

TRI-UU NEWSLETTER

This Month:

Birthdays

- | | |
|-----------------|------|
| • Bruce Twiss | 9/4 |
| • Erin Woodsome | 9/7 |
| • Helen Dohn | 9/10 |
| • Jeff Tatarka | 9/14 |
| • Joan Herring | 9/27 |
| • Liz Perdue | 9/28 |

Calendar

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------|------------|
| • Meditation | 9/4, | 10:30 a.m. |
| • Finance (Zoom) | 9/8, | 2 p.m. |
| • Building & Grounds | 9/9, | 10 a.m. |
| • Green Team | 9/9, | 10 a.m. |
| • Worship (Zoom) | 9/11, | 10 a.m. |
| • Meditation | 9/18, | 10:30 a.m. |
| • Women for Women | 9/20, | 1 p.m. |
| • Board Meeting | 9/22, | 1 p.m. |
| • Membership | 9/25, | 9:30 a.m. |
| • Book Club | 9/29, | 1 p.m. |

TRIUU'S SOLAR SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION STARTS SEPT. 8

Solar panels designed to reduce TriUU's reliance on fossil fuel-generated power from Duke Energy is set for construction starting Monday, Sept. 8, at 11 a.m., weather permitting. A TriUU Forum on solar energy systems with speaker Susan Elwell will follow on Thursday, Sept. 11



Proposed Panels

at 4 p.m. Ms. Elwell is a member of both the Green Team and Buildings and Grounds. She obtained approval for TriUU to install the new system.

Workers for Terra Energy, based in Miami, will install 71 solar panels on TriUU's roof. After the they are inspected, and an interconnection agreement has been accepted, TriUU's solar energy system will be connected to a new meter called a "net meter" or "bi-directional" meter.

(cont'd. on p.6 - TriUU Solar)

Deadline for submissions to October's TriUU Newsletter will be September 24.

Please bear with any changes and/or errors that you may see while I learn more about setting up the newsletter.

Thank you - Jeff Tatarka



Message from Reverend Kristina: Launching Study for Resistance



The beginning of church program year always seems to be fast and full. Our spiritual theme for September is Building Belonging.

During my service on August 3, "Lessons from General Assembly," I mentioned the Wave Cohorts that the UUA is

launching as we consider together how our faith might respond to the challenges of today's world. The cohort options for the fall are live -- find out more here:

<https://www.uua.org/congregations/meet-the-moment/wave-cohorts/fall-2025>

There are 17 options! If you participate, you'll get to meet and talk with UUs from across the country. I'd love to hear if you get involved.

Remember that project that I had mentioned wanting to launch last year and then didn't, in part because of scheduling conflicts and my health being so bad? This is the time of year to consider getting it off the ground. I had called it "Reading for the Resistance," although reading is not required -- watching films, listening to podcasts, and engaging other resources is all considered part of the practice. Are you interested in helping this get started? The idea behind it is to make a commitment to learn by reading from our list of suggested social justice books, articles, podcasts, and even some videos -- or your own. We were thinking about 1-3 hours a week of engaging with the material on your own -- you can select the items that resonate with your own interests or you may choose to occasionally explore outside of your usual comfort zone. Then the group of those participating will get together once or twice a month to talk about what you've learned. I hope the group will do some form of shared leadership once it's going. Please let me know.

(cont'd on p. 5 - Reverend Kristina)

See Our Calendar at TriUU.org

For a complete listing of events and more information, the calendar appears following the latest monthly Newsletter and the current weekly Timetable. You will also see a form for adding events to the calendar. Contact Myra Symons with any questions.

September's Religious Holidays

September 5 – Islamic: Mawlid al-Nabi
Celebrates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.

September 11 – Coptic Orthodox Christian: Nayrouz
Marks the start of the Coptic New Year.

September 22 – Pagan and Wiccan: Mabon
Celebrates the autumn equinox and the second harvest.

September 23-24 – Jewish: Rosh Hashanah
The Jewish New Year, a time of reflection and renewal.

