



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF LITTLE ROCK

Monthly News & Updates

May 2026 | VOL. 75
ISSUE 5

Worship Services

May 3: "Seasonal Celebration: Beltane"

Coordinated by Stephanie Webb.

May 10: "Awakening Curiosity"

Rev. Paul is in the pulpit.

May 17: "Worship Arts Sunday"

Coordinated by Margot Cameron

May 24: "Annual Folk Music Sing-a-long"

Coordinated by UUCLR Musicians. A second service will take place at the Buffalo River with those attending the Annual Memorial Day Buffalo River Float Trip and Camp-out.

May 31: "Democracy & Diversity"

Rev. Paul is in the pulpit.

10 am Forum Topics

May 3: "Right or Wrong?"

Forum and ReConnections will join together this Sunday for a discussion about doing the *right* thing for the *wrong* reason OR doing the *wrong* thing for the *right* reason.

May 10: "Buffalo River Foundation"

Our 2nd Sunday Share the Plate recipient will join us to share news and updates about our beloved Buffalo River.

May 17: TBD

Stay tuned for more information.

May 24: "What's On Your Mind?"

Hosted by Clyde Bailey

Food Pantry News & Updates

The UUCLR food pantry group has done well in the first year of moving the operations to McDermott Elementary. From September through April, each month we fed between **40 and 46 families**. Typically we had between 28 to 33 families each week because not everyone came each week. In all, we helped **82 families**, with 290 members. **166 of those were children**. We handled out 791 bags.

In April, the church won the LRSD's ViPS Partners in Education Award for the food pantry. Margot Cameron and Nell Matthews were there to accept the award.

The last pantry day this school year is Friday, May 15. We start up again in August.



Outer Circle Deadline

May 31: "UU Shared Values"

The discussion will be around INTERDEPENDENCE.

The deadline for submitting information to the next Outer Circle is May 29th. Please note that there will be ONE Outer Circle for the summer - June & July - so please think ahead!

UUCLR ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SUNDAY MORNINGS (10am)

Forum

Forum is an adult religious education program that meets in the south end of the Mehta Wing. It is a group which has a variety of programs and topics throughout the year. On 2nd Sundays, the 11am service's plate collection goes to a local charitable organization and a representative joins us in Forum as a presenter.

REConnections Class

REConnections is for those in their second quarter of life who are looking to connect and reflect with like-minded peers (20's-40's). Topics vary from week to week, but no pre-work is required. The class meets with Forum on the 1st Sunday of odd-numbered months.

REQuestors

This book discussion group meets weekly in the UUCLR library (virtual option available). You do not have to read the book to join in the discussion - new books are chosen throughout the year. If you would like more information or an invitation to participate online, contact Joe Meehan - josmeehan@sbcglobal.net.

MEAL FELLOWSHIP

Vegetarian Potluck

On the 2nd Sunday of each month, a potluck is held in the Mehta Wing immediately after the 11am service. Attendees bring vegan or vegetarian dishes to share and volunteers assist with set-up and clean-up.

LUUnch Out!

On the last Sunday of each month, anyone is welcome to join for lunch at a local restaurant immediately following the 11am service. This is a Dutch-style treat, so individuals pay for their own meal, but sit as a large group. The Membership Committee organizes the meal location each month.

Small Group Dinners

Sharing a meal in someone's home is a great way to increase our connections and opportunities for building community. This clever event assigns guests to hosts for a potluck-style dinner party. RSVP is required a month in advance since so much coordination is

MONTHLY GROUPS

Covenant Groups

UUCLR is committed to increasing our connections and opportunities for building community. Covenant Groups meet monthly for 2 hours and use a discussion framework that supports deep listening, deep exploration of secular and spiritual topics, and building deep connections. Questions? Contact [Linda Vanblaricom](#). Use this [Application Form](#) to let us know if you are interested in participating.

Between the Lines Book Club

Between the Lines attendees meet in the Pehrson Room at 7pm on the 1st Monday of each month. The book list is created one year at a time and books are sometimes provided by CALS. If you are interested in joining, contact [Ann Orsi](#).

Short Stories Discussion Group

This is a gathering on the third Friday of each month from noon-1pm to explore and discuss an assigned short story reading. Join in Pehrson or via zoom for lively conversation. Bring lunch if you wish. Questions? Contact [Janice Peters](#). (This month - APRIL 24th)

Our House Shelter Meal Team

Volunteers cook, deliver and serve a monthly meal at the Our House shelter on the 3rd Tuesday. To volunteer or for more information, contact [Kevin](#) or [Mindy](#).

