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# December 2019

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## UNITER

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING  
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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.**

#### **December 1: THIS SEASON OF PEACE** Jim Scott

Renowned UU composer/guitarist Jim Scott returns to UUCSS to lead both music and worship, as we enter the month of "Awe" (December) and navigate toward the new year. Jim's unique manner of dovetailing song and message does much to blur any barrier between the two. Many will be familiar with his celebrated songs in the UU hymnals, including "Gather the Spirit," "May Your Life Be as a Song," and "Let This Be a House of Peace." Others may remember his many concerts in our Sanctuary over the years. Now this time, on the pulpit, Jim has a new special unifying seasonal message for all of us!

#### **December 8: WAITING** Rev. Lyn Cox

In this season of Advent, different versions of the Nativity story can illuminate different ways of waiting. We might be waiting for a prophecy to be fulfilled, or the right moment in history, or for someone or something to grow in their own time.

#### **December 15: PREPARE ROOM** Rev. Lyn Cox

The Nativity story gives us ideas about creating space for multigenerational community, creative abundance, and spiritual reflection. How might we prepare a spaciousness our hearts and our lives this holiday season?

#### **December 22: LIGHT IS RETURNING** Rev. Lyn Cox

The wheel of the year turns, bringing earlier sunrises and later sunsets. Though we have winter temperatures in front of us, the return of the light reminds us of the possibilities for change and the potential for the year ahead. This earth-based, multigenerational service will feature the Children's Choir.

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#### **December 24: 6:00 P.M. CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE**

In a spiritual community, we recognize that the simple joys of community and respect for the value of all creation bring meaning to the holidays. This year's pageant is based on "A Charlie Brown Christmas," complete with a beloved tiny tree.

#### **December 24: 8:30 P.M. CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**

We gather once again for lessons and carols, deep traditions that are surprisingly current. The story of the birth of Jesus reminds us that hope is possible in times where corrupt leaders, wealth inequality, and migration to escape violence are urgent realities. We reach back into tradition for solace and inspiration as we prepare for the arrival of new lives, each one holy.

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#### **December 29: HANUKKAH** Jeremy Holt

Hanukkah will be in full swing at this music-filled, lay-led service celebrating the Jewish festival of lights.

#### **January 5: FIRE CELEBRATION** Rev. Lyn Cox

We release the old year and illuminate our intentions for the new year in this multigenerational ritual of transformation. Bring courage and commitment, bring what you've gained from learning experiences, be prepared to leave behind old habits.

# INSPIRE

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



The winter holidays are, for some, an opportunity for awe. The twinkling lights, the stories of miracle and legend told in their faith tradition, the holiday foods are all invitations to marvel at the possibilities of this world, the potential for human strength, and perhaps the companionship of the Source of Blessing. As the nights get longer, a little bit of awe might provide us with a light at the end of the tunnel, or with the depth that enfolds us in contemplation.

For others, the winter holidays are reminders of deep pain. We sing about peace on earth, knowing that it is a far-off hope, and that disruptions in peace have already claimed the lives of so many of our kinfolk. We see advertisements about family togetherness, knowing that our own families are divided by death or estrangement or distance. We have wish lists for housing security and food and health care, and perhaps a few simple pleasures, knowing that many people will not have that list checked off. Yet even in the midst of struggle, there are opportunities for awe. We lift up the people and the institutions that help others through difficult times. We hold reverence and wonder for the signs, sounds, and forces that sustain life despite the realities of brokenness.

In December, we attempt to weave all of these complex themes together in religious community. We follow some into joy, and we follow others into grief, and we follow still others into resilience and commitment. Worship, pastoral care, religious education, and social justice take the fullness of our lives during the holiday season into account. That we are bold enough to attempt to embrace all that we are and could be, and that our tradition gives us tools to do so, is reason enough for awe.

If the holidays are hard for you, I hope you will join the Lay Ministers and me for a special Blue Holidays healing circle on December 8 at 12:30. This will be a participatory, contemplative worship service designed to help people speak of and process their challenges with grief and other complex emotions around the winter holidays.

