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# November 2019

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## UNITER

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING

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[www.uucss.org](http://www.uucss.org)

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### Sunday Worship Services—10:30 AM

Nursery care and religious education for children through grade 12 are offered during the worship service. ASL interpreting is provided during the service.

There is one service at 10:30 a.m. followed by Coffee Hour.

#### Inside this issue...

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#### November 3: BE PREPARED Rev. Lyn Cox

Life is uncertain. Preparedness can involve plans and equipment, but there is also a form of preparedness that has to do with paying attention to the needs of the present moment; with our readiness to cross the next threshold, whether it comes at an expected time or not.

\*\*Daylight savings time ends; “Be Prepared” to set your non-smartphone clocks back 1 hour.

#### NOVEMBER 10: WE MAKE IT SO Rev. Lyn Cox

Twentieth century UU religious educator Sophia Lyon Fahs invited us to ask questions and turn to wonder, and to let attention to scientific and historical knowledge increase that wonder. She said, “Life becomes religious whenever we make it so: when some new light is seen, when some deeper appreciation is felt, when some larger outlook is gained, when some nobler purpose is formed, when some task is well done.” No matter what our age or experience, simply living in the world gives us daily opportunities for faith development.

#### November 17: NEVER STOP DANCING John Robinette & Robert Jacoby

John Robinette and Robert Jacoby will speak about their book, *Never Stop Dancing*, a memoir about the year following the death of John’s late wife, Amy, in a pedestrian traffic accident.

#### November 24: ROOM AT THE TABLE IDRE Marsha Thrall & Rev. Lyn Cox

At its best, gratitude creates a sense of abundance, a desire to share the sustenance and spirit we have found with those who have yet to arrive. This season of thankfulness leads us to pay attention to the relationships and values that make our community precious and priceless, and leads us to imagine new ways of creating room at the table. This multigenerational service may involve sharing food.

On November 3, there will be a pre-arranged fire drill during the Worship Service so that in the event of an actual fire, we will understand how to evacuate the Sanctuary and all other rooms on our campus safely. Prior to the drill, Rev. Lyn will make an announcement and point out the exits from the Sanctuary. Ushers and worship associates will be available to guide everyone to exits and to assist those with limited mobility. While those in the Sanctuary are exiting, RE teachers will guide children and youth to exit the classrooms, nursery, and YRUU fellowship house as we make our way to the farthest/back playground and elsewhere.

# INSPIRE

## Interim Minister's Column by Rev. Lyn Cox



As the warmth of the summer and early fall fades, I am turning my attention in new directions. The puzzle I am paying attention to today (as I write this on deadline) is how many garden container plants I can get away with moving indoors. I need to pay attention to how much light and water each one needs, whether the plant is poisonous to cats, and how much space in the house the rest of my family is willing to cede to the growing herbaceous incursion.

In giving my attention to these living plants and to the change in the seasons, I also notice that there are some things I have to let go. I rescued a scraggly cherry tomato plant from a last-chance sale at the garden store in late

summer and transplanted it into a large pot. I thought it would be a cute, little ornamental plant that would live out its post-fruiting days quietly in the sun. Instead, it tripled in size and produced cherry tomatoes in September and October. I could prune it back and try to pretend that it's a houseplant, but everything I've read suggests that this tomato plant has, truly this time, finished for the season. I will need to thank it for its service and mulch it into the compost along with all the other remains of the garden.

Paying attention is one of those spiritual practices that we don't actually have to think of ourselves as spiritual or religious to engage with. No matter what we believe about a higher power or an afterlife, or what we understand the sources of blessing in life to be, being present can help us to live in truth and integrity. One of the difficulties with paying attention is that we sometimes learn things we would rather not know, or face truths that would be more pleasant to ignore. But paying attention can also connect us with joy and with a community of people whose attention to us might help us bear those challenges.

**Sophia Lyon Fahs**, who revolutionized UU religious education in the 20th century, said, "Life becomes religious whenever we make it so." Paying attention and allowing ourselves to grow and learn from that practice can be religious. For me, religious implies the Latin re-ligare, something that binds us together. I think of religion as a method of being in relationship with each other and with our ultimate concern.

