

# Blessings

What does this word say to you? Does it remind you of the Blessings that you have in your life? Or does it bring to mind the prayers that are said in various situations where people are asking for God's Blessings? For me, it means both. Since September 11, I think that we have all been more aware of the Blessings in our lives: health, families, spirituality, friends, jobs, or whatever each of us considers to be a blessing. The media has also told us that people started getting more involved in the religious aspects of their lives.

Join us at SUUSI 2002 where you can explore what Blessings means to you as you participate in our Theme Talks, Worship Services, Workshops, Nature Trips or just "hanging out".

## What's New at SUUSI 2002

No meal cards

We have made arrangements with Virginia Tech so that we won't need to carry meal cards.

Cabaret

Cabaret is going to be open to all ages, all the time. Look for further information in the Nightlife section of this Brochure.

No Linens unless requested

Virginia Tech will not be delivering linens to every room this year. If you want linens instead of bringing your own, please be sure to mark the enrollment form.

Picnic

We are having a picnic. It will be on Friday evening as part of the Community Time and dinner.

First Timers

We have decided to set aside a special area in the cafeteria on Monday for First Timers to be able to get together, eat together and get to know each other instead of a reception.

## Calling All Ministers

Attention UU ministers: We want you to join our spiritual community at SUUSI this year! As you can tell, there will be many wonderful colleagues with whom to connect – not to mention about 1000 other great UUs. (And ordained UU clergy receive a registration discount! See the registration form.)

If you would like more information contact Gatherings Coordinator, Mina Greenfield at [gatherings@suusi.org](mailto:gatherings@suusi.org).

## General Information

The Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute (SUUSI) is an intentional community of UU's (Unitarian Universalists) and others. It's a great family experience, with workshops, nature trips, music and spirit and other activities that build relationships with new and old friends!

We gather annually for a week in July to explore our interconnectedness, to learn new ways of seeing our world and each other, to delight in the joys of sharing outdoor adventures, and to develop new insights and perspectives. Special programs for Youth, Teens, and Young Adults make it a full experience for all members of a family.

For SUUSI 2002, we'll be on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg again. The dorms have small lounges that help us make connections with our neighbors during the week of July 21-27 when we're together.

We will be surrounded by the forest-covered Blue Ridge Mountains and near the majestic New River. Blacksburg offers bookstores, coffee shops, music stores, and all the other "necessities" at the edge of the campus, a short walk away from the SUUSI activities.

### Will this be your first SUUSI?

Welcome! We're glad you're planning to join us.

Every year, there are 300-400 people who are attending SUUSI for the first time. SUUSI is an intentional community. We gather in a nice place but we meet there because of the people. We get recharged and energized by our time together. This is a community where we choose to welcome new people. In our circle, we'll include you and we won't vote you off the island.

Several activities are planned to help you get acquainted and quickly feel like you're part of our large family. Take the campus tour Sunday afternoon after you complete Registration, and look for the special area in the cafeteria where you can meet other first time attendees on Monday.

In planning your week at SUUSI, leave space to relax and reflect. It is common for first-year folks to over schedule. This is easy to understand—there are so many wonderful things to do! But, it isn't necessary to do it all this year. Save something for SUUSI 2003 and beyond.

If you have any pre-SUUSI questions about SUUSI please feel free to email the First-Timers Coordinator Cyndy Bailes at [firsttime@suusi.org](mailto:firsttime@suusi.org). She and her smiling volunteers are the first people who will welcome you when you arrive.

### Getting to SUUSI in Blacksburg

Blacksburg is 40 miles southwest of Roanoke, four hours from Richmond, and three hours from Charlotte, NC if driving by car. Take Exit 118B (Christiansburg) from Interstate 81 onto US 460 West. Go about 10 miles west from I-81 on the 460 bypass to the Virginia Tech exit (314 East). We'll have construction updates in the ConfirmationNUUS mailed in late June, and on the Web site at [www.suusi.org](http://www.suusi.org)

Roanoke is the nearest airport served by a commercial carrier. Reservations for a ride to Blacksburg may be made by calling Blacksburg Limousine Service at (540) 951-3973. Rental cars are also available at the airport.

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the New River Valley in Blacksburg will again offer pre-SUUSI hospitality for July 21, 2002. Guests are welcome to join in any or all the activities. Proceeds go to the Fellowship.

Pickup from the Roanoke airport: \$25.00/person or family

Overnight Bed and Breakfast \$20.00/ person or family dinner at the Fellowship (6p.m.) \$10.00 adults, \$5.00 for kids under 8.

Contact: [RBazuzi@hotmail.com](mailto:RBazuzi@hotmail.com) (540)552-7294

## Community Expectations

We have an abundance of freedom at SUUSI. With it comes full responsibility. Be alert and let's all help make SUUSI safe and enjoyable for everyone!

