

January 2022

# Uniter



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING  
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# WORSHIP SERVICES

## January 2022 Worship

Sunday morning worship--10:00 am, Prelude; 10:30 am, Service

UUCSS is proud to offer hybrid worship on Sunday mornings. Some of us gather together in person in the Sanctuary and others tune in online. Masks are required at all times on church property, except when eating and drinking. All services are offered both in-person in the Sanctuary and online unless otherwise noted. Online links sent out in weekly all-church email and on Sunday mornings.

### **January 2: A Cup of Kindness**, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Start the New Year off right with UUCSS! Our theme this month is "Living with Intention" so this week we begin with a service of letting go of our burdens and realigning ourselves with love and purpose.

### **January 9: Loving Ourselves**, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Join us for the first in a series of three services rooted in the wisdom of mystic Howard Thurman. Thurman was a student of Gandhi, advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr., and spiritual activist in his own right. This week we explore Thurman's teachings about love of self.

### **January 16: Loving Others**, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Join us this Martin Luther King Jr. weekend for the second in a series of three services rooted in the wisdom of King's spiritual advisor, Howard Thurman. In this service we will explore Thurman's theology of loving others, and how that shaped the spiritual activism that gave strength to the Civil Rights movement.

### **January 23: Loving All**, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

This Sunday is the third in a series of three services rooted in the wisdom of Howard Thurman. This week we reflect on love of God and love of all.

### **January 30: Love Is Not Enough**, Rev. Kimberley Debus

Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to love, but what does that look like? Is it enough to have love, or must we do more to hold our congregations and communities in covenant?

*Rev. Kimberley Debus is a community minister based in Takoma Park, inspiring an artful and art-filled faith. She consults with congregations and religious professionals throughout the denomination. She is a member of the other UUCSS, in Saratoga Springs, NY, and is joyfully affiliated with the Unitarian Church of Lincoln, Nebraska. Rev. Kimberley has previously served at the Church of the Larger Fellowship as well as congregations on Long Island and Key West.*

# INSPIRE

## Minister's Column by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt



Fifty-nine years ago, the man whose birthday the nation will celebrate midway through this month wrote the following from a Birmingham jail cell: “The church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society.” While many remember Martin Luther King, Jr., as a brave civil rights leader, it can be easy to overlook that his work for social justice was rooted in his vocation as a minister. His vision encompassed not only change in national rights and politics, but also the way faith communities might lead that change.

This month’s worship theme is “Living with Intention,” and I can think of no better focus for the beginning of a new year. Among other things, this month’s service line-up includes a three-week sermon series rooted in the wisdom of spiritual activist Howard Thurman (who mentored Dr. King). January worship concludes with a service led by my friend and colleague, Kimberley Debus, a community minister who lives in Takoma Park.

Your Board will also be working to practice what we preach about dismantling anti-racism by beginning a year-long study of Widening the Circle, a report by the UUA’s Commission on Institutional Change. I’m glad that Dr. Laura Solomon, Director of Spiritual Growth, will join me in co-facilitating this study. I’m so proud to serve a congregation that not only worked to adopt the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, but is living our values with intention by using this report to help reflect on the ways we can begin to dismantle the white supremacy baked into our own congregation’s leadership and governance practices.

And I hope you’ll join me in bidding high and often at UUCSS’s “Out of This World” Auction! It’s my intention for this to be a year not only of fundraising, but FUN-raising, and what better way to kick that off than this cherished annual tradition. It looks like there are some great items on offer, including a traditional Texas Barbecue Brisket Dinner prepared from scratch by none other than my husband and me. I can’t wait to see who wins it!

May we all find ways to live with deeper intention into 2022, and in so doing may we all help bring about more health, sustainability, and joy to the people and world around us.

In faith and affection,

*Rev. Kristin*

## Message From Maggie Hayes, Board President



Our *Uniter* editors encourage us to build our messages around the monthly worship theme. For December it's "Opening to Joy." But as I'm writing this, my focus is on Thanksgiving, more than a week away. My family has a practice of going around the table to hear from everyone what they're particularly thankful for. This year I'll give thanks that my sister's family and mine are able to resume a decades-long tradition of celebrating the holiday together, by gathering in Seattle where my daughter, nephew, and their families live. I'm anticipating the joy I'll feel next week.

Aha! Maybe that's the connection between giving thanks and "opening to joy." The expression, the practice, of gratitude opens us up to feelings of joy, whether in memories, in this moment, or in the future. Apparently I'm not the first person to make this connection. A 95-year-old Benedictine monk, David Steindl-Rast, has said, "The root of joy is gratefulness....It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful."

I have so many reasons to be grateful and to open a gateway to joy. Here I want to focus on several associated with our church.

