
January 2018

Uniter

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING
10309 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20903
301-434-4050 • Fax 301-434-4051
www.uucss.org



Sunday Worship Services

January 7—10:30 AM

Hari Om! Rev. Evan Keely & Gita Zember

Gita Zember joins us once again for a session of kirtan. UUCSS will be alive with devotional chanting!

January 14—10:30 AM

The Harmonies of Liberty Rev. Evan Keely

What does it mean for a community to be truly inclusive?

January 21—10:30 AM

In the Beauty of the Day Rev. Evan Keely

Reflections on the 1-year anniversary of the Women's March.

January 28—10:30 AM

Look for the sermon leader and topic in our weekly all-church email.

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Nursery Care and Religious Education for children through grade 12 are offered during the worship service. ASL interpreting is provided during the service. (There will be one service at 10:30 am through March 25. Coffee hour will take place after the service.)

Message From Rev. Evan Keely, Interim Minister

UUCSS is a strong congregation, full of dedicated, thoughtful, caring people. Some of the events of recent years, both inside and outside the church, have tested the resolve of this faith community. It can be tempting to want things to be simpler at times like these, but simpler is not always better. When dealing with the uncertainty that change can bring, it can be more of a challenge to recognize that having multiple options is often a good thing. When we're feeling unsure, we might prefer to have things decided for us; if we're frustrated or confused or frightened by change, we might wish to have less change. But very often those are the very kinds of circumstances in which having a variety of choices is actually advantageous. Yet these can be the kinds of situations in which it may not be easy for us to ascertain the difference between what we want versus what we actually need, or between what's easiest versus what's actually best. I'm reminded of the old adage: don't pray for lighter burdens; pray for a stronger back.

It's quite possible that UUCSS could have a new settled minister by the summer of 2019, but wise church leaders are opening their minds and hearts to additional options. Although my relationship with UUCSS will end in July of 2018 in accordance with the contract the church Board and I agreed to, this arrangement provides opportunities for embracing a wider variety of possibilities. The plan to do 2 years of interim ministry is a good one; doing the first year with me and the second year with another interim minister would provide an opportunity for further learning and for greater organizational, maturational, and spiritual growth. Contract ministry, consulting ministry, developmental ministry, and even less-than-full-time ministry are also options. Any choices have their pros and cons. Over the next few months, the church's leaders will be engaging in a discernment process about what the best next steps could be. Those conversations have already begun, and from what I have seen and heard, they have been rich and thoughtful. We should be optimistic.

I continue to be hopeful about the future of this church precisely because I see a great deal of thoughtfulness, curiosity, open-mindedness, and caring in these and other processes of discernment. Although our time together is brief, I will continue to do whatever I can to foster that creativity.



Message From the President of the Board

As Rev. Keely discusses in his article, he plans to leave UUCSS at the end of July to give our church a chance to experience another ministerial style before we look for our next settled minister. When we were seeking an interim minister, the Board decided to offer a 1-year contract, with an option to renew for

a second year. We anticipated needing a 2-year interim period before we would potentially be ready to have a called, settled minister. But we elected to do a 1-year contract, with a possible renewal, because we wanted to leave options open, for all of us to determine the best course after we had an opportunity to begin interim ministry.

During the UUCSS Leadership Retreat, which was December 16 and 17, Rev. Keely helped us to think about who we are as a church community and what would be best for our congregation moving forward. It was a chance to review what he has learned during his time at UUCSS, how we have grown during the interim period, and discuss broader questions about our identity, vision, and mission. Rev. Keely gave a presentation on and led a great discussion about looking at aspects of church culture that tend to correlate with congregations of various sizes.

Rev. Keely challenged us to contemplate where our church culture and our governance systems are serving us in working to build the kind of world we dream of, and where they may be dissonant. He also pushed us to step back from what we had assumed or thought had to be our path forward for our church community.

To be reflective and willing to change course if we determine another path is the best path for UUCSS before selecting a new minister. The path we follow as we move through, and on from, this interim period may look much like what we had anticipated, or may be quite different. But what is critical, and what I feel we are well positioned to do, is to choose our path forward based on our vision and goals for this faith community.

