

September 2020

Uniter



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING
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**Music begins at 10:30 AM / Service at 11:00 AM
Zoom Coffee Hour at 12:00 PM**

How to Join Worship

- A. Join the Livestream by visiting the church's YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-ggwJDOg70yLJT3aTCjuA>
- B. Join the sign language interpretation on Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/993079449>
- C. Attend virtual coffee hour on Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/92338125649>

Having trouble tuning in for worship?

Please email Melinda Yalom at administrator@uucss.org with your name and phone number. She will connect you to a volunteer who can help.

September 6: What Is Just, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Join us this Labor Day weekend as we bust the meritocracy myth and imagine a world organized around what is just, not only what is profitable.

September 13: Loss and Renewal: From Darkness into Light, Deborah Thornton, UUCSS Member

September is a time to celebrate transitions and new beginnings. This year many of us are finding it hard to feel joyful when we are reeling from collective and personal losses. Bring your weary soul to this service as we explore how the darkest corners of our broken hearts can nourish the seeds of renewal and help them turn toward the light.

September 20: By Faith, Not Fear, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

There is much to fear in our world today, but fear doesn't need to shape our living. Join us this first day of children's Religious Education for a service of renewal and deepening our experience of what it can mean to live by our faith, not our fear.

September 27: Universalism for Today, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

This year marks the 250th anniversary of John Murray's legendary sermon that helped birth American Universalism. UUs take pride in our history, but can be tough to reconcile our Universalist tradition with the suffering and destruction in the world today. This Sunday, we will reconsider what Universalism has to offer in the face of evil.

INSPIRE

Minister's Column by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt



“Ends and beginnings--there are no such things. There are only middles.” These words by Robert Frost came to my mind as I sat down to write this first message to all of you. I’ve only been serving with this congregation for a few weeks now, but in every other way my transition here to be with you is one of coming full circle. It has been gratifying settling into our new home in Olney surrounded by familiar parks, restaurants, landmarks, and so many beloved family and friends. Add to that the wonderful welcome our family and I have received by the Welcoming Team and so many others, my beginning here with you is starting to feel a lot like a middle already!

A new ministry in any congregation is a big change, but my presence here is hardly the beginning or ending of this congregation’s transition. From the scramble to pull together high-quality virtual worship to shifting all church activities online to saying goodbye to Rev. Lyn, I feel I have entered this community well into a voyage through seas of change. Some of those changes were expected while those related to the pandemic seem like an unfolding and unnerving surprise. As I preached about a couple of weeks ago in August, our community (local, national, global) is in what many call “liminal space.” In other words, we are in a time of great uncertainty, in between what was and what is to be, a time of endings and new beginnings, a time when things long covered are revealed.

Six months ago, I imagine most of us probably thought life would be very different than it is today, and yet it is this life, this reality, this unique set of challenges and opportunities that lies before us. So, rather than approach this time as just a distraction or an inconvenience, what if it can be for us a clarifying time, a time to sharpen our focus on what we’re being called to do here and now? How might this liminal space renew our sense of who we are and what our purpose is, as individuals and as a congregation? It is in this spirit that I invite you into our worship theme of “Renewal” for the month of September.

Also, since we won’t have the benefit of organically running into one another at church during this time of social distancing, I’d like to connect with as many UUCSS members and friends as I can by Zoom or phone. I’m going to lead an Adult RE class and a Small Group Ministry, both of which will begin in October, and more information about those will be coming to you in all-church emails and Sunday morning announcements. And in the next few weeks I’ll also be inviting the congregation to connect in some larger-scale conversations. But if you’d like a one-on-one chat or to have a pastoral visit with me, please go to www.calendly.com/rev-kristin-schmidt and schedule an appointment. I look forward to talking with you.

Happy first month of shared ministry, UUCSS! I look forward to many years together with this wonderful community, and to the work that truth, love, and justice will do within and among us.

Message From Carl Miller, Board President



I am writing to you all from my home office here in Silver Spring (where I've spent a great many hours teleworking). It is always a pleasure to connect with you all and a privilege to do it now on behalf of the UUCSS Board of Trustees.

