

March 2021

# Uniter



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING  
10309 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20903  
301-273-9745 · Fax 301-434-4051  
[www.uucss.org](http://www.uucss.org)

*In this Issue...*

## WORSHIP SERVICES

### INSPIRE

[Minister's Column by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt](#)

[Message From Carl Miller, Board President](#)

### LEARN

[Message From Marsha Thrall, Interim Director of Religious Education](#)

[Religious Education Activities--for Children and Adults](#)

## CONNECT

### EVENTS

[Committee Updates](#)

[Annual Budget Drive: Rolling Up Our Sleeves.](#)

[Racial Justice Task Force \(RJTF\)](#)

[Green Sanctuary Update](#)

[Volunteer Spotlight](#)

[Charity of the Month](#)

## ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

# 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.

### **March 7: A Changing Faith That Changes Us**, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

People familiar with our faith are probably also familiar with our Seven Principles, but they may not know their history and how the Principles evolve and change. In this service, we will learn about where our Principles came from and the new proposed 8th Principle.

### **March 12 Vespers Service - FRIDAY 7:30pm: One Year Later**, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt, Marsha Thrall, and Michael Holmes

One year ago this week the pandemic changed our lives forever. We've suffered losses both big and small, trauma, uncertainty, and we've witnessed the world change in profound ways. All are invited to join us for a service of reading, story, song, and prayer as we mark together this inexplicable milestone.

### **March 14: The Road Ahead**, Rev. Eric Meter, guest preacher

While we are beginning to imagine a world less completely defined by COVID-19, how might we best re-center such a world with our values intact?

### **March 21: Rolling Up Our Sleeves**, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

We are so richly blessed by the gifts, passions, commitments, and support of every single person who calls this congregation their own. This week in worship we will kick off our Annual Budget Drive and roll up our sleeves for all of the good ministry we're being called to do right here, right now!

### **March 28: Utterly Remade**, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

It's been said that while ships are safe in harbor that's not what they're built for. Committing to our values can lead us into risky situations, but without taking risks we lose the chance to grow and change. Join us this Sunday as we remember the Passover and Palm Sunday stories, imagine how our commitments might utterly remake us, and experience the power of Lea Morris, this year's Musician in Residence.

# INSPIRE

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



James Luther Adams was perhaps the most important Unitarian theologian of the last century, and the focus of most of his work was the church as a “voluntary association.” By that he meant the religious community is powerful because in it people are bound together not by economic necessity or governmental requirement, but by the promises we choose to make to one another. In other words, as my colleague Rev. Dennis McCarty writes, “Our very humanity lies in the way we carry out our promises to our families, our coworkers, our neighbors, and our fellow members of the human family...”

Our worship theme for the month of March is “commitment.” This is a pretty frequent theme in church, but I find myself engaging with it in new ways as we approach the one-year mark of life in this pandemic. These days, when I think of “commitment,” I can’t help but think of all of the deep commitments so many have made over the last twelve months in the service of our democracy and our collective health and well-being. I think of those who worked tirelessly to get out the vote and serve as election judges and observers. I think of those who have quietly donated to food pantries and written checks to individuals and families in need. I think of the intrepid people hunting for vaccines for elders and teachers all over our state. And I think of the members of the UUCSS Board and Transition to Re-Opening Task Force who are serving so well their commitment to help keep us all safe and healthy.

This month we will also begin our Annual Budget Drive. Unlike churches in many other traditions, UUCSS is not part of a denomination but rather one member in an association of congregations. This distinction means that while we are in relationship with other UU congregations, we have both the freedom and the responsibility to govern and fund ourselves. While we govern ourselves with representative democracy, we fund our annual budget primarily through the yearly financial commitments (or pledges) of our members. In other words, it’s our promises and our generosity that makes possible all that we do and experience together.

As we prepare to roll up our sleeves for the vaccine let’s also roll up our sleeves for UUCSS--not because we have to, not because it is required of us, but because we love this congregation, the values it promotes, and the change it’s made in our lives and our world.