September 28-October 2 – Hindu: Durga Puja
Celebrates the goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura.



President's Message What We Share is Freely Given



I was recently asked “Why don’t we place a suggestion box somewhere in the congregation?” I have to admit that the very idea of anonymous suggestions made me cringe.

When you walk through the doors of Tri-County Unitarian Universalists, you are not entering a marketplace—you are stepping into a community. Here, nothing is for sale: not faith, not belonging, not hope. We do not promote a prosperity gospel where your faith and loyalty will be rewarded with material wealth, physical health, and personal success. We do not believe in the commodification of religion. Our gatherings are not transactions but shared experiences, where people come together to seek meaning, offer compassion, and nurture one another’s spirits. What we share is freely given, and what we receive is the immeasurable gift of connection and care.

In our congregation, we are not bound together by transactions but by covenants. We make promises to one another to be together in right relationship. Our covenants remind us that belonging here is not earned by wealth, status, or what we can purchase. Instead, it is a gift we create by showing up for one another, by listening deeply, and by choosing compassion over judgment. We honor the inherent worthiness and dignity of all and make these commitments to care for, respect, and love each other.

In our beloved community, we are not customers, and this is not a business. We are bound by a commitment to one another, not managed from above. We are not the subjects of a board of trustees, or a team leader, nor do we look to our minister to solve life’s challenges.

We don’t consume our gatherings, as though they were performances staged for our benefit. Instead, we co-create them. Each voice singing hymns, each silence in meditation, each hand extended in welcome becomes part of what makes our worship real. The richness of our community comes not from what is provided to us, but from how much we co-create together, in covenant and in trust. We don’t rely on suggestion boxes or “customer service representatives” to keep each other satisfied. Instead, our shared life is sustained by covenant: by promises we freely make and renew with one another.

When we see a need, we respond with care; when conflicts arise, we face them together. This is not a service provided—it is a community co-created. When you make a suggestion in this congregation, it is not handed off like a customer complaint—it is an invitation for shared responsibility. Offering an idea means being willing to explore how you can contribute to the change you hope to see.

(cont’d. p. 5 - President’s Message)



BUILDING BELONGING

Join Us for September Services
In Person or on Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/95277568906?pwd=PJeDQqyY1WMwoJRrkI9Xn4sQG36P2f.1>

Our spiritual theme for September is “Building Belonging”. Our congregational response this month is “Find a Stillness”. There are lots of story images this month for me, but I didn't choose a single round!



**The Rev. Carole Yorke
will bless animals on
Sept. 28**

Sept 7: The Reverend Kristina Spaude will lead the service, “We Cannot Turn Away.” The war in Gaza has been going on for almost two years now, although conditions there have been difficult for far longer. This morning we'll consider this humanitarian crisis and what is happening locally to support Palestinians.

Sept 14: The Reverend Kristina Spaude will lead the service, “Belonging to Unitarian Universalism.” What does it mean to belong to Unitarian Universalism? Considering this question will help us understand both our faith and our work in the world. Join us!

Sept 21: The Reverend Kristina Spaude will lead the service, “Building Belonging.” The Jewish New Year approaches as we consider what it means to build belonging. Together this morning we'll consider how the practices of the High Holy Days might inform our congregations' practices of belonging.

Sept 28: The Reverend Carole Yorke will lead the service, “Blessing of Our Animals.” Blessing of the Animals began as a Catholic tradition because of St Francis of Assisi's love of every living creature — all celebrated Oct. 2. We UUs celebrate when it works for us! Let's understand the word “blessing.” A blessing is a wish of gratitude or happiness toward a person or animal or thing. It's why we come together today to acknowledge how our lives have been blessed by our animal friends. If this tradition is Catholic, why do we UUs do it? Because one of our principles taught us that we covenant to affirm and promote the interdependent web of existence, of which we are a part. And besides, it's a lot of fun!