In our community of about 1,000 people, let us remember to respect each individual's rights and privacy. Count to ten, give an inch, and say please...

Parents and guardians are responsible for their children when the children are not in SUUSI sponsored activities for youth.

Excessive noise when others are trying to sleep is inappropriate. Be mindful of others when having loud fun. Move to an area where your activities will not be disruptive.

Leave dogs, hamsters, and other pets at home. There are no accommodations on campus for our live animals. Instead, enjoy the cows on the farm fields (but no tipping, please).

Skates and skateboards are not allowed in many areas; please respect the local rules.

Fire is a serious concern in college residence halls. Don't use any open flames (i.e., candles) inside any building on campus. Turn off appliances (hair curlers...) when you leave the room. We have special arrangements when we light the chalice at Theme Talks and Worship Services.

The breaking of alcohol, drug, or any other local laws will not be tolerated.

SUUSI affirms its commitment to maintain an environment free of discrimination, harassment, and violence based on sex, race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, handicap, gender, or affectional orientation.

Set a good example for others. SUUSI expects its board, staff, and participants to conduct themselves in a mutually respectful manner, showing concern for colleagues, participants, and the surrounding community.

Be considerate of the neighbors; not everyone in Blacksburg and at Virginia Tech will be in the SUUSI community or have the SUUSI spirit. Recognize that your creativity and enthusiasm should have boundaries.

## Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of the interdependent web of SUUSI. From the late night Coffee House to Daily Morning Theme Talk, from Face Painting at Community Time to the wonderful madness of Registration, volunteers make SUUSI successful. Without the effort of each volunteer SUUSI would cost much more money, if it existed at all!!

SUUSI is an all-volunteer effort. Through volunteering, you will learn more about how SUUSI functions and you will meet more of our community. Keep the SUUSI spirit alive by volunteering for at least a half hour during the week.

There is no restriction on the amount of time you may volunteer. For more information contact the Volunteer Coordinator Kathee Williams at [volunteers@suusi.org](mailto:volunteers@suusi.org) or call (770) 592-3321



## Volunteer Form

- Fill out one block on the volunteer form for each participant who wants to plan ahead to volunteer.
- The SUUSI Volunteer Coordinator will contact potential volunteers before SUUSI. Some will receive their assignment(s) with their packets at Registration. If you can't decide what to volunteer for now, stop by the Volunteer table during Registration to sign up. You will be referred to the various areas where volunteers are needed.

## Volunteers

Please provide information for each person volunteering.  
Star Car volunteers: provide driver's license number and expiration date in "Comments" section. Duplicate form and attach additional pages if necessary.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ If under 21, please indicate age: \_\_\_\_\_  
e- mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
I would prefer (check a few)  
 STAR CAR  HEALTH OFFICE  Enrollment/Registration  
 Newcomers  Communications  Community Time  
 Denominational Affairs  Teens  SUUSI Store  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Comments

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ If under 21, please indicate age: \_\_\_\_\_  
e- mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
I would prefer (check a few)  
 STAR CAR  HEALTH OFFICE  Enrollment/Registration  
 Newcomers  Communications  Community Time  
 Denominational Affairs  Teens  SUUSI Store  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Comments

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ If under 21, please indicate age: \_\_\_\_\_  
e- mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
I would prefer (check a few)  
 STAR CAR  HEALTH OFFICE  Enrollment/Registration  
 Newcomers  Communications  Community Time  
 Denominational Affairs  Teens  SUUSI Store  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Comments

For Staff use only:  
Family # \_\_\_\_\_

I am available to volunteer  
(check several)

Sun  M  A  E  
 Mon  M  A  E  
 Tues  M  A  E  
 Wed  M  A  E  
 Thurs  M  A  E  
 Fri  M  A  E  
 Sat  M  A  E  
 Any day  M  A  E

\*Please indicate morning (M) afternoon (A) or Evening (E)

I am available to volunteer  
(check several)

Sun  M  A  E  
 Mon  M  A  E  
 Tues  M  A  E  
 Wed  M  A  E  
 Thurs  M  A  E  
 Fri  M  A  E  
 Sat  M  A  E  
 Any day  M  A  E

\*Please indicate morning (M) afternoon (A) or Evening (E)

I am available to volunteer  
(check several)

Sun  M  A  E  
 Mon  M  A  E  
 Tues  M  A  E  
 Wed  M  A  E  
 Thurs  M  A  E  
 Fri  M  A  E  
 Sat  M  A  E  
 Any day  M  A  E

\*Please indicate morning (M) afternoon (A) or Evening (E)

## SUUSI GATHERINGS

If you get right down to it, every single minute of SUUSI is a 'gathering' of some sort. But this year, we are putting a special emphasis on the blessing of *community*. In order to make this happen, we need your help with the activities scheduled every day for SUUSI-ites of every age. If you have any questions, contact Gatherings Coordinator, Mina Greenfield, at [gatherings@suusi.org](mailto:gatherings@suusi.org) or call (718)403-9633.