As you are thinking about being present with your neighbors during this dramatic time of year, please consider year-end financial contributions to UUCSS and to the Minister's Discretionary Fund (MDF). Catching up on your pledge (or making a pledge, if you haven't already) before the end of the calendar year helps keep the congregation going and helps us create space for the people who need an inspiring, welcoming, justice-oriented faith home. The MDF is a source for one-time grants to members of the UUCSS community for things like retaining housing, keeping the heat on, urgent medical care, or unexpected funeral expenses. The collection at the Christmas Eve service goes to the MDF, and you can donate to it at any time of year by writing "Minister's Discretionary Fund" in the memo line of your check to UUCSS.

In addition to having opportunities to support the congregation and our neighbors in the congregation, we have many reasons to celebrate. The Children's Choir is off to a great start for the season, and is leading us in learning a few songs by heart that people of all ages can carry with us throughout the week. Planning has begun for the Christmas pageant, sure to be heartwarming as always. This congregation is in a good place with respect to healing and spiritual growth, rising to the possibilities of the future.

We'll have a chance to discuss some of those possibilities at "Conversations for Liberation," scheduled for December 15 after the service. The Transition Team will help me lead a discussion about "the power of we" in Unitarian Universalism, what we value so much in Unitarian Universalism that we are willing to sacrifice for it, and how we will move our faith forward in greater justice. This is a discussion that UUs began at General Assembly and that congregations all over the country are participating in as we speak. Reflecting on the big picture dovetails nicely with the congregation's goals for the interim period. Please register for Conversations for Liberation by December 8: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKcmDoCK3vXMcZ\\_1hssz9gGggaxbVZlea4J4qHOGIYESjTWg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKcmDoCK3vXMcZ_1hssz9gGggaxbVZlea4J4qHOGIYESjTWg/viewform).

There are people, events, sights, sounds, and experiences all around us that can inspire awe. May we be open to mystery and wonder, and may we care for one another as we engage with the challenges and the joys that are ours to embrace in this moment.

## INSPIRE (continued) Minister's Column

### Blue Holidays Healing Circle, December 8, 12:30 p.m.

Join Rev. Lyn and the Lay Ministers in a contemplative, participatory worship service that addresses grief and other complex emotions that we bring into the winter holidays. There will be music, sharing, and silence as we face the difficulties and dwell in the mystery together.

### Conversations for Liberation, December 15, 12:00 noon–2:00 p.m.

How will we move our faith forward toward greater justice? This is a central question for Unitarian Universalism, and one that participants at this year's UUA General Assembly engaged with in facilitated small group discussions. The UUA and several partner organizations have invited congregations to continue the conversation and to continue building a framework in which we can share leadership toward liberation. While many congregations are holding Conversations for Liberation, it is especially timely for UUCSS during the interim period to consider the big picture of our faith. Please join Rev. Lyn and the Transition Team for reflecting and discussion on December 15. A light lunch will be provided for those who register. If you need childcare or ASL interpretation, please RSVP by December 8. Read the invitation to Conversations for Liberation from the UUA and partner organizations:

<https://www.uua.org/conversations/invitation>.

Register for our UUCSS Conversation:

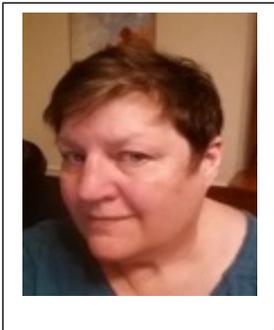
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKcmDoCK3vXMcZ\\_1hssz9gGggaxbVZlea4J4qHOGIYESjTWg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKcmDoCK3vXMcZ_1hssz9gGggaxbVZlea4J4qHOGIYESjTWg/viewform).

### Holiday Office Closure

Please note that the office is closed and most staff are on vacation from December 25 through January 3. Should you encounter an urgent pastoral concern during this time, please contact the Lay Ministers ([layministers@uucss.org](mailto:layministers@uucss.org)), who will know how to contact the Interim Minister if necessary.