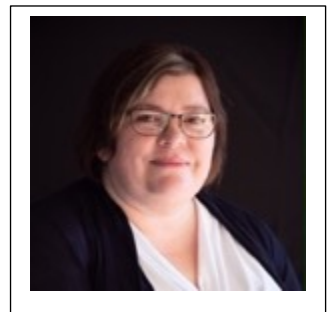
Speaking of religious education, I'm looking forward to our Start-Up Workshop with our new Interim Director of Religious Education, **Marsha Thrall**, on November 16. Under the guidance of an outside facilitator, we'll gather with the RE Committee, some Board leaders, and perhaps other volunteers and parents looking ahead to what this interim opportunity can mean for the future of lifespan faith development.

As we cultivate sacred attention, I hope we'll grow into our best selves. The coming holidays or the decreasing daylight might make us a little frazzled or short-tempered. Let's do our best to embrace gratitude in the moment and to show kindness to ourselves and each other. See you soon.

## MESSAGE FROM MARSHA THRALL INTERIM DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

My favorite season is autumn. One of the things that I lamented, when leaving Wisconsin, was that I was leaving my home state during my favorite time of year. Autumn in Wisconsin is breathtaking, and though it's short-lived, the beauty of fall in Wisconsin seems to be a cosmic gift given to lessen the blow of just how treacherous winter in the same place can be.

What I wasn't prepared for, however, is how beautiful autumn is in Maryland—maybe even more beautiful than autumn in Wisconsin. And being surrounded by such breathtaking beauty, in the face of transition, seems to serve as a reminder that leaving the comfort of what's familiar can reap unexpected rewards.



## INSPIRE (continued)

### INTERIM DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Autumn has a lot to teach us about change. While it can be easy to identify the early onset of dormancy and despair within the transition that autumn represents, autumn is a space for new reality. In her poem “Song for Autumn,” **Mary Oliver** reminds us that autumn provides the space for “leaves to rest on the ground” rather than touching the “nothingness of the air” and the “endless freshets of the wind.” In preparing us for the harshness of winter, which ultimately leads the earth to rebirth in the spring, the beauty of autumn acts to ground our temperate creation, in preparation for the change to come.

It only seems appropriate, then, that as a community, UUCSS would begin its season of rediscovery, particularly in Religious Education spaces, on the cusp of autumn. As the leaves of programs past change color and fall to the ground, they provide both cover and nourishment for what can be beautiful new things to come within the congregation.

I’m excited to be part of this time of change and renewal at UUCSS. As part of UUCSS’s commitment to explore the future of Religious Education programming at the congregational level, the Religious Education Committee will be hosting a Start-Up Workshop on November 16. In the space of this workshop, the complicated work of examining heritage, mission, leadership, connection, and future in regard to Religious Education at UUCSS will begin. This Start-Up Workshop is open to any member of the congregation to attend. Please contact me at [interimdre@uucss.org](mailto:interimdre@uucss.org) for more details.

I’m looking forward to learning, discerning, and actively seeking truth and meaning with you during this transition process. Peace.

*Photos below from Welcome Reception for Marsha Thrall & from October 13th Worship Service*



### November Musings by Michael Holmes,

#### Music Director

It has been about 6 years since the worship leadership at UUCSS began exploring monthly themes. And now, UUCSS is committed to and has bought the *Soul Matters Sharing Circle* program for UU churches into UUCSS, which I find to be of great help when choosing music for our services during the regular church year.

In November, *Soul Matters* challenges us to ask ourselves “What does it mean to be a people of attention?” The concept of “attention” means a great deal to me, especially when I enter the colder months and become more introspective about our practices. Whether it’s Curtis Mayfield’s call to action, “People Get Ready,” Peter Mayer’s song about seeing the divine in the natural and mundane, “God is a River,” or simple songs invoking gratitude before Thanksgiving, we can explore the concept of attention from many angles.

