. By helping to protect the planet we hope to work toward creating a more just and compassionate world.*

Racial Justice Committee

Carol Loscalzo leads this very active team as it leads the congregation in the work of anti-racism. They are supported by USR's [congregational commitment to anti-racism and resolution on the Eighth Principle](#).

Reproductive Justice

This committee promotes “a holistic, human rights and social justice approach dealing with issues that affect all people’s reproductive health and lives.” Reproductive justice is the term created by women of color in 1994, to center the experience of the most vulnerable, and to bridge the gap between reproductive rights and other social justice movements. The Team is mindful of the ways systems of race, class, and gender affect a person’s reproductive rights and health. Activities include film showings, study sessions, information sharing, federal and state legislative advocacy, support for abortion clinics and support for NJ Abortion Access Fund.

For more info: <https://www.uuridgewood.org/reproductive-justice/> and contact Co-chairs Regina Branca and Carol Loscalzo.

Religious Education

The religious education program is part of a vibrant, healthy congregation here at USR. Our RE program celebrates and supports family life and the lives of children and youth as whole persons and whole systems. We create learning experiences that are inclusive, that deepen the capacity for emotional intelligence, that enable the expression of one's whole self through sexuality education, that provide experiences of social justice events and practices, that transmit our values and UU principles through the arts, that deepen our UU faith identity and provide varied experiences of community within family gatherings and congregational worship and events.

This Year's Focus

- **OWL:** We are excited to offer elementary OWL for K-Grade 1 and Grades 4-6 this year.
- **Special Accommodations:** We continue our commitment to radical inclusivity by continually adapting to children and youth's special needs and accommodations.
- **Mental Health:** We continue to integrate mental health skills into classroom practices and provide family resources.
- **Family Service:** Family services next year will focus on social justice activities and mental health practices.

How You Can Contribute to RE's Success

- Volunteer teachers are always welcome. You'll be supported with team meetings via Zoom, lesson plans and assembled materials but more than that, you get to be part of a vibrant learning community!
- Volunteers also fill in for child care when child care staff is absent.
- Volunteers with expertise in social media can help develop a social media strategic plan.
- MOST IMPORTANT, encourage active and regular involvement of children and adults in Religious Education.

Contact Jeanne Nametz, Director of Religious Education, for more information, or ([click here](#)).

Caregiver of Children and Youth Support Group

Once a month on Zoom, Rev. Sarah facilitates this group designed to support those actively caring for children and youth (whether full time or part time). While this group will have some structure, it will primarily be a space for sharing honestly about the challenges of raising kids.

Adult Religious Education Opportunities

There are regular classes and special educational events offered by our minister and volunteers from the congregation.

Society Singers

After a long period of being muted, our Society Singers have resumed rehearsing Thursday evenings @ 7 PM in the Fellowship Room. In addition to singing and conviviality, rumor has it that there are refreshments! EVERYONE IS WELCOME REGARDLESS OF EXPERIENCE!!! GIVE IT A TRY!! SEE YOU THEN!! Speak to Music Director Ron Levy.

Organic Music Group (OMG!)

This is a new idea still in development. It's a meta-categorical vocal group, maybe including instrumentalists. The organizing meeting is after the service October 9. Please contact Jack Lohr or Kristen Plumley.

UU Vocabulary

Most communities use acronyms and jargon to speed communication (and build togetherness). Here are some of the terms you might hear around USR or read about in the larger UU world:

Asset Management: The circle that covers facilities and grounds, finances and fundraising.

AIW: Actions of immediate Witness are (up to three) social justice issues of immediate concern addressed by statements through the [Social Witness Process](#) at the Association's annual General Assembly (GA).

APF: [Annual Program Fund](#), source of funds to support the Unitarian Universalist Association, our national organization.

BLUU: [Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism](#) grew from a small organizing collective into a national community that supports Black Unitarian Universalists with resources, information, and opportunities for connection.

Board of Trustees [BOT]: the elected governing board of USR. Learn more on [our webpage](#).

