

## = Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington =

Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington ( UUCA ) , historically known as the Unitarian Church of Arlington , is a Unitarian Universalist church located at 4444 Arlington Boulevard ( U.S. 50 ) in Arlington County , Virginia . Founded in 1948 , UUCA was the first Unitarian church in Washington , D.C. ' s suburbs . Throughout its history , UUCA has taken part in progressive causes from the Civil Rights Movement to the legalization of same @-@ sex marriage in Virginia . During the Civil Rights Movement , UUCA was the only Virginia church to speak out in favor of racial integration . UUCA 's sanctuary building , designed by local architect Charles M. Goodman in 1964 , is a concrete Brutalist structure that was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register in 2014 . It is one of only three church buildings designed by Goodman and the only one in Virginia .

## = = History = =

In the early 1940s , leaders from All Souls Church , established in 1821 as the first Unitarian church in Washington , D.C. , encouraged its suburban members to start new Unitarian communities in their respective areas . The first one established in the suburbs was the Unitarian Church of Arlington with support and funds from the " mother church " , All Souls . The first meeting was held in George A. Collier 's home , located at 832 South Courthouse Road , on September 16 , 1943 . The following services were held in various spaces on Sunday afternoons so members could still attend the morning services at All Souls . Meeting spaces included the Buckingham Community Room , Ashton Heights Women 's Club , and Kate Waller Barrett School . Gilbert A. Phillips , an associate pastor at All Souls , became the Arlington church 's minister in 1946 . Membership of the Arlington congregation reached 117 by 1948 while the church school had an enrollment of 103 . That same year members voted to establish their own independent church . Their approved resolution stated : " Be it therefore resolved that the Board of Trustees be petitioned to terminate the Fellowship as an instrumentality of All Souls Church as of March 31 , 1948 , and be it further resolved that this Fellowship then be organized as a Unitarian Church affiliated with the American Unitarian Association . "

As membership continued to grow , the congregation needed to find a permanent meeting place . The church purchased a 1 @.@ 07 acre ( 0 @.@ 43 ha ) lot at the intersection of present @-@ day Arlington Boulevard and South George Mason Drive . In November 1948 , ground was broken on the church 's first building , located at 4451 1st Place South , with assistance from the American Unitarian Association which gave the congregation a \$ 15 @,@ 000 loan . The original building was designed by architect and church member Earl B. Bailey . It was a brick Colonial Revival building containing an auditorium , a kitchen , an office for the minister , and a few meeting rooms . The first service in the new building was held in June 1949 and it was dedicated on October 2 . By 1950 , church membership had reached almost 250 . The success of the Arlington church convinced All Souls minister Arthur Powell Davies to establish the Greater Washington Association for Unitarian Advance ( later renamed the Greater Washington Association for Unitarian Universalist Churches ) in 1950 . The organization was founded to assist with establishing additional Unitarian congregations in the Washington , D.C. metropolitan area , and All Souls and the Arlington church were its first members .

In 1953 a religious education wing , also designed by Bailey , was added to the church building , increasing the size of the auditorium and adding classrooms and offices . By the following year the church building had already reached its capacity and the congregation began holding two services on Sundays . The church school , with an enrollment of over 500 , also began holding two services on Sundays . The church purchased adjoining property and in 1958 constructed the parsonage , a one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half story brick Colonial Revival building . By 1959 , there were eight Unitarian congregations in Washington , D.C. ' s suburbs , with the Arlington church being the largest . The congregation began planning for a new facility and chose Charles M. Goodman , a prominent local architect known for his modernist work , to design the church building . A church

committee wrote that it was " confident that Mr. Goodman 's concept of design , his wide experience , and his original and creative genius promise for us a distinctive building which will portray in structural form the spirit and aspiration of this congregation . " Church leaders invited the congregation to give suggestions for Goodman 's design which included " an architectural style which would express the inspiring tradition of Unitarianism in Virginia " and a " free form and no stained glass , [ resulting in ] a building to represent our cleavage with the past . " The congregation wanted the building to " reflect their liberal , progressive beliefs and that would signify the UUCA 's leadership position within the denomination . " According to one UUCA minister , " Charles Goodman spent a lot of time with the congregation and incorporating the values and theology of the congregation into the design of the building . " Goodman finished his design in late 1961 and the church began seeking financing shortly thereafter . His design included plans for a main sanctuary and adjoining wing , the latter which was not built at the time due to budget concerns . Construction of the sanctuary was carried out by the Martin Brothers contracting firm . The total cost was approximately \$ 300 @, @ 000 , and the dedication was held on March 22 , 1964 , with a sermon by Dana McLean Greeley entitled " Building a Faith for the Future . " UUCA 's sanctuary is one of only three churches designed by Goodman and his only church building in Virginia . His other two church designs are Bethesda United Church of Christ in Bethesda , Maryland , and Christ Church of Washington ( now called Embassy Church ) in Washington , D.C.

