Our Principles

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

* The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
* Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
* Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations;
* A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
* The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
* The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
* Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Future of the Principles

May Worship
Services Online

Sundays at 10 AM

https://www.cvuus.org/worship/watch-online/

May 3—What’s Next?—Rev. Barnaby explores the pandemic's impact on two controversial ideas for amending the UU Principles.

May 10—Parenting in a Pandemic—Led by Rev. Barnaby


May 24 —Grieving and Connecting—Memorial Day— Led by Rev. Barnaby

May 31—Beauty—Flower Communion—Led by Rev. Barnaby

Staying in Touch...Virtually

Sunday Morning Social Hour (~11:15 am): Jordan leads exchanges on how we’re doing. Login https://zoom.us/my/cvuussocialhour/ ID 617-9484313

Daily CommUUion: Rev. Barnaby shares inspirational thoughts, music and readings in a regular email. Look for an email titled Daily CommUUion from revbarnaby@cvuus.org email. Not getting these? Email office@cvuus.org.

Choir Rehearsal: Lucy Tenenbaum, Choir Director, leads rehearsal remotely each Wed night 5:45 pm. Email office@cvuus.org if you’d like to join her list. Login https://zoom.us/j/8023884347 ID 802388434.

Religious Exploration: Poppy Rees, Dir of Religious Exploration, offers guiding words at cvuus.org, a closed Facebook page for families, and email messages and Zoom meetings. Youth Group meets remotely Sundays at 4 pm. Want to be added to any of this? Email Poppy at re@cvuus.org. More inside.

Small Group Ministry & Affinity Groups: Several are taking a break until the Fall and some are arranging to meet remotely. See inside for more.

Rhubarb Festival (PIE SALES ONLY), Sat. May 30, 10-12 AM, see inside
CVUUS Annual Meeting ONLINE Sunday June 7, following worship
UU General Assembly ONLINE, June 24-28
Words from Rev. Barnaby:

I looked at the sermon I gave in our Sanctuary on March 1 to kick off this year's pledge drive. I had carefully explained that the pledge isn’t a contract but rather a best guess from each of us of what we intend and will be able to contribute financially in the year starting July 1. And I had said, “We know from experience that the pledges received in March give us a very reliable picture of what 80 percent to 90 percent of our income will be in the coming church year.”

Boy does that seem like ancient history! As I write this in the third week of April, I am stuck at home social distancing and worrying that the financial outlook for CVUUS has never been murkier in my time here. In fact, I've been an active adult UU since the 1970's, long before I became a minister, and I can’t remember a more disruptive moment in the life of any of the congregations with which I have been involved. And all because of an invisible virus we have every reason to believe will be controlled without drastic social measures within two years, if not sooner! Unlike climate change, this is a struggle we will clearly win in the relatively near future.

I realize now that our past pledge drives were reliable windows into the future because most congregants had a pretty clear picture of their likely financial resources in the coming year. The main issue for most of us was how strongly we identified with the values and practices CVUUS embodies, and with each other as a unique kind of extended family. Now, having been driven over an economic cliff by the Coronavirus, we are in a new world. Pledging to CVUUS at levels that feel good may have become more an act of faith than a confident guess of how things will work out for many of us.

From what I hear, many of you have indeed pledged faithfully. The size of the budget cuts we face is not yet settled, but we will still have a lot to be grateful for when the final figures are tallied. The countless new financial threats and stresses many of us will be facing for months if not years to come cast a new light on what it means to pledge generously to organizations like CVUUS. For some of you, a generous pledge may now be a shadow of your support in years past or what you want it to be.

