

“Sunday is My Favorite Day”

Talulah Rice

August 30, 2026

My name is Talulah Rice, I am an extremely short caucasian woman with long wavy brown hair, and I am in my early 20's.

If you haven't already, please grab a flower or leaf from the back table, and something to write with. For this activity, I ask that sometime during my sermon, you write down or draw your favorite thing about UUCSV on your flower or leaf. Then, before the potluck, you can add it to the tree that I made in the back of the sanctuary. This could be a big thing, or small thing, or just something that pops into your mind while I'm speaking. Whenever you feel called to.

I am the UUCSV Office Manager, and for almost exactly one year, I have had the honor of serving this congregation. I am the person who pops into your email twice a week, every week, if not more than that, and posts on instagram and answers your emails, or anything else you may need. I am so excited that I am giving my first sermon today, up here on the pulpit, and if you didn't already know, this will be my last in-person service for a while.

Tomorrow, I will be moving myself, (and eventually my cat, Poppy), up to Massachusetts, to move in with my boyfriend and life partner, Riley. We met in London about four years ago, while we were both studying abroad. I went to Bucknell, and he went to Lasell, and we just happened to be neighbors in our worn down dorm hall in London. We were long distance all throughout college, and have continued to be for the last three, almost four years.

In May of last year, Riley asked me to move in together. He asked again in December. He asked me to come to Boston, and move into his apartment. And while I felt ready, (in terms of our relationship) I was not ready to leave home yet, and I didn't know why. I had just started a new job, this one, and I just could not leave. I knew, in my bones, that there was some great here. Something truly extraordinary. I didn't fully understand it, and he didn't either. He had never been here before, and I can only explain so much, so he didn't understand why I just absolutely refused to leave my part time job at a church that I had only had for about two weeks. But recently, he came to visit. You might have had the pleasure of meeting him a few weeks before the yard sale. After the service that day, the first thing he said to me in the car was, and I quote “That was a church full of the nicest people I have ever met.” And it took just one visit for him

to realize that no, this was not just a job. It is so so so much more than that. It is a home, a sanctuary, a social justice movement, a community of love and equity and grace, and an escape from our world that has been on fire for as long as I can remember.

While I am absolutely elated that I get to move to one of my favorite places, with my favorite people, (yes, Poppy counts as people), it has been quite a bittersweet moment for me.

I am ready for this transformation, to move forward, and yet I find myself feeling increasingly saddened as the weeks go by, and as my time with you all in-person grows shorter and shorter. I have gotten used to seeing all of your beautiful faces every Sunday morning. I can confidently, and with my entire heart say, that I know I belong here. I know that I am a true part of this congregation. I am not sure that I have ever felt that confident in my own belonging anywhere else. In the past year, I have found a community like no other. A true depiction of pluralism, of equity, generosity, and love. To be honest, if you told me two years ago that I was working at a church, and loving it, I probably wouldn't have believed you. Not for any negative reason, but because I had no life plan, and had never allowed myself to take the time to explore any sort of religion.

I grew up going to Pine Street Lutheran Church in Danville. Back then. Sunday was not my favorite day of the week. It never really has been, honestly. In middle school, it was the day that I had to switch between my mom and my dad's house. In high school, I worked every Sunday at Gram's Eatery, in Lewisburg, to pay for college. And then in college, Sunday was the weekly 'chapter' for my sorority, which I tried my best not to attend anyways.

But when I was a kid, rather than a religious activity, I viewed Sundays as my weekly quality time with my grandmother, my Mimi. Not because I didn't love spending time with her, I love and miss her very very much. But for at least 8 years or so, this weekly ritual was not optional for me. I was required to go, unless I was truly sick. Now, this is not to say I didn't enjoy or appreciate my time there, I definitely did. I have fond memories of singing in the choir with my grandmother, making friends at Vacation Bible school, and sneaking extra cups of cream with a splash of English breakfast tea during their version of social hour. But I didn't really understand why I was there, or what they were talking about. And I wrote basically all of this into the google form that I filled out as my application, about one year ago today.

