

April 2021

# Uniter



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING  
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# WORSHIP SERVICES

**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
- B. Join the sign language interpretation on Zoom (link in weekly all church emails)
- C. Attend virtual coffee hour on Zoom (link in weekly all church emails)

## Having trouble tuning in for worship?

Please email [administrator@uucss.org](mailto:administrator@uucss.org)  
with your name and phone number to be connected with a volunteer who can help.

### **April 4: Easter Sunday**, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Join us this Easter Sunday as we celebrate in story, song, and sermon the power of life and love over death and hate. Alleluia!

### **April 11: Salvation Inside and Outside of Us**, Preston Mears, UUCSS member

The challenges of our times have echoes from the 1950s and 1960s with McCarthyism's red baiting of worker, racial, homophobic and global efforts and leading into the Civil Rights Movement. Today, we hear parallel kinds of rhetoric highlighted in the January 6 breach of the Capital, challenges to voter's rights, and the insistent calls and demands of anti-racism to address the very real divisions and built injustices too many have been too blind to see for too long.

Preston will share how salvation for him is the ongoing work of growing inside of ourselves at the same time we join hands together to address the very real challenges to all people. His own experience includes the challenges of life and death, the murder of seminary classmate Jonathan Daniels in Haynesville, Alabama. He will be assisted by fellow worship committee member Bonnie Gallion who brings her own experience and commitments to the service.

### **April 18: Celebration Sunday**, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

This week marks the conclusion of our Annual Budget Drive, and we have so much to celebrate! In this service we give thanks for the many gifts people give and receive as part of this beloved community.

### **April 25: Journeying Towards the Next Moment**, Marsha A. Thrall, Interim Dir. of Religious Ed.

What does Greek epic poetry, the narrative found in the Book of Acts, the idea of "Becoming", and the new normal emerging from pandemic life have in common? Join Marsha as she explores what history has to tell us about epic journeys and what we have the potential to become in the moments after one Journey ends, and a new Journey begins.

# INSPIRE

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



A couple weeks ago some other ministers and I were talking about what we would be doing in worship for Easter this year. One colleague summed up how I was feeling when he said something like, "It's hard to plan an Easter service when we live in a Good Friday world."

Over the last year many wise people have noted how this pandemic has revealed rather than created problems already present in our medical system, economy, elections, etc. The threat of the pandemic is not over. And yet, the number of infections continues to fall and the number of people receiving vaccinations continues to rise. As the weather gets warmer, we will have more opportunities to meet up safely with friends and loved ones outdoors. The Hybrid Ministry Task Force is exploring all sorts of ways we can begin to gather together in-person again, first in small groups and outdoors. We're not out of the woods yet, but things are possible today that weren't thinkable a few months ago, things are better than they were, and they are headed in the right direction.

It's one thing to say that sometimes we have to lose our lives to gain new ones, or that things have to fall apart before they can be reformed, reshaped, renewed. It's quite another thing to actually experience the death, the falling apart, the fear and loss and sorrow. And when things do begin to get better, it can be hard to embrace it. It can be hard to trust again. But, as UU minister, Rev. Richard Gilbert writes "a tomb is no place to stay."

The theme for worship this month is "Becoming," which seems fitting as the natural world all around us becomes alive with leaf and tree, bird, and bee once again. On Saturday, April 3, all are invited to join in our virtual UUCSS Passover Seder which tells the story of how a people formerly defined by enslavement become a people defined by freedom. The very next day we'll celebrate Easter Sunday and remember how even a humiliating death couldn't stop a ministry from becoming a movement. And, on Sunday, April 18, we'll join together in worship for Celebration Sunday and give thanks for the ways our community will be able to continue growing, evolving, and becoming through our shared commitment and generosity.

Whatever religious traditions you claim as your own, however you mark this time of year, may you celebrate the ways that freedom, life, and love are greater than bondage, death, and hate. And may we become the people in whom, and with whom, and through whom freedom, life, and love bear good fruit into the world.