I'm going to begin this message by acknowledging something sad, but probably not unexpected. UUCSS has no plans to resume normal in-person activities in the near future. Services will continue to be online only. Our buildings remain closed for gatherings, and anyone needing to come onto the grounds should get approval first from Melinda Yalom (administrator@uucss.org). When we allow renters back in our buildings, we will have rules in place to make sure

that they stay distanced from our staff. UUA guidelines have encouraged us to plan to have virtual operations for our members as far ahead as May 2021.

So, there it is.

Benjamin Franklin's writing has this quote: "Lost time is never found again, and what we call time enough always proves little enough." I think in his context, this was meant as some kind of exhortation. ("Time is short, so let's all do more.") But at this moment, it means something different to me. Because in addition to all that confronts us right now--including the realities of disability or death from an infectious disease--there is the disappointment of lost time.

How long is a month? How long is five months? When does a period of time become so long that it's hard to remember the beginning or to see the end? (Perhaps not everyone is vulnerable to this feeling. Some people I know always seem happily active even in the midst of a pandemic and a lockdown. I see your smiling faces on social media. Thank you!)

And yet with all that, here we are, at the start of the new church year, and it is the beginning of so many things. Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt joined us officially on August 1st. (Yay!!) We are at the start of a new ministerial lifecycle and a process of mutual discovery that I can only hope is as much fun as the search process was. At the same time, the church has just signed a contract for Phase 1 of the UUCSS Capital Improvements plan, the result of years of work by our volunteers and more than a million dollars in donations. Work is planned to start in the late fall. Thanks to the members of the Capital Improvements Committee for all they have done to make this happen.

We've had four new members join the UUCSS board: Emily Harris (Secretary), Ken Iobst (At-large), Robin Moore (Chair of Operations Council), and Jean Snell (VP of Planning). The board is here to hold up the sky again each time it falls. Or at least, we will try. You can contact us at board@uucss.org and see our monthly minutes in the church member Dropbox folder.

I'm looking forward to a fall season with many great online services, and also some additional creative programming designed to help us build our relationship with Rev. Kristin.

Lost time is never found again, but "now" is always within reach. I hope this message finds you well.

Musings by Michael Holmes, Music Director

Well, summer came and went. I, for one, tried to make the best of it. Meg, Charlotte, and I managed to squeeze in two mini-vacations to Cape Cod and to the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania. It was the best we could do to recover from our “isolation” of which everyone is familiar!



During this past stressful Spring, I was laser-focused, to the point of obsession, on making sure that our virtual worship services were the best they could be, as the worship team, church musicians, and I learned so many new skills to cope with the new reality. What resulted was a series of really fruitful collaborations and relationships we forged beyond the walls of our church. I saw this as a major opportunity to do some serious outreach for the church and to reconnect with a lot of musical colleagues. Since March, I have received almost daily requests for the use of our musical material and for tech advice from other churches. It seems that UUCSS has become a beacon for quite a few churches who wish to remain connected with their congregations.

I have to give a very big shout-out to the Worship Associates (from the Worship Committee) and the A/V and (now recently expanded) IT teams. These great people have jumped on board so valiantly and cleverly to take on tasks that originally fell upon Rev. Lyn, Jake Ryder (tech director), and myself. I also feel that after all the investment of my energies into crafting virtual worship, I now can really focus even more on providing spiritually enriching music for the church.

For me, it is so satisfying to receive everyone’s individual media and to craft it into something beautiful that we will be able to keep for posterity. For me, all of this is in many ways even more rewarding than ever. The solitude of studio work is something that I’ve dreamed of doing more of for a long time, and now that I’m doing it from week to week by necessity, I’m kind of living the dream. That’s the way I’m going to look at it. Back in March, our motto was “connection over perfection.” Now that some good connection has been established, we’re starting to head in the direction of the more perfect, which really feels good. I think we are ready for a great new era at UUCSS!

LEARN

Message From Marsha Thrall, Interim Director of Religious Education



Thank you all, first and foremost, for the gift of study leave. During a pandemic moment, in a space far away from family and friends, having the space to quiet my mind, while getting a handle on the things in my life that are not religious education, has helped me to feel, well, more human again. I am so, so grateful for your generosity.

Now, from a space of renewal, it is time for me to lead members and families of UUCSS into their own space of Religious Education renewal, in what will be, for the foreseeable future, our new communal normal.

In this new space, we will be experiencing new class structure, new curriculum in some spaces, and most exciting, a new RE Coordinator!