But I want you to know a few things about how this will all turn out. One way or another, CVUUS will find a way to remain a congregation welcoming people of every race, color, creed and personal identity into a community where your inherent worth and dignity is recognized. We will remain a congregation committed to making the world more just, compassionate, and beautiful. And we will remain a community where I can stand by the final words I preached March 1: May you find the level of pledge that meaningfully reflects back to you the image of who your best self is. May that blessing be yours to receive as you give this year and for many years to come. Blessed be, Rev. Barnaby
2020 “Novel” Rhubarb Pie Curbside Sale

For the past 10 years, May has been the big “run up” of our Annual Rhubarb Festival. As you know, the tag line for the annual CVUUS Rhubarb Festival has long been “food, fellowship, and fun” – but with social distancing part of our “new normal” for the next while, we’ve decided on a “pies only” event on Sat., May 30 this year – which Lise Anderson (pictured at right below) is expertly heading up. So, to quote Brett Millier, for this May, “it’s all about the pies.” If folks are interested in a Rhubarb Festival event in the fall, please let me know what parts of a traditional Rhubarb Festival would make sense in the fall season and if you’re interested in planning such an event – or perhaps a different event – as this is a critical part of our non-pledge fundraising for CVUUS and has also provided funding to HOPE in past years. Thanks, Mary Hadley

Yes! You can have your pie and eat it too! The 2020 “Novel” Rhubarb Pie Curbside Sale will take place on schedule, Sat. May 30 from 10 AM-12 PM. The preliminary plan is for volunteers to make pies at home. The sign-up for all roles (bakers, box makers, choppers, sellers, traffic control, etc.) on-line soon. We will have baking supplies, like tins and boxes, at CVUUS for pick-up (details to come). Those of you wondering what to do with all that rhubarb, please reach out to Sheila House (left), our rhubarb wrangler house.sheila@gmail.com. She is eager to hear from you. Stay-tuned for details about how to pre-order your pie(s). Lise Anderson (liseand55@gmail.com).

United as One – 2020 Pledge Drive Update

We are thankful for the 102 pledge units who have pledged for the July 2020 – June 2021 budget year. The canvass team is following up by phone for those folks we have not heard back from yet. You can pledge online at: https://cvuus.breezechms.com/form/3b77c8

Our original canvass pledge/one-time gift goal for this pledge drive was $303,809. Based on the current situation with COVID-19 and the pledges we have received to date, the finance team has reduced the overall budget plan and therefore the revised pledge drive goal is $280,000. So far, we have gotten $236,076 in pledges and one-time gifts so we still have a $43,924 shortfall versus the current budget plans.

We very much appreciate everyone who has pledged and encourage those who have not yet pledged to do so. If anyone has situations which would allow additional one-time gifts to CVUUS, please keep us in mind.
RE THOUGHTS

WHAT’S UP IN RE RIGHT NOW?

Though we are not together in body, my spirit is very much with all of you right now! As things normalize a little bit, I am working on RE ideas for now and down the road. Here are some ~

Friday May 1, I’m going to have a RE Zoom Room for all ages. A chance for kids to come say hi, show and tell, light our chalice together, and see each other. We’ll see who shows up and what other Zoom activities we could do together. Zooms for separate RE groups coming soon.

Youth Group has been rocking the Sunday Zoom time! – they are even planning an Unbirthday Party that involves secret presents being carefully dropped at houses and then unwrapped on Zoom. We are in talks about how to virtually celebrate our graduating Seniors.

Reaching out to individual families  I have been in contact with many families, checking in to see if they need anything, how they are doing, and sometimes bringing them things. I sent out a very brief survey weeks ago, to see how people were doing and what they might be interested in from RE. A few families responded but I think most of us were just hanging on at that point, so I’m going to send it out again soon.

Weekly Zoom meetings with the DREs (Directors of Religious Exploration, like me) from the UU churches in Burlington, Montpelier, and Norwich  Since this first began, we have been checking in with each other to share ideas about worship, Times for All Ages, videos, Zoom tips, and ponder future RE ideas. Montpelier is about our size, so it’s especially useful to hear how it’s going there. We are ALL finding that our families are very busy dealing with working, schooling, and parenting at home right now and not wanting much programming yet.