## Message From Carl Miller, Board President



Well, it is COVID-19 vaccine season for sure. I have to admit that I feel some mixed emotions when I see the news about vaccination numbers these days. They keep rising, but sometimes it seems so slow. It reminds me of all the time we have already lost. But, what can we do--sometimes transformation takes a while.

The church has a lot to look forward to, in any case. Capital Improvements are expected to start work on our buildings in the early spring. And I'm delighted to announce that we have our newly formed "Transitioning to In-Person Activities Task Force," which has just made its first official communication to the board.

Thanks to John Acton, Joe Baldi, Eli Briggs, Emily Harris, Bob McGaughy, Doneby Smith, Sharon Snyder, and Kandra Strauss-Riggs for their dedicated work.

The transition task force is responsible for informing the board about what metrics we will eventually use to make decisions about re-opening, and also about the safety policies that we will put in place when that happens. Making decisions that balance our safety with our needs for community, art, and spiritual fulfillment is no easy thing. And yet, it's judgments like that that hold us all together.

On a more immediate note, the Ministry Evaluation Committee has released our official congregational feedback form for this year's evaluation. UUCSS members and friends--all those who haven't already had a chance to give us their feedback this year--are invited to [fill out the form](#). Your information will help us move forward mindfully and creatively with Rev. Kristin's ministry at UUCSS.

There's satisfaction in knowing what we are today and also in what may come next. I hope this message finds you well.



# LEARN



## Religious Education Activities--for Children and Adults

### Youth Religious Education

At UUCSS, we offer religious education for all ages. If you are not yet registered, you can do so for the following ages on our website at <https://uucss.org/children/>

- Pre-School (Ages 2-5) Parents of Preschoolers (POP!)
- Kindergarten through 1st Grade - "Love Surrounds Us" from Tapestry of Faith
- Grades 2 through 4 - "Love Will Guide Us" from Tapestry of Faith
- Grades 5 through 6 (Middle School A) - "Heeding the Call: Qualities of a Justice Maker" from Tapestry of Faith
- Grades 7 through 8 (Middle School B) - "Building Bridges: A World Religions Program" from Tapestry of Faith
- Grade 9 - Coming of Age (COA)
- Grades 10 through 12 - Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)

### Adult RE

**Reading, Resilience, and Resistance**, Led by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

April 18, 1:00-2:30pm

*Zoom links will be shared in all-church emails*

In this class we use a sacred reading approach to engage deeply with a text and explore what meaning it holds for us today. This month we will sink into excerpts from The Book of the Living in the Earthseed novel series by Afro-futurist sci-fi writer, Octavia Butler. No need to register or sign up, you are welcome whether you can make it to all or just one of these monthly conversations. Links to each class will be available in the all-church email.



# CONNECT



## EVENTS

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

**April 1, 7:30 pm.** Masterworks of Music: J. S. Bach--St. Matthew Passion (Leading to Easter). [Zoom.](#)

**April 3, 4:30 pm.** Passover Seder. See more details about the seder directly below this list of events. [Zoom.](#)

**April 5, 7:30 - 10:00 pm.** Online Men's Group.

**April 8, 7:30 pm.** Masterworks of Music: Early R&B and Its Influence. [Zoom.](#)

**April 12, 7:30 - 10:00 pm.** Online Men's Group.

**April 15, 7:30 pm.** Masterworks of Music: Beatles--White Album (and background). [Zoom.](#)

**April 18, 1 - 2:30 pm.** Reading, Resilience, and Resistance, led by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt. Discussion of excerpts from The Book of the Living by Afro-futurist sci-fi writer, Octavia Butler. Zoom link will be in all-church email.

**April 18, 7pm.** Men's Book Group. We are reading Bookman's Promise, a novel by John Dunning, which features Cliff Janeway, a cop who is an avid collector of rare and first edition books. If you are interested in joining the discussion, contact Richard Lorr ([rlorr4@gmail.com](mailto:rlorr4@gmail.com)) to get the Zoom link and come to the next meeting!

