



December 2024
Volume 42, Issue 12

Crossroads



*Whatever traditions you celebrate during this time of year,
whether ancient or modern, traditional or not-so-traditional,
BRUU wishes you a warm and comforting season!*

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The monthly BRUU Newsletter



December Service Descriptions

December 1: *Buddhism: Being Centered for the Season* - Bodhi Day marks when the Buddha reached enlightenment after many years of practice. Buddhism utilizes many tools, that not only echo across many secular and sacred practices, but can provide comfort and centering during the busy-ness and chaos of the holiday season.

December 8: *Jewish Lesson* (Rabbi Liz Goldstein and Kristin Worthington) - Jewish Lesson Service.

December 15: *Music Service: Sharing the Light (MG)* (David Maley) - We will be celebrating the December holidays: Bodhi Day, Hanukkah, Christmas, Solstice, and Kwanzaa with music and candle lighting ceremonies. The service will feature the BRUU choir and musicians.

December 22: *Yule and Becoming a Constellation of Hope (MG)* (Annaliess Trommatter and CUUPS) - In the darkest night, even the smallest lights shine brightly. From cozy bonfires to awe inspiring auroras, there are many ways to illuminate the cold gloaming of winter. On this solstice, bring your darkness and your light to our Yule celebration of hope, music and ritual, and build a beacon of light for all to warm themselves by.

December 24 (Tuesday): *Christmas Eve (MG)* (Martin Crim Kathy Sobrio) - Christmas Eve candlelight service (7:00 p.m.). Lean into Christian and Catholic traditions of music, candles and celebrating the birth.

December 29: *New Year's with the Muirs (MG)* (Star and Janette Muir) - The Muir's Annual New Year's Service.

From the President's Desk

Angie Carrera, President, Board of Directors

Dear fellow congregants,

As we enter the holiday season, I hope your Thanksgiving holiday was filled with people and activities that are important to you. I'm excited to see that we have several events ahead that promise fun ways to connect over the holiday season. Now is a time for appreciating all that we have, including family and friends who are part of our lives, and remembering those we love who have passed on. We also need to keep in mind those friends who have lost someone special in their lives during this past year. Let's do our best to connect with those whose life circumstances have changed by letting them know we are all part of the BRUU community.

As usual, this time of year, the Board begins the process of providing guidance to the Finance Committee as to current budget priorities based on those articulated during development of BRUU's 5-year Strategic Plan discussion with the congregation. As you may know, the Board has been focused on several building issues.

While still in the process of drafting this guidance document, we've discovered an issue that needs our immediate attention and affect the guidance for FY26. Although Building and Grounds has determined some temporary solutions, I share this with you as it's important for you to be informed, as not everyone attended Sunday Service, in person or on zoom. But they are only temporary. The following paragraph is a summary of information reported by John Sunda.

This past Friday, one of our oil-fired steam boilers failed to start up. It may not be easily repaired or worth doing. It's clearly time to replace one or both 20-year-old heat pumps with high efficiency ones capable of producing heat at lower outdoor temperatures.. In the interim, we will use portable electric heaters in the affected rooms. Our ultimate goal is to retire the hot water boiler as well and use air source heat pumps wherever feasible. This event just

From the President's Desk, Continued

rearranges our priorities moving one or more to the top of the list.

The Building and Grounds Committee will keep us updated. In the meantime, please be sure to thank Mike Freeland, John and Christine Sunda and the B&G Team for keeping us warm as we celebrate the season. Also, we owe Mike a special “thank you” for working with Comcast to improve our internet capacity and reduce our telephone costs!

I look forward to seeing you at BRUU at the Christmas service and other beautifully crafted events celebrating the season.

Angie Carrera, President



Board Matters

November, 2024 Board Meeting

This scheduled meeting was held on November 21 at 7:00 p.m. in the BRUU Conference Room and may be available on Zoom, There was no Closed Executive Session.

At this meeting, the Board approved the Consent Agenda and reports from the President, Program Council, and Membership. The Staff meeting report was brief so was included in the President's Report. Attachments included: Perpetual Board Calendar - Draft 2 (revised Nov 2024), and a copy of FY24 Budget Guidance provided to committee chairs.

Please see BRUUnet KnowledgeBase for Board Meeting minutes, as well as attachments in support of the agenda and/or the reports.

