from the President...

A Special Service

On Sunday, November 12th, the Reverend Kirk Ballin, the settled minister of UUCR from 1987 to 1999, was conferred the status of Minister Emeritus of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke. It was the first time that this church has conferred such an honor.

At the service, eight former Board Presidents sat in the choir section as RevAlex explained the honor and the perks that came with that title. Forty years of experience and wisdom looked on as some of Reverend Ballin’s accomplishments were listed.

It dawned on me that this was an extraordinary event, an service that spanned three generations: the generation that knew the old church as home and then moved that home here; the generation that hired Reverend Ballin and bade him farewell; and the generation that has had highs and lows since.

When the time came for comments, some of the past Presidents shared some memories of Kirk and the church as it was a generation ago. Some of the comments were emotional, some were humorous, and one involved a donut with a cream-filled hole (thank you, Mary Boenke)! All the comments were heartfelt.

As Kirk took the pulpit, I felt a surge of pride as I watch the audience, which ranged in age from 20s to 90s. An energy seemed to be passing from Kirk and the Presidents to the members watching. I realized that the service not only honored Kirk, it gave each generation a window into the two other generations. It was a bonding that we surely needed. Kirk’s melodic benediction caused me to lose it for a second. Forty years flooded through my thoughts and I was proud.

Spike Harrison
Growing up in Roanoke the first five years of my life, my family did no holiday making at this time of year. This was because my father, non-religious (i.e., atheist) was very bah! humbug! No Christmas tree, no gifts, no nothing except he did get the day off from work.

My mother didn't like this. She was Christian and from a large Glenvar family (she the baby of 14 children) who, though poor, did Christmas with gusto. Didn't matter if her family had little or nothing, they'd gather multiple times each December to share food, song (they loved harmonizing!) and joke-filled story-telling. Thinking back on it all, it's clear that my mother's family understood one another to be great gift.

My father ended up being moved to "accept Jesus" as his savior because of my mother's family's good energies. And with this conversion he had, we got Christmas! I remember with sharp detail our first family tree and the bicycle I got, over in our little house on Mountain View Terrace. It was great!

Over the lifetime that's followed, I've had winter holiday seasons that were full of much merry-making and winter holiday seasons that were almost completely lacking any festivity. In the two Decembers following my coming-out as a gay man, I spent the holidays alone, shut out from family that was struggling to accept my truth. I remember the first of those two Decembers well, particularly when I awoke alone on Christmas for the first time in my life, knowing that I had no plan to be with anyone for the day. I was tearful at times, feeling great pity for myself. But I was also fortunate in that the very family that was shutting me out had taught me two practices that served me well in my aloneness. One was to get up and move when feeling down - I spent hours that Christmas Day walking the streets of Lancaster, PA, through blowing snow showers. The other was that it's important to do for yourself at Christmas just as you do for others - I made myself a holiday meal, bought myself a present, and sang Christmas carols alone. It was poignant work that, though fraught with tears, strengthened me. I know now that Christmas will always be good and precious for me no matter my life circumstance.

My hope for each of you, and all the good peoples with whom we share in life, is that the holidays, whichever they might be, will have about them practices that make for "holiness" no matter what. Holiness is that which makes whole. And more good. And more joyful.

I am so thankful for the gift of each of you in my life.
Wishing you the holiest of holidays!
Much heart, RevAlex
Upcoming Worship

December 3 - "Our Winter Holidays - A Hopeful Perspective" with RevAlex
(This is New Member Sunday! All Church Potluck follows our Worship Service!)
Many are of cynical perspective on our cultural practice of winter holiday celebration. Rampant materialism and commercialism have frozen many a heart. In today’s worship, we wrestle with why, despite all that’s not right with our winter holidays, that it may still be important for us to celebrate. Come, come to know the goodness of being with others who yearn for more faith, hope and love! New Member Potluck. Bring a dish to share and stay after the service for a potluck to get to know our new members! Sponsored by the Connections Team!

