

Newsletter
August 2025

Sunday Service at
10:30am, in person and
online

Zoom Sunday Service Link:
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/891
22019151](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89122019151)

Meeting ID: 891 2201 9151

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Pittsfield



August Sunday Services

August 3 Bob Shepherd: A Minor Matter

August 10 Rachel Schwartz: Patriotism Redux

August 17 Alexander Herrmann: TBD

August 24 Peggy Taylor: Ode to Joy

August 31: NO SERVICE

We are always looking for new members for our various committees. Please check out our [website](#) and let us know what resonates with you!

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If you'd like to write for the newsletter, please email the Social Media Director at uucpsocialmedia@gmail.com!

These August Hills

July was...not a great month for me.

I just felt like every day was worse than the one before, somehow. It started off with our cat dying, followed by my (recently deceased) mother's birthday...and I just got more and more and more tired, to the point where one day I just couldn't wake up. I mean, obviously I did eventually, but that day I decided that I needed to Do Something™ to get myself outta bed and back into life. So I took a walk in the sunshine and I think that helped.

Looking back at the month, I feel like I really did spend most of it asleep. It was so hot that I rarely went outdoors for more than a minute or two at a time, so nothing seemed real. The days ran together, and before I knew it, July was over and we were into August.

August never used to be a favorite month for me, mostly because it's long, hot, and has no holidays. However, all three of my children were born in August, and so it's become a month that I look forward to. Amusingly, their birthdays are in reverse order of their ages, so that the eldest's birthday is last and the youngest's birthday comes first in the month. That's why when someone asks me when their birthdays are, I will look confused for a moment, because (I guess) it somehow affronts my mind that they're in reverse order of their ages.

Ah...neurospiciness...such fun.

One of the things I let fall by the wayside in the past month was working with our partner BIO (Berkshire Interfaith Organizing) on holding the City to account for the current effort by some officials and Downtown businesses to criminalize homelessness. It hasn't ceased being important to me, and it's a horse I'm going to get back on as quickly as I can, but something definitely had to give, and that thing was, unfortunately, the activism for a little while. But, as I told one of my activist pals just earlier today, don't stop inviting me, because I'll be back. The housing crisis in this County is way too important to let slide, and I'm just grateful to my brothers and sisters fighting the fight that they are there when I cannot be to *keep* fighting.

Enjoy the dog days of Summer, and I hope I see you soon!

*Peace and Joy,
Alexander Herrmann, Editor*

“August slipped away
into a moment in time,
'cause it was never
mine.” — Taylor Swift

“If it could only be like
this always - always
summer, always alone,
the fruit always ripe.”
— Evelyn Waugh

Adulting in a New Age

New Year's Eve is my favorite holiday. Why am I talking about this in the summer? The reason I love celebrating this holiday is because of the intrinsic opportunity to reflect on achievements and progress towards goals within a designated time span, and create new actionable goals to work on in the next year. But the truth is that most people do not feel their most motivated during the cold bleak days of a harsh winter, but rather most likely during the blossoming of spring. Now as the end of summer is in sight, and many people have shifts in their typical schedules starting soon, reflecting and creating new goals may feel in line with what many people may be yearning for to guide them through the rest of the year. So I would like to share my thoughts with you on how to develop personal goals that can enhance rather than hinder wellbeing.

One form of structuring goals that has gained widespread use is the idea of SMART goals. This represents a framework for developing a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely.

Another method that I use is incorporating strategies on building habits. Instead of expecting myself to commit to a daily achieved goal every day moving forward, I break a big goal up into smaller sections and gradually work on one piece at a time. An example of what this can look like is changing a diet, such as striving to change a standard Western diet to a vegan diet, which was one of my New Year's resolutions several years ago. Instead of expecting myself to be completely vegan on January 1st and every day afterwards, I made a goal of reducing red meat during January, then poultry during February, seafood during March, non-dessert dairy during April, non-dessert eggs/honey/etc during May, and aiming for a flexible mostly vegan diet by the end of June. Sure enough, these gradual steps matched the requirements of a SMART goal and helped me develop gradual habits that I felt good about maintaining that year.

For a more fun and interactive approach, you can also consider making yourself a BINGO card of goals, which is something that I did with my family at the beginning of this year. We all bounced ideas off of each other to help us each create a personalized BINGO card of goals for the year, including a mix of expected goals and wildcards. This method can work especially well due to its gamification in addition to accountability to written goals or those shared with other people.