- Staff Presentation: Taylor Johnson presented on her work as Office Administrator.
- Auction Report: Scott Maile reported that the auction raised \$38,445, (goal was \$30K) with \$15,000 outstanding. However, there may be checks that have not yet been processed. The Board approved Scott's proposal for a Never Ending Yard Sale, which can be operated via Auctria and will be a pilot from Dec 1, 2024 -Sept 30, 2025 - more details to be provided soon.
- Perpetual Board Calendar: Board members approved the revision to move dates for the:
 - November Town Hall (see Perpetual Board Calendar) and the Congregational Survey process which we expect to begin in January with a final report in April. However, this timing may not be in sync with ministerial availability for hire during 2025. (Please see Town Hall Q&A).
 - Nov. 10 Town Hall: Board reviewed feedback from the congregation and some items emerging from the Town Hall Q&A, including all ministerial exit interviews that the President has requested from UUA, UUA resources leadership training available, the timeline on the

Board Matters, Continued

Congregational Survey process, and a need to tweak our organizational structure now that the Reorganization is pretty complete with our seven core committees in place. Art Muirhead will discuss the latter at the Program Council and report at the December board meeting.

- Building and Grounds: Three items –
 - John reported that the cost for platform chair lift is \$88K to connect 1st and ground floors. The Fired Marshall needs to approve the lift before we can proceed. If the lift is acceptable, John will seek a second estimate.
 - John and Angie met with the roofing company to confirm contract details for necessary roof repair. It requires that the board allow Angie to sign a contingency contract to present a claim to our insurance company. If the insurance company approves the claim, it will obligate BRUU to pay the deductible. We will keep the congregation informed as to the status of this claim.
 - John reported a problem with the fascia (near the roof line) that needs to be repaired post haste and asks for approval for payment, which the Board approved.
- Budget Guidelines to Finance Committee: Angie, Josh & John will create a draft for finance guidelines. Note: Stewardship Team meets on Dec 14.

After approval by the Board, the full minutes of each board meeting (not the closed sessions) are available in the BRUUnet KnowledgeBase. Anyone interested in further information about the meeting may contact the President at

President@BRUU.org .

Adult Life Enrichment

Adult Life Enrichment (ALE) Monday

On Break for December

January 20, 2025

Dinner at 6 pm, Workshops at 7 pm

***Volunteers for set up and clean up are always welcome!
Contact Mary Kadlubowski at fellowship@bruu.org***

Monday ALE Coming ahead

January 20: Intro to Zumba

March 17: Ranked Choice Voting

Look for these in addition to Monday ALE

Sunday, January 19, 1-4 pm ***The Blanket Exercise:*** teaches the history of the colonization of North America from an Indigenous perspective.

Sunday, February 9, 11:45 pm ***Curator Tour, Albert Speiden Exhibit*** at the Manassas Museum

MUSIC SERVICE: "SHARING THE LIGHT"



Sunday, December 15th, 10:00am - We will be celebrating the December holidays: Bodhi Day, Hanukkah, Christmas, Solstice, and Kwanzaa with music and candle lighting ceremonies. The service will feature the BRUU choir and musicians. Congregants will share the special meaning the holidays hold for them.

BRUU Sangha - Meditation & Buddhism

Randy Earl

December 5th 7:00 – 8:30 PM Ann Deschamps will return to BRUU to teach on two related areas. Ann will teach Meditation and how Buddhist writings can provide a richer Meditation Practice.



Sitting meditation is all about simply being in the present moment without doing anything. Sounds simple right? Actually, most of us find it challenging. Why do we find it difficult to stop doing and just be? Please join us as we dive into everything you want to know about sitting meditation and find out why it is so beneficial.

Ann is currently in the Brown University Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) teacher Certification Program, and offers mindfulness classes in Reston, VA. Ann also works with another Sangha, Mindful Shenandoah Valley.

To support the BRUU Sangha, a Dana (generosity) offering will be accepted. More information about that later.

The Sangha will be meeting in the Flamingo Lounge. The session starts at 7:00 PM, please try to arrive several minutes early.

If you have not attended any of the Thursday Night Meditation Practices before, please email Sangha@BRUU.ORG to get additional information. You will need an access code to enter the building.

Planning Your New Years Resolutions

Cathy Ring

Build More Relationships!

Looking for an easy way to really get to know more BRUU folks – besides sitting next to them in the pew?