I still remember the day that I had my interview. I had been applying for jobs frequently at that point, as I was a fresh Bucknell graduate with no life plan whatsoever. All that I knew was that

I wanted to do good work with good people. And when I was researching UUCSV for my interview, I knew that I had found it. UU values spoke to me, and I didn't know it yet, but they would truly change my life. I remember when Sara showed me around the building, and I remember the gut feeling that I just couldn't shake. I knew that there was something special here. Even though the Sanctuary was empty, I somehow could visualize how full of life it could be. On the car ride home, I remember saying to my mom, "If I don't get the job, is it weird if I just start attending services anyways?"

For the past year, I have had the absolute honor and privilege of being your Office Manager. I have sent almost 100 newsletters, made hundreds of social media posts, and I've spent many precious moments here, in the sanctuary, with all of you. I have learned so much about myself, about love, justice, and compassion.

To me, Unitarian Universalism has grown to mean a few things. To me, it means compassion, community, and warmth. And without even realizing it, I have transformed my life to live UU values. Because of all of you, I find pluralism, transformation, equity, generosity, interdependence, love, and justice everyday. I find myself looking for it, and looking for joy. UU values transformed me into a kinder, more open, more curious, and I would hope a more generous person. And now, I carry them with me.

While I might have already known that every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion, UUCSV is where I've had the pleasure of seeing it lived, unconditionally, to the fullest extent. The way that this congregation comes together to support each other and its community is unmatched.

UUCSV has been so very generous to me and has regenerated and cultivated my spirit of gratitude and hope. Because of this place, and all of you, I have hope. In times where I feel too anxious to even watch any sort of news channel, I can come here, every Sunday, and spend a few hours with a group of true, kind hearted people. A community that comes together to welcome, acknowledge, and celebrate an interdependent web of identities, ideals, and beliefs. A community that meets you where you're at, that supports you, that encourages you to flourish and grow and find yourself.

In this ever changing world, I try my best not to be afraid of change, and transformation. I try to spread the love and compassion, and the warmth that I feel when I enter and leave here. I leave here every Sunday with a smile. Every single time. It doesn't matter if there were 60

people here, or 20, or 10. And trust me, I know that it makes me the luckiest girl in the world. I am so very lucky to have gotten to know all of you, to have learned your stories, and to have shared this time with you. This is the best job I have ever had.

But I don't think of this place as work. Truly, I think of this place as a home.

And to Sara,

Lenore said it best: You are the heart of UUCSV. I am so lucky to work so closely with you, and so lucky to learn so much from you. I am forever grateful for your wisdom, your kindness, your patience, and your faith. Thank you for always listening to my ideas, and for letting me do the bulletin board because you know I love it so much, and for always labeling your receipts with their exact Quickbooks category. Thank you for making to do lists in the same way that I do, and understanding my word jumble ideas, and usually making them better. Your generosity and dedication is an inspiration, and I hope to even have an ounce of your work ethic and grace in me as I continue to grow.

Now don't worry, you haven't actually gotten rid of me completely, and I will still be popping into your inbox plenty of times throughout the week. You will see my face (and Poppy's) on Sundays on Zoom, and sometimes I will even be lucky enough to be back in the sanctuary. Although I am moving, I could not bear to leave this job completely. While I may not physically be here as often, a part of me will always be.

So now, Sunday is my favorite day. It is the day where I know that I will be smiling the entire morning, laughing with all of you, and joining you for worship. I know I will get to hear some beautiful music, some inspiring words, and if I am lucky enough, I will even get to pet some dogs. It is a day of rest, even if I am not even home. A day of joy and sunshine, even if it's raining. I will be surrounded by peace and kindness and generosity and the spirit of justice. And even as I move, Sunday will still be my favorite day. It will be the day that I get to return to all of you. For a few hours, I will get to experience the joy of the UUCSV Sanctuary. Wherever I may be in the world, I will still get to feel the sense of belonging that you all have so graciously given me.

I am so lucky to be able to call UUCSV a home, and to hold UU values with me as I move forward. I am grateful to be able to look for UU values all around me, and to continue to do so no matter where I am. So thank you. Thanks for giving a recent college grad a chance, and for welcoming me into your community. Thank you for all the love and laughter and kindness and

silliness and comfort. Thank you for continuing to support me in this next chapter. But most of all, thank you all for being yourselves. I love each and every one of you, and I am so thankful that I get to continue to do this work, and to live UU values.

THANK YOU!!!