Chalice: The flaming chalice is a central symbol Unitarian Universalism. Learn about it here: <https://tinyurl.com/USRChalice>.

Child Dedication: the [ceremony](#) by which we celebrate a child, often an infant, at times an older child. In this ceremony, parents, other grownups, and sometimes whole congregations dedicate themselves to raising the child with love, committing to letting the child's life unfold in its own unique way.

Circle: One of the [six areas](#) of shared ministry and work established by the USR Board of Trustees to oversee areas of Society business. Everyone at USR is encouraged to join in the work of at least one circle.

COA: “Coming of Age,” the year-long program where youth explore theology, spirituality, and the history of their faith to deepen their Unitarian Universalist faith while clarifying their own beliefs and values.

Committee on Shared Ministry [COSM]: This governance group works with the minister to assess our areas of ministry and makes recommendations to improve functioning; provides counsel to the minister; and facilitates covenantal behavior within the community.

Congregational Connections: The circle that builds community and care within USR, helping us connect to each other and access the support we need.

Covenant Groups: Formerly known as Connections, these conversation groups of 8 to 10 gather to build relationships and discuss what matters.

Central East Region [CER]: This [geographic division of the Unitarian Universalist Association](#) of Congregations(UUA) includes the UU congregations in CT, DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, OH, PA, VA and WV. (Other regions include districts and clusters.)

CUUPS: [Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans](#) is an organization dedicated to networking Pagan-identified UUs.

DRE: Director of Religious Education. Meet Jeanne Nametz, our DRE, [on the website](#).

Eighth Principle: A [grassroots movement](#) within the Unitarian Universalist Association is proposing an 8th principle be added to the seven that were adopted in 1985. USR endorsed the 8th Principle in 2021. See our commitment to the 8th principle and racial justice [here](#).

Endowment Fund: USR's endowment fund is administered by the Planned Giving Committee. It dispenses funds (approximately 4% of the principle) yearly to support local justice organizations with microgrants. Our [bylaws](#) Art. XII §4 outlines how it functions.

Friend: A person who desires to be associated with the Society, but not as a member, may be included on the Society's mailing list as a Friend. A Friend is not entitled to vote at meetings of the Society or serve on the Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee, Committee on Shared Ministry, Intern Committee (when operating), Safe Congregation Response Team, as a Circle Facilitator or on the Ministerial Search Committee (when operating).

General Assembly (GA): The annual meeting of the congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association. This meeting, usually held in June in a major US city, includes business meetings, worship services, musical experiences, and the opportunity to visit with UUs beyond our local area. See the [UUA website](#) for information on upcoming GAs.

Governance and Well-Being: The Circle that pulls together governance, policy, budget, safety and congregational assessment functions, as outlined in the bylaws.

Green Sanctuary: Our congregation has participated in the UUA's green sanctuary accreditation program and adopted a [Statement on Environmental Justice](#). Our recent addition of solar panels is part of this work. The UUA Green Sanctuary .

Humanism: A progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity. Humanism and Unitarian Universalism have enjoyed close ties throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

LGBTQIA+: This is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual, Asexual, plus. Folks of any sexuality, gender identity or gender expression are welcome at USR> To learn more, please visit <https://www.uua.org/lgbtq>.

Member: A member of USR is any individual, 18 years of age or older, who concurs with the principles and purposes of the UUA and this Congregation, who signs the membership book, and makes an identifiable annual contribution to the operating budget of the Congregation in accordance with the Bylaws. Youth members (14-17 years of age) have many of the same rights and responsibilities as may be limited by law.

Our Whole Lives (OWL): is an innovative and important curriculum for children and youth, developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ to address holistic issues around sexual education, gender issues, and spirituality.

Realm: [REALM](#) is USR's secure, private, Facebook-style member platform. It offers an online member/friend directory and the latest news and events. It lets you manage your pledge and contributions, including online contributions. The phone app is called "Realm Connect."

Resource Handbook: This is USR's annual prospectus. It comes out in the fall.