### ***Parade to Ingathering and Ingathering***

Meet new friends or reunite with those you haven't seen for an entire year (or more!) as we come together in our SUUSI 2002 community for the first time. For our famous, annual banner parade, we invite you to bring a banner from your home congregation or design a new one so everyone knows "who you are". Our teens will lead the parade again this year along with our very own drummers (Please bring a drum and join us! No experience or practice required!)

Once at Ingathering, we'll officially start our SUUSI week with the entire community (or close to it, anyway!) with singing, perhaps a skit or two, and lots of joyful noise. We're also bringing back our opening circle. You don't want to miss it! Watch the SUUSI NUUS for time and location.



### ***Daily Community Time***

We gather Monday thru Friday afternoons for Community Time from 5:30 to 7pm. Keep an eye out for a gaggle of SUUSI-ites having fun. There will be activities planned for each day, but there's no limit to Community Time! Bring an instrument! (We'll have live acoustic music nightly!) Bring a kite! Bring a game you'd like to

share! But most importantly, bring yourself. We can't have Community Time without you! Any questions? Contact Gatherings Coordinator, Mina Greenfield at [gatherings@suusi.org](mailto:gatherings@suusi.org).

**Monday-** It's time for the Sidewalk Festival, again! Calling all street performers. Games, bubbles, and PRIZES for everyone. Back by popular demand— face painting and nail painting.

**Tuesday-** Game Night. Anyone up for a game of checkers or chess? Wanna try your skill at Mancala or throw a pie at your favorite Board member? Come to watch or play in the Twister Tournament and more. Need a makeover? Visit the Teen Style booth for a new look.

**Wednesday-** Birthday Party. Things to do at the party: sidewalk chalk, button making, games, nail painting, and the infamous Watermelon Seed Spitting Contest (with prizes, of course). What would a party be without cake?

**Thursday-** Craft/T-shirt Sale. If you just can't find enough to buy, here's one more opportunity. Vendors, please bring your own cloth or table. Please give a \$10 donation to the SUUSIship fund so others may join our wonderful community. Also, don't miss the Youth sponsored tie-dye event! A bargain at \$3 per item. (Youth will NOT provide 100% cotton items for you to tie-dye. You must bring your own.)

**Friday-** Rain date for the Craft/T-shirt sale and get ready for TWOB. Also, you won't want to miss our first annual Wacky Olympics, sponsored by our Teens and Young Adults. Wanna know more? You'll have to show up!

### **ALL-SUUSI PICNIC**

For you veteran SUUSI go-ers, this is something we are bringing back from SUUSIs long ago. On Friday, instead of chowing down at the dining hall, we will be dining OUTDOORS! Yes, we are having a picnic (a really big one, at that)! Bring yourself, your friends, your family. Bring your guitar, your drum, your kite. This is something you will NOT want to miss, trust us. Questions? Ideas? Contact Gatherings Coordinator, Mina Greenfield, at [gatherings@suusi.org](mailto:gatherings@suusi.org).

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH AT SUUSI

Our Unitarian Universalist principles remind us of "...the importance of a religious community". SUUSI's denominational programming is designed to deepen our experience of our special time together and to encourage us to worship as a community.

As we spend this week together, we hope you will explore what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist in our community and in our world. For more information, contact Gatherings Coordinator, Mina Greenfield, at [gatherings@suusi.org](mailto:gatherings@suusi.org).

### *Theme Presentations*

Each morning (Monday through Friday) from 9:00-9:45am, a denominational leader will share with us a personal interpretation of this year's theme, "Blessings". These daily theme presentations offer a wonderful way for participants to begin their SUUSI day together.

MONDAY: "To Give and to Receive"

**Rev. William Sinkford**, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, will greet us as we begin our week of reflection on our theme of "Blessings." Bill will ask us to consider how we give and receive the blessings in our lives. Bill is a graduate of both Harvard University and Starr King School for the Ministry, and served as the UUA's Director of Congregational, District and Extension Services prior to his election as President at the 2001 General Assembly in Cleveland.

TUESDAY: "Showers of Blessings"

Anyone remember the old song with this title? Somehow it has come back into my consciousness this year, as I have felt showered with blessings, even in the midst of some pretty challenging times. I believe we can all have showers of blessings when we are open to receiving them. **Eunice Benton** is the District Executive of the Mid-South District of the UUA. She has served as an active lay volunteer in our churches in Winston-Salem, N.C., and Oxford, Miss., and is a past President of the Thomas Jefferson District.