Consider becoming a member of the teams that are the Koffee Kitchen Krewe. One Sunday a month you team up with a couple of other BRUU members who set up and/or clean up the Fellowship Coffee Hour. No experience needed, just a willingness to learn a few health standard processes and kitchen machine buttons that create coffee and sanitize the mugs. Contact Cathy at

Kitchen@BRUU.org

OR— Consider being a Sunday morning Usher, one or two Sundays a month. You just arrive 15 minutes prior to the Service to welcome everyone as they arrive, handing them an Order of Service; providing hearing-assist headphones, help with accessibility issues, appropriate seating, and large print hymnals; and, lastly, processing the collection basket contents. Email: Worship@BRUU.org



Green Gift Guide 2024

Kaylee Rachford

The Green Team would like to encourage you to shop locally and consider options that reduce environmental impact this holiday season:

- Carbon Offset from [Terrapass](#). They offer a helpful guide on how to measure the appropriate quantity per recipient on the “gift” page.
- If you haven’t already visited our neighbor [Fillagreen](#), now is a great time! They are offering a 10% discount with coupon code “BRUU.” For gifting inspiration, check out their Holiday Gift Box Starter Set and personal care items such as lip balms and soaps.
- Grab a gift card or fill up a growler from [Old Bust Head Brewing Co.](#) This brewery located in Vint Hill prioritizes sustainability through use of their geothermal wells and carbon capture technology. Additionally, they will be hosting their annual Winter Market on December 7th 12-5pm featuring local artisan gifts.
- [Manassas Clay](#) not only sells beautiful handmade items, they also offer classes that would make for a fun experiential gift.
- [McKay Used Book Store](#) has an impressive selection of used books, records, comics, CD’s, board games, puzzles... and gift cards!
- [Plato’s Closet](#) is a thrift store curated to teens and young adults. They sell clothing, shoes and accessories. Unsure of what to pick out? They also sell gift cards!
- Equal Exchange Fair Trade goodies from the Green Team store. You'll find plenty of gifts such as chocolate bars, hot chocolate, nut butters, and coffee.
- For secondhand large and durable items, Facebook Marketplace can be a great resource for gently used gifts such as instruments, sports, and gym equipment.

Green Gift Guide 2024, continued

Experience Gift Ideas:

- Tickets to our [Chrysalis concerts](#) at BRUU, of course!
- Rock climbing classes at [Vertical Rock](#)
- Cooking classes with [Becky's Pixie Kitchen](#)

And for a DIY approach, join us on Saturday, December 14th, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. as we use our newly developed vegetable printing skills to create unique gift wrap. We will also be making handmade ornaments and crackers. This event is for all ages! Please RSVP to Kaylee at kayleerachford@gmail.com by Wednesday, December 11th.



Season of Giving

Martha Muirhead

Today begins a season of sharing and giving thanks. By the time you read this, Christmas will be less than a month away. We will exchange gifts of time and treasure with family and chosen family, including our BRUU family. Nothin' Fancy will fill the sanctuary with music and the pews with friends new and old. Untrim-A-Tree offers us the opportunity to share with children who otherwise might not find anything under the tree. The BRUU choir and orchestra prepares for the beautiful Holiday Music Service. We're even having a traditional Christmas Eve service.



Our annual canvass won't begin for a couple of months, but now is a good time to “discern” what BRUU means to us and what gifts of time and treasure you want to set aside for the work of the congregation in the next year. What kind of steward are we each called to be? Are you a Supporter, Sustainer, Visionary, or Transformer? You might be familiar with such categories from invitations from charitable institutions that show up towards the end of the year. The consulting firm Stewardship for Us defines these levels as indicated in the statements below. Which of these rings true for you? Just sit with the first sentence in each category and answer honestly. Which category best describes how you feel? The first three categories certainly ring true for me and I wish the last did as well, because we need to be able to fund transformation if we are going to do what this world needs. So, I urge you to ponder each description as part

Season of Giving, continued

of a process of discernment:

Supporter: “The congregation is a significant part of my spiritual and intellectual life that I want to support”. My fair share financial commitment starts at 2% of my income and rises to 6% as my income and capacity rise.

Sustainer: “The congregation is my central community; I am committed to sustaining the programs and ministries of my congregation.” My fair share financial commitment starts at 3% of my income and rises to 7% as my income and capacity rise.

Visionary: “My commitment is a clear demonstration of the unique importance of this congregation and of my spiritual principles.” My fair share financial commitment starts at 5% of my income and rises to 9% as my income and capacity rise.

Transformer: “I am deeply committed to the congregation; my contribution provides fuel for transformation and is part of my spiritual practices in living out my UU Principles.” My fair share financial commitment represents 10% of my income. Our generosity connects us to one another in relationships of interdependence and mutuality.