**April 19, 7:30 - 10:00 pm.** Online Men's Group.

**April 22, 7:30 pm.** Masterworks of Music: Igor Stravinsky--Le Sacre du Printemps ("Rite of Spring"). [Zoom.](#)

**April 24, 10 am - 2 pm.** UUCSS Clean-Up Day. Come help us mark Earth Day!

**April 26, 7:30 - 10:00 pm.** Online Men's Group.

**April 26, 7:30 - 9:30 pm.** Women's Book Group. Reading Nothing to See Here by Kevin Wilson. After a brief check-in, we have an open discussion of the book. One of us usually facilitates the wide-ranging conversation. It is informal and fun! Interested readers are welcome to join without a long-term obligation. Please contact Deb Weiner ([dweiner04@gmail.com](mailto:dweiner04@gmail.com)) for further details.

**April 29, 7:30 pm.** Masterworks of Music: John Coltrane--A Love Supreme. [Zoom.](#)

## **UUCSS Passover Seder--April 3**

Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/99536950371?pwd=dUc1OCtSRk9tc3BLUVJTQlBkVnpHdz09>)

This year's annual UUCSS Passover Seder will be at 4:30 pm on Saturday, April 3! All are welcome to join us. Most of the Virtual Seder is being treated as a pre-dinner ritual that should last a little less than an hour. After the main portion of the Seder, we will have the option to stay and eat your Passover meals in small breakout rooms.

If you are new to Passover, it is the Jewish celebration of freedom from slavery. Seders are family-friendly household events, and there is no pressure to get everything correct. In the Seder, there will be a chance for anyone who can read to participate in the storytelling and for families to help create a music video for the song Dayenu. Please email [seder@uucss.org](mailto:seder@uucss.org) if you have any questions or concerns--we want this to be easy and enjoyable. Details are in the all-church email.

### **SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY MAY 15, 6 PM, for the Virtual Fellowship Dinner**

We cannot let another year go by without our beloved Fellowship Dinner. Unfortunately, we are unable to do it in-person so we will need to get creative.

We will start the evening at 6 pm in a Zoom room (video on, audio off) where Reverend Kristin will lead us in a blessing and then we will move to breakout rooms where you and 7 of your friends/family will enjoy a dinner together in a private breakout room. Each breakout room will be like a "table" and each table can be as creative as they want in planning their own meals, such as a menu theme, dressing up, having food delivered to each house at the same time, make a meal together earlier in the day, divide up the courses (don't forget dessert!) and deliver portions to each other earlier in the day, or whatever you want, just have fun!

At 6:45 pm we will automatically be returned to the main Zoom where we will be entertained by UUCSS's very own comedian Ben Johnson (son of Cathy & Ed Johnson) for a live stand-up act that will be sure to have you laughing out loud!

Our event will conclude at 7:30 pm, but we will continue to offer breakout rooms for anyone who wants to stay and continue the conversation.

We will offer a "table" for COA and for YRUU, but they will need to have a separate computer if the parents are going to be at another "table."

Because this is virtual, we will not be separating tables by dietary wants and needs. Each table can be creative in incorporating any preferences or restrictions.

An RSVP by April 23 is required and a Google Docs sign up will be available Mid-April. Final table assignments will be sent to everyone by May 2 so tables can plan their menus.

We will do our best to use our best Zoom etiquette and please note that latecomers will not be accepted into the Zoom after 6:30 pm in order to avoid disruptions to our performer.

## Committee Updates

### Membership Update--Regarding New Members and You!

We can't believe it has been an entire year since we have been together on the grounds of UUCSS. A year since we put on a name tag, since we laughed over a cup of coffee in the community hall, since we handed out the order of service, and since we hugged one another. But we are still here and we are all doing our best to stay connected to each other and to our beloved community. It's been a challenge, but we have never given up hope of being back together in person soon.

If you are a recent new member and are feeling a little distanced from the congregation, please reach out to one of us on the Membership Committee. We know some of you joined our community right before we went online and may be feeling like you never got to meet anyone or get involved. We can help!

