

PETERBOROUGH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CONGREGATION
GUIDE



25 Main Street
Peterborough, NH 03458
www.uupeterborough.org
(603) 924-6245

Who Are We?

The Peterborough Unitarian Universalist Church is a gathering place for a freethinking religious community. Our faith is a spiritually alive and justice-centered religion that provides an open-hearted and open-minded path in the search for truth. We strive to nurture a loving, inclusive spiritual community where all ages celebrate together. As our Mission affirms:

We witness for our liberal Unitarian Universalist faith with compassion and generosity, and we serve and inspire the local and global community through social action and the arts.

Our community is a place where each person is free to explore life's ultimate questions in a community of other seekers, and everyone is encouraged to find his or her own answers. We come from many religious backgrounds. Among them are Christianity, Judaism, Humanism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Earth-Centered religions. Members may also be Agnostics, Taoists, Pagans, Atheists, or Unaffiliated. What we hold in common is acceptance of the seven Unitarian Universalist principles.

We are delighted that you are interested in our congregation and invite you to join in our spiritual journey. As a congregation, we challenge ourselves to create a hospitable place in which we may all listen to each other, learn from each other, and share in the councils and leadership of this community. Membership is open to individuals and families who want a home that values diversity in people and beliefs and does not require adherence to a creed.

We are a BYOG congregation — Bring Your Own God

We are a place of freedom of faith. We are a place of excitement with a social conscience. We are a welcoming community of inquiring free thinkers. We invite individuals of all stripes, shapes, colors, ages, and sexual orientations to come and discover how we are bound together by shared values, social concerns, common interests, and fellowship.

Our children receive liberal religious education as we model values in our search for truth and meaning. Come, and find out if you'd like to join your family with ours.

Our Services

Sunday services begin at 10:15 a.m. starting the first Sunday after Labor Day in September through mid-June. Nursery care is also offered at that time. Handicapped parking is in the rear lot. Our church is wheelchair/walker accessible. Enter through the ramped entrance at the rear of the building to the lower floor elevator to access the Sanctuary and Parish Hall. There is a wheelchair-accessible restroom downstairs and pews that provide for friendly inclusion in our services.

The Rev. Lane Fisher has served as our minister since August 2021. She has a three-quarter-time schedule and typically leads services two Sunday mornings a month. Our worship associates, shared ministry groups, and guest speakers offer informative and inspirational services on other Sundays.

There is always music. Choir is a tradition, and we are blessed with many trained and talented instrumentalists. Our special Hook organ, dedicated in 1867, was refurbished and rebuilt in the 1990's and is a joy to listen to today.

During the summer, while our regular services are on hiatus, the **Monadnock Summer Lyceum** offers renowned speakers on various topics, ranging through social policy, science, economics, history, and the arts, in our sanctuary at 11 a.m. on eight Sundays.

A 200-Year History to Celebrate

Our congregation takes pride in our historic church. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this 1825-26 Bullfinch-styled structure is a beautiful and familiar Main Street landmark, and its tower houses the Town Clock donated by the Ladies' Society in 1856. When the membership chose to become a Unitarian society in 1827, a tradition of community service was born. The first Unitarian congregation's minister Abiel Abbot founded the first tax-supported public library in the nation in 1833. He also began a Lyceum in 1830 which continued through the nineteenth century. Revived in 1970, the Monadnock Summer Lyceum today brings distinguished speakers throughout the summer. To this day, our building provides space for our community outreach activities and offers a place for nonprofit service organizations and the arts to meet and perform.

Our Main Street building and lawn serve as gathering places for the wider community with musical practice and performances, exercise and dance, self-help and support groups, arts and crafts.

Get to Know Us (and Help Us Get to Know You)!

Share information. To get on our mailing list and receive our weekly e-newsletter *The Cresset*, fill out a blue card in the pew and put it into the collection bag.

Stop in the Parish Hall during Community Hour following worship to ask questions, pick up more information, fill out a visitor form, subscribe to our weekly e-newsletter, and get a name tag, along with refreshments.

Do visit our website at www.uupeterborough.org. Send an email to puuc@uupeterborough.org. Recordings of past sermons are available on our web-site.

We are a part of the **Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)**, a denomination consisting of approximately 1,000 congregations and 300,000 adults, youth, and children in the United States.

For More Information

For more information about PUUC, especially any of the groups, activities, or events listed in this pamphlet, check out *The Cresset*, our website at www.uupeterborough.org, or call or visit Vanessa, our office administrator, to obtain contact information.

Our PUUC Community

Discover Sundays and So Much More. There are many ways to become involved as you learn about us.

Affinity Activities are easy to join in.

- ◆ **Community Hour** happens every Sunday after our worship service, usually about 11:15. Join us for beverages, snacks, and conversation.
- ◆ **Community Supper** is a 20-year tradition, open to the wider community, serving spaghetti dinner with all the fixings every Wednesday evening at 5:30 in the Dining Hall. Help prep, serve or cleanup.
- ◆ **Small Group Ministries** are guided by UUA programs that focus on deepening connections between members and friends and

fostering a stronger understanding of and commitment to that ministry. Small groups do not have to be from a UU source but can be initiated by a member or members with skills or interests in a certain topic or activity. Groups are routinely composed of 8-10 members who meet with a facilitator to explore together.