Times for All Ages and other worship things  Have you heard the verb “skilling up”? As in, we are doing tons of “skilling up” right now to figure out how to make decent videos, record ourselves, make slideshows, find royalty-free photographs, use Zoom, and find effective ways to connect virtually!

New private CVUUS Parents Facebook group  click here to join the group

My main goal right now is to share things with you that bring JOY and CONNECTION. If you have ideas, please contact me  ~ Poppy Rees, your Director of Religious Exploration, re@cvuus.org
CVUUS Goes Solar!

In August, 2018, the CVUUS Board voted to invest in Acorn Energy Coop’s AES2 solar project in Shoreham. A newsletter article with the same title as this one suggested that the system might start producing power in the fall of 2018. We estimated that our 17 photovoltaic (PV) panels in AES2 would supply some 25% of CVUUS’s electrical energy.

However, AES2 faced a series of regulatory hurdles, which weren’t cleared until July, 2019. Site work began the next month and continued through last fall. The PV panels and associated equipment were installed through the winter, and finally, on March 10, 2020, AES2 went online.

CVUUS recently received our first monthly credit for electricity generated by our solar panels. Our credit was $123—taking some 45% off what would have been a bill of $272. In terms of energy, we consumed 1,360 kilowatt-hours (kWh) for the month, and were credited for 634 kWh of solar generation. That means 47% of our electricity was solar-generated. (That’s a bit more than the 45% of our monetary bill, a result of other charges like our monthly customer charge.)

However, the pandemic means 2020 is an unusual year: We aren’t using our building, and our electricity consumption is down. Last year we used 2,100 kWh in the same period, and estimating from that figure gives suggests that our bill would have been reduced by about 29% if AES2 had been online. But that percentage is probably low, because we consumed more electricity than usual at this time last year while finishing the ground-floor kitchen. So in more typical times we might be getting more than 30% of our electric bill paid through the solar project. That will vary throughout the year, lower in winter and higher in summer, and we’ll need to monitor for a full year to get a good number. Stay tuned!

Dedication ceremony for the AES2 solar project, March 14, 2020.

Can you spot Steve Maier? Submitted by Rich Wolfson

Watch Steve Maier’s Living and Loving with Climate Emergencies worship service on April 26 at cvuus.org/worship/pastworshipservices.
Social Action Updates

May “Share the Plate” Donee: Common Ground Center

Camp Common Ground is an inter-generational family camp founded in 1994 located on 453 Tatro Rd in Starksboro VT. We welcome people of all ages, ethnicities, lifestyles, abilities and economic backgrounds. We rent our unique eco-friendly facilities for events and host week long family vacation programs focused on creative expression, fun, great food and community. Campers have the opportunity to explore the many options available in one week or to immerse themselves more deeply in one particular activity. New and old friendships are cemented at Camp Common Ground. The extra time spent lingering over meals, on the wrap-around porch, or on the hill watching kids run and play allows for stimulating conversations. Come make connections with us. Family camp is an easy way to vacation with your extended family and friends. Grandparents to toddlers will have the time of their lives. For more, speak with Neily Jennings and Connor Timmons or visit cvgvt.org.

Please speak with anyone on Donation Ministry to suggest an organization you would like CVUUS to support: Barbara Karle (chair), Allison Cutler, Parker (Monty) Montgomery, Ashleigh Hickey, Chris Murphy, or Rev. Barnaby. April’s collection raised ~$1,800 for Minister’s Discretionary Fund. Thanks!