John Henderson

Director of Religious Education

You, Me, and UU History

I spoke recently to the first minister of UUCSS, the Reverend David Hicks MacPherson. He came to our church fresh out of seminary before we had a building and even two dozen members. You can visit the Reverend's first office on campus still today. It isn't in the Administrative building but existed in the Fellowship House over a bundle of hay and animal tracks. From humble beginnings, we grew into the church we are today.

History is a central theme for our congregation this year as we celebrate the 65th anniversary of UUCSS. We can also learn more about our faith by looking at the larger picture of Unitarian and Universalist history throughout the course of human history. Some UU history facts:

- 1) The first ceremony of union performed by a UU minister for a same gender couple was reportedly done in the late 1950s.
- 2) Louisa May Alcott, author of *Little Women*, was Unitarian.
- 3) Rev. Joseph Jordan (1842–1901) started a Universalist mission in Norfolk, Virginia. In 1889 Jordan became the first African American to be ordained as a Universalist minister.

These facts scratch the surface of the deep well of history our faith draws from. If we are to lead the story of our faith in the future, we must know the stories of our past. Therefore, RE is proud to offer a Brown Bag UU History class from January 7th to March 8th from 11:45 to 1:45. Class will be drop-in and cover a different topic each class. [Childcare will be provided. Please bring your lunch and join us for discussion and fellowship.](#)

RE is Looking for Spring Workshop Leaders:

Can you juggle? Paint? Do improv?

We want you!

RE is seeking teachers for our spring workshops in April and May. If you have an idea to teach children and youth one Sunday morning, please email Catherine at dre@uucss.org.

UPDATES AND REPORTS

UUA Offers a Course for Congregational Leaders

Want to Grow? Time to Adapt!

Is your congregation looking to be relevant in a culture where most mainstream white religions are in decline? Many UU congregations are growing, even areas that have declined economically. What is their "secret sauce?"

It's as simple as congregational health, a sense of purpose, open communication, and covenantal community.

And it's as complicated as congregational health, a sense of purpose, open communication, and covenantal community. These are not things learned in a single workshop or by reading a single book. They are processes—ways of being in the world. These are not skills that a single leader can gain and take to their congregation. They are group skills that are best learned by a critical mass of the congregation (20 percent or so) learning together.

The UUA has made it easy and affordable for your congregational leaders to learn together, taking core leadership courses as a group, and then using what you learned by applying it to case studies and other activities.

- Faithful Leadership is a great beginning course, covering how our history, theology, and polity inform our faith communities.
- Centered Leadership focuses on healthy relationships and communications, developing a shared sense of purpose, and how to lead through a change.
- Strategic Leadership is for boards, strategic planning committees, bylaws task forces, etc., helping you lead strategically through governing documents and processes.
- Adaptive Leadership helps leaders develop a more nuanced view of the congregation as a system during uncertain times.

The courses each have 8 sessions. They open every 2 weeks, and each participant will get an email when each new module is open. The cost is only \$30 per course per semester per participant. There is a combination of YouTube video presentations by UUA Congregational Life staff and guests, as well as readings and links to more resources. The first module opens January 26, 2018, so you have plenty of time to enroll! URL: <https://wp.me/p6FyZr-ic>.

Update from the Green Sanctuary Committee

The Montgomery County Council passed a resolution in support of Renewable Portfolio Standard bill requiring electricity suppliers (all utilities and competitive retail suppliers) in the state to procure a 50 percent of their electrical retail sales by eligible renewable energy sources by 2030. You can email your special thanks to Councilmember Roger Berliner, who was lead sponsor and Council members George Leventhal, Marc Elrich, Hans Riemer, Sidney Katz, Tom Hucker, Nancy Navaro, and Craig Rice, who were co-sponsors. CountyCouncil@MontgomeryCountyMD.gov. Don't know who your council member is? Go to <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/> and enter your address.

Preserving Our History: Construction and Consolidation

This will be a longer-than-usual article, as I was so torn between two great stories, I decided to tell them both.