## INSPIRE (continued)

### MUSIC DIRECTOR

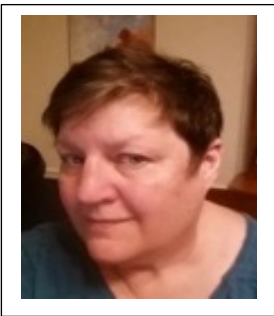
I am really looking forward to continuing the UUCSS children's choir for another year, and this time, with a greater presence. The kids will be leading the congregation in singing several familiar UU hymns at the beginning of each service. This will be something quite new for us, but I'm sure highly welcome for those who are seeking ways for the children to be more involved in our worship services. We could not have achieved this without the expert assistance of our very own Audrey Engdahl, whose inherently graceful manner sweeps our young singers along, in what is very often their first public singing experience.

As I enter my 16th year as music director at UUCSS, I remain in awe of what this church has taught me by way of the riches that it holds within the ranks of our music volunteers. There are too many treasures to mention, unique people with great gifts to transmit musical and poetic sound to the ears of kind, supportive, and grateful congregants who allow themselves to be open and enriched by what we offer.

As we enter November, we discover that we are people of attention, and this is the best path to gratitude!



### Message From Tamara Bowman, Board President



Fall has begun, and the weather has finally cooled. We had another wonderful Catoctin thanks to the combined coordination powers of Robin Moore-Lasky and Cynthia Curry-Daniel. We had sunny days, s'mores, puzzles, games, paper-bag dramatics, and all the camaraderie that makes Catoctin special each year.

We continue to work toward our shared vision of justice and equity. The Rainbow Alliance led an inspiring service as part of renewing our status as a welcoming congregation for our LGBTQ+ members. The last time we had renewed our status was 1996. In order to be welcoming, we need to continue to expand our understanding of LGBTQ+ issues. The Rainbow Alliance will continue to make opportunities available to develop a greater understanding; be sure and take part. Expanding our understanding

allows us to be stronger allies outside of UUCSS and work toward building a world that is inclusive and welcoming to all.

To fulfill our commitment to Unitarian Universalism, we support the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and Central East Region (CER) through donations to the Annual Program Fund. This budget year will be the first one in a number of years that we have donated. The Board, in particular, relies on the guidance and documentation available on the UUA website. We use this information to shape policy and determine best practices. CER works with us throughout the year, answering questions and providing opportunities to work with other congregational leaders. CER will be providing the consultant for our IDRE start-up. This will give us the support to begin our work with Marsha Thrall with mutual understanding and respect.

At the September Board meeting, we approved policy for the operating reserve. The Constitutional Revision task force (RevCon) has been formed and has held its first meeting. Look for further announcements on Q&A sessions in coming months. The safety plan is evolving and being refined. There will be further guidance on our first fire drill. During the October 23 Board meeting, we will be discussing the search, starting the discussion for the annual budget drive (ABD) budget, conducting a policy discussion concerning cosponsoring events outside of UUCSS, and clarifying the policy on the operating reserve. The minutes and agenda for the Board are posted in the dropbox for the benefit of the congregation.

# CONNECT



The annual UUCSS auction is one of the church's most enjoyable events, as well as a terrific fundraiser. There is something for everyone at our **November 9 UNDER THE SEA Auction!!** There are three silent auction rooms with more than 160 offerings, a fixed-price auction with 30 offerings, 40 quickie board items, and a LIVE auction with almost 40 offerings!

Fill your calendar with fun activities and great services offered by UUCSS members and friends. All the fun generates money for our church.

## Auction Catalog Available Online!

Print out the catalog, <https://uucss.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/FINAL-Auction-Catalog-2019.pdf>, or better yet, download it to your tablet or smartphone to be green. A limited number of printed catalogs will be provided.

## Get Your Raffle Tickets!

You can increase your chance of winning a place at a few select auction events or even win cash. Purchase raffle tickets during coffee hour or at the auction.

If you cannot attend the auction in person, try to find someone to "proxy" for you and sign you up for fixed price things, or email [auction@uucss.org](mailto:auction@uucss.org) ASAP if you need help finding a proxy.

## Volunteers Needed!

We need volunteers to set up for and clean up after the auction. With enough volunteers, everyone will have plenty of opportunity to participate in and enjoy a well-run event. Let us know if you can help with an email to [auction@uucss.org](mailto:auction@uucss.org).