- I appreciate the tireless efforts, creativity, professionalism, and compassion of Rev. Kristin and her excellent staff. A special shout-out to Phil Browne, who in his too-brief time with UUCSS has instituted improved ways of approaching administrative and technical functions. I am grateful that he will still be with us, however part-time, and wish him joy in his new career.
- I'm so thankful for all the volunteers who are making hybrid worship meaningful, whether in-person or online. I also give thanks to congregants who can abide the inevitable glitches with patience and grace. There's more joy ahead!
- Gratitude also goes to so many others who serve our community by leading efforts to improve our buildings and grounds, keep our programs up and running, and implement our visions of social justice and living into the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle. Another shout-out to the folks who are initiating a project for UUCSS to co-sponsor an Afghan refugee family resettling in our area. What joy that will bring!

With hopes that your observation of Thanksgiving has opened you to joy!



# LEARN



## RE Schedule

**January 2nd:** NO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OR YRUU

**January 9th:** Virtual RE for PreK - 8th grade - 10:00AM  
YRUU - in person at UUCSS - 10:30AM

**January 16th:** TBD based on weather and vaccination rates  
Turn in your Guest At Your Table boxes!

**January 23rd:** Virtual RE for PreK - 8th grade - 10:00AM  
YRUU in person at UUCSS - 10:30AM

**January 30th:** TBD based on weather and vaccination rates

# CONNECT

## Events

Recurring and committee events can also be found on the Church Calendar at <https://uucss.org/calendar/>

**January 9:** 7:00 pm. **Men's Book Group.** We are reading Go, Went, Gone by Jenny Erpenbeck. A vividly drawn, powerful novel about the plight of African asylum seekers in Europe. We will either meet at the home of Bruce McConachie or hold the meeting over Zoom. If you are interested in joining the discussion, let Richard Lorr know ([rlorr4@gmail.com](mailto:rlorr4@gmail.com)), get the book, and come to the meeting.

**January 10:** 7:30 - 10:00 pm. **Online Men's Group.**

**January 14:** 8:00 pm. **Ladies Night Out.** Currently, a Zoom chat for UUCSS women interested in connecting with other UUCSS women. To join the group and receive announcements, subscribe to the the church's UUCSS | Ladies-Night-Out listserv, which is a subgroup of the main UUCSS [groups.io](https://groups.io) listserv.

**January 24:** 7:30 - 10:00 pm. **Online Men's Group.**

**January 31:** 7:30 - 10:00 pm. **Online Men's Group.**

## Committee Updates



Out of this World  
Auction



*Hey there, Earthlings! – It's about time for the UUCSS 2021 Online Auction! The UUCSS Out of This World auction starts on Saturday January 15 at 7:30 pm!*

**January 2:** LAST day to submit donations!! <https://tinyurl.com/UUdonatepage>

**January 15 through January 23:** Online Bidding Window

**Saturday, January 15, 7:30 pm:** Online Auction Kickoff (Zoom link will be shared via all-church email.)

**Sunday, January 23:**

- **After Service:** Outdoor Get-together at UUCSS (weather-permitting)
- **4:30 pm:** Grand Finale via Zoom (Zoom link will be shared via all-church email.)
- **5:00 pm:** Online Auction Ends

**REMEMBER TO:**

1. Register to bid at: <https://tinyurl.com/UUauctionregistration>  
(include credit card info for easy checkout)
2. View 2021 Auction website: <https://tinyurl.com/UUauctionhome>
3. Start bidding on January 15, 7:30 pm
4. Finish bidding by January 23, 5 pm
5. Pay one of these ways:
  - Credit card at end of auction (easiest way)
  - Check (write "Auction" in memo line)
  - GivePlus mobile app There are TWO Auction funds:
    - Auction Purchases (to PAY for auction items you have won – Auction Purchase payments ARE NOT tax deductible)
    - Auction Donations (to DONATE money to the Auction - Auction Donation payments ARE tax deductible)

Be sure to review [UUCSS Covid Guidelines](#) when planning an event and just before the event. The current (November 18, 2021) guidelines state that "Hosts of off-campus events (meetings, Auction events) should make decisions about precautions considering this guidance, local regulations, and the comfort level of each attendee. These decisions should not be dependent on the vaccination status of individuals. When the transmission risk is Very High or Severe (as indicated on the [Covid Act Now website](#)), off-campus events should be suspended."

If you have any questions about the auction, please email the Auction Team at [auction@uucss.org](mailto:auction@uucss.org).



## Volunteer Spotlight

### Deborah Sorenson



Deborah Sorensen grew up in Texas and was highly involved in her local Methodist Church. It had a personable pastor with a fine sense of humor and a good youth group. That changed when the family moved to a rural location that did not have the same sense of home. After moving out of the family home, she became more interested in Buddhism as a personal approach to life and relationships but not as part of a temple.

After coming to DC with her husband, she remembers meeting someone at work with a chalice necklace and developed a positive feeling for the denomination after learning more online. As her daughter grew older she started looking for church. She missed the weekly connection with people and wanted Fiona (or Finn), then 13, to have space for her own needs and interests. They visited Paint Branch UUC but found that there were very few people Fiona's age. She and Fiona tried UUCSS and, with Rev. Lynn in the pulpit, it immediately felt like the friendly open church of her youth. (Seeing her friend Bonnie Gallion in the congregation also helped!) Her husband John, who had sworn off organized religion, started

attending soon after and feels just as grateful for having found this community.