Religious Education classes will not meet on December 29; however, there will be a lively lay-led service.

### Message From Tamara Bowman, Board President



It was my privilege to take part in the Start Up workshop for our Interim DRE, **Marsha Thrall**. The meeting was facilitated by **Ann Richards**, who is a consultant provided—at no cost to UUCSS—by the Central East Region (CER). The Start Up provided space for us to discuss expectations for the coming year and learn more about how Marsha and UUCSS can work together. Conversation was lively and productive. For this year, Marsha will focus on religious education for children and youth while exploring possibilities for lifespan religious education.

Collaboration between staff and volunteers in pursuing the mission of the congregation is a major theme in the strategic plan, and one of the ways we will be doing that is through the creation of the Committee on Shared Ministry (CoSM). The CoSM held its first meeting in November, with plans for monthly meetings from now on. The CoSM was established to assess whether we are following our mission and vision as well as to support the **Reverend Ashley Burczak**, our Community Minister, in reaching full fellowship. As our Community Minister, the work that Rev. Ashley does with JSS Hospice and as the chaplain at Riderwood is an extension of our shared ministry at UUCSS, so supporting her work is part of assessing and aligning all of the congregation's ministries with our mission and vision. This year, the CoSM will work on deciding which measurement tools would fit our congregation best.

Speaking of work that aligns with our mission, we have an opportunity for social justice engagement that aligns with all four of our major teams (Defending Democracy, Racial Justice, Green Sanctuary, and Rainbow Alliance). The Poor People's Campaign (PPC) originally began in 1967 during the Civil Rights era as an effort to draw attention to the poverty prevalent across all races. The campaign has been revitalized recently because the problems are still present, and because of the intersection of racism with other issues such as the war economy, environmental devastation, immigration justice, civil rights for LGBTQ people, and access to health care. The campaign calls for both parties to address an economy that isn't working for the majority and to address the racial inequality that continues to persist.

## INSPIRE (continued) President's Message

The campaign is a national call for moral revival culminating in the Poor People's Mass Assembly and Moral March scheduled for June 20, 2020. There are several ways that individuals and UUCSS groups can support the PPC. Individuals may volunteer for one or another PPC activities. The social justice committees may decide individually or together to work with the PPC on specific initiatives. As a congregation, UUCSS also has the opportunity to support the PPC. Look for a congregational meeting next year to make your voice heard. Until that time, there will be opportunities to individually participate in the PPC. Look for information from the social justice committees.

Living our mission in the world is sustainable because of the inspiration and renewal we bring to each other at UUCSS. Once again we will gather for Quiet Day, a day of spiritual practice and gentle adult religious education. On Saturday morning, January 4, 2020, we will gather in quiet reflective pursuits to replenish after the bustle of the holidays. Look for opportunities to participate and/or lead activities. Activities in the past have included movement meditation, journaling, nature walks, doodling, and yoga.

As of this writing, the Board is preparing for its November meeting. We will be hearing from the Search Committee, continuing the discussion for the annual budget drive (ABD) budget. The Constitution Revision Committee (RevCon) will provide an update. The Board will continue discussion on the communication goal for the strategic plan. The minutes and agenda for the Board are posted on dropbox for the benefit of the congregation.

As always, it is an honor to serve as your President.

### Current Budget information

	Expected	YTD
Pledges – Annual Budget Drive (ABD)	\$397,214	\$160,853
Other Income	\$141,800	\$ 69,869
Expenses	\$528,393	\$151,990
For Capital Campaign	Total Collected \$1,442,228	Current Balance \$1,156,238

### Search Committee Update

Your 2019-2020 Search Committee brings you these updates on where we are and what's ahead:

#### 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 have integrated into the record feedback from last year's congregational survey and cottage meetings, this year's cottage meetings, and emails we received from the congregation. We built upon and updated the record developed by last year's Search Committee. We've submitted the draft Congregational Record to our UUA Transition Coach for her review, and we will be submitting the final Congregational Record soon.