Some of the goals I will be working on for the rest of this year include making a habit out of writing or journaling, not having any absences from school related events, volunteering for at least one

“August rain: the best of the summer gone, and the new fall not yet born. The odd uneven time.” – Sylvia Plath

“Breathe the sweetness that hovers in August.” – Denise Levertov

community service project, and getting a new piercing or tattoo. If you want an accountability buddy for your goals, tell me yours!

Bruna L. Shabazz

Weekly Happenings at the UU

Sundays	10:30am	Sunday Services
	7pm	1st and 3rd Sunday: Men’s Group (closed for new members)
Tuesdays	5:30pm	Crafting Group (bring your own materials, any craft)
	6pm	1st Tuesday: Berkshire Coalition for Suicide Prevention; Healing After Suicide Support Group
	7pm	2nd Tuesday: WordxWord: Poets Creating Conversation
	5:30pm	3rd Tuesday: Open House/Community Dinner
Wednesdays	5pm	Vickie Bandoski Yoga
Thursdays	10am	Vickie Bandoski Yoga
	5:30pm	Pittsfield Sangha Meditation Group
Saturdays	1pm	Teen Youth Group (Crafting / Games / Social Justice)

The Grumpy Groundskeeper

So under all that paint was some really gorgeous wood, which was about what I expected. Whoever built these windows even pinned the joints for extra strength! One of the best parts of fixing things up is the simple joy at seeing good craftsmanship. Feeling the echo through the decades of an experienced hand at the tools. Seeing the scalloped, mangled edge of a pane of glass that shows that whatever schmendrick who glazed this window wasn't any better at cutting glass than I am and was thankful that a quarter inch of putty hides all sins. Stuff like that, you know?

I like taking note of the tiny details. The ones that don't matter to anyone else, things like design decisions that get hidden. Whether the moutons are over the mullions or the other way around, or how the weather-stripping gets mounted. Did you know there's a

“August used to be a sad month for me. As the days went on, the thought of school starting weighed heavily upon my young frame.” — Henry Rollins

“It is best to be born in April or August when the life-giving Sun is in its exaltation . . . for then we enter the sea of life on the crest-wave and are backed in the battle of existence by an abundant fund of vim and energy.” — Max Heindel

minor controversy about what direction one should cut the mortises in a wood window? One camp feels that the horizontal parts, also called 'rails', should slot into the vertical parts, also called 'stiles', so that when the window is opened or closed, the rail pushes the stile along, with the transfer point of the force being the middle of the rail pushing against the middle of the stile. The idea there is that the middle of the component is probably the strongest, so you're using the strongest parts to transmit and receive the forces.

The other view is for the stiles to slot into the rails - while this means that the transfer point of the force is around the edges of the component, and therefore more susceptible to damage, the force is spread around the entire edge of the component. The benefit of this is that because the point of transfer is larger, there's less force being applied to any given point, and therefore the entire system works better.

If you're looking at the previous couple paragraphs and scratching your head, wondering if you missed where I started arguing with the walls or whatever, don't worry, these are all details that don't actually matter to anything in any significant way. Sure, if you sat down and really thought about it for a while, I'm sure you could cook up a scenario in which the exact angle of mortise joints in a window could be important, and I'm sure there's entire professions at window manufacturers that are devoted to finding ways in which this distinction matters - but given it's funded by the window manufacturer, I'm not sure how much attention should be paid. They have a vested interest in continuing the argument, you see, because every time they convince you to change your mind, suddenly you need new windows.

Realistically, it simply does not matter in practice. Windows where the rails mortise into the stiles are the same as windows where the stiles mortise into the rails. While there ARE minor differences, in practice they will never actually matter, and in order to tell which was which, you'd have to do enough damage stripping the window to investigate that by the time you had satisfied your curiosity, you'd have a big hole in your wall where a window used to be, and a window that is now so thoroughly offended by your ministrations that it no longer really cares about keeping the bugs out of your living room, thank you just the same. You got an answer to that thing you were so intensely curious about, but now there's mosquitoes in the house. Great job!

If you're still a little perplexed about how this article is laid out, that might be because this article isn't about windows at all. It's about trans women in sports.

Christopher Hicks, Groundskeeper

We thank you for your support! Please use this QR code to donate to our church or mail a check to: Unitarian Universalist Church of Pittsfield, 175 Wendell Ave., Pittsfield MA 01201



August Open House and Community Dinner

We hope to see you at our next Open House! It will be on August 19 from 5:30-8, with dinner around 6pm. Our Youth Group will also be there with craft tables. Hope to see you there!



Social Hour Needs You!

We are all so appreciative of Ben running the social hour following services. Sign up to help using the sheet in the Social Hall on the table - it makes such a difference!