## Dress Up for the Auction

Theme-related clothing/costumes are encouraged, and are part of what makes this such a special event. Be creative! Don't be koi—whether it's sophisticated or outrageous, we know your costume will be turtle-y fantastic!

## Questions?

For more information and answers to any questions about this year's auction, please contact the Auction Committee at [auction@uucss.org](mailto:auction@uucss.org).

### Search Committee Update

#### Cottage Meetings/Congregant Emails

As you may recall from last year, part of the ministerial search process is gathering input from the congregation about who we are, what our future vision is for the church, and how our future minister can help us achieve that vision. One avenue for gathering this input is through facilitated cottage meetings held with small groups of members and friends of the congregation. Last year's Search Committee held extensive cottage meetings, and this year's committee held three meetings in October. Although the meetings were not widely attended, we received some useful feedback. We've also received emails from congregants sharing their perspectives.

#### Congregational Record

Right now, one of the primary focuses of the Search Committee is the Congregational Record. The Congregational Record is a compilation of facts and narratives covering our church history, membership and attendance, congregational demographics and beliefs, governance structure and programs, finances, paid staff, and the congregation's strengths and challenges. This document will reside with the UUA for review by ministerial candidates.

We will be integrating into the record feedback from last year's congregational survey and cottage meetings, this year's cottage meetings, and emails we receive from the congregation. We will be building upon and updating the record developed by last year's Search Committee and submitting the final Congregational Record later this fall.

If you have new ideas to share, or your feelings have changed since you participated in last year's cottage meetings, please email us at [search@uucss.org](mailto:search@uucss.org)

UUCSS Settled Minister Search Committee: **Katie Kirk Haag, Steve Hirsch, Jeremy Holt, Anna Molpus, Beverly Schnetzler, Lisa Schumaker, and Sharon Snyder**

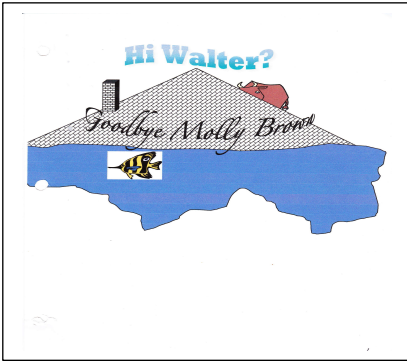
**The UUCSS Defending Democracy Group and Green Sanctuary** are co-sponsoring a Phone and Text Bank in the Sanctuary on Wednesday, October 30, from 6:00–8:00 p.m. We will be working through the Environmental Voter Project to help turn out environmentally-conscious, but inconsistent, voters in the swing state of Florida. You will need a laptop and a cell phone. You can choose whether you would like to participate in the phone bank or the text bank. Please come join us and help make democracy work.

If you have any questions, please contact Bob Geiger at 301-593-3319 or [bobandcath@prodigy.net](mailto:bobandcath@prodigy.net).

### Property Committee Update

Our church community pitched in, and painting the Administration Building was a huge success! A heartfelt thanks to the host of people who helped replace rotten wood, scrape, fill, sand, caulk, and paint. And there is another opportunity to pitch in and help beautify and maintain our church. We will have a Church clean-up on **Saturday, November 2, from 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.** We will be raking, pruning, weeding, and cleaning up. We also are planning to have a group of people working with the YRUU youth to do some work on the Fellowship House, where the YRUU meets. Lunch will be served—bring your energy. (Side dishes are optional!) Please email [propertychair@uucss.org](mailto:propertychair@uucss.org) if you can make it, so we can plan what projects we can take on and quantities for lunch.

## CONNECT (continued)



**Open Auction Event:** Saturday, November 2  
7:00 p.m. in the UUCSS Sanctuary

A reading of a play: *HI...WALTER? (Goodbye Molly Brown)*  
*A Two-Act (Of GOD) PLAY WITH WATER*  
written by **Bill Stanley**

Featuring: **Bill Stanley, Bruce McConachie, Tina Borrer, Phyllis Stanley, Stephanie McConachie, and Marty Atias.**

Donation to the church at the door, \$10.