#### Documents Packet

In addition to the Congregational Record, we submit the "Documents Packet." While the Congregational Record consists of our responses to a list of questions, the Documents Packet is...wait for it...a packet of documents. The packet includes documents such as our church constitution, budget, congregational covenant, Board meeting minutes, policies, organizational chart, photos of the church, and sample newsletters and orders of service. We are updating the packet now, and it will be finalized sometime in December.

As always, please feel free to email us with any questions or concerns 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.**

## INSPIRE (continued)

### Musings by Music Director, Michael Holmes,

We are now into December, the month of “Awe” according to the Soul Matters Sharing Circle. Lots of exciting music in store at UUCSS. On December 1, UUCSS welcomes back renowned UU composer/guitarist **Jim Scott** to lead both the music and the message that day. Some may remember the few occasions Jim has been with us as a guest musician, especially the two performances he did with the Sanctuary Singers of Paul Winter’s Missa Gaia in 2007 and 2015. Jim will explore the themes of Peace and Awe as we head into the New Year. The UUCSS Children’s Choir returns to perform for the service of Solstice on December 22, and the Sanctuary Singers will be in full form as usual on Christmas Eve! This year, Hanukkah lands after Christmas, and this gives our jazz musicians a chance to shine in some Klezmer jazz, led again by klezmer violinist **Susan Jones**.

December is often the most exciting month for musicians, as well as being frantic and daunting. In addition to our usual busy lives outside of music, our schedules are often crowded with an inordinate number of rehearsals, performances, and services. Like anyone, how do we allow ourselves to experience the sense of awe during this busy time? Very often, it’s the music itself that gives us permission to experience emotion, when we otherwise may have controlled ourselves to keep our composure. One of the greatest feelings is transmitting that unleashed emotion that happens to us outwardly toward other human beings. In turn, we give the listeners a possibility to free themselves in direct or abstract ways. This is every performing musician’s aim. I would call this transmission “spreading the happy virus.”

### LEARN UUCSS Religious Education “Start Up”

*This month, **Ann Richards**, the Director of Lifespan Spiritual Growth at Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church in Alexandria, Virginia, will be the guest Religious Education contributor to the Uniter newsletter. On November 16, 2019, Ann facilitated a Start Up workshop for Religious Education at UUCSS. During this workshop, both the congregational history and the history of Religious Education at UUCSS were examined as part of beginning the discernment process for the future of Religious Education at UUCSS.*

*Interim work is exciting! Doing interim work is by no means acting as a “placeholder” while the congregation lies in wait for its next settled minister, or next settled religious educator. Rather, as an Interim DRE, I have the unique responsibility of working with UUCSS to conceptualize, collaborate, and help create new direction—direction that works to build a sustainable religious education program that meets the changing needs of the congregation. In beginning the work to lay this new foundation, the interim DRE works to equip the congregation to maintain the momentum needed to continue the building process with the future settled minister, and future permanent religious education professional—making the transition easy for all involved.*

*I want to thank Rev. Lyn for having the foresight to know that a Start Up workshop was necessary. Thanks also to Ann for her hard work in preparing for and facilitating the Start Up workshop. But most importantly, I would like to thank you, the members of UUCSS, for valuing religious education, its future within your congregation, and for also trusting me with the exciting opportunity to be your Interim Director of Religious Education.*

### Report on the Recent Start Up Workshop at UUCSS by Ann Richards, Facilitator

It is very clear that the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring has a real and abiding dedication to its Religious Education program. While some congregations slip a new DRE in with a stealthy “nothing to see here” attitude, Interim Minister **Rev. Lyn Cox** and Interim Director of Religious Education (DRE) **Marsha Thrall** took the more thoughtful route of planning a Start Up workshop. Traditionally, a Start Up workshop is an opportunity for stakeholders to spend time thinking about the history of the congregation and how the RE program fits in it, to consider the tasks ahead, and to learn more about the new DRE and his/her goals.