After a bit of conflict with our initial candidate for the position, and with the approval of a two thirds majority of the RE Coordinator search committee, I am excited to announce that Lindsay Cowett will be joining the staff team at UUCSS as our new Religious Education Coordinator, effective immediately. Lindsay comes to us with an impressive resume. Information about the gifts and talents that Lindsay will bring to the UUCSS community can be found a little further down in this article.

I am also excited to announce that the Racial Justice Task Force has agreed to continue to partner with Religious Education to continue reading, learning, discussing, and developing strategies to help our children, families, and members work toward creating racially equitable space not only within the community that is UUCSS, but the wider community as well. During the next program year, we will be working together to provide meaningful opportunities to grow together.

Though we are in a time of uncertainty, I'm excited about the opportunities for renewal that lie ahead of us during this church year.

In this article, you'll find information about the following:

- Introducing Lindsay Cowett—UUCSS' New RE Coordinator
- Religious Education Officially starts on September 20, 2020—Register Now!
- Volunteer for RE—It's Fun!
- Racial Justice Religious Education—What's Going on This Month

Introducing Lindsay Cowett, Part Time Religious Education Coordinator



As we continue our time of virtual worship and Religious Education because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lindsay will help to ensure that the Religious Education program at UUCSS launches and runs smoothly. Lindsay will also act as the staff liaison to YRUU.

Lindsay brings a wealth of talent to UUCSS:

Lindsay Cowett is a Master of Divinity graduate from Eastern Mennonite Seminary with experience in the spiritual formation of both youth and adults. As the coordinator of the Sister2Sister mentoring program at RISE United Methodist from 2012 to 2014, Lindsay planned weekly team building, art, and small group activities for 40 girls, who ranged from grades Pre-K to twelfth grade. She also trained 30 college-aged mentors through team building and curriculum planning workshops. Together they worked on providing a safe space for the girls to talk about healthy self-image among other relevant themes.

In 2016, she presented her Seminary Capstone project “Playing with Parables: Theater, Biblical Interpretation, and the Exodus from the Church--a research-based and practical study with undergraduate theater and graduate-level seminary students. Lindsay led the students through a series of four interviews and four group practices, during which the students discussed their reasons for leaving or remaining within institutionalized Christianity and incorporated a spiritual practice of engaging with four of Jesus’ parables through improvisational theater. She is currently enrolled in the Master of Sacred Theology online degree program at Chicago Theological Seminary.

Her passions outside of spiritual formation include writing short stories and on her blog, reading Young Adult and Fantasy novels, and theater.

When you get a chance, please take a moment to welcome Lindsay to UUCSS!

Register Now for Religious Education! Starts September 20

Because of the COVID crisis, and the new demands that homeschooling will present to the families at UUCSS, the decision was made to officially start Religious Education a little later than usual for the 2020-21 church year. Virtual RE will begin on September 20, 2020. Curriculum and registration information can be found below. Session information will be shared with the UUCSS community within the next two weeks.

Pre-School (Ages 2-5)

Parents of Preschoolers (POP!)

Parents of Preschoolers is a video-based, at-home religious education curriculum grounded in Unitarian Universalism and designed specifically for parents of kids ages 2 to 5. Rather than gather on Sunday mornings for rote Religious Education, parents and preschoolers who are registered for this program will receive access to a web portal that will provide videos and resources for Parents of Preschoolers to incorporate UU principles and values into every day family culture.

<https://forms.gle/tx5HSqb4fqScAz9q8>

Kindergarten through 1st Grade

“Love Surrounds Us” from Tapestry of Faith

For K-1st Grade, we will be using “Love Surrounds Us” from Tapestry of Faith. This curriculum focuses on the core of our Unitarian Universalist community--our seven Principles. The Principles encompass all the ingredients of a good and faith-filled life based on equality, freedom, peace, acceptance, truth, care, and love. This program explores all the Principles in the context of Beloved Community of family/home, school, neighborhood. Participants engage in activities that emphasize the love they feel in community.

<https://forms.gle/a1deFpkcdGEtrqzp8>

Grades 2 through 4

“Love Will Guide Us” from Tapestry of Faith

For 2nd Grade through 4th Grade, we will be using “Love Will Guide Us” from Tapestry of Faith. In this program, participants learn to seek guidance in life through the lens of our Unitarian Universalist Sources, with an emphasis on love. Together we ask questions such as, “Where did we come from?”, “What is our relationship to the Earth and other creatures?”, “How can we respond with love, even in bad situations?”, and “What happens when you die?” Sessions apply wisdom from our Sources to help participants answer these questions. Children will learn that asking questions is valued in Unitarian Universalism, even as they begin to shape their own answers.