December 10 - "Our Winter Holidays - The Opportunities of Controversies & Challenges!" with RevAlex
In today’s worship, we unpack specific commentary on what's wrong with our culture's winter holidays celebrations. It’s a Sunday to draw on Scrooge’s "Bah! Humbug!" refrain (from the imagination of Charles Dickens, our fellow Unitarian). Your ever-optimistic minister hopes that by tackling the specific objections, we might free ourselves to more fully embrace the potentials. Come, Come to be of critical mind and hopeful heart!

December 17 - "Celebrating Winter Solstice and Paganism!" with RevAlex
(This is an All RE Sunday on which our children will be making holiday candles during worship.) This is also our Annual UUCR Cookie Exchange Sunday when you’re invited to "bring a dozen, or more, and take home a dozen!") No winter holiday celebration offers us UUs greater unrealized gift than does the Winter Solstice with its deep, dark pagan heritage. In today’s worship, we will strive for poignant and meaningful engagement of a holiday practice predating our history. The hope is to awaken ourselves as congregation to opportunities for growth, empowerment and enrichment. Come, Come to open a holiday gift!

December 24, 2017 - 11:00 a.m. - "Christmas Eve!" with Our UUCR Children, Choir and RevAlex
We gather for intergenerational worship on this Sunday. Our children will be front and center, sharing gifts of music and craft with us. We’ll be retelling stories of the season. We’ll be caroling. We’ll be celebrating the great goodness of belonging that comes of congregation. Come, Come in the hope of gladness made manifest in all we do!

December 24, 2017 - 6:00 p.m. - "Christmas Eve Candlelight Service!" with Our Choir & RevAlex
We do lessons and carols tonight. Our service will be brief, no more than forty minutes long. We’ll end our worship with our traditional congregational candle-lighting and wishing to one another greetings of the season before heading back to our homes. Come, Come whomever you are...

December 25, 2017 - 11:00 a.m. - "Christmas Day!" with Rosalie Sutherland and RevAlex
We remember the Christian story of the Christ child in today's worship. We'll share in a story and caroling. We'll hope for renewal of human spirit in all places, for all people. Come, Come to make Christmas!

December 31, 2017 - 11:00 a.m. - "All Good Gifts" with Kerry Morgiewicz and Bill Bestpitch
Kerry Morgiewicz and Bill Bestpitch are planning service and if you would like to share a musical or other talent, or if you are willing to share a goal of accomplishing something new for you in 2018, not just a resolution you made have made in the past and perhaps struggled to keep, contact Kerry at kmorgiewicz@uuroanoke.org or Bill at billbestpitch@gmail.com.
Lifespan Faith Development News

Adult RE
Sundays | 9:30 am: Living the Questions Class, Olin Room
Join us as we continue with the Lloyd Geering's book Coming Back To Earth, From gods, to God, to Gaia. This intriguing survey of religious history continues Dec 3, 10, and 17. Each participant is urged to purchase their own book. If you have any questions, contact Gene Edmunds - gene.edmunds@gmail.com

Children and Youth RE
Sundays | 11:00 am: Worship Service and Children's RE

- Ages 0-3: Nursery playtime!
- Pre-K, The Rainbow Connection
- Grades K-2, Dr. Seuss
- Grades 3-5, Hogwarts: Promotion of the winter clothing drive.
- Grades 6-8, The Twilight Zone

Sundays | 5:00 pm: YRUU
Our youth-directed high school youth group. We will meet on December 3, 10, and 17.
Upcoming:

**December 3, 10, 17** - After the worship service, children will meet briefly from 12:15-12:45 in the Broker room for Kids' Christmas Music Rehearsal. All are welcome!

**December 6** at 7 pm RevAlex will host a movie night in the Olin Room

**December 10** - After the worship service there will be an OWL Parent Information Meeting at 12:30 in the YRUU Room. A monthly *Our Whole Lives* sexuality education class will be offered for 8th and 9th graders beginning in January 2018.