### Green Sanctuary Kicks Off “Go Green”

The Green Sanctuary will host a “Go Green” kickoff meeting November 10 in the Triangle Room following the Sunday service. Visit our table to find out more about how you can get 100 percent green electricity for your home or apartment without installing costly solar panels and while keeping your current utility provider. Community solar projects, wind energy, and Montgomery County's ongoing effort to procure power on behalf of residents and business are all exciting developments—but it can be confusing to understand all of your options. Visit us on November 10 and we'll help you **Go Green**.

### Rally To Protect DACA

On November 12, in response to the U.S. Supreme Court hearing on that date, supporters will gather at the steps of the Supreme Court and at events across the nation to protect Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

- Gather by 10:00 a.m. at 1 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20002. The rally should end near 3:00 p.m.
- Please wear Side With Love shirts or gear.
- Clergy are encouraged to wear collars and stoles.
- Let UUSJ know you will attend or organize a congregational delegation in DC ([info@uusj.org](mailto:info@uusj.org)).

The fate of DACA now sits with the Supreme Court; hundreds of thousands of people could lose their homes, their livelihoods, and their families. Help show the Supreme Court that DACA recipients and immigrant families aren't going anywhere—because their #HomelsHere—and to demand the court protect DACA recipients and all immigrants. It's time to put an end to this fear and uncertainty.

Post to the #HomelsHere Facebook event page

(<https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/homeishere?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=31f458c5-cc8b-49ae-9b4f-be6be4733510>) to show solidarity and declare your intent to mobilize November 12.

- Pablo DeJesus, Executive Director, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ)

### UUCSS 101

If you are a visitor who would like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and UUCSS in particular, or about the process for becoming a member, please join us at our monthly UUCSS 101 on **November 17** for an informal gathering with folks from the Membership Committee. We meet following the service in the Triangle Room, which is adjacent to the Community Hall where coffee hour is underway. Grab a cup of coffee or tea, and bring your questions. We look forward to seeing you!

## CONNECT (continued)

### EVENTS IN BRIEF

**OCTOBER 30, 6:00–8:00 p.m.** Phone & Text Bank sponsored by the UUCSS Defending Democracy Group & Green Sanctuary, UUCSS Sanctuary.

**NOVEMBER 2, 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.** Church clean-up at UUCSS. Lunch will be served.

**NOVEMBER 2, 7:00 p.m.** A reading of a play written by **Bill Stanley**: HI...WALTER? (Goodbye Molly Brown), A Two-Act (Of GOD) PLAY WITH WATER, UUCSS Sanctuary.

**NOVEMBER 6, 6:30–9:00 p.m.** Legislative forum hosted by the UUCSS Racial Justice Task Force, Silver Spring Justice Coalition, ACLU Maryland, and Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Together Diversity Team, Silver Spring Civic Center, 1 Veterans Plaza. RSVP at <https://www.facebook.com/events/690717518109813/>.

**NOVEMBER 9, 9:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m.** Pastoral Care Workshop Helping Families Cope with Depression and Bipolar Disorder, Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington. 4444 Arlington Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22204.

**NOVEMBER 9, 5:30–9:30 p.m.** “Under the Sea” church auction.

**NOVEMBER 10, 11:45 a.m.** “Go Green” kickoff meeting, Triangle Room.

**NOVEMBER 12, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.** Rally to protect DACA, 1 First Street NE, Washington, DC.

**NOVEMBER 16,** Religious Education Start-Up Workshop, time and UUCSS location TBD. Contact [interimdre@uucss.org](mailto:interimdre@uucss.org).

**NOVEMBER 17, 11:45 a.m.** UUCSS 101, Triangle Room.

**APRIL 24–26, 2020.** 14th annual Revolutionary Love Conference, All Souls Church Unitarian, Washington, DC. Go to <http://revolutionaryloveconference.com> for more information.

#### NOVEMBER CHARITY OF THE MONTH

#### JOSEPH'S HOUSE

Opened in 1990 in response to the AIDS crisis in Washington, DC, Joseph's House offers a welcoming community and comprehensive nursing and support services to homeless men and women with advanced HIV disease and terminal cancer. The clinical staff and trained caregivers work to create a home where the values of unreserved love and friendship are practiced. Joseph's House nurtures the living and accompanies the dying, providing a depth of physical, emotional, and spiritual support that creates the possibility for the restoration of individual dignity and profound healing—healing into life or healing into death. At Joseph's House each person is loved and cared for as family. Joseph's House nurtures and supports volunteers and staff members with as great an intention as it cares for its residents.

