

Harrisonburg Unitarian Universalists



Religious Education Program
for Children and Youth

2009-2010

<http://huuweb.org/kidsre.htm>



One Journey

Many Paths

Harrisonburg Unitarian Universalists
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As Unitarian Universalists, we believe that . . .

Every person is important and valuable.

All people should be treated fairly.

Our churches are places where we should accept one another and learn together.

Each person should be free to search for what is true and right.

All people have the right to speak out and vote on things that matter to them.

We should help build a peaceful, free, and fair world.

We need to take care of the earth, our home, which we share with all living things.

These ideas come from many places:

The sense of wonder we share,

Women and men of long ago and today whose lives remind us to be kind, fair, and understanding,

Ethical and spiritual wisdom of the world's religions,

Jewish and Christian teachings which tell us to love others as we love ourselves,

The use of reason and discoveries of science,

And the harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life.

Thankful for all these ideas, we want to learn even more! We come to church, where we can freely share our thoughts and feelings and promise to trust and help one another.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harrisonburg Virginia

A Religious Community Serving Each Person's Spiritual Journey -
One Journey, Many Paths

We are a lay-led, religious community offering a unique spiritual and moral witness in the Shenandoah Valley.

We meet each Sunday in the historic Dale Enterprise School House. We remind ourselves that the three key tasks of this religious community are:

- sense-making, helping each other to find the truths in our lives and in the world;
- care-giving, helping each other through the hard times and celebrating the good times;
- justice-seeking, trying to leave this community and the world a better place for us having been here.

We invite all who search for truth and meaning with open hearts and open minds to join us in worship, in mutual support, and in shared ministry to each other and to the world.

Who are Unitarian Universalists?

Unitarian Universalists are people who express themselves in these ways:

- I want a religion that respects the differences between people and affirms every person as an individual.
- I want a church that values children, that welcomes them on their own terms — a church they are eager to attend on Sunday.
- I want a congregation that cherishes freedom and encourages open dialog on questions of faith, one in which it is okay to change your mind.
- I want a religious community that affirms spiritual exploration as a way to truth.
- I want a church that thinks globally on the great issues of our time: world peace, women's rights, racial justice, homelessness, gay and lesbian rights, and protection of the environment.

Unitarian Universalists include members whose positions on faith may be derived from a variety of religious beliefs: Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, naturist, atheist, or agnostic. Members might tell you that they are religious humanists, liberal Christians, or world religionists. All are committed to the practice of free religion.

Children and Youth Committee on Religious Education (CYCORE)

The Director of Children's Religious Education works closely with CYCORE, the Religious Education committee at HUU. CYCORE chair Holly Labbe coordinates monthly meetings in which CYCORE members discuss Religious Education programming at HUU. Members of CYCORE garner and communicate information about UU Religious Education, organize social justice projects and programs for children and youth, and organize family-friendly fellowship activities. They are able to answer questions about the Religious Education program, and provide support to the DCRE in preparing for upcoming events, programs and intergenerational services. This year CYCORE hopes to define policy and protocol in the RE program, including the integration of a "Safe Congregation" policy. Members of CYCORE are also available to channel community feedback to the DCRE and will be involved in organizing summer programming and recruiting teachers, volunteers and committee members.

If you would like to contact the committee, you can best reach its members by e-mail at CYCORE@huuweb.org. If you are interested in joining CYCORE or supporting its work this year, please contact Holly Labbe (holly@huuweb.org).

Director of Children's Religious Education



Julie Goldman Caran joined the HUU staff in July 2009, after being a member of the congregation for more than five years. This is her second time coordinating a UU Religious Education program; she previously worked full time as the Acting Director of Religious Education at First

Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond, Virginia from 2001 through 2003.

When she is not working, Julie enjoys spending time with her husband, Kevin, and their three dogs. Julie is a member of the folk trio blue stone sky and enjoys songwriting, journaling, making pottery, experimenting in the kitchen, and growing lavender. She and Kevin are currently in the process of adopting an infant from Ethiopia.