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**December Intergenerational Services:**

**Sunday Dec. 24** | 11 am Worship Service, nursery care provided
**Sunday Dec. 24** | 6 pm Christmas Eve Service, nursery care provided
**Monday Dec. 25** | 11 am Christmas Day Service, nursery care provided
**Sunday Dec. 31** | 11 am New Year's Eve Worship Service, NO child care provided (truly Intergenerational!!)

**Register:**
All children and youth need to be registered to fully participate in church activities. [goo.gl/forms/USiJWRSrj4Bg0LfN2](https://goo.gl/forms/USiJWRSrj4Bg0LfN2)

Volunteers are the heart of UUCR. Somewhere there is a need that matches your passion! Find out more at our ONLINE VOLUNTEER FORM [goo.gl/forms/eura8QFJkYE610Ph2](https://goo.gl/forms/eura8QFJkYE610Ph2)

THANK YOU!
The Green Team's Earth Friendly Friday presents...

Our Holiday Potluck Party
December 8, 2017 - 6:30 pm

Come share food, drink, and good times. With another year almost past, let's join together to celebrate our victories, comfort each other over our losses, put our challenges in fresh perspective, and have fun. This is our evening to party, so bring your favorite dish, and libations (alcohol welcome).

Also, as in the past two years, there will be Green Team Jeopardy. This year’s trivia questions will include quotes about nature by famous people and general questions about wildlife.

This program is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke and the Roanoke Group of the Sierra Club. Programs are held on the second Friday of each month at the UUCR. Snacks for the social time before and after the presentation are welcome, but not required. Bob Egbert at canyonlake76@gmail.com

For more information on The Green Team visit our web page:
uuroanoke.org/we-are-on-a-mission/green-team

Shared Ministry Committee (SMC)

The SMC committee members are Lynn Yates, Chair; Betsy Biesenbach, Anne Perrin, Don Wages, Barbara Bockner, and Esther Johnson. There will be no meeting in December. The first meeting of the new year will be January 23rd. Listening Circles originally scheduled for December 3, 7, and 10 have been postponed until January. Watch e-news and January Newsletter for dates. For further information about these topics and more, contact Lynn Yates at lyyates8@gmail.com
THANK YOU to all our volunteers!

December 3
Life Lines - Sally Garber
A/V - Adam Honeycutt
Head Usher - Moorman Robertson
Leader Greeter - Lydia Woerner
Coffee - Dennis McKinn

December 10
Life Lines - Jane Harrison
A/V - Betsy Biesenbach
Head Usher - Dick Hawkins
Lead Greeter - Judy Robertson
Coffee - Nora Smith
Recycling - Betsy Biesenbach

December 17
Life Lines - Sally Garber
A/V - Todd Hannabass
Head Usher - Dennis McKinn
Lead Greeter - Nancy Brattain
Coffee Team - James Rosar
Recycling - Bob Egbert

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service
Intergenerational Service
A/V - Betsy Biesenbach
Music - Choir with Kerry Morgiewicz

December 25 – 11 am Christmas Day service
Head Usher - Alice Davis

December 31
Life Lines - Judie Lallmang
A/V - Bob Egbert
Head Usher - Volunteer needed
Lead Greeter - Chris Yates
Coffee – Pam Yates

December RE Teachers and Youth Advisors –
Gary Crawford, Claire English, Pam Fisher, Anne Foulke, Margie Garber,
Spike Harrison, Cindy Honeycutt, Aidan Skye Jameson, Sharon Jameson, Nelson Lafon, Laura Latham, Bonnie Nelson,
Judy Nelson, Elizabeth Rigg, Kris Shandor, Kris Shelor, Samantha Swain,
Danielle Teague, Robert Wallenborn

Life Lines - Sally Garber
A/V - Bob Egbert
Head Usher - Jim Overholser
Lead Greeter - Eileen Lepro
Coffee – James Rosar
Are you Interested...