Jim and I visited the Rev. David Hicks MacPherson at his home in Ashland, Virginia last month. I wanted to continue our interview about the first decade of our church, and Jim was curious about the process of planning, funding, and constructing our first building, the present Community Hall. I noticed a ramp had been installed at the house since my visit last spring; Rev. Dave just celebrated his 89th birthday and is troubled by arthritis. As we settled into his book-filled living room, Jim admired the detailed models of colonial Boston landmarks Rev. Dave had created over the years. Then we got down to business, beginning with Jim's questions about the building. We had recently found a set of slides showing a meeting, with the individuals posed in exaggerated attitudes of frustration and despair. In one of the photos, Max Miller was sitting beside a building model



that bore little resemblance to the Community Hall. Rev. Dave had not been at that meeting, but he guessed that it was around the time they had to abandon the original build plans due to lack of funds. It turns out that between 1955 (when they first started planning for a building) and 1964 (when the building was completed), they went through two architects (both church members, working pro bono), two sets of

plans, and at least one detour into consideration of buying a different property entirely, where construction might be less costly. I'll go into more detail in a future article. It was heartening, in a way, to learn that our history of building efforts has always been characterized in fits and starts.

I had brought along a small pile of photos with unknown events and/or unidentified people, which I hope Rev. Dave would recognize. One set was of a large group of smartly dressed people at an "annual meeting" at the Villa Rosa restaurant in Silver Spring in June 1960. I thought it was the church's annual meeting, but Rev. Dave pointed out a few UUCSSers and said the rest were from other area congregations, as it was the annual meeting of the DC UU's. So, it happened that UUCSS hosted the annual Greater Washington Area meeting, with its special guests, Dr. Dana Greeley, president of the American Unitarian Association, and Dr. Philip Giles, general superintendent of the Universalist Church of America, shown here with Rev. David MacPherson.



(Left to right: Greeley, MacPherson, Giles).

This event was just about a year before the consolidation of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America. I am still researching the exact timeline, but before the official merger in 1961, the proposal had to be approved by a majority of the congregations of both denominations. UUCSS voted unanimously to approve the merger; both All Souls Unitarian or Universalist National Memorial (our founding church) rejected it. But we had gone one step further. Our congregation had also approved a name change to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring, to take effect immediately on the national approval of the consolidation. We had the new letterhead and a new sign ready to go. There may have been other congregations who did the same; at the very least, we could boast that no other church adopted the UU label before we did.

Rev. Dave remains a thorough Universalist, the product of several generations of New England craftsmen and laborers. In our interview last spring, he mused that if the consolidation vote were today, he might vote against it. He feels that the more centralized organizational structure of the UCA would have worked better to support ministers and congregations, and that the message of universalism is more relevant to our social justice work.

I posted a video message from Rev. Dave in our Facebook group. If you want to send him a note of thanks and appreciation, his address is:

Rev. David Hicks MacPherson,
103 Randolph Circle,
Ashland VA 23005
Next month from Jo Paoletti: *UUCSS and the Civil Rights Movement*

Report on Mosaic Makers San Diego 2017

At the end of October, I was privileged to attend the Mosaic Makers 2017 Conference, sponsored by the UUA Office of Multicultural Ministries and hosted by the First UU Church of San Diego. UUCSS has been a participant in these conferences since the first one in 2012 at All Souls Unitarian in Washington DC. These conferences consist of workshops, worship, experiential learning, and community building to strengthen the fabric of UU multicultural congregations and ministries.

It would be impossible, in this short article, to cover even a small portion of the discussions and knowledge-sharing that went on at the conference. If I mention that speakers included UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, Dr. Takiyah Amin of the Black Lives of UU Organizing Collective, Rev. Mitra Rahnama, editor of the UU common read "Centering," Dr. Mark Hicks of the Meadville-Lombard Theological School, and Chris Crass, author of "Toward the 'Other America,'" you may get an idea of how deep these conversations were. In addition, the UU San Diego church is a vibrant multicultural campus that includes a satellite storefront church in Chula Vista with bilingual services at both churches.

With all of that, I have to say that one of the most powerful experiences that most of us had was not at either church, or particularly UU, but spoke to the promise of multicultural community. We were all bused to Chicano Park, in a predominantly Mexican-American community that had been gutted for highway construction in the 1950s, and then was saved by the community from development in the 1970s, and has been beautified by turning the highway piers and overpasses into 89 murals that cover most of the bare concrete with vibrant images and colors. We were able to talk to one of the muralists and a community organizer with Border Angels. This conversation was the living example of how we all can be part of the mosaic-making, in San Diego or Silver Spring.

