



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF LITTLE ROCK

Monthly News & Updates

November 2025 | VOL. 74
ISSUE 10

Worship Services

Nov 2: "What Does 8th Principle Mean?" - Coordinated by our 8th Principle Team

Nov 9: "The Joy of Becoming in the Light of Community" - Coordinated by Stephanie Webb the Worship Arts Team

Nov 16: "The Covenant Group Experience" - Rev. Paul

Nov 23: "Nurturing Gratitude" - Rev. Paul

Nov 30: Annual Service of Gratitude - Coordinated by Rebecca Roetzel and the Worship Arts Team.



Thanksgiving Meal

UUCLR hosts a community meal on Thanksgiving Day for anyone who would like to attend. The main meat dishes and drinks are provided. We ask that those in attendance bring a side or dessert to share - please sign up in the foyer for a particular item so that we have a well balanced spread! Gather as soon as 4pm, eating closer to 5pm. A \$5 donation will help offset costs. Guests are asked to stay and help with cleaning up.

10 am Forum Topics

Nov 2: Forum and REConnections groups will come together for this shared discussion.

Nov 9: 2nd Sunday Share the Plate - This month's recipient is Holiday Hope Tree. Each year we support this cause which provides gifts to children and youth in foster care.

Nov 16: Tentative: UU Shared Values

Nov 23: "What's on your mind?" Hosted by Clyde Bailey

Nov 30: "Gratitude" (Meets in the Sanctuary)

Gratitude Service

On Sunday, November 30th, the 11am service will be held in the Mehta Wing. The Annual Service of Gratitude is an inter-generational event which includes a service and a shared meal (provided by UUCLR). Children are invited to sit with us for this participatory service.

Dessert is a Pie Potluck! If you'd like to bring something to contribute to the meal, any and all pies are welcome to a part of this celebration.

Upcoming Events

- 11/1 Memorial Woodlands Workday (10am)
- 11/2 Book Exchange & Recycling
- 11/2 Memorial Woodlands Service (noon)
- 11/3 Between the Lines Book Club (7pm, Pehrson)
- 11/5 Religious Trauma Group
- 11/7 Card Night - Play Spades! (6pm, Pehrson)
- 11/9 Vegetarian Potluck
- 11/11 Young at Heart Luncheon (11:45am, Mehta)
- 11/12 Program Council Mtg. (5:15pm, Zoom/Pehrson)
- 11/13 Site Ops Council Mtg. (12:30pm, Zoom/Pehrson)
- 11/15 Grounds Workday (8am @ church)
- 11/18 Our House Meal Serving
- 11/18 UUCLR Board Meeting (7pm)
- 11/27 Thanksgiving Meal (4pm, Mehta)
- 11/28 Short Story Discussion Group (Noon, Pehrson)
- 11/29 Parents Night Out (5-8pm)
- 11/30 Intergenerational Service (11am, Mehta)

Young at Heart Luncheon

Meet in the Mehta Wing for lunch and good company on November 11th at 11:45am. A \$10 suggested donation helps to offset the costs. Rev. Paul will be offering the program and lunch will be quiche.

Grounds Workday

Save the date and come enjoy a morning of nature, homemade snacks, and fellowship with fellow church friends. Starts at 8:00am.

Saturday, November 15

Contact Joanne Kriehn for more info.

LUUnch Out!

Please note that there will be no LUUnch Out gatherings in November or December. This event will begin again in January 2026.

View the online calendar to see times and locations of all the upcoming summer events.
www.uuclr.org



Come play Spades!

Friday, Nov. 7th, 6-8pm, Pehrson

Do you like playing cards and want to spend more time with our UU community? Come play Spades!

Beginners are welcome. 6-8 pm at UUCLR in Pehrson. Bring your own beverage and a snack to share. Please [fill out this form](#).

AbleNet Donates \$8,000 to the Food Pantry

The McDermott food pantry that is run by UUCLR volunteers depends on donations and grants to purchase fresh produce, meat, and canned goods from the Arkansas Foodbank and from local grocery stores like Edwards Food Giant and Kroger. The church budget provides seed money but that doesn't go far. For the past several years, the Christmas Eve offering and January's Second Sunday have brought in about one-third of the necessary \$20,000 needed for the nine months that the pantry is open.

The rest of the money has come from Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance grants funded by Pulaski County's American Recovery Act money. However, the last grant cycle, our submission did not get selected for funding, which, because we were starting up the McDermott pantry program, would leave us short of needed money.

When Crystal Amos, UUCLR member and frequent pantry volunteer, heard that we didn't get this grant, she immediately sent a funding request to her company, AbleNet. AbleNet responded as soon as their funding committee met and gave us \$8000, no strings attached.

AbleNet is a company that specializes in technology and tools to help disabled children and adults communicate. Crystal says that they are always looking for good works to support. Earlier I had asked if they could buy some freezer bags for a few hundred dollars and she replied that she wanted to wait till we had a big ask. It wasn't long before we needed to make that ask and AbleNet responded generously.