#### NOVEMBER VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

#### ROBIN MOORE LASKY

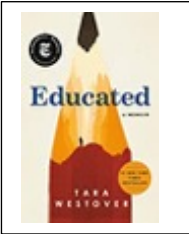
**Robin Moore Lasky** and her first husband **Kevin MacDonald** believed they would find a church when they had children. It was important to them that their child have a supportive community to grow up in. This took on a new imperative when Irene was 9 months old and Kevin was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. Vowing to check out all UU churches and Quaker meetings, their quest ended with their first visit to UUCSS. For Robin, UUCSS was a place where she could both enjoy singing and cry without judgment. UUCSS sustained her through Kevin's sickness and death and through the beginning and culmination of a new relationship with her current husband, **Michael Lasky**.

## CONNECT (continued)

### VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH: ROBIN MOORE LASKY

Robin has given back generously. She has been the communications manager for the ABD, as well as being a budget steward. For 10 years she was the assignment manager (cabins, teams) for Catoctin and most recently co-managed the 2019 Catoctin retreat. She's led Sunday services twice and has co-led three additional services. She has also been the Christmas cookie reception manager for many years. Currently, she serves on both the Nominating Committee and the Capital Improvements Committee. When asked for her thoughts on volunteering, Robin said, "Shared labor, working side by side, is a joy. We are a smart and strong-willed people, but more and more I want to learn what good followership is like."

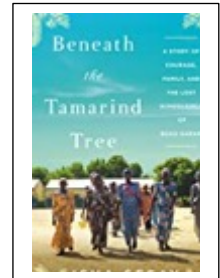
### WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP



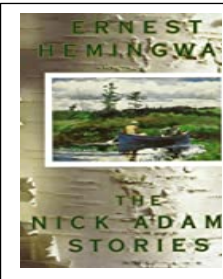
The Women's Book Group continues to meet on the fourth Monday of the month throughout the year, except in December and August. We love to discuss the book we read each month and to add in personal experiences that often enlighten our conversation. We are an informal group, and we welcome new readers. No long-term obligation is required. Please contact **Deborah Weiner**

at [dweiner04@gmail.com](mailto:dweiner04@gmail.com) for additional information and directions.

On November 25, we will discuss *Educated: A Memoir*, by Tara Westover. We will not meet in December. On January 27, 2020, we will discuss *Beneath the Tamarind Tree*, by Isha Sesay.



### MEN'S BOOK READING GROUP



We are reading *The Nick Adams Stories*, by Ernest Hemingway. We will meet to discuss the book at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 24, at the home of **Richard Lorr**, 302 Windsor Street, Silver Spring.

If you are interested in joining the group, contact **Richard** ([rlorr4@gmail.com](mailto:rlorr4@gmail.com)), get the book, and come to the next meeting. Hope to see you there!

### Update from Melinda Yalom, Administrator

I continue to appreciate how hard the Property Committee is working on our Buildings and Grounds. It is always a challenge, and they are often responding 7 days of the week, days and nights, to attend to the needs of the church's structures and systems. The Property Committee, chaired by **John Henderson**, includes **Marty Atias, Brian Beard, Rob Dahlstrom, and Jim Street**. And, at any given time, a number of helpful and skillful church volunteers have assisted as part of our church's "**Labor Brigade**." Many church projects have been taken care of by them—and we are grateful for all their help.

Thank you all for your dedication and hard work!





**Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring**  
10309 New Hampshire Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20903

FIRST CLASS

### **Staff and Board President**

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**Marsha Thrall**  
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**Melinda Yalom**  
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**Tamara Bowman**  
Board President  
[president@uucss.org](mailto:president@uucss.org)

Submissions to the **Unitar** are due by the 20th of the prior month.  
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 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](mailto:administrator@uucss.org).

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

### **Church office hours**

**Monday: 1–4 p.m.**

**Tuesday–Thursday: 9 a.m.–5 p.m.**

**Church website: [www.uucss.org](http://www.uucss.org)**