<https://forms.gle/HyaGtjHc97ALjYQ8A>

Grades 5 through 6 (Middle School A)

“Heeding the Call: Qualities of a Justice Maker” from Tapestry of Faith

For 5-6 (Middle School A) we will be using “Heeding the Call: Qualities of a Justice Maker” from Tapestry of Faith. While working through this curriculum, youth are encouraged to view themselves as agents of change in the world as they develop qualities crucial to justice work. They reflect on their own lives while making connections to the lives lived by others, building self-awareness while growing as leaders. Includes a Justicemakers Guide to help youth track their activities outside the workshop and a long-term Faith in Action project to lead youth, step-by-step, in becoming allies to marginalized communities.

<https://forms.gle/6R8SHvh3RDWYqyV67>

Grades 7 through 8 (Middle School B)

“Building Bridges: A World Religions Program” from Tapestry of Faith

For 7-8 (Middle School B) we will be using “Building Bridges: A World Religions Program” from Tapestry of Faith. Building Bridges is a world religions program to deepen youth’s understanding of the dynamic, fascinating, and varied world in which they live. It seeks to broaden their knowledge of humanity and embolden their spiritual search. New for 2020-21--parents are invited to participate with their youth in virtual services conducted by neighboring faith traditions. A separate adult group, focusing on Stephen Prothero’s book “God is Not One--The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World--And Why Their Differences Matter” will be conducted in tandem with this middle school curriculum to create a family Religious Education experience.

<https://forms.gle/pMSM1vrGG4wch81Z8>

Grade 9

Coming of Age

UUCSS offers a Coming of Age (COA) Program for 9th Graders. Coming of Age rituals around the world celebrate the time when young people are ready both to begin making decisions for themselves and to start taking responsibility for those decisions. Unitarian Universalist COA programs also encourage young teenagers to begin identifying and defining what they believe and to determine what actions follow from those beliefs. In short, we encourage our 9th Graders to answer the questions: “What do I care about?” and “What am I going to do about it?”

<https://forms.gle/ujgebpqFYR2GZxc29>

Grades 10 through 12

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) meets regularly throughout the church year, providing youth (teenagers in high school grades 10-12, as well as Coming of Age 9th Graders following that program) opportunities for deep faith formation, social justice work, congregational involvement, worship, fellowship and more. YRUU is facilitated by adult advisors who ensure YRUU provides a safe environment but that activities and discussions remain largely youth led.

<https://forms.gle/1Zf7oHD8RBjX8reYA>

Racial Justice Religious Education--What’s Going on This Month

In the month of September, the Racial Justice Task Force will be partnering with Religious Education at UUCSS to facilitate reading and discussion of Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum’s “Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race.”

Information about this very important work can be found here:

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/why-are-all-the-black-kids-sitting-together-in-the-cafeteria-beverly-daniels-tatum/1120040647>

Want to participate in the discussion? Please contact Interim Director of Religious Education, Marsha Thrall, at IDREUUCSS@gmail.com

CONNECT

EVENTS

September 12, 8am-12pm. Church yard cleanup. Help weeding, pulling vines, watering, mulching, pruning bushes, weed whacking, or putting old carpet pieces along the hill on NH Ave. & seeding with buckwheat.

September 20, after the service. UUCSS 101 via Zoom. Learn more about Unitarian Universalism and UUCSS in particular, or about the process for becoming a member. Please RSVP to membershipchairs@uucss.org

September 20, 7:00pm. Men's Book Group via Zoom. We will discuss Michael Chabon's magnum opus, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2001, the book is considered to be one of the three best American books of the last 20 years. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Richard Lorr (rlorr4@gmail.com).

September 28, 7:30pm - 9:30pm. Women's Book Group via Zoom. All interested readers are welcome to join! Contact Deborah Weiner (dweiner04@gmail.com) to get the Zoom link.