Jim Paoletti

**December
Volunteer
of the
Month:
Rob
Dahlstrom**

Rob Dahlstrom, already a UU, came to UUCSS in 1978 when his wife, Hank Dahlstrom, was hired as the DRE. The family had been looking for a new church and when Hank's term as DRE ended 2 years later, the family decided to stay. Over his nearly 40 years of membership, Rob has been involved in many committees and other activities. One of the volunteer activities he derives great satisfaction from involved his work with a group that was working on a new governance structure for the church in the 1980s. He came up with an alternative program council to the one that was proposed. Although neither was adopted, his proposal provided the basis for the

ultimate model that was adopted and which we still use. He was also involved in more recent efforts to create the Operations Council, as a separate group from the program council, on which various committees focused on church operations (as opposed to church programs).

Rob, with February's Volunteer of the Month, Ken lobst, has for many years provided the IT support for the church auction. He and Ken run the IT system that captures all the auction items that people donate, maintains everyone's bidder number, compiles the entered bids by bidder number and derives each bidder's total, and provides lists of items bid and items donated by bidder/donor. Rob and Ken's IT support is critical to the success of UUCSS's annual Auction.

EVENTS

JANUARY 12-13: Jubilee Anti-Racism Training MLK Weekend

Do you wish to nurture your congregation's multicultural future in the face of opposing cultural currents?

Do you wish to deepen your understanding of how race and ethnicity play out in our institutions and our daily lives?

This is a great way to celebrate the work of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the ongoing struggle for justice on MLK weekend.

Al Nathan is attending and would be happy to connect with other folks from UUCSS.

- **WHEN: Friday, January 12th, 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm; Saturday, January 13th, 9:00 am to 9:00 pm; Sunday, January 14th, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm**
- **WHERE: All Souls Church Unitarian, 1500 Harvard St NW, Washington DC 20009**
- **FEE: \$160 per participant (includes the cost for trainers, meals, and materials). Contributions in support of this work are welcome.**

➤ Enrollment is limited to 40 participants. Online registration deadline is January 8, 2018. Jubilee Anti-Racism Training helps participants understand what is involved in nurturing a multicultural community and working against racism in all of its forms. The workshop requires a weekend commitment, and it is worth every minute of that commitment. Here is a link to the Facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/356412571493219/?ti=ic> That also includes a registration link.

JANUARY 14: NEW UUCSS MEMBER RECOGNITION

Please welcome three new UUCSS Members: Nadine (Dina) Raley, Rick Ehrenreich, and Maureen Malloy. We will formally recognize them at the Sunday service on January 14.



Nadine (Dina) Raley



Rick Ehrenreich & Maureen Malloy

JANUARY 20: Join Us for Our Annual Legislative Kickoff

Come Help Us Kick Off the 2018 Legislative Session! Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry Keynote by the Honorable Delegate Cheryl D. Glenn, Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland.

WHERE: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, 7246 Cradlerock Way, Columbia, MD 21045

WHEN: Saturday, January 20, 2018. 8:30 am-1 pm.

WHAT: Opportunity to get involved in issues advocacy for climate change, economic justice, criminal justice reform, police accountability, and death with dignity.

REGISTER HERE: https://www.uulmmd.org/2015/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78

Stay tuned to the UULM-MD website and Facebook page for further details on programming.

FEBRUARY 25: Commemorate the Selma Marches with the Sanctuary Singers

Join the Sanctuary Singers in commemorating the Selma marches. This stunning musical tribute features vocalist and Strathmore Artist in Residence alumna Cassandra Allen and choirs from UUCSS and the People's Community Baptist Church in a performance that explores and celebrates the legacy of the Selma marches through story, spirituals, and gospel music.

