



## Together on the Journey

**Rev. Bruce Beisner**  
**Your Minister**

I don't know if you've noticed this, but around our church we use words like Love, Compassion, Justice and Respect quite frequently. That's because Unitarian Universalism is a relational faith. The center of our community is a set of principles and values that each have something to say about how we are called to live in relationship to ourselves and everything around us. Rather than holding shared theological beliefs about the nature of some supernatural reality, we hold shared affirmations about how we want to try to be together here in this reality.

This can lead us to want to believe that church is a safe space where everyone always gets along perfectly and treats each other with unlimited respect and patience. I think this is pretty true most of the time here at BAUUC, or at least we strive to make it true. But because none of us is perfect and none of us sees the world exactly as anyone else does, disagreements happen. This is why we created our Covenants.

Covenants are the shared promises we make to each other. Some covenants, like the words we say together on Sunday morning, are expressions of the overarching values and worldview we share. Others, like our Covenant of Loving Kindness, are statements about how we will try to treat one another and seek to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings when they occur, as they inevitably do. Covenants are not lists of rules for behavior as much as they are guidelines for living. Because we are all gloriously human and thus prone to make mistakes, our Covenants are there to remind us of our best selves and call us back into healthy relationship.

I'm not writing about this because of any particular conflict or issues here at BAUUC. I'm writing about it because in recent months I have seen several UU churches, both here in Houston and in other parts of the country, handle difficult situations with their ministers and with one another in ways that did not seem to live up to our values or our covenants. This can and does happen in every church and I know that there have been times when our own congregation has had to meet these challenges. And when we've done this well, it's been because we were able to recognize that we weren't acting according to our principles and needed to come back into Covenant and right relationship.

Someone asked me this month what my vision is for BAUUC. I told them that I want us to continue to be a prophetic voice for liberal values and social justice in the Clear Lake community and I want us to always be mindful about inviting and welcoming new people into our church. I also want to get the potholes in our road repaired. But what I think is most important is that we focus on creating and sustaining positive and caring relationships with one another. This always has to come first.

Our nation and our world are so divided. People are so fearful of one another. Our culture continuously reinforces an "us vs. them" mentality when it comes to economic opportunity, access to healthcare, immigration, racial justice and international affairs. We all get the message outside of church that those

in need are a burden and potentially a danger to our own well-being. Yet there are those amazing moments of hope, when we see communities come together to support, defend and care for one another. Our event with Moms/Students Demand Action to honor those killed at Santa Fe High School and our ongoing efforts to offer assistance to those still recovering from Hurricane Harvey are just a few examples. And in those moments, whether they are happening at our church or on the streets of our city, we witness what is most holy and sacred about us come alive.

This summer at BAUUC, our children will be exploring other cultures. Our volunteers will be serving dinners and offering hospitality to families experiencing homelessness. We'll be gathering for dinners and lunches. We'll be welcoming some amazing guest speakers from diverse backgrounds on Sunday mornings. And most importantly, we'll be striving to live out our values, our principles and our covenants by being in blessed relationship.

Stay cool and have a great July!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce".

*Rev. Bruce Beisner can be reached at [minister@bauuc.org](mailto:minister@bauuc.org) or 513-374-3926. He will be away on vacation and summer study leave from July 1-15. If you have an immediate pastoral care need during his time away, please contact our Board President at [president@bauuc.org](mailto:president@bauuc.org)*