The stewardship canvass team will be sharing more thoughts over the next couple months. Until then, Happy Holidays,

Martha Muirhead, Canvass Convener

SASS Holly Daze Socials

Cathy Ring

SASS (The Society of Audacious Silver-haired Sisters) is now meeting on the **3rd Tuesday of each month**. On December 17 we will gather at 1:00pm in the Flamingo Lounge, rather than (traditionally) going out for lunch at Noon. This is, as always, open to members and friends of BRUU who enjoy getting together to chat and snack. Everyone is invited to bring sweets, snacks, and/or a beverage to share. Also come prepared to share a meaningful holiday memory, and feel free to wear your special sweater, socks, or knit cap.

Possible upcoming theater outing to see “Christmas Belles” at the Hylton, for a matinee show, on Dec 15th or 22nd will be discussed.

In October a group of BRUU SASS gals carpoled to Fredericksburg and toured the Gary Melcher Belmont Mansion & Art Gallery. After walking the grounds there was lunch in the vault of a former bank building.



Events At & Around BRUU

Second Sunday Hike on December 8

We'll hike for 3.2 miles around Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge and the Belmont Bay community on **December 8, 1:00-3:00pm**. The hike is on gravel trails within the Refuge and on blacktop path in Belmont Bay. Pets are not allowed inside the Refuge. Please register at <https://tinyurl.com/e27h4m8s> so we can notify you if the hike is postponed or cancelled because of weather conditions.



Next Work Day is Saturday, January 18th



Bring out your calendars and set the date because on **Saturday, January 18th**, we will have our winter work day. As usual we'll start at 9:30 am and go until 3-but come for as long as you can. We will need many hands as we have many

jobs. Even those you can't paint well can help paint the black chairs-even young kids! It's been awhile since we've touched the chairs up. In addition there are many other skilled and unskilled jobs. Jobs for those who can clean or paint and more, details to follow in January. Dress accordingly! As usual there will be a pizza lunch. Point of contact is Christine Sunda.

Join Us at SUUSI In July

Two new families from BRUU will be coming to the Southeast UU Summer Institute (SUUSI) on **July 20-26, 2025**; they won the trip in the BRUU auction. They will join the 10 or so other BRUU-ers who go regularly to "church camp" with about 600 other UU's.

It's a week of music, making friends, stimulating workshops, nature trips, worship services, and more music. It's a week of making new connections with family and expanding our circle of friends.

Check it out at SUUSI.org, or talk to the Muirs, Lisa Stewart, Mike Freeland, Cathy Ring, and others who have discovered how to renew and recharge for a week in the mountains of Southwest Virginia. Plan ahead, and schedule the time now.



BRUU Midweek Coffee Hour - 10am Wednesdays

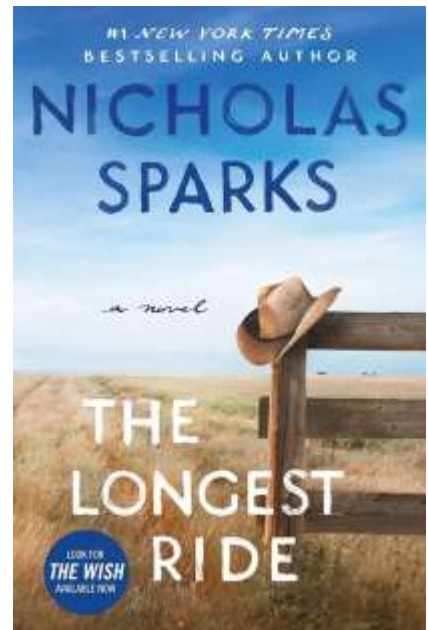


- Visit with old friends and make new ones
 - Share your joys, concerns and insights
 - Discuss serious topics and not so serious ones.
 - Start your day off with a smile and a laugh or two!
- 10am-11:30am every Wednesday on Zoom. Feel free to drop in at any time. Contact Gordon Ward for links at wardge@icloud.com.

Join the BRUU Book Group!

Our next book club meeting will be on Monday, December 16th at 3:30. The book for this month is "The Longest Ride" by Nicholas Sparks.

New members welcome, including people who are not members of BRUU. To get the Zoom invitation, contact us at bookgroup@bruu.org.



Pastoral Care

One of our strengths as a congregation is how we care for one another.