- September 28, 2020: *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson.
- October 26, 2020: *There There* by Tommy Orange

Anytime, from anywhere. Join the Green Sanctuary Committee in letter writing to Governor Hogan about climate change and Maryland policies. Tell him we won't go back to "business as usual" after the pandemic. Here are 5 things Hogan could do right away to steer MD toward the mitigation of our climate crisis:

1. Approve the 40+ large solar projects stuck in MD's regulatory process
2. Prevent any cuts to renewable energy grants or energy efficiency funding in your proposed budget adjustments to the Board of Public Works
3. Stand against Trump's reckless subsidization of fossil fuels
4. Coordinate with non-profits to plant a million new trees
5. Shift funding within your transportation budget away from counter-productive highway expansions for I-270 and I-495 to capital needs for MD's public transit system

If you need more information, here's a website that can help you craft your letter:

<https://chesapeakeclimate.org>.

Send your letter to: Governor Larry Hogan, 100 State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401. Written letters with a personal touch and signature usually work better than computer-generated notes. Be sure to include your own address under your signature. And let Hogan know that you are a member of UUCSS!

Committee Updates

Membership Committee

It's a new church year, and the Membership Committee wants to remind everyone about our efforts to welcome visitors during the online service and also introduce you to this year's committee.

The committee is composed of Dina Raley, Chair; Mary Beth Lerner, Assistant Chair; members Dorothy Hale, Pat Hulsebosch, Jiwon Kim, Ryan Smith, and Jim Street as well as our advisor Maggie Hayes.

These are particularly difficult times, and we want to be able to reach out to visitors and help them get connected with UUCSS. But we are also faced with technological challenges, so we are asking for your help!

When visitors attend our YouTube services, it may be their first interaction with UUCSS, which means they have not yet received the weekly email with the link for the coffee hour. And because we do not want to broadcast the coffee hour Zoom link on the YouTube site to avoid being "Zoom-bombed," we are limited in our ability to reach out to visitors. Therefore, we ask everyone to help us identify and communicate with visitors. If you notice a new person or know of someone who has been attending but is not yet a member, please let us know. You can send a private message to the Welcome Captain through the YouTube Chat, you can email us at membership@uucss.org, or you can contact the visitor via a private chat message and ask them to email membership@uucss.org for the Zoom link and more information about UUCSS.

Green Sanctuary Update

The Green Sanctuary is focusing our fall efforts on getting out the vote! 2020 may be the most important election year ever for the environment. Much more is at stake than politics—the future of our planet depends on if and how people vote in November.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we have 10 years to cut our carbon emissions in half to avoid a climate catastrophe. The U.S. is the world's second largest carbon emitter, but instead of focusing efforts on cutting emissions, the current government has been focused on cutting regulations, including standards for cars and methane emissions. This election is our opportunity to set the climate policy for the 2020s. We must vote for candidates that support climate and environmental legislation.

In July, when members of the Green Sanctuary, Racial Justice Task Force, Defending Democracy, and the Rainbow Alliance met via Zoom, we agreed that "All Hearts on Deck" are needed to help ensure that people are registered, reminded, and able to vote in the November presidential election.

Green Sanctuary is following the lead of Defending Democracy and participating in the campaigns of Vote Forward and Reclaim Our Vote, writing letters to remind and encourage voting in swing states like Florida and Texas. Please join us in our efforts! To sign up, go to <https://votefwd.org> or <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/reclaim-our-vote-signup> or contact Bob Geiger for details.

Green Sanctuary will continue to promote green electricity and to track the progress of state and national legislation that affects the environment, but between now and November please join us in our UUCSS "All Hearts on Deck" campaign to get out the vote!

Racial Justice Task Force Updates

What a time we're in! Between a reinvigorated Black Lives Matter Movement, sparked by renewed focus on police shootings of Black people, and ways that Covid has highlighted inequities, we certainly are called to act.

As you probably know, at our congregational meeting in June we approved a resolution to explore the proposed 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism. The resolution reads as follows:

"We, the members of UUCSS, resolve to engage in deep study and mindful reflection about what adopting the 8th Principle means for our Congregation. We commit to working with the UUCSS 8th Principle Task Force to explore how adopting the 8th Principle could strengthen our unique church structures, cultures, and processes, with the goal to bring the 8th Principle to a Congregational vote in June 2021."