Reverend: Unitarian Universalist ministers are typically addressed as "Reverend." Ours is "Reverend Sarah."

Safe Congregation Response Team [SCRT]: This governance body cares for the physical safety of USR, particularly working to prevent sexual abuse of children and youth, and reviews and amends the Safe Congregation Policies.

Share the Plate/Share the Porch: Every month, we give our gifts outward either by collecting donated items on the porch at Reeb or by giving away

half of our offering. The Wider World Circle chooses a local charity to receive the congregation's offering for that month.

Seven Principles: A [summary of the core values](#) of Unitarian Universalism. They serve as a moral guide for our aspirations, not a code of law or creed.

Side With Love: [This campaign](#) was inspired by the 2008 shooting at Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville, which was targeted because they are welcoming to LGBTQ people and have a liberal stance on many issues. Knoxville community's response inspired the UUA in 2009 to set the goal of harnessing love's power to challenge exclusion, oppression, and violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, race, religion, or any other identity.

Six Sources: An [inventory of the living traditions](#) of experience, wisdom and teachings that we affirm and promote, without idolizing them.

Spiritual Development: The circle that helps deepen our spiritual development through worship, arts, music and religious education for children, youth and adults.

UU: Unitarian Universalism – that's us – our denomination! For a description of what we believe...<https://www.uua.org/beliefs> & <https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/beliefs>

UUA: Unitarian Universalist Association, a voluntary association of autonomous, self-governing local congregations which have freely chosen to pursue common goals together. Our polity is congregational; delegates from the congregations make Association decisions at the annual [General Assembly](#) (GA). Between GAs, we're governed by the [Board of Trustees](#).

UU Buddhist Fellowship: Among the many identities that constitute our UU faith, some of us feel affinity with both Unitarian Universalism and

Buddhism. [This group](#) provides resources for them. USR has long hosted a [Zen group](#) that meets Monday nights.

UU Christians: A [group](#) of (mostly) UUs who recognize the denomination's roots in Protestant Christianity and say they seek "in freedom, to follow the footsteps of one of the world's greatest teachers—Jesus of Nazareth."

UU Humanist Association: The [UU Humanist Association](#) exists to promote a broad acceptance of Humanism.

UUs for Jewish Awareness: [A group](#) committed to supporting Unitarian Universalist Jewish multi-religiosity. It offers resources for the many UUs who have come from Judaism, for interfaith/multi-religious individuals and families, and for anyone with an interest in Jewish UU theology, stories, heritage and resources.

UUSC: The [Unitarian Universalist Service Committee](#). The UUSC is how our denomination works to provide disaster relief and promote human rights and social justice around the world.

Welcoming and Participation: The Circle that promotes awareness of USR, and seeks to turn visitors into fully integrated members and congregational leaders.

Welcoming Congregation: The UUA offers a formal process for designating congregations which meet criteria for welcoming gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgendered folks into their midst as "[welcoming congregations](#)". Our church gained this designation in 1998.

Wider World: The circle that works for social justice and strengthens connections to other religious and justice organizations, and the larger UU world.

(adapted from a page on the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa website)

Handbook History

Resource Handbook 2002-2003

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20030811183419/http://www.uuridgewood.org:80/res.html>)

Resource Handbook 2003-2004

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20031223010933/http://www.uuridgewood.org:80/res.html>)

Resource Handbooks 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19

<https://www.uuridgewood.org/usr-resource-handbook-2015-16/>

2021-22 Annual Report

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r4konyCXsTi5EVIG6B6dGEY9I_850pgZ/view)

2021 Annual Meeting

<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/USR-Annual-Meeting--Sunday--June-13th-via-Zoom.html?soid=1117863363161&aid=dGPaGGaf1iE>

2020 Annual Meeting

<https://conta.cc/3dIDbka>

2018-19 Annual Report

<https://www.uuridgewood.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/June9-Annual-Report-Website-2019.pdf>

2019 Annual Meeting

<https://www.uuridgewood.org/usr-annual-meeting-june-9-2019/>

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