In the mid @-@ to @-@ late 1960s , attendance at church services and enrollment at the church school experienced dramatic decreases . The congregation replaced their minister and began a campaign to attract new members . Attendance gradually increased over the next several years and by 1974 , membership had reached 724 . The church continued to thrive throughout the next decade and by the late 1980s , church members decided more space was needed . The congregation held meetings regarding the church expansion throughout the next several years . Finally , in 1993 , members approved the construction of an addition to the sanctuary . The new wing , designed by Kerns Group Architects of Washington , D.C. and built by Dustin Construction , Inc. of Gaithersburg , Maryland , was dedicated on October 2 , 1994 . The addition included classrooms and office space , a chapel , and meetings rooms . The design of the new wing was praised by architectural critics and Kerns Group Architects received an Excellence in Architecture award from the American Institute of Architects 's Virginia chapter . An additional expansion , designed by Intec Group of Fairfax , Virginia , and built by Sully Construction of Sterling , Virginia , was added in 2013 and includes a hall space and multipurpose activity room . UUCA 's 1964 sanctuary was listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register in September 2014 and the National Register of Historic Places on November 19 , 2014 , following a two @-@ year effort for the building to be named a historic landmark . One of the church 's leaders said " We 're hoping by it being put on the national registry , people will realize that the physical presence of a group in a community matters . It says something to the world . " The 900 @-@ member congregation is currently led by Aaron McEmrys , a former union representative , and Linda Olson Peebles , an artist and musician who served on the Unitarian Universalist Board of Trustees for eight years and officiated the first same @-@ sex marriage in Virginia in 2014 . Prominent members , past and present , at UUCA include Representative William R. Ratchford of Connecticut and Arlington County Board Member Jay Fissette , Virginia 's first openly gay elected official .

= = = Activism = = =

Like other Unitarian congregations , UUCA is a liberal church that has been active in social justice causes and interfaith dialogue throughout its history . When UUCA was founded , church leaders wrote " Our Church like all Unitarian Churches , is dedicated to the progressive transformation and ennoblement of individual and social life through religion , in accordance with the advancing knowledge and the growing vision of mankind . " In 1949 , a time when most local organizations were segregated , the church operated a children 's summer camp open to all races . During the 1950s , the church was one of the few places in Northern Virginia where black and white individuals met to discuss race relations and ways to improve society . In 1951 , UUCA minister Ross Allen

Weston founded the Community Council for Social Progress , an interracial , interfaith group that promoted " full development of democratic principles in human relationship " . UUCA 's members were active during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s , protesting against segregation and other unfair treatments of minorities . UUCA minister Weston , who was also president of the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice , even received a letter of gratitude from Martin Luther King , Jr . Following the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision , *Bolling v. Sharpe* , which made segregation in Washington , D.C. ' s public schools illegal , Virginia Governor Thomas B. Stanley sought input from the state 's citizens . UUCA was the only Virginia church who spoke out in favor of integration .

In October 1958 , the church received a bomb threat the morning of a sermon by Rabbi Emmet A. Frank of Temple Beth @-@ El . This was part of a larger effort by the American Nazi Party , headquartered in Arlington , to intimidate synagogues and other institutions affiliated with or friendly towards Judaism . The bomb threat was widely condemned by area churches and the Arlington congregation released a statement saying it would not be intimidated , harassed , or coerced to change the way it practiced religion . The church continued to support civil rights causes in the 1960s , registering black voters from Arlington County , and renaming its 1949 building ( now demolished ) Reeb Hall in honor of James Reeb , an All Souls minister who was killed by segregationists while protesting in Selma , Alabama . Since the 1970s , church members have continued to advocate social justice causes including , but not limited to , environmentalism , women 's rights , LGBT rights , and affordable housing . One of UUCA 's most prominent projects was the Culpepper Garden Senior Center , a nonprofit retirement housing community for low @-@ income senior citizens , which opened in 1975 and has expanded since then . From the 1990s until it was demolished in 2011 , Reeb Hall was rented out to nonprofit groups including the Northern Virginia chapter of Habitat for Humanity and Arlington Street People 's Assistance Network . Since the 1990s , Kol Ami , a Reconstructionist Jewish community , has met at UUCA in the library and fellowship rooms .