The 8th Principle, introduced at the 2017 UUA General Assembly, is:

"We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

For more info about the 8th principle and our process, visit: [UUCSS, the 8th Principle, and YOU](https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/) & <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>

In the upcoming year, we will continue to offer opportunities to build skills related to the work of understanding and dismantling racism, focusing particularly on what it would mean to more fully embody the aspirations of the 8th principle in our congregation and individual lives. We will strive to find the joy in this work that will help us face the challenges it brings with grace and a shared sense of purpose.

As we move into the future, we draw from our past work together including several events held over the summer. IDRE Marsha Thrall led several of us in a rich discussion of the book "Raising White Kids" by Jennifer Harvey (<https://www.abingdonpress.com/raisingwhitekids/>). Marsha is also leading book discussions with our children and youth. Several of you have held or are planning discussions of the book "White Fragility," by Robin DeAngelo (<http://www.beacon.org/White-Fragility-P1631.aspx>), including its usefulness and some criticisms. Others have discussed Ibram X. Kendi's book, "How to Be an Antiracist" (<https://bookshop.org/books/how-to-be-an-antiracist/9780525509288?aid=2644>).

Meanwhile, we're planning exciting events for the upcoming church year. Look for information on book and movie discussions, workshops, and listening sessions. Work with us as we examine our congregational systems with an eye towards equity and justice. Act with us as we explore partnering with the Silver Spring Justice Coalition in their work on police accountability. And don't forget the upcoming election! The RJTF is joining with the other UUCSS social justice committees in our shared "All Hearts on Deck" activities to get out the vote! Join us as we work, Covid-style, to reach as many voters as possible to make sure all voices are heard in November!

Beloveds, we have much work to do and our many hands joined together will move us forward in love and joy. We welcome your thoughts and ideas along the way, whether during one of our events or via email--racialjusticetaskforce@uucss.org.

Rainbow Alliance

The Rainbow Alliance would be remiss if we didn't contribute something to the Uniter after hearing that this month's theme is renewal! One of the core goals of our committee is completing the UUA's Welcoming Renewal Program and setting the precedent of a yearly process of affirming our connection with and inclusion of our queer community. We have already set up two rainbow services a year, and our next one will be in October. We hope all of you will tune in!

It has been wonderful having all of the support we have received from the church in affirming our status as an inclusive and safe space for our LGBTQ+ community. We deeply appreciate all the LGBTQ+ families, friends, and allies involved in the Rainbow Alliance as well as the greater church community helping us all live our UU values in loving and respecting folx of all walks of life. Let's all look forward to another church year working to live these values together.

Speaking of renewal, we voted in a new Chair this July: Nora Strauss-Riggs has joined Elise Turner in co-chairing the Rainbow Alliance this year. Nora says: I'm looking forward to guiding this committee through the coming year and hope that you all will join us at our movie nights and the many other social events that we plan to host throughout the year.

We also want to send much love and heart emojis to our former Co-chairs, Veronikia Martin, who has moved to Miami for the next couple years and was the major force in founding this Alliance, and Linda Barrett, who was integral in getting us started and organized and has now been doing a lot of other things for the church like last year's auction. Thank you for all the work both of you did in leading our committee.

As we get into this new church year and continue to stay remote, we have many things we'd like to host for our queer friends and allies. We just had our first Movie Night on August 28, where we watched The Half of It. It was a lot of fun and we plan to have many more fun events like it this coming year. October is LGBT History Month, so stay tuned because the Rainbow Alliance has a lot of things geared up!

If you are not on our email list, or you just want to join us for the movie nights/other socials, please contact us at rainbowalliance@uucss.org. We look forward to hanging out with everyone even with being online!

Volunteer Opportunities

Sunday Worship Tech Directors Needed

UUCSS is recruiting additional Sunday Worship Tech Directors to supplement Jake Ryder. Training is available! Please contact Steve Leete at ITChair@uucss.org, and/or Jake Ryder at jacobryder01@gmail.com, if you are interested in taking the first step.

Volunteer for RE—It's Fun!

We are currently seeking volunteers to help with virtual Religious Education for the 2020-21 season. We are in particular need of facilitators and mentors for the Coming of Age program. If you'd like to help in RE, please contact IDRE Marsha Thrall at IDREUUCSS@Gmail.com

Volunteer of the Month

Tamara Bowman



The Southern Baptist world knew that Tamara Bowman, age 12, was trouble when she added Christianity to a comparative mythology paper. For many years, after going off to college, Tamara was happy to be free of religion. That was until her daughter Elise, age 4, started asking questions, such as why her friends couldn't have play dates on Sunday and who was that baby in the basket. Initial return forays into the Southern Baptist world were still unsatisfying. But, driving by UUCSS one day, Tamara decided to give UUs a try. Elise liked RE and was joined in church by her sister Alexis and their father Ron Turner soon after.