WEDNESDAY: "The Blessing of Space"

Do we fill the spaces in our lives with the sacred? In choosing where we spend our time, we often miss the beautiful and holy things around us. We will explore the blessing of space, and our challenge to make the space we inhabit sacred space, whether it is in our living room, our office, or somewhere we're just passing through (like SUUSI!).

**Michael Tino** is the Director of Young Adult and Campus Ministry for the Unitarian Universalist Association, and a student at Meadville/Lombard Theological School. A former SUUSI Teen Director, he realized his call to the ministry in the gentle embrace of the SUUSI community. He lives in Durham, N.C.

THURSDAY: "Shining Like the Sun: A Theology of Gratitude"

An examination of the theme of Blessings from a Buddhist perspective. We will consider gratitude from a very practical level, and receive some suggestions and inspiration for practicing awareness of the blessings we all have in abundance. **Rev. Cynthia Cain** (SUUSI 90, 91, 93) is minister of the UU Church of Lexington, Ky. A native of New Jersey, she graduated from the Pacific School of Religion and has served our churches in Shenandoah Valley and Loudoun County, Va. and Riverside, Calif. She is a short story writer, and a practicing Buddhist in the Thich Nhat Hanh tradition.

FRIDAY: "God Bless Us Everyone"

This (the "everyone" part) sounds like good, solid Universalist theology. What would it look like if everyone shared in the blessings? What does it take to turn theology into politics? What will it take to turn everyone into a Universalist? How hard would it be to get there from here? **Rev. Julie Denny-Hughes** is minister of the UU Fellowship of Raleigh, N.C. She was initiated into the SUUSI milieu by the good folks at the Glen Allen, Va., congregation, which she served before moving to Raleigh. This is her first trip to SUUSI in several years, and she's looking forward to returning to the fold.

## *Evening Worship*

Join us each evening (Monday through Friday) from 7:00-7:45pm for an opportunity to worship together as only SUUSI can do it! Each service will touch on our theme, “Blessings”, while offering opportunities for participation and reflection at the close of our day.

MONDAY: “Blessings and Curses: Is Our Future Where They Tell Us It Is?”

The “discipline” in spiritual discipline requires that we pay more than cursory attention to our long tradition, if we are to have a meaningful (and useful) future.

A native Virginian, **Rev. Barry Whittemore** serves the Holston Valley UU Church in Gray, Tennessee. He is a Virginia Tech alumnus, and holds graduate degrees from Radford, Carnegie Mellon and Duke. He is an avid UU evangelist, historian, and enthusiast of Southern Mountain music and dance.

TUESDAY: “But What’s a Blessing?”

The act of blessing can be a foundation of how we hope to interact with every individual with whom we come into contact. Through blessings, we align ourselves with the unlimited possibilities for goodness that the universe holds. Such an alignment moves all of us toward healing and wholeness. Do UU’s give blessings? Come and find out!

**Rev. Louis Schwebius** currently serves on the staff of Fountain House, an outreach center for the mentally ill in New York City. This past year he has worked with many people whose lives have been directly affected by the Sept. 11 tragedy. His ministry includes creative incorporation of the spirituality of music into the settings where he works. Louis considers SUUSI a blessing of the highest order!

WEDNESDAY: “Blessed Be! Honoring the Goddess and Celebrating Life”

Our annual earth-centered worship service moves to midweek, with a celebration of Mother Earth’s blessings using drum, dance and chant.

The **Women of Womenspirit at the Mountain** will help us create a sacred circle in which to safely honor our different paths toward a personal relationship with the Divine, in the process learning to heal ourselves, each other, and the Earth.

THURSDAY: “The Blessing of Transitions”

This year, our teens and young adults will lead our traditional service honoring all of life’s transitions. As is our custom, the centerpiece of the service will be a “bridging ceremony” in which we welcome our graduating teens into adulthood, but we will also honor those other life transitions (births, deaths, losses) which give meaning to our existence.

**Ted Welsh**, SUUSI Teen Director, and **Courtney Cannon**, SUUSI Young Adult Director, will facilitate the planning for this service; if you’d like to be involved, join them for dinner Tuesday night at 5:30 – they’ll be at the big table playing cups!

FRIDAY: “The Many Blessings of SUUSI”

The joy of creativity and the depth of human relationships are the touchstones of our week together. Celebrate the power of SUUSI to change the lives of children, youth and adults – as we come together in worship to honor the many blessings of our intentional UU community.

**Rev. Alice Syltie**, a graduate of the Modified Residency Program at Meadville/Lombard Theological School, is an ordained Minister of Religious Education. Along with her 13 years as the Religious Educator for our Birmingham, Ala., congregation, she has served the Mid-South District as chair of its R.E. Committee, as Youth Coordinator, and currently as Healthy Congregation Consultant.