

November 2021

# Unitar



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING  
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# WORSHIP SERVICES

## Welcome to Worship, Now in Two Ways!

Because of the financial investment the congregation made in this year's budget, and thanks to the incredible time and expertise shared by several of our members, UUCSS is proud to welcome you to join us for Sunday morning worship in two ways: virtually on Zoom and in person in our Sanctuary. The link to Zoom worship will be included in the all-church email and is on the church website. **Note: every person planning to attend the service in-person must sign up ahead of time so we can ensure we don't exceed the safety limit to our Sanctuary's capacity.**

While some UUCSS members are glad to return to our Sanctuary for worship, many are just as glad to be able to join us for worship virtually. Some are not ready to gather indoors with others yet, some in different regions and even countries, and some might need to tune in virtually due to travel, illness, or just because it's more convenient. However you join us for worship, however you engage with our community, we're glad you're here!

Broadcasting worship from the Sanctuary with an in-person congregation is a very new dynamic for the team of dedicated staff and volunteers who are making it happen. Like any big change, it may take us some time to become accustomed to it, to figure out how to make all of the pieces work, to find what changes need to be made so the service is truly accessible to as many people as possible. As always, we welcome your feedback, and we ask for your grace, patience, and understanding in this time of transition and learning.

We also ask for your help. It's always taken a lot of people to make church happen, and now it takes even more. If you haven't already, please sign up to help out on a future Sunday. The link to sign up will be in the all-church email.

## **November 7: To Fix or Fight the System,** Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt (NOTE: Eastern Standard Time Begins Today)

162 years ago last month, in an attempt to arm slaves for revolt, John Brown led a raid on Harpers Ferry. Of the six people who funded Brown's raid, five were Unitarians. Join us as we seek wisdom, warning, and courage from our past and consider today's liberal and radical perspectives on how to build a better world.

## **November 14: Remembering Anew,** Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Former President Trump continues to bemoan critical race theory while some in Texas want public school curricula to include "opposing views" about the Holocaust. Meanwhile, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland has launched a review of the deadly legacy of federal boarding school policies on Native American communities. This week in worship we grapple with it all, and contemplate the importance not just of the past, but the way we remember it together.

## **November 21: Our Share of the Work of Creation,** Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Join us this Sunday before Thanksgiving for feel-good harvest hymns, a re-telling of the Stone Soup story, and a service about generosity of spirit.

## **November 28: Power, Partnership, and Change,** Rev. Mary Katherine Morn

Last week we invited everyone to participate in the "Guest at Your Table" spiritual practice through the autumn and winter holiday season. This week we learn more about this program and the "guests" it empowers from Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, President and CEO of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

# INSPIRE

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



Here at UUCSS we use Soul Matters materials to inform our worship and small group ministries, and November's packet begins with words by Parker Palmer:

*"Jewish teaching includes frequent reminders of the importance of a broken-open heart, as in this Hasidic tale: A disciple asks the rebbe: 'Why does Torah tell us to 'place these words upon your hearts'? Why does it not tell us to place these holy words in our hearts?' The rebbe answers: 'It is because as we are, our hearts are closed, and we cannot place the holy words in our hearts. So we place them on top of our hearts. And there they stay until, one day, the heart breaks and the words fall in.'"*

I don't often think of myself as having a closed heart, but these words still resonate because they reflect the link between vulnerability and truth. In times of pain and struggle, it can be tempting to lean away from those feelings rather than deal with them head on. Yet honesty, first and foremost with ourselves, is the only way to inner growth and maturity.

Moving beyond the realm of the individual, the news is filled with stories rooted in people's unwillingness to be honest about reality, both past and present. The human cost of racism baked into our culture and policies, the ecological cost of an economy that prioritizes short-term profits for a few people over long-term sustainability for the planet, these realities are easier to deny, rationalize, and ignore than they are to accept. As the Soul Matters packet reads "It certainly seems the rabbis were right. Like those holy words, history in its fullness just sits there until our hearts break open and allow it in."

This month in worship we will be grappling with it all as we engage our theme of "Holding History." There is something powerful about being fully present to the world and ourselves as they are--the bad, the good, and everything in between. This is not easy; it is deep spiritual work. But the blessing in opening ourselves up to the fullness of history are the stories of hope and courage, kindness and commitment we learn along the way. Holding history does not only mean holding the hard parts; it means celebrating the good parts, too.

I'm also mindful of the ways each of us will need to intentionally hold our own recent history as our community more fully inhabits our campus once more, and as we venture into the nuances of hybrid worship. Each of us has experienced the last 18 months in our own ways, each of us has our own truths to tell, and while the temptation to try and recreate the before-times may be strong, the truth is things will never again be just as they used to be. This truth brings some loss, but it also brings the opportunity to try new things, forge new paths, sing new songs.