Deborah especially likes doing things with Fiona, including working in the gardens. Working on the grounds is meditative and she looks forward to helping more. For a time she worked with the Rainbow Alliance, but that's Fiona's space now. She's looking for new ways to help our community, thinking especially of our soon-to-arrive Afghan resettlement family.

When asked about what she would say to the congregation she said that she was so grateful that we exist especially with our natural sense of humor. "It's like cool water after a difficult time. UUCSS was what we were looking for and we're glad we found it. Keep being awesome!"

### Community Partner of the Month Suspended

Like many faith communities, UUCSS has long partnered with organizations in our community whose missions intersect with our own and whose work promotes our values and furthers justice for our neighbors. In recent years we've done this by partnering with a different organization each month and encouraging the congregation to support them. This has had the benefit of exposing our members and friends to organizations they might not have been familiar with, and it's felt good to learn how our gifts are empowering their work in our wider community.

This program has also had challenges and draw-backs. A single month is not long enough for our congregation to be able to form much of a relationship with each organization, and as we are learning from our 8<sup>th</sup> Principle work, relationships are as essential as financial commitment in our service as a faith community. It's been challenging to balance commitments made to organizations selected for a given month with urgent needs that emerge locally and internationally. Another idea that is being explored is whether we might shift our Community Partner project toward a deeper and more lasting relationship by joining Action in Montgomery (AIM) and/or the Prince Georges Leadership Action Network (PLAN) to work with other congregations to press for local policy change. However, a commitment of that magnitude will take time for us to consider as a community.

It is for these reasons that the Program Council has chosen to suspend the Community Partner of the Month program, at least for now. I support this decision, but even more I support the spirit of discernment that led to it. I'm glad to serve together with people who are willing to lean into the unknown and into sometimes uncomfortable areas, who are willing to make space for questions and reflection, as we consider how best to try to be of service as a congregation in our wider community. Ultimately, in this time of ever-changing need around us, such an internal posture of openness, contemplation, and humility will serve us well.

*Rev. Kristin*



# ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

## Staff Hours and Contact Information

### **Phil Browne, Communications Administrator**

Phil performs property management tasks at church on Thursdays from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. He is available remotely by appointment throughout the week. Phil can be reached Monday through Friday at [administrator@uucss.org](mailto:administrator@uucss.org) or by calling the general church phone number: 301-273-9745

### **Dr. Laura Solomon, Director of Spiritual Growth**

Laura is available by appointment Tuesday through Friday at [dsg@uucss.org](mailto:dsg@uucss.org) and (443) 671-2845. Monday is her day off. If something urgent comes up outside normal office hours or over the weekend please text or call her. You can schedule an appointment with Laura at [www.calendly.com/uucssdsg](https://www.calendly.com/uucssdsg)

### **Michael Holmes, Music Director**

Michael works Thursday evenings, Sunday mornings, and is available at other times by appointment. Michael can be reached at [musicdirector@uucss.org](mailto:musicdirector@uucss.org).

### **Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt, Minister**

Rev. Kristin works Tuesday through Thursday from 10:00am to 4:00pm. Mondays is her writing days and Friday is her day off. She is available at [minister@uucss.org](mailto:minister@uucss.org) and 202-780-7164. If you experience a pastoral care emergency outside normal office hours or over the weekend please text or call her. You can schedule an appointment with Rev. Kristin at [www.calendly.com/rev-kristin-schmidt](https://www.calendly.com/rev-kristin-schmidt)

## UUCSS is Hiring for Two Positions

We are looking for a part-time Office Administrator to keep the office organized, maintain good communication with the congregation using tools set-up over the past year, and coordinate management of our campus. More information may be found at <https://uucss.org/2021/12/03/job-opportunity-at-uucss-2/>.

We are also looking for a part-time Religious Education Coordinator to work closely with the Director of Spiritual Growth and with volunteers to coordinate virtual and in-person Religious Education classes for children and youth. More information may be found at <https://uucss.org/2021/12/15/job-opportunity-re-coordinator/>.

*UUCSS policies do not allow us to hire members for staff positions, but if you know someone who would be a good fit for either of these positions, please encourage them to apply!*

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring**

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FIRST CLASS

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Board President**

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Submissions are due by the 17th of the prior month.

**Uniters** are published monthly September-June by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring.

Send information and visuals to [uniter@uucss.org](mailto:uniter@uucss.org).

Format guidelines for submissions: Text must be in a form that it can be edited, either in a Google Doc (preferred), 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.

Co-editors are **Lynn Cave** and **Caroline Stauss**.

To receive a PDF email version of the newsletter, contact the church office at [administrator@uucss.org](mailto:administrator@uucss.org).

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