It takes a village to grow our community of faith, and volunteers are the heart of our village. We are here on this earth to help others, and there is always good work to be done. We love our volunteers and are looking for anyone to fill spaces or help where they feel led. Whether it be a one time, once a month, or recurring we appreciate you.

Coffee Committee
The Coffee committee has wonderful volunteers who prepare and help service coffee for Coffee Fellowship after each Sunday service. The Committee are looking for a few volunteers who can give one Sunday a month or every other month. If you are interested please attend the brief training from James Rosar on December 17 at 10 am prior to service. He will show anyone interested in volunteering how to prepare and what to do. For more information or questions please email the administrator at mbrauch@uuroanoke.org. Thank you!

LFD Clothing Drive begins
Our witches and wizards of Hogwarts will be fighting the evil of poverty. Please support and encourage them as they lead a collection of clothing and donations to benefit the Roanoke Refugee Partnership. Hats, mittens, scarves, cash donations, or checks are ideal. Please make checks payable to UUCR, with "Roanoke Refugee Partnership" in the memo line.

Teach Dr. Seuss!
Oh the places we've gone with stories, crafts, and song,
But Thing Two and Thing One are ready for vacation!
Could you be the fabled Thing Four or Thing Three?
There's room at our table in the SeUUs Family.

Pack a Snack
In the midst of the winter holiday season, there are growing needs for the Pack-A-Snack program. Urgent needs include: juice boxes, cereal and granola bars, and mac-n-cheese boxes. Your prompt attention is greatly appreciated, and we thank everyone who has donated. Contact Bonnie Evans with any questions at bevans@uuroanoke.org

Check out our Online Volunteer Form or write to aMoore@uuroanoke.org to start a conversation.
UUCR Holiday Outreach 2016

Friday, Dec 22 from 1–5 pm
Friday, Dec 29 from 1–5 pm

For those of you who want to join a mission group but may not be able to commit to a long-term project, this Outreach is for you. UUCR has the opportunity to make some local needy young people’s lives better over the Christmas holidays.

Nearly 200 students at Patrick Henry High School - our across-the-street neighbor - are homeless or wonder where their next meal will come from when school is not in session. Many of them have aged out of the programs that serve younger children, but can’t yet provide for themselves. The school’s PTA runs a Student Outreach program that offers food and clothing to these students while school is in session. However, on their two-week winter holiday break, these young people are on their own. On two consecutive Fridays, December 22 and 29, from 1 to 5 pm, our church will serve as a food pick-up location for these students.

Here’s how you can help:

- **We need a total of eight volunteers,** allowing two people in the building each day during pick-up hours, preferably working two-hour shifts to make up and distribute food bags.
- Most of the food will come from the Student Outreach Program, but we can always use more.
- We need food items in pop-top cans because the students may not have access to can openers, (pasta, fruit, soups, stews). Granola bars and packaged peanut butter or cheese crackers are also needed. No, these aren’t the healthiest foods, but they are calorie-dense, portable, and do not need preparation.
- We also need Kroger bags to put the food in.
- Extra cookies and treats are welcome. We would hand these out for a little extra Christmas cheer, or if you’d like to donate a bag of fresh fruit, it would be a real treat!

If you can donate any of these items, please leave them on a table in the Fellowship Hall marked “Outreach” and label them “PHHS Outreach Program”. This table will be available after Sunday for the remainder of the month.

If the church is closed, there will be a tub outside the back door for donations. Anything left over will be given back to the Student Outreach Program.