Please reach out to us at pastoralcare@bruu.org and let us know if there is a need within our community, so that we may coordinate with caring volunteers within BRUU.

CHRYSLIS CONCERT SERIES
PROUDLY PRESENTS

NOTHIN' FANCY



2024 marks 30 years since Nothin' Fancy was
founded as a bluegrass band in 1994!!
Don't miss their special anniversary year tour!

SATURDAY
DEC 7, 2024
7:30 PM

BULL RUN UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALISTS
9350 MAIN STREET
MANASSAS, VA 20110



TICKETS | \$25



Chrysalis Concert Series

FRICTION FARM – 10/12/2024

Friction Farm combines storytelling, social commentary, and humor to create songs of everyday life, local heroes, and quirky observations.



NOTHIN' FANCY – 12/7/2024

After 30 years together, Nothin' Fancy continues to grow in popularity performing at festivals all across the United States, Canada, and Norway.



LARA HERSCOVITCH – 2/1/2025

Lara's songs are soulful, poetic treasure maps that point to the wisdom, grit and joy of underdogs & misfits, connection & courage, love & loss, hardship & hope, resilience & transformation.

JILLIAN MATUNDAN – 3/15/2025

Jillian Matundan is a unique singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who continues to win over audiences with her warm, resonant vocals. Her songs tell stories that are relatable, while her unique guitar-style, and inviting stage presence draws her audience into every performance



KRAY VAN KIRK – 4/26/2025

A fine finger-style guitarist with a precise baritone, Kray Van Kirk has a Ph.D. from the University of Alaska, but he set science aside to write songs, tell stories and summon heroes.

KIYA HEARTWOOD – 6/28/2025

Kiya Heartwood is a modern-day American troubadour. She scours the nooks and crannies of history to find interesting tales of romance, injustice, danger and death. It's a simple show but it packs a powerful punch.



SAM ROBBINS – 10/17/2025

Often described as an "old soul singer songwriter," Sam is a Boston-based musician whose music evokes classic 70's singer songwriters like James Taylor and Neil Young, adding a modern, upbeat edge to the storyteller troubadour persona.



20% Off Tickets for BRUUers!

Use the code below for 20% off tickets to this event thanks to our friends at the Manassas Ballet Theatre.



MILLER & **Dominion Energy** present
TOYOTA.com Manassas, Virginia

MANASSAS BALLET THEATRE

in **NUTCRACKER**

with the
Manassas Ballet Theatre Orchestra

December 18-23

Discount Code
FAM20 20% OFF

at the
HYLTON PERFORMING ARTSCENTER
10960 George Mason Circle, Manassas, VA

info: manassasballet.org
(703) 257-1811

for tickets:
www.hyltoncenter.org
703-993-7759

Manassas Ballet Theatre is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, Prince William County, and the City of Manassas

XMB Photography



See Something? Report It!

Notice anything in or around the BRUU building that needs maintenance or repair? Please report it by using this link:

www.bruu.org/www2/building-repair-request-form

This will provide a quick opportunity for you to contact the Building & Grounds folks and alert them to the situation that needs attention.

Deadlines

To better serve the BRUU community, late submissions for BRUU publications **will not be accepted**, except in extreme circumstances. Please note the following deadlines for BRUU publications:

Round-Up: midnight on Tuesday night

Crossroads: midnight on the 24th of the month (so, by the 25th)

Order of Service items: midnight on Wednesday night

Items received after these deadlines **will not be included**, except in extreme circumstances. Also, if submissions are incomplete or require follow-up or editing that delays a final version beyond the deadline, such items **will be counted as late** and may not be included.

Early submissions are always welcome. If you are unsure about any details or your item has specific needs, please consider submitting your article or other content early, and/or contacting the Office for clarification.

Please contact office@bruu.org or president@bruu.org with any concerns. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this matter.

From the Treasurer's Office

Links for donating to BRUU



BRUU can receive online charitable donations via Zelle, Stripe or Paypal. You can use these services for your pledge payment (supporting our operational expenses), food pantry or community assistance donations, capital fund contributions, Sunday and split-the-plate, or any of our special collections and fundraisers. When donating online, you may use the comments section to specify your designation.

If you have questions or concerns just send us a note. Thanks!

Terrie McClure, Treasurer,

treasurer@bruu.org

Robin Fegeas et al, Bookkeepers,

bookkeeper@bruu.org

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BRUU OFFICE HOURS

M-F 10:00 am – 2:00 pm