In this time of transition, may we all open our hearts to the truths of our own experiences, the truths of others, and the fullness of history. For we will never find our way to freedom together with closed-off hearts; we need the truth that falls into broken-open hearts to do that.

## Message From Maggie Hayes, Board President



This month's worship theme of "Holding History," along with Rev. Kristin's message above, has set me thinking about the history of UUCSS. My own history here began exactly seven years ago, on a Sunday when the UUCSS choir and that of the Cedar Lane UU Church performed Clif Hardin's Requiem, a profoundly moving work with humanist sources. I went to Cedar Lane to hear it again the following Sunday, and quickly figured out that Silver Spring was the place for me.

Though my membership in UUCSS is briefer than many of yours, I've had several opportunities to delve into our almost seven decades of existence. As a member of the 2018-19 ministerial search committee, I volunteered to prepare the congregational record that prospective ministers would peruse. Searching our archives and interviewing some of you "old-timers" gave me plenty of historic material: "the good, the bad, and everything in between," to quote Rev. Kristin. The search experience also revealed that our elderly constitution was woefully out of date, not exactly appealing to ministerial applicants.

The next year, as an at-large member of the Board of Trustees, I organized the task force that drafted our new Bylaws, adopted by the congregation in June 2020. During the 2020-2021 church year, the Board revised many of its policies to be consistent with the Bylaws and to incorporate new ways of "doing church" – still a work in progress. These changes in governance are intended to promote inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability; to dismantle oppressions in building a Beloved Community, and to encourage service by a wider group of volunteers through leadership development and transition. Simultaneously, the congregation began the important work of learning about the 8th Principle before adopting it last June. That effort continues as we all consider how we can best live into its values.

Yes, the Pandemic has changed everyone's lives, sometimes in tragic and traumatic ways, almost always in unpleasant and stressful ones. But it has forced us as individuals and communities to re-examine our histories, to reclaim and celebrate the good, to own and rectify the bad. This year, as we focus on the transition into hybrid worship and in-person gatherings, we're trying to be honest about reality, to try new things and forge new paths. Our hope is that UUCSS's "new normal" will benefit our members, friends, visitors, the community around us, and our minister and her staff.

# LEARN

## Message From Laura Solomon, Director of Spiritual Growth



On the first Sunday of the month, we had about 20 kids and 6 youth attend our first, in-person, Children's Chapel. Linda Barrett, Emily Harris, Jake Ryder, and Sandra Sackett were our rockstar volunteers, and oh my goodness, it felt so good to meet and be together with the children of UUCSS!

On the second Sunday, we had our first virtual RE day, and had about 14 children and youth attend classes with rockstar teachers, Erica Belser, Emily Harris, Brian Livelsberger, Amy Meldau, and Sandra Sackett.

The third Sunday, we had an in-person Art Assembly, led by Linda Barrett, Emily Harris, Ashley Holt, and Patti Poss wherein the kids made about 40 cards to send out to some of you! We hope you enjoyed a bit of sunshine in your mailbox.

I am so pleased that we will be partnering with the Washington Ethical Society (WES) to offer Our Whole Lives sexuality education programming for 7th and 8th grade students. This collaboration will be excellent on so many levels: it gives us more teachers to ease the volunteer load for this intensive class; it gives us the opportunity to partner with a wonderful neighboring community; and it allows our middle schoolers to forge relationships with youth in another faith tradition while ensuring more youth have access to this valuable sexuality education program. If you have a 7th or 8th grade student and have not yet been in touch, please let me know you're interested at [DSG@uucss.org](mailto:DSG@uucss.org).

Due to a lack of volunteers, we have not been able to start a Coming-of-Age program for our 9th grade students. As you know, Coming of Age is a formational rite-of-passage for many of our youth, and so many of us identify the Coming of Age credo service as one of our favorites each year. I am in conversation with congregational RE leaders about how to re-imagine this program so that it is less intensive for volunteers. I hope to recruit enough volunteers for this program soon.

I know some folks have concerns about the wide age range for students on the in-person Sundays (Children's Chapel and Art Assembly). I agree that it would be ideal to split into groups by age; however, I do not currently have enough volunteers to staff the virtual or the in-person Sundays on a regular basis. To split into more age-based groups would require even more volunteers.

Currently, we need:

- 1 virtual RE teacher for 2nd-4th grade
- Substitute teachers for virtual RE
- Coming-of-Age teachers
- Volunteers for Children's Chapel

I know this is such a taxing time, and it can be difficult to imagine adding something else to your plate. I am so grateful to the amazing volunteers who have stepped up and offered such grace and flexibility!