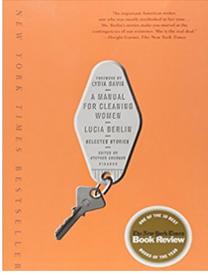
These marches are particularly important to UUCSS because several congregants travelled to Selma to participate. , Two UUs were killed during these events, including Rev. James Reeb, a UU minister who worked at All Souls DC for several years before he was ordained, and Viola Liuzzo, a UU from Detroit, who was shot as she was driving people to the airport after the march.

Date and Time: February 25, 2018, at 4:00 pm

Location: The People's Community Baptist Church, 31 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905

ONGOING EVENTS

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

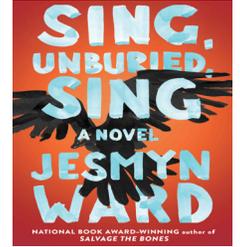


Women's Book Group meets on the fourth Monday of each month. We are an informal group that has been meeting since 2000, and we are open to interested readers; there

is no long-term obligation. Please contact dweiner04@gmail.com for additional details. At our next meeting on January 22, we will discuss *A Manual for Cleaning Women*, by Lucia Berlin.

MENS' BOOK READING GROUP

We will be discussing *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, by Jesmyn Ward, the winner of the 2017 National Book Award for Fiction. The next meeting will be held at the home of **Jerry Herbers (1215 Highland Drive, Silver Spring)** on Sunday, January 21, at 7 pm. All are welcome. If you are interested in joining the group, contact **Richard Lorr** (rlorr4@gmail.com), get the book, and come to the next meeting. Hope to see you there!



CONNECT WITH UUCSS

Did You Know?

Many people do jobs around the church that most people don't know about. They should be recognized and thanked, so I proposed this "Did You Know" column for the *Unitier*. I'll be happy to write it if people feed me the basic facts—either about your own contributions or someone else's. Email me at bnbmccgaughy@verizon.net.

Note: Please feed me interesting information for this column or it'll peter out for lack of content.

Did You Know? How many volunteer hours the choir (the Sanctuary Singers) has put in each year ever since we went to two services 13 years ago? Each full-time choir member has put in about 80 hours for Thursday rehearsals over 9½ months, and an additional 80 hours singing two services every other Sunday, for a total of 160 hours per choir person per year. Multiply that by 20 full-time choir members, and you get an awful lot of hours per year. And that doesn't include UUCSS-sponsored musical workshops, residencies, and concerts.

Did You Know? That Beth Riggs is the senior choir member, with approximately 30 years of singing with the group under her belt? She joined the choir in the mid '80s before joining the church. Ever modest, Beth wanted some other long-time stalwarts (including her husband Drew, who's been singing "off and on" for the same amount of time) highlighted. But after further checking, there's no question that she's been in the choir the longest. With a beautiful voice and an impeccable sense of timing, she's also one of the key singers. (Her fellow second sopranos have moments of panic when she's absent). Thank you Beth!

Speaking of our Sanctuary Singers, did you know that choir membership took a big jump several years ago when Ron Turner started bringing beer for after-rehearsal socializing? (There's more to the choir than meets the ear!)

Administrative Update
Wishing everyone a
Happy New Year!





UUCSS

Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring

10309 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20903

FIRST CLASS

Rev. Evan Keely

Interim Minister

interimminister@uucss.org

Catherine Boyle

Religious Education Director

dre@uucss.org

Michael Holmes

Music Director

musicdirector@uucss.org

Melinda Yalom

Church Administrator

administrator@uucss.org

John Henderson

Board President

president@uucss.org

Submissions to the **Uniter** are due by the 20th of the prior month. Send information and visuals to uniter@uucss.org.

Format Guidelines for Submissions: Text must be in a form that it can be edited, either in a Microsoft Word file or in the body of an email that can be copied and pasted. Graphics must be in a format in which they can be repositioned and resized—jpeg is greatly preferred.

The newsletter is published September–June by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring.

Co-editors are Jane Larrick and Stephanie McConachie.

To receive a PDF email version of the newsletter, contact the church office at administrator@uucss.org.

To receive a mailed copy of the **Uniter** for the year, please send **\$24 to UUCSS, Attention: Collector.**

Church Office Hours

Monday: 2-5 pm

Tuesdays–Thursdays: 9 am–5 pm

Church Website: www.uucss.org