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Food Pantry

Volunteers are needed to operate UUCLR's food pantry at McDermott Elementary. If you have time to help out on Thursdays or Fridays, contact Nell Matthews by email at uuclrnell@gmail.com. Monetary donations towards food purchase are always appreciated: [Donate Here](#)

UUCLR Choir

There is no audition or exclusion with this group of music-makers! Rehearsals happen weekly on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm in the sanctuary. The choir typically sings in the 11am service twice a month.

required. New mid-day meal options are available! Gatherings occur in January, March, May, September and October.

Interested? Contact [DeAnn Shields-Marley](#)

Instrumentalists are also welcome to connect with the choir. Questions? Contact [Kendi!](#)

Contact the office for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 5/1 Card Playing Night (6-8pm, Pehrson)
- 5/2 Beltane Celebration (3:30pm at UUCLR)
- 5/3 Book Exchange & Recycling Sunday
- 5/4 Between the Lines Book Club (7pm, Pehrson)
- 5/10 Vegetarian Potluck (Mehta)
- 5/12 Young at Heart Lunch (11:45am, Mehta)
- 5/13 Program Council Mtg. (5:15pm, Pehrson)
- 5/15 Short Story Discussion Group (Noon, Pehrson)
- 5/16 Small Group Dinners (offsite)
- 5/19 Our House Meal Serving
- 5/19 UUCLR Board Meeting (7pm)
- 5/22-25 Memorial Day Buffalo Float Trip (Buffalo Point)
- 5/26 8th Principle Team Meeting (5pm, Pehrson)
- 5/30 Parents Night Out
- 5/31 LUUnch Out!

Short Story Discussion Group

Friday, May 15th
Noon in Pehrson

“The Beyoglu Municipality Waste Management Orchestra“ by Kenan Orhan from *The Paris Review*.

Young at Heart Luncheon



Tuesday, May 12

May's Young at Heart will meet on May 14th at 11:45.

The program will be a Name that Tune and Trivia game from the 60's and 70's and the menu is our annual chicken picnic. The cost is \$10.00 and all profits go to the church's fund for attending workshops.

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



HALBERG ECOLOGY CAMP

The Arkansas Audubon Society Halberg Ecology Camp is held each June at Camp Clearfork, a U.S. Forest Service camp between Hot Springs and Mt. Ida. First-year campers experience a variety of subjects including ornithology, aquatic biology, mammalogy, botany, entomology, geology and herpetology. This camp for students who have just completed 5th, 6th, or 7th grades. There are two sessions: June 7-12 and June 14-19. Click on the link to learn more or register. Need a scholarship to help with camp registration fees? Talk with Fin Judkins, our DRE.

[Learn More!](#)

Some church happenings will take a break over the summer months.

If you are part of a group that's taking a summer pause,
please be sure to confirm that with the office.



HA
HEARNE
FINE ART

**WOMEN CREATE
SPACE. GRACE. POWER.**

A Multimedia Survey of
Thirteen Black Women Artists

EXHIBITION DATES:
March 26, 2026 -
June 13, 2026

FEATURED
PROGRAMMING

ARTIST RECEPTION:
Friday, April 17, 5:30 pm

THE EMERGING SPIRIT:
A Dialogue on Becoming:
Gallery Talk: Saturday, April 18, 3:00 pm

***To create is often an act
of survival; for the
Black woman, it is an
act of revolution.***

**Hearne Fine Art Gallery
March 26-June 13**

Women Create is more than an
exhibition title—it is a
foundational truth.