## RE Schedule

### **November 7** 10:30 - 11:30 am

First Sunday: In person at UUCSS

PreK-8--Children's Chapel on the monthly theme (November: Holding History)

9-12--YRUU

### **November 14** 10:00 - 10:30 am

Second Sunday: Virtual RE programming-- <http://uucss.org/zoom3>

Pre-K-1--Tapestry of Faith: "Wonderful Welcome"

2-4--Tapestry of Faith: "Signs of Our Faith"

5-6--Tapestry of Faith: "Riddle and Mystery"

7-8--Tapestry of Faith: "Amazing Grace"

9-12--YRUU

### **November 21** 10:30 - 11:30 am

Third Sunday: In Person at UUCSS

PreK-8--Art Assembly

9-12--YRUU

### **November 28** 10 - 10:30 am

Fourth Sunday: Virtual RE programming--<http://uucss.org/zoom3>

Pre-K-1--Tapestry of Faith: "Wonderful Welcome"

2-4--Tapestry of Faith: "Signs of Our Faith"

5-6--Tapestry of Faith: "Riddle and Mystery"

7-8--Tapestry of Faith: "Amazing Grace"

9-12--YRUU



# CONNECT



## Events

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

**November 1** 7:30 - 10:00 pm. Online Men's Group

**November 6** 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. All-grounds Church Clean-up

**November 8**, 7:30 - 10:00 pm. Online Men's Group

**November 12** 8 pm onward. Ladies Night Out. An informal Zoom chat for interested members and friends. See <https://uucss.org/calendar/> to get the link. Join the church's Groups.io subgroup list: UUCSS | Ladies-Night-Out to get announcements.

**November 15** 7:30 - 10:00 pm. Online Men's Group

**November 21** 7:00 pm. Men's Book Group. We are reading *Samarkand* by Amin Maalouf. It is a novel about the writing of the Rubaiyat of Omar Kyayyam, the discovery of the manuscript in the 1870s and its subsequent loss in the wreck of the Titanic. If you are interested in joining the discussion, contact Richard Lorr ([rlorr4@gmail.com](mailto:rlorr4@gmail.com)) to get the Zoom link and come to the next meeting.

**November 22** 7:30 - 10:00 pm. Online Men's Group

**November 22** 7:30 pm. Women's Book Group. We are reading *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett. Interested readers are welcome without a long-term obligation. Contact: [dweiner04@gmail.com](mailto:dweiner04@gmail.com).

**November 29** 7:30 - 10:00 pm. Online Men's Group

## Committee Updates

### News from the Racial Justice Task Force

The Board and the Program Council have begun the process of imagining what it means to live into the 8th Principle. The Board has committed to meet an extra night each month to dig into the UUA Widening the Circle report and consider how those findings might translate into our vision for worship, RE, governance, covenant and more.

Jake Ryder and Kathryn Leete of the Racial Justice Task Force have been working with the Silver Spring Justice Coalition to make some videos to promote upcoming actions. For their first, they have drafted a short video advocating for the Montgomery County Police Chief, Marcus Jones, to be replaced with someone more committed and qualified to reimagining public safety. They have just about completed this feedback-driven project, revising the script and visuals several times and using the help of many volunteers for voiceovers. We look forward to sharing the video with the congregation.



SSJC is raising money to create a mural in Silver Spring to memorialize those who have been killed by police violence in Montgomery County: Finan Berhe, Robert White, Kwamena Ocran, Ryan LeRoux, and Kevin Costlow. The mural honoring their lives will be painted on the wall of Quality Time Learning Center on Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring by the local artist Aniekan Udofia. RJTF is supporting this fundraiser and asks your help in the final push to reach the \$7,000 needed to make this project a reality.

[Please make your donation to the PayPal account @SilverSpringJustice by October 31, 2021.](#) or you can email [RJTF@uucss.org](mailto:RJTF@uucss.org) about making a contribution.

## Rainbow Alliance

### Trans Parent Day – November 7, 2021

November is Trans Awareness month, celebrating transgender and gender non-conforming communities and raising awareness through education and advocacy. We highlight Trans Parent Day, which was established in 2009 as the first Sunday in November. It originated as a time to celebrate and honor transgender parents, in lieu of traditional Mother's Day and Father's Day. Now, Trans Parent Day includes parents who have transgender children as well transgender parents. Want to know more about what transgender means and how you can show respect for trans folk? Check out Trans 101 at Queer Events: <https://www.queerevents.ca/education/transgender>. Some ideas for showing respect and educating others include: don't assume someone's gender based on physical appearance; ask about preferred pronouns and use them; if you accidentally misgender someone, apologize and move on; state your pronouns when introducing yourself; and use gender-neutral language in everyday conversation. If you would like to know more about or join Rainbow Alliance, send an e-mail to the Rainbow Alliance co-chairs: [rainbowalliance@uucss.org](mailto:rainbowalliance@uucss.org).