Welcome to our Religious Education Program!

Thank you for your interest in the Religious Education (RE) program for Children and Youth at Harrisonburg Unitarian Universalists. Our program acknowledges that a person's spiritual path begins at an early age. We encourage our children to explore their own paths, and provide them with a foundational knowledge of faith traditions. Through Religious Education, children and families explore the three key tasks of our congregation — sense-making, care-giving, and justice-seeking — in developmentally appropriate ways.

Throughout the course of their school-age years, children enrolled in the Religious Education program will explore:

- The natural world and our relationship to all others;
- Our liberal religious heritage and its roots in Judaism and Christianity;
- Major world religions and their practices;
- Unitarian Universalist history and identity;
- Social outreach and social justice as an integral part of religious life;
- Spirituality as it relates to exploring concepts of love, trust, health, compassion, wisdom, awe, wonder, and unity.

Each Sunday at 10:30 a.m., children are invited to join adults during the first part of the service for the opening chalice lighting, singing, and joys and concerns. The congregation then "sings out the children" to the nursery (ages 0-4) or the Religious Education building (ages 5 and up), where teachers lead our youngest members through curricula appropriate for their age group.

At HUU, we welcome children of all levels of ability and mobility. We will work with you to provide the best Religious Education experience possible.

For more information on the Religious Education program at HUU, please contact the Director of Children's Religious Education, Julie Caran, at huudcre@gmail.com or by phone at (540) 434-6314.

2009-10 Programming

Team Teaching

A team of four teachers will be working with the “5 and older” crowd this year. Team members will work collaboratively to provide consistent, interesting weekly lessons. Julie will act as an “anchor” each Sunday, and the three other team members will spend about every third Sunday in the RE building. Tabatha La-Freniere will provide weekly assistance. One of the keys to a strong Religious Education program (and a strong congregation) is well-integrated programming. We hope integrating team teaching into the Children’s RE program will allow adults and children in our congregation to get to know one another better, and create a broader sense of unity across generations at HUU.

Ages 0-4

Pax Helferstay will provide care to children ages 0-4 in the nursery, integrating stories and activities from the Unitarian Universalist preschool curriculum, *Celebrating Me and My World*. The curriculum begins by celebrating the wondrous qualities of the children themselves and expands outward to the things and people around them. This program provides preschoolers with experiences and opportunities to grow in their sense of trust and caring and to develop their self-identity and their sense of connectedness with all of life.

Ages 5 and Up

Lessons from two curricula will be adapted to span the broad age-range of the children attending. Children and youth ages 5 to 18 are welcome to participate.

Stories About God offers children a wide variety of experiences with that which people call God. At the heart of each session is a story which presents a concept of God inspired by images and issues from world religions, feminist studies, science, and human experience. Before the story there are activities which enable the

children to make connections between the images and concepts in the story and their own experiences. After the story there are opportunities for them to express their own beliefs through conversation, service projects and the arts.

A Stepping-Stone Year focuses on these important religious questions:

- How did the world begin?
- How did life begin?
- How did I begin?
- How can I live so as to make my life worthwhile?
- Why do people die?
- What is right and wrong?
- How can I make decisions?

A Stepping Stone Year draws upon science, myth, Unitarian and Universalist traditions, and other secular and spiritual resources to support children in their inquiry.

Ages 12 and Up:

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)

This year we plan to offer monthly meetings for the middle- and high-school age members of our congregation. Members of Bring Your Own Spirituality (BYOS), the JMU campus group affiliated with HUU, will help to facilitate discussions and events that will provide spiritual nourishment to our youth.

Parental Involvement

Parental and congregational involvement are vital to our work toward strengthening the Religious Education programming at HUU. In lieu of a registration fee, we ask that each parent assist in the nursery 4-5 times a year. The presence of Pax, our nursery care provider, and an additional adult in the nursery each week is in line with “Safe Congregations” policy and Virginia law. Your participation is particularly valuable, as the presence of two adults will allow the preschoolers to experience curricular material without neglecting infant care.