Housekeeping “rules”: All critters should be on leashes/in crates or cages. Bring clean up supplies with you. Accidents happen! Pictures of beloved animals, alive or passed, are welcome.

~Reverend Kristina



Reverend Kristina (cont'd)...

And!.. they're called Covenant Groups, Chalice Circles, Small Group Ministries, and about a hundred variations. Whatever you call them, they were one of my favorite experiences when I was a lay person. We have one group that has been regularly meeting, but others have chosen not to continue. These are monthly gatherings to reflect on spiritual matters in an intentional way that we don't always get the opportunity to explore otherwise. In the past, I have used the same spiritual themes I use in worship for these sessions. Last year the group considered the new Values. This year we are hoping someone(s) might be interested in facilitating (a) group(s). Two thoughts have emerged as options: using the monthly spiritual themes, or using the UUA's 2025-6 Common Read: Social Change Now by Deepa Iyer.

<https://www.uua.org/lifespan/curricula/read/social-change-now> Training is available for facilitators and additional resources are available for potential Social Change Now sessions. Again, please let me know!

Lastly, I was invited to speak at the Humanist Club of The Villages. Thank you to Andrea, Bob, and Judy for coming -- it was so good to have you there! The video is available for anyone interested in watching --

<https://youtu.be/qRBpwW9bzgI> I'll have covered most of the material in the August 24 service, but I know some of you might enjoy this.

These are a variety of some of the ways we can build belonging within our congregations and/or our faith. Belonging is welcoming people in when they arrive and getting to know them -- not just about wanting them to know us. Belonging is about inviting in -- but being willing to change and be changed by those who come. Any institution that doesn't change as people come in and go out probably isn't achieving a sense of belonging among all its people.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you! Emails are great -- to triuurev@gmail.com. Hope to see and hear from you soon!

~Reverend Kristina Spaude

President's Message (cont'd) ...

It also means practicing humility: recognizing that others may hold different perspectives, and that real transformation comes through building consensus, not simply getting one's own way.

In this way, our community thrives not because someone fixes things for us, or to our liking, but because we commit ourselves to working together in covenantal relationship.

Covenantal responsibility doesn't mean rigidity, but a willingness to grow together. We are not closed to new ideas. On the contrary, our covenant calls us to remain open—to trying new things, to exploring new opportunities, and to listening with curiosity when someone brings forth a vision. But openness here is never passive; it asks us to participate, to lend our hands, hearts, and voices. When we dream together, we also commit together, so that what emerges is not the product of one person's wish but the shared creation of the community.

Thank you to all who enter our congregation in this spirit of beloved community. It is my personal pleasure to be on this journey with you.

Cindy Grossman,
President of the TriUU Board of Trustees



TriUU Solar (cont'd)...

Unlike traditional meters that only track power consumption, a bi-directional meter measures both the power flowing into the building from the utility company, and the power flowing out from the solar system to the grid. The bi-directional meter measures and records the flow of energy in two directions which allows TriUU to get credits on their electric bill for the surplus solar energy produced that is exported to the grid.

To begin the installation, workers will attach “racks” to TriUU’s metal roof. The solar panels will be attached on top of the racks with the electrical connections and conduits underneath. Once the solar panels are in place, the system’s electrical connections are tied to the outside meter and TriUU’s main electrical panel.

In Florida, solar installations must be grid-tied. Off-grid systems are only allowed in specific remote locations. Connecting the solar system to the utility company’s grid allows for “net metering,” which is a billing agreement between the customer and the utility company. With net metering, a solar customer is billed for the “net” amount of electricity consumed—the difference between what they use and what they generate—rather than just their total consumption.

“For the church, financially, it’s a winner,” Bruce Twiss, TriUU’s vice president, announced to the Building and Grounds and the Green teams.

Once installation is completed, the solar system will not go into effect immediately. It will be subject to electrical and mechanical inspections by Marion County.

Once all inspections are approved, the utility company will send out a technician to swap out the traditional meter with a new bi-directional meter. Once those steps have been completed, the system will be granted PTO, a solar term for “Permission to Operate”.