The pantry could not succeed without the financial support of the members and friends of UUCLR, individual and corporate donors like AbleNet, and grants from hunger-fighting organizations like the Foodbank and the Hunger Relief Alliance.

Thank you.



UUCLR is a Welcoming Congregation

Each of us has worth and dignity, and that worth includes our gender and our sexuality. As Unitarian Universalists (UUs), we not only open our doors to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, we value diversity of sexuality and gender and see it as a spiritual gift. We create inclusive religious communities and work for LGBTQ justice and equity as a core part of who we are. All of who you are is sacred. All of who you are is welcome.

REFLECTIONS: “Next Steps in Arkansas Schools”

On October 23rd I attended the Arkansas Times Lecture Series and lunch at the Copper Grill. The speaker was Baker Kurrus, former superintendent of the Little Rock School District. I don't go every time, but this one sounded good, and I like to do something to support the Arkansas Times, since I do like to read it.



Of course, the topic was the impact of the LEARNS Act (Kurrus wrote a series of articles on education in Arkansas this year for the Times), and his main message was, if you want kids to get a good education, never let them fall behind. That's not a matter of low-performing *schools*, he said; rather, it's a matter of a low-performing *system*. We have to invest in the right things. The LEARNS voucher program does the opposite.

probably remember that the pitch for LEARNS Act was, “We have to help our kids to escape these failing schools.” The vouchers were supposed to empower parents (via subsidy) to choose good schools. Kurrus cited some statistics:

- Of the 50,000 vouchers issued, 27,000 went to homeschoolers.
- The top three ultimate recipients of voucher money were homeschoolers, religious schools, and private schools.
- 88% of voucher recipients did *not* move their children to a different school.

So, parents didn't “choose a better school.” In the case of private schools, the parents' choice doesn't even enter into it: it's the *school's* choice whether their children get to attend. And in any case, a voucher is worth less than \$6900, and private schools charge as much as \$36,000; for poor families (those most in need of such help), he said, it's like getting a half-off coupon for Tiffany's.

In short, what has happened is what we thought would happen.

Kurrus emphasized that, on this issue, our biggest obstacle now is that we've gone so far down the track of blaming the schools. It's understandable that we have: the 1957 desegregation crisis, the 1982 school consolidation lawsuit in Pulaski County, and the 2004 statewide school consolidation law, all reinforced the idea that a bigger school is a better school. But the solution to children's education is at the classroom level, and it doesn't have to do with teachers' pay: it has to do with their working conditions. If you have a class of 28 kids, and a handful of them need extra attention or support to learn, that's manageable. If all 28 need extra help, that's overwhelming. So we need to create balanced, manageable classroom conditions so that our kids are well-supported to learn. And we need to invest in preschools, to create a more level situation from the start. And there are other things we can do to support parents who (for example) must devote a larger share of their time and energy than others to earning income.

During the Q&A, Kurrus remarked that the era of tax cuts is over – any more cuts will break the budget.

And he quoted Rosa Parks: “The hardest step is the first step.” He offered the hope that this might be the moment when we can take our first collective step off the blame-the-schools path, onto a more productive one.

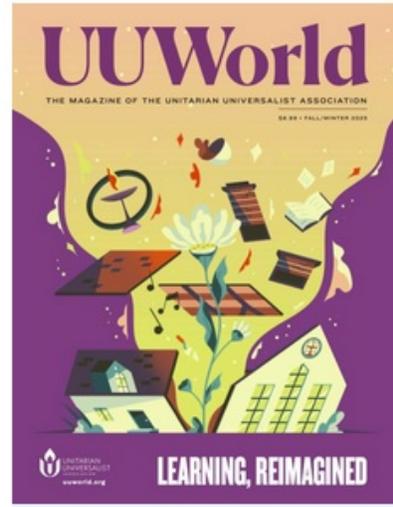
Rev. Paul Beedle
Unitarian Universalist Church of Little Rock



Board President's Message

Submitted by Laurie Smith Prud'homme

I am always inspired, intrigued, and comforted when I take time to read the [UUWorld](#). And, full disclosure, sometimes that reading time occurs months after I have received my copy and placed it safely on my desk with other “important things to read.” This month I was lucky and picked up the Fall/Winter 2025 edition last week when I was grabbing a quick lunch. I was immediately absorbed by a book excerpt about a hospital chaplain and I ended up buying the book, written by two UU ministers (*Blessing It All: Rituals for Transition and Transformation*, edited by Allison Palm and Heather Concannon). Since lunch was over, I put the UUWorld down again until Gene Meili mentioned another fabulous article a few days later – “Revelatory, Revolutionary Dinner Church”! I should have kept reading!!!



I realized that this edition of the World has so many pieces that resonate with me as our congregation sees new growth, new members, new families with children, and new ideas popping up in coffee hours and monthly meetings. Some of the ideas mentioned are very similar to things we are already doing – yay for us! And some of the thoughts about Lifespan Religious Education and reasons for prioritizing intergenerational services and events confirmed what we hope to achieve with our church goals for the year. I started a list of articles to recommend to you, but it was too long – please take a moment and read all of them if you can!!