Addison County Mutual Aid spreadsheet for covid-19 relief Amy Mason helps coordinate this. Give help or request help here: https://www.addisoncountymutualaid.org/

Food Project with Breadloaf Mountain Zen Center Recently several participated in working on bag lunch distribution to homeless and otherwise food-short folks with Breadloaf by dropping off bags in the open trunk of Rev. Barnaby’s Prius, which was parked in the CVUUS parking lot Thursdays (starting late morning) for pick up Thursday evening. Watch the blast to see how this continues. A bag might include: any mix of fresh fruit that is easy to handle and chew (grapes, clementines); individual apple sauce servings; small boxes of raisins; small packages of small carrots; string cheese (two per bag if possible); packaged trail mix; granola or protein bars; and bags of chips. Hand sanitizer and wipes are precious additions. Individual tissue packets and cans of seltzer water are also appreciated. Last but certainly not least, the best bags include a kind saying, prayer or other expression of kindness.

Charter House Community Lunch Team Join our call list for making a dish occasionally, or help make sandwiches on site for take-out lunches, or serve, or help with cleanup. We do this every third Tuesday from 10 am – 1 pm. Contact Alan Moore alanwmoore1947@gmail.com, Barbara Merz, Revell Allen.

Meals on Wheels provides so much more than a nutritious meal. Time commitment is based on your availability--it can vary from one day a week to two days a month (weekdays only). Delivery is typically from 10 to 11:30 am. Talk with Thurs UU Team leaders Mary Conlon & Mike Greenwood. Contact emarks@agewellvt.org or 662-5249 or visit agewellvt.org/giving-back.
FINANCE UPDATE

In May the Finance Team will continue refining the proposed budget for 2020-2021 (which begins July 1, 2020). We know these are uncertain times and greatly appreciate all of you who have been able to continue contributions to CVUUS.

Our annual pledge canvass is wrapping up in early May so that we will have a clear picture of that large part of our income outlook. Thanks to all who have given your best faith estimate of pledging capability for next year so that we can work to present a balanced budget proposal to the Board who will then present that to members for discussion and vote at the Annual Meeting – currently still scheduled for Sunday, June 7th.

Right now, we’re looking at a budget with expenses totaling $323,454 (within $100 of the current year budget you approved last June) but our projected income for next year is only $297,300 - leaving us with about a $26,000 difference which will need to be reconciled before presenting a balanced budget.

A special thank you to members who made themselves available for the quorum at the Congregational Meeting in April to approve the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan/grant of $26,050 which we received.

If anyone is in a position to consider additional one-time gifts to CVUUS – perhaps part of the government stimulus checks being provided - we’d be especially grateful.

With gratitude,
Mary Hadley (Treasurer) and your entire Finance Team – John Berninghausen, Mary Conlon, Alan Moore, Rich Wolfson, and Kris Butler (Bookkeeper, fm@cvuus.org)
SEVERAL CVUUS AFFINITY GROUPS GO ONLINE OR SUSPEND UNTIL FALL

Parents Group will check in to see how it wants to continue online in spring before it takes off for the summer. Parents with children through middle school age are invited to get together and develop deeper connections by sharing their thoughts and beliefs around our monthly CVUUS themes within the small group ministry model. Contact Tracey Harrington for more.

Retirement Group will take a break for now and check in over the summer to see how it wants to resume in the fall. Participants discuss their current or prospective reflections and experiences on the transition to retirement. Contact Dinah Smith for more.

LGBTQIA+ Group addresses the needs and interests of LGBTQIA+ and questioning folks. It meets via zoom following the Sunday social hour on occasion. For more, see Jordan Young or Ollie Cultrara.

Writers’ Group will take a break for now and check in over the summer on how it wants to resume in the fall. Meanwhile, keep writing and read to each other in safe social distance. Contact Bobbi Loney or Nancy Wright with questions.

Residence at Otter Creek Group will take a break. Meets monthly for discussion 2 pm with Rev. Barnaby. Contact Ann Brousseau.

CVUUS Sangha & Meditation We’ll resume meeting every Sunday at the CVUUS Fenn Chapel at 7 PM when we can. Visit cvuus.org/connection in meantime.