The UUCSS Start Up was held on Saturday, November 16, and about 20 members of the Children and Youth RE Committee, the Board of Directors, the Membership Committee, the Volunteer Coordinator, RE teachers, and interested congregants attended, along with Marsha Thrall, Rev. Cox, and me. As the Director of Lifespan Spiritual Growth at Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church in Alexandria, a Credentialed Religious Educator, a Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) mentor and lifelong UU, I was offered the opportunity to facilitate. I was excited by the prospect, and the event did not disappoint!

## LEARN (continued) UUCSS Religious Education Start Up Workshop

After a reading of UUCSS' Religious Education Mission and lighting of the chalice, the workshop started with an interview of the Interim Minister and Interim DRE. Rev. Cox explained that Marsha's thorough understanding of theology, her experiences in seminary, and her time as a DRE at another UU congregation made her a great fit for Silver Spring. Marsha said that one element that particularly attracted her to UUCSS was its commitment to racial justice. Rev. Cox said she felt having two interim staff serving together had some advantages, in that they were both looking at systems and problem solving, and some of that work overlapped. Marsha talked about her central tasks as an Interim DRE, and how she would be working on religious education programs already running for children, but would spend more exploratory time on adult religious education, especially in the first year of her tenure. It was clear that a program for adults was of interest to a number of participants, and that spirituality was a topic that several would like to see explored with all ages.

A timeline of the congregation's history revealed a deep pride in leadership that UUCSS provided in the denomination when the Unitarians and Universalists joined, in supporting same sex marriage, and more. It also brought to light the resilience demonstrated through trauma and tragedy over the years. Participants also posted the date of their first attendance on the timeline, and we had both very experienced people (more than 30 years) and more recent attendees (in the last 5 years) at the workshop, a sign that religious education is important to a wide range of people at UUCSS.

Workshop participants also took some time to talk about events and experiences that were memorable and positive in their association with the church. Several people mentioned the importance of Our Whole Lives, Coming of Age, and youth programming to both themselves and their children. Others mentioned specific moments in RE classes, or spiritual experiences that had moved them.

Keeping these experiences in mind, we drafted a description of what we thought should be included in the Religious Education program. Participants listed:

- RE should be for everyone: children, youth, and adults.
- Learning should be ubiquitous; life made sacred by intention.
- There should be opportunities for internal and external reflection.
- The use and incorporation of the body is important in activities and spirituality.
- Religious practice is vital.
- UUCSS can be a space to support, draw out, cultivate, and discern your calling. It should assist in finding your calling and how it integrates into application in the community.
- Spiritual courage is important.
- All people should be included.

Writing a comprehensive description of the RE program was somewhat difficult, as several crucial issues had yet to be discussed. Being unable to address them all in the workshop setting, we wrote them down for further consideration. They included:

- Multigenerational worship (This is a regular feature of worship now, and some are not yet comfortable with it. Rev. Cox said this is something she preferred to address.)
- Multigenerational activities (These are done informally by groups who have an interest, and it isn't always clear who has responsibility year to year.)
- Multigenerational classes (Like the activities, it is unclear who would be responsible, and if there are enough volunteers and staff time to carry them out.)
- Adult religious education (Again, there is a lot of interest, but it is unclear how these would be organized and executed at current volunteer levels, with space limitations, etc.)
- Rainbow Alliance (There is a need for discussions about this.)
- Reorganization of the Religious Education Committee (to include adult and multigenerational programming?).

The workshop closed as we each contemplated what was ahead of us. Many felt hopeful, some curious, and our new Interim DRE said she was excited. That certainly bodes well for the future of UUCSS religious education! I wish you all well as you do this work together, and know that you begin with a mutual dedication to religious education and its important place in your community.

### Microaggression Workshop

Save the date! **Charles Alexander** will lead a workshop on Understanding, Identifying, and Interrupting Microaggressions on Sunday, January 26, from 12:30 to 4:30 pm. in the UUCSS Sanctuary.