- ◆ **Meditation Hour** welcomes practitioners of all (or no) faiths to the PUUC Meditation Group, taking place every Tuesday for an hour in the Parish Hall, and open to anyone looking for a group to sit with. Meditation starts promptly at 6:00 pm. There will be a short reading followed by 20 minutes of sitting meditation, a short walking meditation, and a second 20-minute sitting.
- ◆ **Solstices, Equinoxes and Cross-Quarter Days** occur several times during the year. We gather around a fire outdoors in the church's front yard to celebrate the Solstices, Equinoxes, and Cross-Quarter Days. Our celebrations are open to the public as we offer homage and respect for the interdependent web of all existence.
- ◆ **Circle Suppers**, held three or four times a year, are small gatherings in members' homes to share a potluck of good food and good conversation.
- ◆ **Hospitality Events** are always being planned: Sides and Slides, seasonal parties, post-service potluck luncheons.
- ◆ **Men's Luncheon** is an informal gathering the third Wednesday of each month at a different local restaurant for a social break, chatting and catching up.
- ◆ **Ladies Who Lunch** is an informal gathering the second Thursday of each month at a different local restaurant for a social break, chatting and catching up.
- ◆ **Book Discussion** meets the fourth Wednesday on Zoom at 10 a.m. to discuss fiction and non-fiction books.
- ◆ **Peterborough Hiking Group** meets Tuesday mornings to hike local trails year-round to walk and share companionship. Option for a separate Women's Group.
- ◆ **Muusic For UU** is a concert series held on the 3rd Saturday of most months. Performers are mostly local groups from a variety

of musical genres, including folk, jazz, and classical. More information at concertseriesdot.blog.

- ◆ **Monadnock Summer Lyceum** has a guiding committee composed of PUUC members and individuals from the broader community who create and manage the summer program by seeking speakers, managing the events, and generating interest in the Monadnock region. Learn more at MonadnockLyceum.org.

Keeping PUUC Alive and Well

- ◆ **Governing Board.** President, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and three at-large members are elected annually to manage the affairs of the congregation, per our Bylaws.
- ◆ **Nominating Committee.** Three-person team recommends members to be voted upon by the full membership for Governing Board and Trustees, per our Bylaws.
- ◆ **Committee on Shared Ministry.** Five-member team oversees the health and welfare of PUUC ministry in conjunction with the minister, per our Bylaws.
- ◆ **Trustees of the Investment Funds.** Oversees the congregational invested endowment.
- ◆ **Care Network.** The goal of PUUC's Care Network, which includes the Care Committee, lay pastoral care associates, and the minister, is to have a congregation where each individual is cared for and supported during difficult times. The Care Committee organizes meals made by congregants for members and friends in need.
- ◆ **Lay Ministers.** Specially trained volunteers provide an ear to listen, a hand to hold, and a heart to care, to members and regular visitors.
- ◆ **Caregivers group.** Meeting monthly, Caregivers share concerns, stresses, tips, laughter, and support with one another in a safe, friendly, and non-judging environment.
- ◆ **Choir.** All singers are welcome to sing at the service twice a month, meeting each Sunday morning before service and sometimes during the week to rehearse.

- ◆ **Finance.** Chaired by the treasurer, this committee reviews the income and expenses of operations and special projects.
- ◆ **Membership.** This committee leads congregation in welcoming newcomers, and supports and sustains our fellowship in common community.
- ◆ **Property.** This committee cares for and repairs our historic building and grounds, determines capital needs, and manages contracted projects.
- ◆ **Social Justice.** Meeting monthly, Social Justice focuses on current critical Social Justice issues of today. Some specific activities include special collections to support worthy organizations, writing letters to support human rights causes, participating in the annual Hunger Walk, and educating the congregation about social justice issues and concerns.
- ◆ **Stewardship.** The Stewardship Committee organizes and runs PUUC's annual pledge campaign. The committee works with the minister and governing board to develop goals and a message to the congregation, organizes in-person and mail-in pledging opportunities, tracks pledges and celebrates the successful completion of the campaign. The Stewardship Campaign is essential to financial planning for the upcoming congregational year.
- ◆ **Worship.** This committee organizes and presents worship services on Sunday mornings when our minister is not in the pulpit.
- ◆ **Technology.** This group provides Sunday in-house sound support and offers the service online on Zoom.
- ◆ **Sunday Morning Hosts**
 - Sanctuary – Ushers and greeters every week.
 - Flowers – Given by members.
 - Community Hour – Offering coffee, tea, drinks, snacks, and good conversation
 - Childcare – Provided in our downstairs RE space.
- ◆ **Fundraising.** The mission is: 1) to have FUN and 2) to support and/or organize fund raising efforts for any person or group who is interested in hosting a fund raiser for our congregation. Recent activities have included the Dinner Anywhere Around

the World Raffle, Holiday Stroll, and online/live Springtime Auction.

- ◆ **Accessibility Task Force.** This group is working to create a fully accessible PUUC experience for everyone—in the sanctuary, parish hall, dining room, office, and for congregational and community gatherings. Accessibility is a work in progress.
- ◆ **Green Sanctuary.** The Green Sanctuary initiative is a re-engagement of our congregation's efforts to begin efforts toward re-accreditation. We achieved Green Sanctuary status in 2009. The UUA is encouraging congregations to look toward a recommitment in 2022 and to recommit to do more. To further reduce the congregation's carbon footprint through a series of actions and upgrades in its buildings and practices, and through working with the community to expand its impact in bringing about a more verdant and just world.

Volunteer!

Everything we do at PUUC depends on the efforts of our many volunteers. Most volunteer opportunities are open to visitors and friends. For volunteer opportunities, check *The Cresset* or visit www.uupeterborough.org.

Become a Part of Us!

Membership at PUUC is open to any individual who is at least 16 years old and is in sympathy with our mission, vision, and values.

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