We also need help from the rest of you. One challenge the Membership Committee has faced is how to recognize and connect with visitors in the online world. With our online services, there is just no way to know who is watching. We try to encourage our visitors to introduce themselves in the YouTube chat and to email [membership@uucss.org](mailto:membership@uucss.org) for the link to coffee hour and to learn more about us. But, if they don't take that initial step, then we aren't able to identify or connect with them. We are asking our community of friends and members to be on the lookout for visitors and potential new members and, if you see a new name, please send an email to [membership@uucss.org](mailto:membership@uucss.org) to let us know. We want to make sure everyone feels welcome.

We just completed a Pathways to Membership class and are excited that Tallman Boyd has committed to joining our community; we will be working with Tallman to schedule a book signing. If you see Tallman in a Zoom room or in the chat, please welcome him! We are very glad he chose us and we look forward to getting to know him better.

### Racial Justice Task Force and 8th Principle Updates

The UUCSS Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) is hosting a series of 8th Principle coffee hours following Sunday services through May. These exploratory Q&A sessions will be facilitated by RJTF and Eighth Principle Task Force (8PTF) members.

Topics will include:

- How is the 8P different from the other 7 Principles?
- What does the 8P mean, and what are we committing to?
- What is the history of the 8P?
- What has changed within other congregations who have adopted it?
- What is the meaning of accountability and action?
- Journeying towards spiritual wholeness--what does it mean for you, our church, and community?
- What are we voting on, and how will the vote work?

We are engaged in a process of understanding what the 8<sup>th</sup> principle is. That means learning about the authors and denominational advocates who are primarily Unitarian Universalist BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color). Perhaps most challenging, is opening ourselves to a different worldview that speaks, perceives, and acts in ways that are not immediately comprehensible to the White Euro-American worldview.



## COMMITTEE UPDATES CONTINUED...

Be on the lookout for a church-wide email that provides more detailed reflections on the history, research, and worldview that birthed the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle. Whether you plan to attend our post Sunday service coffee hour discussions, linguistic pop-up analysis events, or the workshop introducing us to the Widening the Circle report, these links to articles and video presentations (below) can help you learn more about what the 8<sup>th</sup> principle is and what it calls upon us to do together.

### Other 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Task Force Events

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1G4ej2rWYDb3sngYArSPU7pv4UmJr-MWgos4hbj9raMs/edit?usp=sharing>

### Get To Know The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Resources

- General Information: <https://8thprincipleuu.org/>
- Paula Cole Jones, "Building A Community of Communities" Lecture: <https://www.uua.org/ga/past/2019/workshops/sophia-fahs-lecture>
- Paula Cole Jones, "The 8th Principle Matters to Members of the BIPOC Community" Lecture: <https://vimeo.com/511677092>
- UUA Commission on Institutional Change (and their Widening the Circle report): <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic>

### More about the Work of the RJTF

The RJTF force also takes actions for racial justice in our local community. We are focusing on standing up for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) individuals via protests and contacting our representatives regarding legislation to make changes in our local community to bend the arc towards justice. This includes working for increasing legislative funds for mental health units to support the community and save lives, instead of having to call the police during a mental health crisis; standing up against the increased violence towards Asian Americans; and standing in support for Bethesda African American Cemetery against desecration of its graves. If you are interested in becoming more involved in UUCSS' community engagement for racial justice, contact Kathryn Leete ([kathryn.l@gmail.com](mailto:kathryn.l@gmail.com)), 301-792-4757, to learn more and/or to join us in monthly meetings.

### Green Notes from the Green Sanctuary--Plant a Tree!

Spring is here, Earth Day is coming up, and it's a great time to plant a tree! Trees do amazing things for us—they give us shade and beautify our homes and communities, while fighting global warming by sequestering carbon and reducing “heat islands” in marginalized communities and cities. Nature-based solutions such as enhancing the tree canopy are an important part of the climate action plans of Montgomery County and the state of Maryland. The amount of carbon dioxide a tree will offset depends on many factors. On average, one broad leaf tree will absorb about 1 metric ton of carbon dioxide in a 100 year lifetime. But, on average, each of us in the U.S. now emits the equivalent of around 14 metric tons of carbon dioxide a year, according to the World Bank. Do the math! We need to plant A LOT more trees, everywhere!