Installation of the solar panels has been made possible through a Terra Energy leasing program called “subscription solar” that makes solar possible with no investment or added insurance costs. As part of the arrangement, Terra Energy agreed to help TriUU with the much-needed roof repair and provided half of the cost (\$1,900).

“The main attraction of the Terra Energy program is no upfront costs from TriUU,” Twiss said.

Currently, the average electric bill for TriUU is over \$600 a month. After “permission to operate” the solar system has been obtained, TriUU will pay a leasing fee of \$299/month, resulting in significant monthly savings for TriUU. With utility rate hikes predicted, these savings will increase over time.

The main attraction of the Terra Energy program is no upfront costs from TriUU, Twiss said. TriUU this year has budgeted \$7,200 for electricity. How much TriUU will save is unknown at this time, according to Tom Murphy, who heads TriUU’s Finance Team. Terra Energy estimates residential savings at 50 percent.

The contract with Terra Energy calls for an annual rate increase of 1.9 percent. That amounts to \$6, Twiss said. Compare that to Duke Energy rate increases of as much as 20 percent in any given year in the residential market.

Leasing is especially good for the nonprofit community and similar groups that have limited means to install solar, according to Ms. Elwell. Terra Energy has more than 8,000 customers in North America and has installed more than 170,000 solar panels, according to the company website.



Joyce Axelson, Meditation Leader, Finds Joy Leading TriUU Devotees

By Lenore Mickelson
Communications Team Leader

Joyce Axelson has been leading a one-hour silent Buddhist Meditation group two or three times a month for the last year. She continues the practice begun by our former minister, Reverend Cynthia.

When I talked to her recently she said, “I appreciate the quiet space to practice Buddhist Meditation in our building, a safe haven, a Sangha, a place of peace. In this time of increased angst and unknowing, a meditation practice can be helpful to center and focus on our state of mind, body, and spirit. This form of meditation seems to be very helpful to people throughout the world.”

The practice is not just sitting in a circle in silence. Forms differ from session to session.

We are invited to improve our skill in concentrating and steadying the mind (as that) is the basis for all types of meditation.

“Mindfulness, consciousness of what thoughts are swirling in the mind, is so helpful,” Joyce said.

Recently, the class began a study of the teachings of Kuan Yin, revered in Buddhism as the compassionate saviouress, the Bodhisattva of

Mercy. Beloved as a mother figure and divine mediator, she is close to the daily affairs of her devotees. Here is the meditation schedule through the end of the year. The class is open to everyone, and Joyce hopes you will join her as the starting point is considered to be where each person’s study begins.



Meditation Schedule At TriUU, Fall 2025

September

Thursday, September 4, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Thursday, September 18, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

October

Thursday, October 2, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Thursday, October 16, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Thursday, October 30, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

November

Thursday, November 13, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Thursday, November 20, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

(Note date change above)

December

Thursday, December 4, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Thursday, December 18, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.



Alarms are Going Off, Literally; Please Lock all TriUU Doors

There is an ongoing problem with doors being left unlocked at the TriUU building.

For the people who have keys to the building, locking up is an important task that cannot be hurried. A missed step could mean that a crime of opportunity happens, and it may cause responders the time and trouble of a trip to the building to find out what's amiss.

First, the signal is transmitted to the alarm company central station, and someone there notifies a member of the Building and Grounds Team, but if there's no answer, police are dispatched.

Bruce Twiss, leader of Building and Grounds, recommends these steps: shutting off all lights, turning off small appliances, and closing all interior doors, then setting the alarm and quickly leaving the building by the front doors. There is a short alarm delay for the front doors. Last, be sure both front doors are latched and locked.

~From a Report by Bruce Twiss
Submitted by Lenore Mickelson

Book Club To Discuss "Entitlement"

"Entitlement" by Rumaan Alam (2024, 284pp) – Fiction

Cindy Grossman will facilitate a discussion of TriUU's Book Club September selection, "Entitlement" on Sept. 29 at 1 p.m.