= = Design and location = =

The church is located on a 3 @.@ 97 acre ( 1 @.@ 61 ha ) lot on the southwest corner of Arlington Boulevard ( U.S. 50 ) and South George Mason Drive near the Arlington Forest neighborhood . The property extends south to First Place South , a residential street where the church parsonage is located . A large parking lot , where Reeb Hall once stood , is on the south and west sides of the property . Church attendees access the building 's 1994 wing from the parking lot via concrete walkways and a concrete pedestrian bridge beneath a steel canopy . South of the church is the Memorial Wall and Garden , dedicated in 1996 . The landscaped garden includes concrete walls , paths , and benches . Concrete blocks inscribed with the names of church members are also found throughout the garden . South of the garden is a playground , built in 2007 , that is enclosed by a wooden fence . The 1964 sanctuary , which faces the road intersection , is on the northeast corner of the property on a wooded knoll .

UUCA is composed of three sections : the 1964 sanctuary is a rectangular @-@ shaped , two @-@ story reinforced concrete building ; the 1994 addition is a two @-@ story rectangular @-@ shaped concrete structure on the south side of the sanctuary ; the 2013 addition is a two @-@ story square @-@ shaped concrete structure on the east side of the 1994 addition and southeast corner of the sanctuary . The two additions " complement the original building in their scale , style , material , and fenestration pattern , and fulfill Goodman ' s original plans to expand the church with additional space for educational , administrative , and social functions . " They are set back and at a lower height in deference to the sanctuary .

The sanctuary is a precast concrete building designed in the brutalist style . It features an overhanging concrete flat roof , concrete block foundation , and corrugated concrete wall panels . Square clerestory windows are on the north , east , and west sides of the building 's top level and narrow fixed @-@ light windows are on the first floor . The east and west sides of the sanctuary are five bays wide while the north and south sides feature three bays , a large central bay with a smaller

bay on each side . The bays are defined by tall concrete columns , spaced 16 feet ( 4 @. @ 9 m ) apart , that stand from the ground to the underside of the roof . Pale blue wooden doors flanked by black wooden frames provide access to the sanctuary while there are two narrow doors on the north side . The main entrance to the sanctuary is on the south side where the 1994 addition is sited . The 1994 addition runs along the entire south side of the sanctuary and extends west past the building . It is a 26 @, @ 000 sq ft ( 2 @, @ 400 m<sup>2</sup> ) building that includes a social hall , classrooms , and office space . Like the sanctuary , the 1994 addition features a flat roof and concrete foundation . The concrete walls are a lighter color than the sanctuary and are also smoother . A one @- @ story terrace was originally on the southeast corner of the 1994 addition , but this was replaced by the 2013 addition , named the Celebration Center . The Celebration Center is also faced with light @- @ colored concrete and has a random @- @ coursed stone facing on its east side . Similar to the sanctuary , it features an overhanging roof and wrapping clerestory windows .

The sanctuary 's meeting space measures 62 feet ( 19 m ) by 62 feet and features a polished reinforced concrete floor set in a large grid pattern . The north , east , and west walls are faced with beige brick while the ceiling is exposed concrete . The sanctuary 's design allows for the meeting space to have natural lighting which is complimented by patterned rows of light fixtures along the ceiling . The fixtures are the original black @- @ painted , metal cylinders designed by Goodman . A 2 @. @ 5 foot ( 0 @. @ 76 m ) high concrete platform stage , now covered with wood , is on the north wall . It features a wheelchair ramp obscured by a decorative wood screen . Seating in the meeting space is composed of padded , moveable pews and chairs . There are two staircase lobbies on the south side of the meeting space that lead to the first floor . The east staircase provides access to the choir balcony via concrete dogleg stairs and an elevator installed in 1974 . Goodman chose to place the choir on the south side of the space because he considered it " the most desirable location for a choir . " The balcony features stepped stairs for choir members and a large pipe organ . The ground floor is a north @- @ south corridor plan with an east @- @ west corridor on the south side giving access to the staircases . The lower floor , which includes meeting and storage spaces , features concrete floors in most areas , concrete block dividing walls , and concrete ceilings .