*This collection gathers the voices of
thirteen creative women who
navigate the complexities of
identity, memory, and grace
through a diverse array of media.*

*From the historic, monumental legacies of **Elizabeth Catlett**, **Artis Lane**, and **Samella Lewis** to the ethereal, whisper-thin silverpoint of **Marjorie Williams-Smith**, the works on these walls do not merely occupy space; they command it. The exhibition weaves a temporal thread through the Black feminine experience. We see it in the layered narratives of **Phoebe Beasley**'s collages and the profound, soul-stirring portraiture of **Louise Mandumbwa**.*

*This story is further grounded by the documentary power of **Ebony Blevins** and the tender, cinematic storytelling of **Nina Robinson**, whose photographs serve as vital archives of contemporary life and legacy. There is a rhythmic pulse found in the vibrant palettes of **Theresa Cates** and **Erica Dunlap**, balanced by the meticulous observations and textured stories of **Alice Aida Ayers**, **Anyta Thomas**, and **Paula Rogers**.*

*In the heart of Little Rock, a city with its own deep-set histories of resistance and beauty, these artists offer a sanctuary of reflection. Their hands transform clay, pigment, light, and metal into mirrors. They challenge the viewer to look beyond the surface of "craft" and into the depth of "being." **Women Create** celebrates the lineage of the Black woman as the original architect of culture. It honors the quiet moments of the studio, the decisive click of the shutter, and the loud declarations of the spirit.*

Here, creativity is not a hobby—it is a birthright, a testimony, and a gift.

The 8th Principle Team meets at 5pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month to continue the work of 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.



2026 Flower Communion

April was packed with special services and events. On April 5th, Easter Sunday, we had 132 in attendance at the 11am service. This meant guests were shoulder to shoulder in each row and we ran out of seats!

Photo of Kim and Margaret processing back to their seats after making their flower selections at the front.

REFLECTIONS: “Beyond Belief”

During my travels last month, I was surprised – while flipping channels in my hotel room one evening after dinner – to stumble across an *Indiana Jones* movie I hadn't heard of before. *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny* (2023) was the same nostalgia/sci-fi, comic-book/adventure, roller-coaster ride with a dash of supernatural/religious flavoring as all the other installments in the series. But there was a nugget of dialogue in it that, for me, sparked some theological reflection (influenced, no doubt, by having spent the preceding few days with colleagues at our annual study retreat):



Indiana Jones: “I don't believe in magic, Wombat, but a few times in my life I've seen things, things I can't explain, and I've come to believe it's not so much *what* you believe, as how *hard* you believe it.”

Wombat: “I've seen things, too, Indy; the only thing worth believing in, *ever*, is cash.”

Throughout the *Indiana Jones* series, the plots are driven by the kind of commitment and goals that the good guys and the bad guys have to their archaeological projects. The good guys are in it for knowledge and wisdom, the bad guys for wealth and power. The good guys have too little money; the bad guys have too little wisdom. In the first film, the main villain articulates what they have in common:

“You and I are very much alike. Archaeology is our religion. Yet we have both fallen from the pure faith. Our methods are not different as much as you pretend. I am a shadowy reflection of you. It would take only a nudge to make you like me.”

Which suggests a theological flaw in the formula. Invariably, the good guys find their power; the bad guys die. In a better formula, theologically speaking, the bad guys would find wisdom. Balance would **be restored**. And the good guys and the bad guys would become “the guys” (and, since balance has been restored, would call themselves something more inclusive, like “folks”), and the wealthier folks would find wiser and more generous things to do with their money, while the scholars did likewise with their learning.

Any of those themes sound familiar? They do to me.

This is not the first time the *Indiana Jones* series has mentioned belief. I had a dim memory of a similar short dialogue about belief between Indiana Jones and his father in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. I fished around online and found this:

Henry Jones Sr.: “Elsa never believed in the grail. She thought she found a prize.”

Indiana Jones: “What did you find, Dad?”

Henry Jones Sr.: “Me? Illumination.”

At the end of that movie, to get back home, they end up following a guy who once got lost in his own museum. In other words, they found their way home in a spirit of love, faith, humility, hope, and

community. That sounds familiar to me, too.

Rev. Paul Beedle

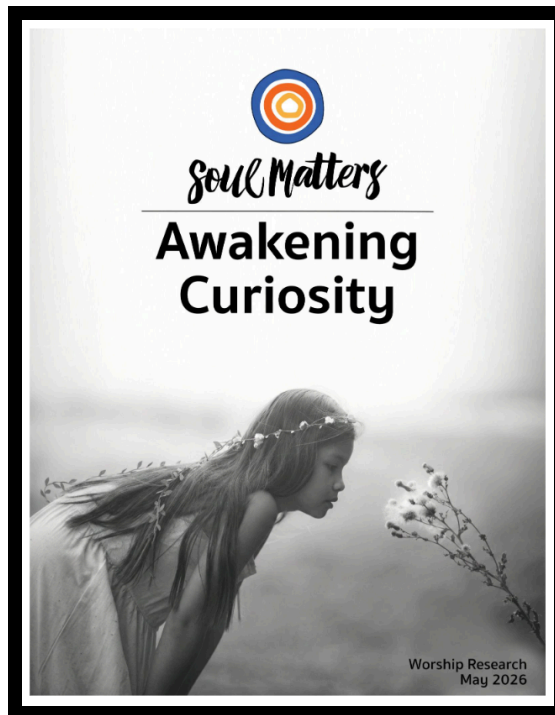
Unitarian Universalist Church of Little Rock