For the first four years at UUCSS, Tamara taught RE covering the nursery, kindergarten and first grade, third grade, and fourth and fifth grades, after which Elise and Alexis decided Mom shouldn't be in the classroom anymore. Tamara has also served UUCSS in many capacities. She was an Annual Budget Drive steward and was also a member of an InReach group. Using her leadership abilities, Tamara has served two terms on the Board including, most recently, a term as President as we conducted our search for a new minister. Throughout, UUCSS has provided the polar opposite of her upbringing, a place where anyone who follows the Principles can fit in and be accepted and where everyone is free to believe as they wish. In the interview for this column, Tamara was asked for some last thoughts: She said she was most concerned about maintaining the bonds within the community and asked that we all make it a point to reach out to folks we haven't spoken to for a while.

Charity of the Month

Bright Beginnings--Urgent Need

Bright Beginnings is a child and family development center for families with young children aged 0 to 5 who are experiencing homelessness. The organization is in the final stages of a capital campaign with an urgent deadline. Their brand new state-of-the-art child development center opened for 104 infants and toddlers in 2018 with a 30-year construction loan of just over \$3 million.

In July, they received lender approval to apply the construction loan collateral of \$1.25 million toward the amount owed to the lender. This approval has made it feasible to pay off the loan by September 30, 2020. They now need to raise only \$62,810 to finish their capital campaign and save \$500,000 in interest. It may seem odd to work on debt retirement during a pandemic, but this puts \$500,000 right back into Bright Beginnings for their children and their families.

For more information or to donate directly to the center, please go to <https://bbidc.org/> or contact Carol Seifert at carolmarie.seifert@gmail.com or 202-276-858.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Attention Committees and Groups! Calendar Clean Up and Update!

When UUCSS had to go virtual with all gatherings last Spring, lots of committees and groups shifted their meeting times to accommodate changed schedules. Now that it looks like we will need to stay virtual, it's time to make sure our online church calendar reflects reality. This is one way we can be welcoming to those who are new to UUCSS and who aren't sure who does what yet or how to get involved.

If you are the chair or leader of a church committee, group, task force, etc. please send the following info to Melinda Yalom at administrator@uucss.org by September 7, so that we can update the calendar.

1. Name of committee/group
2. Mode of meeting (Zoom, phone conference, Google Hangouts, etc.)
3. Day and time of meeting
4. Email address for people to request info to join meeting

Gratitude to UUCSS Financial Team

I want to express gratitude and much thanks to several members of the UUCSS Finance Team--Emily Harris (Co-Collector), Rachel Vanarsdall (Co-Collector), Olivia Pickett (Treasurer), and Bruce Marquette (Bookkeeper)--who have been faithfully coming in to the Admin Building to take care of all our financial obligations every week since March, when we closed down our campus due to the pandemic. Along with Juan Vargas, our Sexton, who has continued to clean, mow, and carry our trash and recyclables to our dumpsters, I appreciate their dedicated service, which surely keeps this church going during very difficult times.

Thank you, my friends!

Melinda Yalom, UUCSS Administrator

Contacting Rev. Kristin

Since we won't have the benefit of organically running into one another at church during this time of social distancing, I'd like to connect with as many UUCSS members and friends as I can by Zoom or phone!

If you'd like to chat or have a pastoral visit with me, please go to www.calendly.com/rev-kristin-schmidt where you can schedule an appointment.

I check email during my office hours, which are on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 8am-2pm. Mondays are my day off and Wednesdays are my writing days. You can also contact me at 202-780-7164.

I look forward to talking with you!

Rev. Kristin

Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring

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Silver Spring, Maryland 20903

FIRST CLASS

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Submissions are due by the 17th of the prior month.
The next issue of the *Uniter* is in October 2020.
Send information and visuals to uniter@uucss.org.

Format guidelines for submissions: Text must be in a form that it can be edited, either in a 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.

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

Co-editors are **Lynn Cave** and **Becca Stucky**.

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

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