Caring Circles Our Caring Network formed circles of 6-8 congregants, organized largely by neighborhood, as a means of staying in touch with one another through phone call and Zoom check ins. Did we miss you? Contact Michele Lowy (mclowy@gmail.com or 989-7197).

Breeze Update

We’re continuing to learn the new Church Management database software we started using called Breeze. All pledge and contribution information is entered and can be accessed securely from “the cloud.” We quickly instituted QR codes and web addresses for online giving as well as text giving – for use in our Sunday services (or access them anytime.) Feel free to reach out to Mary Hadley if you’d like a tutorial on either web or text giving. Stay tuned as we roll out more functionality and features!

Yellow Card Milestones & Passages

Submit your info via code to right or at https://c vuus.breezechms.com/form/YellowCard

Virtual Visit

Request one with Rev. Barnaby via code to left or at https://c vuus.breezechms.com/form/VirtualVisit

Online Giving Options

Submit a donation by text (dial 518-255-8053) or by code to right or at https://c vuus.breezechms.com/give/online

Enter the amount you want to give. It defaults to Gifts Non-pledge but remember you can use the drop down on the right of that field to choose another giving category as shown below.
Choir Notes  This spring has sure been full of learning new skills. Our choir is still meeting on Wednesdays for a “rehearsal” a bit early for logistic purposes, at 5:30 pm, on Zoom (https://zoom.us/j/8023884347). We check in with one another, and then shut off our mics and sing in our private spaces, singing along to the YouTube recordings of the songs we’re learning. Chuck has come to one rehearsal, and we’re trying to figure out how to incorporate a pianist who isn’t in the same space as the conductor. There are time lags because of various wifi speeds, so everything is off by seconds. It’s a learning curve, but the best thing is seeing the choir members coming together, and still making some beautiful music. We are missing each other. I hope many congregants will come check out the meetings, if for no other reason than to say hi and sing a song or two.

One exciting thought Rev. Barnaby and I had was that maybe this hiatus from group singing could open the door to some individual singing and skills learning. I am offering any congregant an opportunity for a “Zoom Voice Lesson” as they find it useful. I am your choir director for 10 hours a week average, and I’d love to fill some of those hours with some personal time with some of you! Music changes, but doesn’t stop. Please know that the CVUUS choir is still interacting, still finding Ministry in Music for CVUUS services and with each other. This could be an opportunity to sing with us even if you’d never be able to do so live, in person. For instance, Ginny Ashenfelter has not been able to stand to sing with us for a while. But we’ve seen her (even once from her bed at Rehab) at these meetings. It is a silver lining. Stay well, stay safe, sending love to all. Lucy

P.S.  Roses of thanks to Anne Christie for offering her Zoom account for choir’s use. Another Rose to Chuck Miller for trying to play piano for our rehearsal, and for being available to give accompaniment tracks with which other musicians can share their vocal or instrumental music.

Welcome!  In ordinary times we would have some gatherings to introduce or refresh understanding of UU history, the background of this congregation, and the amazing spiritual journeys that have led us to CVUUS. Not knowing when we will be able to resume these "New UU " classes, there may be alternatives, thanks to modern technology, to providing comparable information. At the least, there is our website, and that of the UUA, our national organization. And our Rev. Barnaby may have additional ideas about making such knowledge available in creative ways.

I have been thinking about why someone becomes a CVUUS member, apart from having attended Sunday services more and more frequently, having meaningful conversations with new friends during coffee hour, participating in social action projects and other pathways to Connection, and coming to realize that you have found a spiritual home that suits you. Such is a frequent route to membership-- in ordinary times.

On the other hand, you may have just started this route, not yet certain if this will be your spiritual home. Or, you may be in search for a place where you and your children can experience and nurture values that are important to you. And those values may have led to your involvement in community actions where you learned about the role of CVUUS in such social action. There may be some of us who have been active and committed participants in the life of this congregation and realize how important it is to us, when the doors are closed and many activities have been suspended; the idea of official membership may take on a new light. If any of these descriptions fits you, or you have a different perspective, we would be glad to hear from you. And for all who find spiritual inspiration and nourishment in nature, may the arrival of more pleasant spring weather give you cause for gratitude in trying times.