And please talk with each other and with your board members if you see ideas that seem like a good fit for our church. I love hearing about what is happening within our denomination and in other UU churches across the country. Our world seems challenging and frightening to me on many days, and I am grateful we are one of many communities working to keep love at the center as we respond to the current crises.

We are very lucky to have engaged, thoughtful staff at the UUA and volunteers from our many churches who are producing and making contributions to the World. You should have received your copy in the mail a few weeks ago. If you aren't receiving it regularly, please let me know and I'll follow up. And seriously, read it! You'll be so glad you did.

With love and high expectations for our future!
Laurie Smith Prud'homme

October Board Meeting Summary

Following approval of the minutes, we heard reports from Rev Paul, Finance Committee, Program Council, Site Operations Council, and Executive Committee. We reviewed reports from the ad hoc committees including Governing Docs, Technology, and OWL Feasibility.

In old business, we discussed the possibility of creating a Leadership subcommittee with board oversight for now with the goal of becoming a subcommittee under Nominating and Leadership in the same way Stewardship is now a subcommittee under Finance.

In new business, we discussed the ongoing plan to expand our Lifespan Religious Education opportunities.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, November 18th, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Smith Prud'homme, President

CPR & Heart Health Workshop - Nov. 10th

Thanks to Paulette and Jay Mehta, arrangements have been made for the Health and Safety Task Force to sponsor a program of Cardiovascular education and CPR training.

The date will be **Nov 10, Monday, from 6:15 to 8:00**. A light supper will be provided. Childcare is available. The program will be given by several physicians. It will be targeted to the demographic of our church so it should not be over strenuous and accessible to everyone. This is a truly unique opportunity for us. The more people who know basic CPR the safer our congregation is. It is not just about your resuscitating someone else, it could be about them resuscitating you!

Images from October Events

Central Arkansas Pride, Blessing the Animals Service, Office Upgrades, CAYRE Activities, Food Pantry Recognition Sign, Halloween Festivities, Arkansas Goat Festival, Annual Samhain Service (To name a few - it was a busy month!)



Technology Team Update

There is ongoing work with the addition of security cameras at the church thanks to the leadership of Scott Lee (Chair of the Technology Committee), generous financial donors, and many volunteers who have helped along the way! The cameras and equipment have been purchased and a new monitor is at the ready in the office. It is installation time - in a few weeks the first cameras should be in place and connected for use.

UUCLR needs multiple people who understand how our network and camera systems operate in order for this work to be sustainable into the future. If you are interested in helping manage this equipment—or simply want to learn the basics so you can serve as a backup when needed—please be in touch with Scott or Rebecca.



New Member Recognition

On October 5th we celebrated the addition of these wonderful folks to our beloved community: Cassie Martin (pictured with daughter, Alice), Brandon Murphy, and Marty & Chalina Mora. Welcome!

The next new member recognition ceremony will be in the Spring.

Are you getting all the news you need?
We have several ways of communicating!

Friday Email Blast
Sunday Morning Email Blast
Sunday Order of Service Insert
Bulletin Boards (Thomson & RE Wing)
Outer Circle - Monthly Newsletter
New! - Parent GroupMe Chat
Website - www.uuclr.org
Facebook - /UUCLR



So many beautiful people! If you'd like to take a photo for your directory listing, please contact the office. Thank you, Membership Team, for your work to keep our records up to date!

November Birthdays

November 02 - Jesse Mellor
November 03 - Sharon Boyd-Struthers
November 06 - Maritza Bean
November 07 - Rich Roy
November 11 - Cathey Simpson
November 13 - James Thomson
November 16 - Shirley Swindle

November 16 - Deidre Wyers
November 17 - Sarah Walker
November 20 - Dave March
November 20 - Randi Hardin
November 27 - DeAnn Shields-Marley
November 28 - Peggy Harstvedt
November 29 - Gene Meili

*See a birthday that is missing or incorrect?
Please let Membership or the office know!*

CHURCH ADDRESS:

1818 Reservoir Road
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WEBSITE:

www.uuclr.org

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Tuesday-Friday, 8am-1pm

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AV DIRECTOR:

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Margot Cameron & Laurie Smith Prud'homme

FACILITIES TEAM LEAD:

Michael Roetzel

GROUNDS TEAM LEAD:

Joanne Kriehn

MEMORIAL WOODLANDS:

Margaret McLellan

CARING TEAM LEAD:

Sue McDonald

FELLOWSHIP TEAM LEAD:

Kater Reynolds

MEMBERSHIP LEAD:

Lisa Brents

FORUM COORDINATOR:

Jan Bowen

RE-QUESTORS COORDINATOR:

Joe Meehan

RECONNECTIONS COORDINATOR:

Zenyth Propst

CUUPS COORDINATOR:

Stephanie Webb

COMMUNICATIONS & RENTALS:

Rebecca Roetzel

HEALTH & SAFETY TEAM LEADS:

Phil Peters & Sherman James

TECHNOLOGY TEAM LEAD:

Scott Lee



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