Arkansas Foodbank Annual CEREAL DRIVE

If you'd like to support this cause - ensuring kids across Arkansas have plenty of food during the summer months - please bring cereal and other pre-packaged breakfast items to the church before June 15th. There is a collection box outside the office.



May's Worship Theme:



Save the Date!

Ordination of
Monica Clark-Robinson
Saturday, May 16, 2026
3pm CST

Unitarian Universalist Church of
Columbia, Missouri
2615 Shephard Blvd
Reception to follow immediately after.
Service will be live-streamed.

May 16, 2026 3pm

A note from Monica Clark-Robinson

The Arkansas Yurt Family Robinson is moving! I've been called as the candidate for settled ministry at the Unitarian Universalist church in Wilmington, Delaware, which is just 30 minutes south of Philadelphia. The congregation feels like the perfect fit for me, and we're excited to live so close to Philly and Baltimore and DC and NYC. And I can't wait to learn more about Wilmington and Delaware!

Greta and I are both so sad to leave beloved friends here in Arkansas, and we will miss the theatre community and our UU congregation here so much. I really had hoped to do one more show with theatre friends before leaving, but between navigating Greta's cancer last year and working at an internship in another state, it simply hasn't been possible. Mrs. Lovett is probably the best role to go out on, anyway!

Beatrice will be moving with us and going to college nearby while also training further in circus/aerial arts, but she'll return for summer break and winter break to make music with her beloved Wild Onions band!

We've lived in and loved Little Rock for so long, and we will miss so many beloveds. As Candyce Blackard Hinkle has been known to say, "I like almost everybody in this room!" We hope to have a gathering here at the yurt before we move so we can see everyone. Or IDK maybe we need to put together a cabaret so we can all sing together before we go? So many wonderful memories here, between the church and the old homeschool play group and the theatre community and on and on... To quote Candyce one more time, we are "very lucky people," indeed.

Everyone is welcome to attend the Ordination Ceremony on May 16th in Colombia, MO.



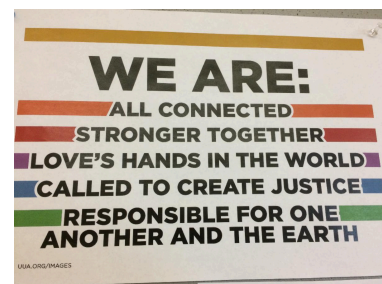
UUCLR is a Welcoming Congregation

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.

Board President's Message

Thank you all for an amazing April at UUCLR!

I keep thinking about the gathering of so many beloved friends at the Fellowship Dinner. We love being together, especially with delicious food! Thank you so much to Jane Harper for your outstanding effort in preparing and feeding so many people with grace and beauty. Thank you to Debbie Goolsby and her 75th UUCLR anniversary team for a year of celebration and memories.



I am also remembering the delightful All Church birthday service with the hum of conversation and the mmmmm's for sweet treats and the creative and whimsical table decorations for each month. Thank you to Rebecca Roetzel for the idea and the organization!

I am so grateful for this beloved congregation. We have committed ourselves to showing up and caring for each other. And the work of our Fellowship and Membership teams supports that commitment. We strive to make visitors feel welcome, and we celebrate new members (can I get a Woohoo?!?) who join our community. We gather together for fun and community and food and services and to learn more about each other and our world. Our time together feeds and sustains us to keep doing the work of caring for our neighbors and our world. We are all truly connected.

I've included two pictures that I love – one from our church and one from the 7th street Peace Week mural. Together these pictures reflect my understanding of Unitarian Universalism and of our church. I repost them frequently on my social media pages because they make me happy and inspire me, and I hope others will feel the same if they see them.