If you can help, please e-mail Betsy Biesenbach at beezinbox@aol.com or call 982-7892. Please call early for planning purposes to ensure we help our local youth.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Betsy
AmazonSmile for UUCR

Shopping on Amazon for the Holidays? Did you know that UUCR has a unique AmazonSmile link that makes it easier for people to find and support us? When customers click on our unique link, they skip the process to search for a charity to support among over one million eligible charities. Instead, they're taken to smile.amazon.com and are automatically asked if they want to support Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke. What is UUCR's unique link? [http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-3612007](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-3612007)

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**Reading Seeds**

**Christmas Sale! - Reading Seeds Fund-Raiser**

"So Many Books, So Little Time"

![Poster Image]

Cincinnati artist Dawna Boehmer has created a reading themed poster titled "So Many Books, So Little Time," and agreed to donate two-thirds of the proceeds from local sales of it to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Roanoke’s Reading Seeds mission to provide books to Head Start and elementary school children in our neighborhood. A book lover's poster, it is modeled after Jean-Honore' Fragonard's famous painting titled "A Young Girl Reading a Book."

The poster is pictured above, and can be viewed in the Fellowship Hall at UUCR. The artist, Dawna is the sister of UUCR member Bill Hackworth.

**Sizes Available:**
1) 20” by 16” posters are $40
2) 8” by 10” posters are $15
3) Laminated 6.5” by 5” bookmarks of the poster are $3
4) 20” by 16” “ABCs of Roanoke” posters - $25
5) Notecard sets of 10 of the popular “ABCs of Roanoke” poster - $15

Make checks payable to Bill Hackworth, and be sure to write a phone number on the check. Bill can be reached at 797-8998.
Caring Committee - Joys and Concerns

Contact Sally Garber with joys, concerns, or questions at jessgarber@comcast.net.

If you have a confidential joy or concern, and would like to share with the minister, put your request in the locked box on the podium located in the alcove next to the name tag board.

Jeannie Berger and Jason Garland-
Jeannie and Jason are set to get married on December 15th. Please congratulate them when you see them.

Bert Spetzler and Joanne Derryberry-
Wedding bells will ring for Joanne and Bert on December 23. Congratulations to them!

UUCR Housekeeping

Over the next month with so many events occurring, be sure to take with you any dishes from the kitchen after events. To schedule any events email Megan at mbrauch@uuroanoke.org. For safety and liability reasons there should not be anyone in the church without prior scheduling.

I want to give a sincere Thank You to all the volunteers who have helped with the building remodeling and maintenance for inside and outside grounds. This includes the UUCR Board members, my fellow staff members, and any volunteer I have been able to work with over the last year. It is a pleasure to work with everyone who has such a heart to build people up and grow. As UUCR’s administrator if I can be of any help, reach out to me anytime.

I hope everyone has a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Megan
Recurring Activities
Visit the website for more information. UURoanoke.org

Adult religious education classes
Classes are offered throughout the church year. Come join us; contact Alan Moore.
- **Living the Questions classes** are offered every Sunday from 9:30-10:30 am in the Olin room. Childcare will be provided. Contact is Gene Edmunds.
- A six-week series began in November and will run Dec 3, 10, and 17 to discuss Lloyd Geering's book *Coming Back To Earth, From gods, to God, to Gaia*. Each participant is encouraged to purchase your own book.
- We will skip two weeks then begin with a new series on January 7th.

Children religious education classes
A variety of classes are offered throughout the church year. See the LFD section and the website.

Youth Group religious education classes
The High School Youth group meets each Sunday from 5-7 pm in the YRUU room.

Board meetings
Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8:30 pm in the Olin room, and are open for all to attend. All Board reports are due on the first Monday of each month.

Choir(s)
There are several Choir groups holding practices and events throughout the year.
- **UUCR's Choir** is led by Music Director Kerry Morgiewicz, practices each Wednesday from 7-9 pm. There will not be a practice on December 27.
- **Goodenuf Choir**, led by Beth Caruthers, has practice beginning at 6 pm on Dec 5, 11, and 18 in the Olin room.
- **Children's Christmas rehearsals** will be on Dec 3, 10, and 17th after service in the Broker room. Email Kerry or Alan if interested.