Montgomery County and the State of Maryland have a number of programs that provide free trees and some maintenance services. Check out the list below. If you decide to purchase a tree at a local nursery, keep in mind that trees native to this region are much preferred. Most local nurseries now have sections that feature native plants. Do your homework or ask at the nursery so you select a native tree that you love, that will provide shade and habitat for pollinators, that will thrive wherever you plant it, and that will sequester carbon for many years to come.

**Native Trees Discount** - Download a Reforest Montgomery coupon for \$40.00 off a native tree of \$ 75.00 or more, at participating nurseries.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/environment/forest-conservation-and-trees/reforest-montgomery/native-trees-discount/>. May be combined with a Marylanders Plant Trees coupon of \$25.00.  
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/MarylandersPlantTrees/Print-Your-Coupon.aspx>

**Tree Montgomery** is a program in the Montgomery County Department of the Environment that provides free trees and long-term maintenance. Designed to get designed more shade trees into the ground, Tree Montgomery plants trees in yards of single family homes, multi-unit buildings, homeowner associations, businesses, and even parking lots. To see if you qualify for a free shade tree and assistance with long term care see <https://treemontgomery.org/>. There is currently a wait list for this program.

**ReForest Montgomery** also has a program that provides free shade trees to eligible county residents. Check the map on the website to see if your address is in a high priority area. The program has “open seasons” during which applications are accepted. The next opportunity may be in October 2021.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/environment/forest-conservation-and-trees/reforest-montgomery/>

**Tree-Mendous Maryland** is a program of the Maryland Forest Service that will help us to plant trees on public land and community open spaces, including right of ways, school grounds, and government facilities. Trees are delivered free to 3 locations across the state each spring and fall, or you can pay for delivery to a specific site. So consider gathering a group of neighbors, colleagues, or classmates to plant a tree today to help create shade, clean the water, and sequester carbon.

[www.dnr.maryland.gov/forests/document/Tree-Mendous\\_OrderForm.pdf](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/forests/document/Tree-Mendous_OrderForm.pdf)

**Backyard Buffers** - If you are 300 feet or less from a stream, river, drainage ditch or storm drain you may be eligible to receive free native tree seedlings through Backyard Buffers. The program is designed to support creation of streamside “buffers” of native trees and shrubs, which improve water quality, reduce erosion, and create wildlife habitat. It may be too late to get seedlings for this spring, but the program is ongoing. For more information see <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/programs/Backyard-Buffer-Program.aspx>, or contact James Eierdam at [james.eierdam@maryland.gov](mailto:james.eierdam@maryland.gov).



## Volunteer Spotlight

### Colin Riggs



Pre-K Colin arrived with his parents Drew and Beth Riggs in the early 1980s, and like many of our children found Bobbi Pohl teaching his RE class. Colin went through the whole RE curriculum, the predecessor to OWL, and then YRUU. From this experience, UUism came to mean seeing our place in an interconnected web of nature and human interrelationships.

At Guilford College, he soon gravitated to the UU group on campus where he met his wife-to-be Kandra Strauss. After graduation, they returned to the DC area, married, and had two children, Nora and Madeleine. Having children led Colin and Kandra back to us as they wanted their children to learn and share the same values they had found.

Colin soon became involved in teaching RE. He was asked to join our first ministerial search committee in 2018 and then joined the board as VP of Finance in 2019. For Colin, UUCSS is a home for people who want to help the world. He feels grateful for how the congregation has kept the church alive and inspired through this very difficult year.