May blessings,  Marjorie Carsen, for Membership Ministry
Welcome to Spring! Each day, a new flower or tree is blooming and a different bird makes their presence known outside of our windows.

To say that this is an odd Spring is quite an understatement for many people in our community. I do wonder though, is it equally as odd for the trees and birds?

My children love to participate in the Junior Ranger Program that the National Parks design to engage kids in the natural world. One year, not so long ago, we visited the Hoh Rainforest on the Olympic peninsula in Washington. There, a ranger took us through a tour of the rings of a tree that had recently been cut down which was hundreds of years old. These rings told the stories of droughts, the environmental damage of wars, the eruption of Mount Saint Helen, and the toll of pollution. The compression of growth, and the changes in color were a vivid and compelling tale written by a very old soul, which was only evident, in a way that we could read, after its death.

Fortunately, we have less sorrowful sources than the post-mortem accounts of trees to learn from. Though it is a temporary dip, which many scientists tell us is not expected to be sustained, there is a dramatic decrease in air pollution right now. Skies are blue that frequently are obscured by smog. There is a measurable difference.

For me, this begs the questions, what have we learned? what changes will we make due to this learning? How will we make those sustainable? As part of our faith community, I am in awe of our learning! In a matter of weeks we have figured out how to have services online. We have defined new ways to connect. We have engaged community members across the continent! We are resilient and we are illustrating how quickly we can adapt. Is it easy? Of course it is not, but it is needed. When this current crisis ends, what do we want to keep from this learning?

Like the sequoia that has adapted to regrow after its fall, may our community use this time to regenerate and strengthen. As a faith community what adaptations will we soon turn into traditions? I am excited to see this unfold, and thankful to do this with each of you.
CVUUS May Newsletter

CVUUS Seasons of Life Fund

Our Seasons of Life Fund is a way to share your joy or concern with the CVUUS community. Members and friends can commemorate personal milestones and passages through financial gifts to CVUUS that provide extra money for us to fulfill our mission statement. The names of the donors and the occasions of the gifts are noted in our monthly newsletter. There is no minimum amount and the size of your donation will not be made public. Please consider the Seasons of Life Fund the next time you—or someone you know—want to honor a birthday, marriage, retirement, anniversary, death, or achievement of any sort.

Planned Giving: For help including CVUUS in your will or trust, contact John Berninghausen (349-7080 berningh@middlebury.edu).

Pastoral Care

CVUUS is blessed with many wise and well-trained individuals providing support to members and friends in various kinds of distress. Laurie Borden, Jordan Young, Marjorie Carsen

Our Caring Network provides support, such as calls, visits, meals, and rides, to those in need. We thank all the faithful folk who have participated in our efforts to support our members - providing lots of meals and myriad rides to doctor's offices, doing errands and paying visits. We encourage the congregation to call on us. We have a network of willing helpers standing by that we can call or email on your behalf. Let us know if you’d like to join this network by contacting Nita Hanson (boostasha@aol.com or 345-0489).

Visit www.uua.org to learn about the wider work of UUA and our affiliates. Visit www.cvuus.org to explore our happenings and most current calendar.
Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society

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Located at Duane Court & Charles Avenue

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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Dir. of Religious Exploration – Poppy Rees (re@cvuus.org)
Nursery Head – Journey LaRose (journeylarose@gmail.com)
Office Manager – Laura Asermily (office@cvuus.org)
Sexton – Keith Rickerby

2019-20 Worship Themes
We will focus from September through May on an in-depth exploration of the wide variety of things we care about through a month-by-month journey through the UU Seven Principles.

Return Service Requested
Middlebury, VT 05753