The world needs the love that is embodied in our congregation.

Thank you for creating and sustaining this community with your love and presence.

With love and gratitude,

Laurie Smith-Prud'homme

April Board Meeting Summary

Following approval of the minutes, the board heard reports from Rev Paul, Finance Committee, Program Council, and the Site Operations Council. The board reviewed reports from the ad hoc committees including 8th

Principle. In old business, the Executive Committee was invited to join the April Health & Safety Team meeting. The Exec Comm members reported to the board on the ongoing process of hiring a security officer. Marci presented the Finance Committee's proposed 2026-27 budget to the board. The Finance Committee will host two town halls to present the budget to the congregation for input following the Sunday morning services on April 26th and May 3rd. The board voted to approve the proposed 2026-27 budget. Debbie gave an update on the fabulous Fellowship Dinner. In new business, the board discussed the process for inducting members into the Cornerstone Society.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, May 19th, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

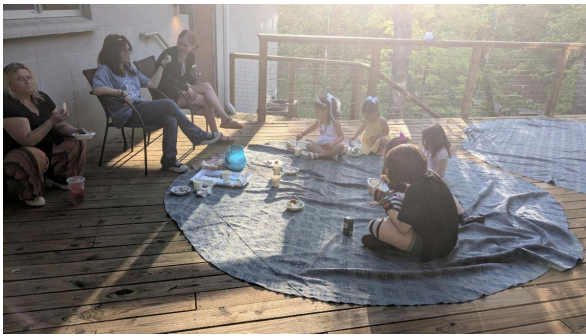
Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Smith Prud'homme, President

April Fellowship Dinner

On April 11th, over 120 people gathered to celebrate the church's 75th Anniversary and the culmination of our 2026-2027 pledge drive. A huge thank you to Debbie Goolsby and the whole planning committee. Special thanks to Jane Harper and her business "Frills Catering" for her efforts and providing delicious desserts! And to Marvin and Tony for the very entertaining skit! To everyone who attended and made this possible - THANK YOU!

Here's to the next 75 years!





Photos by Rebecca Roetzel & Jerry Blackburn



Paper Goods Needed at Pantry

Faith in Action is requesting people to donate paper towels and toilet paper for the McDermott Elem. School pantry. The Food Bank doesn't carry them and the families we serve can't buy them with SNAP benefits. Please put them the hallway near the office and Sue will pick up periodically.

All-Church Birthday Service

On April 19th, we gathered for the 11am service in the Mehta Wing for an inter-generational and somewhat unusual worship hour coordinated by Rebecca Roetzel.

Attendees were asked to sit according to their birth month at tables decorated to the nines by volunteers. Traditional 11am service elements were braided together with traditional birthday party elements, creating a joyful atmosphere as we celebrate the lives of everyone in this incredible community.

Special thanks to our table hosts who signed up for this without a clue what the event would entail and produced 12 creative and delicious table displays! Special thanks to Sarah Hyndman and our RE kids for their participation in many portions of the service.



REQUEST - If you took a photo of your month's table, please send it to uuchurchlr@gmail.com. We are trying to collect photo evidence of all twelve months!



Photos by Jerry Blackburn

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!

May Birthdays

May 02 Greta Robinson
 May 06 Anna Mattei
 May 07 Deirdre Lee
 May 08 Margot Cameron
 May 14 Dianne Scott
 May 15 Mindy Morrell
 May 17 Claire McCullough

May 18 Gail Roberson
 May 20 Hannah Scott
 May 22 Nancy Hamlin
 May 25 Amanda Golbeck
 May 26 John Althoff
 May 26 Monica Clark-Robinson

See a birthday that is missing or incorrect?

CHURCH ADDRESS:

1818 Reservoir Road
Little Rock, AR 72227

WEBSITE:

www.uuclr.org

OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday-Friday, 8am-1pm

OFFICE CONTACT:

Rebecca Roetzel
Church Administrator
(501) 225-1503
uuchurchlr@gmail.com



MINISTER:

Rev. Paul Beedle
Contact for appointment.
(504) 458-2254
revpaulbeedle@gmail.com

DIRECTOR OF RE:

Stephanie "Fin" Judkins
dre@uuclr.org

MUSIC DIRECTOR:

Kendi Jensen-Loving

AV DIRECTOR:

Chad Loucks

WORSHIP ARTS TEAM LEADS:

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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