## Auction



### "Out of This World" Auction: January 15-23, 2022

Our annual auction, an important annual fund-raising activity, will be "Out of This World" this year! We scheduled the auction later in the church year, in the hopes that we'll be able to have a live, in-person closing event. Like last year, we'll have an online auction that spans two weekends (January 15-23, 2022). Cross your fingers that we'll be able to close the auction with a live, in-person event. Mark your calendars for a virtual opening event on the evening of January 15 and a closing event the afternoon of January 23.

Please start thinking about items or events that you would like to donate--such as events in which people can safely gather, lovely items around your home that you no longer use, gift certificates, activities for families or children. The auction database will be open for submissions from December 5 through January 2. We'll have trainings for submitting donations and for bidding. Follow our announcements as the auction approaches.

Let's see donations that are "Out of This World!"

Your faithful Auction Committee,

Emily H, Emily T, Linda B

Questions? Send us an e-mail at [auction@uucss.org](mailto:auction@uucss.org).



## Volunteer Spotlight

### Claudine Manning



"I was born in Eastman, Georgia, a small Southern town south of Atlanta during the latter part of the Great Depression. FDR was President and the primary agenda of his New Deal was to lift the country out of poverty. Jim Crow was the law of the land. I was the eldest of three, and my father was a tenant farmer; our farm provided for most of our needs. A New Deal program made it possible for us to move from a shack to a better home that had running water and a sink but no bathroom--we still had to bathe in the tin tub every Saturday night or as needed! We had the good fortune to have a radio, one of the few families that did, and I remember listening to a children's show, 'Let's Pretend,' and C.L. Franklin, the preacher and father of Aretha Franklin. I have memories of Pearl Harbor and how our neighbors piled into our home to hear the reports and speculate about what the War would bring.

"When I was in elementary school, my family moved to Ft. Pierce, Florida, when my father got a job with the USO. After the War, we moved to

Atlanta. My mother was able to go to beauty school and then build and run a beauty shop off the back porch of our home. In Atlanta, I attended Booker T. Washington High School, the only high school for Black children. I was a good student and was encouraged by my teachers to go to college, as well as by my aunt who was also an educator. I went to Clark College, an Historically Black University, and got a degree in Elementary Education and Library Sciences. After college, I married and had my first child, Cynthia, and then moved to the D.C. area where Kenneth was born. I raised a family and worked throughout the metro area until retiring in 2010."

Claudine went on to describe how in rural Georgia in the 1930s, there was no state-provided elementary education for Black children, so it was left to the church community to educate them. She described the small country church she grew up in as "old-time religion." In Atlanta, she went to Beulah Baptist Church. Claudine became more interested in religion when she studied it in college and learned about it from a historical perspective. And of course, religion was a very important part of the Civil Rights Movement. But as her religious beliefs evolved, Claudine became more of a skeptic: "I'm not so sure God's gonna do what I want him to--maybe, maybe not. I

don't expect miracles. I'm going to do everything I know how to do to reach my goal. I don't completely wait on God." She also wryly observed that in her experience, "ministers tended to be little kings and were often into the money."

Claudine started going to All Soul's Church in D.C. Back then, she said, there were more Blacks at All Soul's, as well as people from many walks of life, socially, culturally and economically, something she misses. She found UUCSS when she moved to Montgomery County in 2006.

Claudine has most enjoyed volunteering for the Diversity Committee which was created by Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay during her tenure. Claudine had opportunities to do presentations sharing her experiences. Claudine has also enjoyed working on Hospitality and Sunday Support for which she is so-well suited. She lights up many eyes with her delightful smile and beautiful outfits, and it's hard not to notice how people seek her out for quiet conversations, to be gifted with her intelligence and strength. She is indeed a beloved member of this community and a rare treasure of a person.

### November Community Partner

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County is this month's community partner. The League works to increase voter registration and education, advocates for fair redistricting and fights voter suppression. The Montgomery County chapter produces unbiased voter guides, assists at voter registration drives, hosts candidate forums and offers educational opportunities throughout the year on a wide range of county issues.

# 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](http://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](http://www.calendly.com/rev-kristin-schmidt)

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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**.