Racism and white supremacy are easy to identify when its purveyors wear white hoods, swastikas, and even MAGA hats. However these expressions of racism only scratch the surface of how racist and white supremacist ideologies, institutions, and systems are perpetuated and maintained. The problem is much more nuanced and subtle. Understanding microaggressions will offer insights into how racism and white supremacy persist, even in an environment where such ideals are rejected, and offer participants strategies and skills that interrupt the effects of subtle acts of oppression.

The number of participants will be limited. Look for registration information in December.

## CONNECT

### Sunday, December 15, 2019 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 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!

### From the Leaders of the Mass Poor People's Assembly and Moral March on Washington

In 1967, when **Dr. Martin Luther King** launched the Poor People's Campaign, not a single denomination endorsed it. Today, 15 national faith bodies and denominations have endorsed the Campaign. More faith bodies, denominations and congregations are coming on board all the time. We are planning a Poor People's Mass Assembly and Moral March on Washington for June 20, 2020.

On December 4th, we will go live with commitments from leaders across the country. Please consider now your mobilization goal. Please go to <https://actionnetwork.org/> for our "asks" for faith leaders and their congregations. We are planning a major press announcement and mass meeting in Washington January 29 with faith leaders, national partners, and others. We will keep you informed as plans develop.

**Rev. Rob Stephens**, Deputy Director of the Mass Poor People's Assembly and Moral March on Washington  
**Rev. Dr. Robin Tanner** and **Dr. Adam Barnes**, Faith Outreach Team

### Church Clean-Up Saturday, December 7

Help us spruce up the church before the Holiday Services! We will have a Church Clean-up on **Saturday, December 7, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** We have some indoor projects ready. And, if the weather cooperates, we will work on the usual raking, pruning, weeding, and outdoor cleaning up. We also are planning on having a small crew working on carpet cleaning and will have a follow-up email looking for people to work on shifts later in the day on Saturday and on Sunday. 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)

### Holiday Bazaar Is Back!

Back by popular demand, the UUCSS Holiday Bazaar will be held on December 15 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Community Hall. A fundraiser for the church, the Holiday Bazaar is an opportunity to browse unique gifts made by church members and others. There will be a wide range of vendors offering jewelry, scarves, olive oil, tie-dye, and much, much more. We will also have "Fairy Hair by Claire"—a fun way to add sparkle to your hair for the holiday season. COME EARLY BEFORE THE SERVICE for more relaxed shopping and a chance to win a free pair of tie-dye socks!! Question? Email **Susan-Marie Stedman** at [smsted5@gmail.com](mailto:smsted5@gmail.com)

### Time for Quiet Day!

Save the date: January 4, from 9 a.m. to noon for our annual "Quiet Day" program. Consider this your invitation for a low-key morning of post-holiday restoration. I am also looking for help with beverages and snacks, and a few folks willing to organize an activity. (In the past, these have included meditation, yoga, coloring, a quiet walk on the grounds, etc.) This year the program will be multigenerational, so ideas for mixed child/youth/adult activities are especially welcome. **Jo Paoletti**

## EVENTS IN BRIEF

**DECEMBER 7, 9:00 a.m. –2:00 p.m.** Church clean-up.

**DECEMBER 8, 12:30 p.m.** Blue Holidays Healing Circle, Sanctuary.

**DECEMBER 15, 9:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.** UUCSS Holiday Bazaar, Community Hall.

**DECEMBER 15, 11:45 a.m.** UUCSS 101, Triangle Room.

**DECEMBER 15, 12:00 noon–2:00 p.m.** Conversations for Liberation, Sanctuary.

**JANUARY 4, 9:00 a.m.–noon.** Annual Quiet Day.

**JANUARY 11, 8:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.** Annual Legislative Kick-Off, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland, UU Church of Annapolis, 333 Dubois Road, Annapolis, MD. Register at <https://uulmmd.salsalabs.org/legislativekickoff1-11-2020/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=76984941-3da3-4161-ad75-dddf5a28562a>.