Community Outreach Committees
- **Diversity Action Group** meet on Dec 3, from 12:30-1:30 pm in the Olin room. Contact Barbara Smith with questions at barbdave@cox.net.
- **Men's group** meets weekly on Thursdays from 12:30-1:30 pm in the Olin room for fellowship and lunch.
- **Women's group** will meet on December 7 and 21 from 11:30 am-1:30 pm in the YRUU room. For more information, contact Bonnie Nelson at 540.588.1452.
Ministry & Mission
The M & M committee decided to solicit another round of proposals for the Fund. The deadline for the proposals is December 3, 2017 at 12:15 p.m. (sharp). Contact Margie Garber at margiegarber@yahoo.com. The committee meets in the YRUU room on Dec 3rd from 12:15-1:15 pm.

Tai Chi and Meditation Groups
UUCR has two different groups that meet throughout the month and all are welcome.

- **Tai Chi (Qigong and Taijiquan class)** reduces stress, increases stamina, flexibility, coordination, balance, and much more. Students learn the move sequence of the Yang family style Taijiquan and much more. Your first class is Free. Classes are held every Monday from 6-7 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Contact Alan Armstrong at alan@alan-armstrong.com
- **Vipassna Meditation Group** meets every other Thursday from 6:30-8 pm in the Olin room. Each meeting begins with a presentation on the factors called the 5 Hindrances and equally relevant while meditating and negotiating the conflicts of everyday life. No prior experience is necessary. Contact is Mary Ann Koch at mapkoch@gmail.com
### Specific Upcoming Events

Recurring events are listed above. Visit the website for more information.

#### Saturday, Dec 2
- **9 am**  Bus to Water is Life Rally, Richmond, departing from UUCR
- **11 am-2 pm**  Deck the Halls of UUCR - with All the UUCR Elves! It’s a Saturday to decorate our building for the winter holidays. Join RevAlex, Ray, and UUCR’s elves as we make more holy this place we call our religious home. Brunch will be served! Children will be most welcome! Come, come for the fun of doing together!

#### Sunday, Dec 3
- **11 am**  LFD Clothing Drive; see RE section
- **12 - 2 pm**  New Member Potluck; Food tables are at the back of Sanctuary
- **12:15 pm**  Kids’ Christmas Music Rehearsal, Broker

#### Wednesday, Dec 6
- **7 pm**  Movie Night with RevAlex, Olin; "Get Out!"

#### Friday, Dec 8
- **6:30-8:30 pm**  Earth Friendly Friday Holiday Potluck Party

#### Sunday, Dec 10
- **11 am**  Special collection during worship to benefit Habitat for Humanity
- **12:15 pm**  Kids’ Christmas Music Rehearsal, Broker
- **12:30 pm**  OWL Parent Information Meeting, YRUU Room

#### Wednesday, Dec 13
- **7 pm**  Movie Night with RevAlex, Olin; Movie title TBA.

#### Sunday, Dec 17
- **10 am**  Coffee training with James Rosar, Kitchen
- **11 am**  Coffee training with James Rosar, Kitchen
- **12-2 pm**  Christmas Cookie Potluck during coffee hour! New twist on potluck! What is Christmas without Christmas Cookies! Bring a batch of your favorite cookies to share at Coffee hour after the service. Hosted by Connections Team.
- **12:15 pm**  Kids’ Christmas Music Rehearsal, Broker
- **12:30-2:00 pm**  LFD Council, YRUU Room

#### Tuesday, Dec 19
- **7-8 pm**  Special Performance with Star City Sounds Holiday Music, Everyone is welcome and open to the public; Fellowship Hall

#### Monday, Dec 25 - Tuesday, Dec 26
- **All Day**  Church office closed. Happy Holidays!

#### Wednesday, Dec 27 - Friday, Dec 29
- **All Day**  Church office closed but emails and messages will be checked.

#### Monday, Jan 1
- **All Day**  Church office closed. Happy New Year!