The book examines the American imagination regarding need and worth, race and privilege, philanthropy and generosity, passion and obsession as the protagonist goes about her job of helping a billionaire dispose of his wealth. Nancy Garrison is the contact for this event.



Alison Wohler

The following Chalice Reading was written by the Rev. Alice Wohler. Before becoming a Unitarian minister, Wohler was a working scientist and spent 19 years as an art gallery owner. She has a BS in Biology from Allegheny College and an MDiv from Andover Newton Theological School, now part of Yale Divinity School.

Chalice Readings

With thankful hearts we have

Come together this morning

To bask in the warmth of the community

To share with friends the tides of our lives

To entertain perennially our hopes

For a better future.

We come together as always

To resist injustice and

Inequality, wherever they may be found.

We come here to be together in

Companionship and love

Compassion and service.

Contributed by Joan Sheppard



Are You That Person?

Social Justice Team Needs a Leader; Here's a Summary of What They Do

By Joyce Mills



One of the most visible groups at TriUU is the Social Justice Team that needs a leader and volunteers to help its members who are serving TriUU and the local community. This is where you can make a difference daily with your actions.

~Carole Clarke is the contact for the Dallas Community, with Gretchen Lewis assisting to assign a congregant to transport a resident to an appointment. Are you on the list to transport residents? Carole also volunteers at a clinic in Wildwood and provides translation when needed.

~One of the greatest joys of this team is the Fifth Sunday Special Collection for a local 501c3 agency. On June 29, \$1747 was donated for the Minister's Discretionary Fund for congregants in need. Two more fifth Sundays occur this calendar year. Aug. 31 was donated to the Trade School Scholarship Fund. The most recent recipient was awarded a scholarship for \$1,000 to study phlebotomy at Southern Technical Institute in Tavares. Nov. 30 the collection will be contributed to The Villages Martin Luther King, Jr., Scholarship Fund. Helene Kirschbaum is TriUU's representative to the Fund's Commemorative Scholarship Committee, serving to review applications by students for scholarships. She sells tickets to TriUUers to attend the January Scholarship Breakfast

~Holiday Giving Trees are adorned with ornament requests for local children who are needy or homeless and for children in the Dallas community. Cynthia Alicea and others have delivered gifts from congregants.

~Linda Bobbitt and Phil Montague make a trip weekly with your donations to the Community of Gratitude Food Bank in Ocklawaha.

~Joyce Mills often takes donated clothing to Veterans Helping Veterans, Hospice, Humane Society, Salvation Army or Interfaith in Ocala. Some clothing can be taken to a school for their clothes closets for children. Joyce will also take your donated unopened over-the-counter medications and supplies to local clinics. Personal care items usually find homes in a school clinic or The Interfaith Emergency Center for the homeless.

~The Bus Brigade Project in July and August serves to collect school supplies for children to ensure they are prepared for success.

~Sally Bethart and Liz Perdue, supported by Helene and Reverend Kristina, developed activities to increase understanding and support for those in the LGBTQ+ community and to meet requirements to recertify TriUU as a Welcoming Congregation.

~Actions organized by individuals include voting petitions prepared by Nancy Garrison and viewing the Oscar winning FILM "No Other Land" at TriUU to increase awareness of the war in Palestine, presented by Cindy Grossman. Another congregant hosted a meeting in her home to enhance support of the humanitarian needs of Palestinians. Many congregants have attended rallies, written letters, and made phone calls to express our values in the local communities. Thank you for your generous donations of food, clothing, medicines, school supplies, gifts, and cash that demonstrate your recognition of our part in making life better because we are here and can. Thank you for representing TriUU at rallies, signing petitions, and being present. We are active in our social support for local community needs.

Can you direct our efforts to expand our activities to some of the larger justice issues facing us as citizens of the state and the country?