**JANUARY 25, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon.** Workshop by Ashley Burczak on Living and Dying Well. More details in next month's *Uniter*.

**JANUARY 26, 12:30–4:30 p.m.** Understanding, Identifying, and Interrupting Microaggressions Workshop, Sanctuary.

**JANUARY 29.** Mass meeting to prepare for the Poor People's Mass Assembly and Moral March on Washington. Go to <https://actionnetwork.org/> for more information.

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

**JUNE 20.** Poor People's Mass Assembly and Moral March on Washington. Go to <https://actionnetwork.org/> for more information.

**DECEMBER  
CHARITY  
OF THE MONTH**

**MINISTER'S  
DISCRETIONARY  
FUND**

This month, we're taking a break from partnering with an external charity of the month and focusing on the Christmas Eve collection for the Minister's Discretionary Fund (MDF). The MDF provides one-time grants to members of the UUCSS community for urgent needs dealing with life emergencies. Grants from the MDF could help provide emergency funeral expenses for a member, cover a portion of an unexpected medical bill, or keep a member's heat from getting shut off. It is traditional to collect for the MDF during the Offertory at the Christmas Eve services. If you won't be able to contribute on Christmas Eve, donations are accepted at any time of year. Please make your check payable to UUCSS with "Minister's Discretionary Fund" in the memo line.

**DECEMBER  
VOLUNTEER  
OF THE MONTH**

**Linda Barrett**

**Linda Barrett** grew up as a "holly and lily" Episcopalian, attending church a few times a year. After moving back into the area, she adopted her parents' newfound Methodism, which did not work when non-theistic **Emily Harris** entered her life. Nonetheless, they both saw value in a supportive community. So, following two friends, they decided to try UUCSS. They were met with a warm greeting from **Dorothy Hale**, the rock band played, the congregation sang along, and they never looked back.

Linda has performed a wide variety of services for the church. She has enjoyed working with Dorothy Hale's Sunday Support from the beginning. Branching out, Linda worked for 2 years with Coming of Age teens, co-chaired the Rainbow Alliance, helped with Rainbow Alliance services and June Pride activities, co-

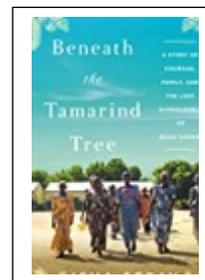
chaired the auction, and was an ABD steward.

Linda is an introvert and initially had difficulty getting to know people. That changed as she took on responsibility and people got to know and depend on her. She jokes that she makes a great #2 person in a group, the right blend of responsibility and comfort. Through it all, Linda believes that volunteering helps people meet new people, learn new things, and feel an integral part of the congregation.

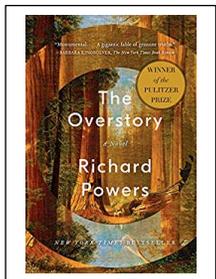
**WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP**

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.

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 *Overstory* by Richard Powers, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2019. The novel is about nine Americans whose unique life experiences with trees bring them together to address the destruction of forests.

We will meet on Sunday, January 26, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Bill Wolf, 519 Dartmouth Street, Silver Spring. If you are interested in attending, just tell **Richard Lorr** ([rlorr4@gmail.com](mailto:rlorr4@gmail.com)), read the book, and come to the next meeting. See you there!

**Update from Melinda Yalom, Administrator**

**Best holiday wishes to all from the  
UUCSS Staff!**

**Melinda Yalom  
Church Administrator**



**Holiday Office Closure**

Please note that the office is closed and most staff are on vacation from December 25 through January 3. Should you encounter an urgent pastoral concern during this time, please contact the Lay Ministers ([layministers@uucss.org](mailto:layministers@uucss.org)), who will know how to contact the Interim Minister if necessary.



UUCSS

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring**

10309 New Hampshire Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20903

FIRST CLASS

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Submissions to the *Uniter* 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 *Uniter* 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)**