## Community Partner of the Month

### Nourish Now

Nourish Now, [nourishnow.org](https://nourishnow.org), is a local nonprofit providing food to people in need in Montgomery County. They were founded with the model of “recovering” donations of fresh, healthy food that might otherwise have gone to waste from grocers, farms, caterers, etc. However, the pandemic restrictions on these business’ operations choked off this vital source of food for their operations. They now depend on funding from business, individuals, foundations, and local governments to raise money to purchase food.

Undaunted by the pandemic, Nourish Now has pivoted their operations to find creative ways to meet the growing need for food in the county. They created the Multi-Cultural Mobile Food Assistance Program. Now, with the help of the on-the-go capabilities of area food truck operators, they are able to distribute food to 17 sites in the communities where there is poor access to grocery stores and transportation. Nourish Now has reached more than 40,000 households, including 70,000 children and 2,000 seniors with nearly 4 million meals at 17 distribution sites around the county.

UUCSS is happy to be able to share our generous gifts this month with Nourish Now as to help them fight hunger in Montgomery County.



# ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

## Seeking Your Feedback--Ministry Evaluation Committee

The Ministry Evaluation Committee\* has created a new process this year to provide thoughtful feedback to our minister, staff, and lay leaders about how members and friends are experiencing the life of our church. Using your name, you will be invited to answer questions on an online Google platform in the three areas of Worship, Pastoral Care, and Administration. These areas correspond to ones being studied by our minister with UUCSS's larger Shared Ministry team. Next year, other areas of church activity will be identified for study. Our intention is to use the feedback to strengthen the congregation's ministry and mission. A written summary will be shared with the congregation on the church website and in the June 2021 Annual Report.

Feedback Link--Deadline April 12, 2021: [Link to the survey here.](#)

\*Bonnie Gallion, Stephanie McConachie, Carl Miller, and Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

## New Co-Editor Needed for Uniter (and farewell to the Stuckys)



This year, Lynn Cave and Becca Stucky took on co-editing for the Uniter. Lynn helps gather and edit articles, and then Becca does the layout using a Word template, designs any Facebook posts, and does a final copy edit. It's a great way to keep up with the happenings at UUCSS and flex your creative muscles!

Editing for the Uniter runs from August (to be ready in time for the September article) through May. We're looking for a new co-editor to take Becca's place, as she and family are moving to British Columbia this summer.

You might know the Stuckys best by their now 2.5 year old son, Reese, who pre-COVID was often seen toddling his way to the front of the church to dance as close to the music as possible. They have been members of UUCSS for about 2 years, but always knew they wanted to move to Canada to gain dual citizenship for their kids... as well as a love of hockey and Tim Hortons! They will be moving to Kelowna, B.C. in Canadian wine country (and most importantly, the sunniest place in Canada). They are really going to miss UCCSS and the community they've built in Maryland, but are looking forward to adventure and finding a new church where their son Reese can dance to vibrant music!

## Zoom-ing for UUCSS Meetings

Good news! You can now schedule and run Zoom meetings for church-related events yourself! Also this new scheduling method eliminates meeting collisions.

Be on the lookout for all-church emails that give detailed instruction how to:

- Schedule a church-related Zoom meeting
- Attend a church-related Zoom meeting
- Run a church-related Zoom meeting

In addition, the instructions are also on the UUCSS WIKI at <http://wiki.uucss.org/>.

### Contacting Rev. Kristin

If you'd like to chat or have a pastoral visit, please go to [www.calendly.com/rev-kristin-schmidt](http://www.calendly.com/rev-kristin-schmidt) where you can schedule an appointment.

**Office hours:** Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 8am-2pm. Emails are checked.

**Day off:** Monday

**Writing day:** Wednesday

Contact number for phone and text: 202-780-7164

Email: [minister@uucss.org](mailto:minister@uucss.org)

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

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

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

Format guidelines for submissions: Text must be in a form that it can be edited, either in a Google Doc (preferred), Word file, or in the body of an email that can be copied and pasted. Graphics must be in a format in which they can be repositioned and resized—jpeg is greatly preferred.

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

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**.