UNITARIANS WHO BECAME FAMOUS

“Give what you have. To someone, it may be better than you dare to think.” — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Longfellow (1807–1882), a poet and educator, was America’s first celebrity. His original works include the poems "Paul Revere's Ride", "The Song of Hiawatha" and "Evangeline." He was born into a Unitarian family in Portland, Maine, and remained a Unitarian all his life. He was greatly admired and later vilified as a plagiarist by Edgar Allan Poe, who appeared to be seeking publicity for himself. Upon the death of Poe, Longfellow wrote, "The harshness of his criticisms I have never attributed to anything but the irritation of a sensitive nature chafed by some indefinite sense of wrong."



UR Invited to “UU & U”

Eileen McCabe and Tom Murphy will host a “ UU & U” gathering at their home on Friday, Sept. 26, from 5-7 p.m.

It is a favorite TriUU custom to get together at Members’ and Friends’ homes in a relaxed setting. The name “UU & U” is new.

There is a sign-up sheet on a back table in the Chalice Room. Guests are welcome to bring a side dish to compliment the turkey, ham, and plant-based entrées that Eileen will prepare.

Contact Eileen McCabe or Andrea Coburn if you have questions. If you are interested in hosting something similar in the coming months, please contact Andrea Coburn. Hosts choose the date, time, and share information as to the number of guests that can be accommodated, refreshments, and any other pertinent information.



Tom Murphy & Eileen McCabe



New Website Is Taking Shape

The Communications Team has been watching our new website being built for the past year. The team realized that the current one is not doing the job, and our website administrator and all-round techie, Myra Symons, needed relief. She couldn't keep the old jalopy together any longer. Ken Pond was hired to create a site with a fresh look. His background is in filmmaking, photography, design, and music production.

Phase 1 is finished, and it includes our minister speaking in a video to site visitors. Now Ken is working on Phase 2.



Volunteers Keep TriUU Clean and Functioning

Ten volunteers reported to TriUU for the quarterly clean-up day recently to clean the kitchen, place five stones in the Memorial Garden, and perform regular maintenance duties. And that isn't all. Other work included weeding concrete

seams in walkways, cleaning windows, straightening and leveling all wall hangings, and hanging

a poster showing 100 famous Unitarian Universalists. Volunteers put their backs into trimming, weeding, and fertilizing the Pollinator Garden, sweeping walkways, realigning indoor seating, and inspecting fire extinguishers. Bruce Twiss leader of the Buildings and Grounds Team, thanked the volunteers for their efforts and mentioned how many hands make light work in the ongoing care and upkeep of TriUU.

Periodic cleaning and maintenance keep TriUU looking and functioning its best.

Please take note as you walk through the main entrance into the sanctuary the next time you visit TriUU.



Bruce Twiss

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this month's newsletter. Special recognition goes to Lenore Mickelson, Communications Team Leader, who has been diligent in reporting the good works of our Teams. My thanks also to UU member Jeff Tatarka who quickly learned the layout process using Canva and who created this new look for our Newsletter as we head into our second year of publication.

~Marie Lujanac





Jerry Slosser
August 9, 1938 – July 20, 2025

Jerry Slosser benefited many lives over his 86 years as a teacher, life-long student, an a talented, gifted Renaissance man and Unitarian. He developed and implemented TriUU's Policy and Operations Manual, crafted our Mission statement, served as president, stepped up wherever needed, and guided our membership through his insight and wisdom. He is missed.

Memorial Service Sept. 13 at 11 a.m.

ZOOM LINK TO JERRY SLOSSER'S MEMORIAL:

<https://zoom.us/j/95575813618?pwd=OTbTWY8odWHobB6aGl5UjC1g850OUB.1>



TRI-UU FORUM

“ POWER FROM THE SUN”



**Susan Elwell, a solar specialist,
outlines money-saving steps involved
in building a solar energy system,
and the multiple ways that
businesses, non-profits, and
homeowners may benefit.**

Thursday, September 11th, 4:00

**at Tri County Unitarian-Universalist,
7280 SE 135th St. Summerfield, Fl.**