## Message From Carl Miller, Board President



At the time I'm writing this (February 17th), we are awaiting some tough winter weather. I'm getting text messages on my cell phone like this one: "Keep tuned in to your local forecast ... Power outages, tree damage, and hazardous travel conditions are expected to be the primary threats." Yikes. As if we need more things to be cautious about right now. I have vivid memories of the winter storms we would get in Maryland when I was growing up. (1993: a major blizzard in March. 1994: a foot-high sheet of ice. 1996: another major blizzard that shut down school for a week.) It seemed so adventurous at the time to be trapped at home, contending with unpredictable forces of nature. Little did we know what the future would hold.

Here are some of the items that we covered at the last board meeting:

- \* Continued policy revisions, including a new version of our membership policy
- \* The preliminary budget for the coming church year (2021-2022)
- \* Personnel matters, including possible professional support for virtual worship
- \* Assembling a new task force to consider questions about physical reopening.

Also: preparations for the Annual Budget Drive (ABD) have started! Thanks to our co-chairs Margo Kelly, Teresa Meeks, and Jamie Jorgensen, and to everyone who has helped make the launch, including Jean Snell, Cynthia Curry-Daniel, Tamara Bowman, Rachel Vanarsdall, and Rob Dahlstrom. ABD is a great time for community renewal and reflections on what we want for the future of the church.

Tonight--especially because of the February 14th service--I am appreciating the music I've heard at UU churches and all the creativity and positive energy that flows through it. Thanks to everyone for their virtual musical creations that connect us through time and space during the pandemic. I think of one of the first UU services that I ever went to--this would have been at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Oakland around 2004--where they did a grand energizing performance of Bob Dylan:

*I see my light come shining  
From the west down to the east  
Any day now, any day now  
I shall be released.*

All the best to everyone for the remainder of the winter.

-----  
*What is your favorite piece of church music? You're invited to share by commenting on the #ShareWithUs post found in the [UUCSS private Facebook group](#).*

# LEARN

## Message From Marsha Thrall, Interim Director of Religious Education



It seems that 2021 is moving in a whirlwind fashion. As I write this, we've already passed the midway point of February, time is moving quickly, and it feels like there's so much to accomplish yet during our present RE season.

The Soul Matters theme for March is "Commitment." Sometimes, to me, this feels like a loaded word. What does "Commitment" look like both during a global crisis, but also during a time of great content? How does "Commitment" help us live into our UU principles? And from the perspective of Religious Education, what does "Commitment" mean? I don't know how to answer question one, I have feelings about question two, but most important, to me, is question three, and it has been on my mind a lot lately.

A big misconception about the role of Religious Education is that it's mostly a Sunday morning thing. When we're in person, your DRE shows up, makes sure that there are adequate supplies and snacks, and interacts with kids. And that's a lovely scenario, and definitely a commitment. But it's only a fraction of what it means to be a Religious Educator. The true commitment in being a Religious Educator comes when it is realized that living, breathing, and finding a way to make each moment a "teaching moment" is the totality of the Religious Educator's calling. In other words, this commitment is a full-time dedication to vocation. It's a gift to be shared, not a task to be completed.

During my time with you so far, a lot of thought has been given to how to best live into our commitments, particularly in the face of the fullness of the questions asked above. And, I feel that moving toward a "Lifespan" model of Religious Education will be a meaningful move forward. A "Lifespan" model shifts the focus of our learning project from providing a "service" to our children and youth on Sunday mornings to creating a holistic learning environment for all who congregate within the UUCSS community. We have so much to learn from one another, and the faith that can grow from this learning experience is both life changing and beautiful.

In closing, please know that as UUCSS moves forward in the journey of doing the work to build a "Lifespan" affirming culture of faith, I am committed to helping you take the steps necessary to make the trip.

# 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

**Soul Matters Monthly Conversation: Beloved Community**, Led by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt  
Sunday, March 7, 1 - 2:30 pm

Stephen Covey says that "Anything less than a conscious commitment to the important is an unconscious commitment to the unimportant." This month we delve into the theme of "commitment" both in terms of the important commitments we've chosen and those that we may not even realize we've made. Everyone is invited to join in this conversation that follows a small group ministry approach. 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 Zoom conversation will be available in the all-church emails.

**Reading, Resilience, and Resistance**, Led by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt  
Tuesday, March 2: Cancelled / Sunday, March 21, 1 - 2:30 pm

In this class we use a sacred reading approach to engage deeply with a text and explore what meaning it holds for us today. In these days when so much injustice is being laid bare, join us as we seek wisdom and inspiration from people who have persisted and found joy even while living through tumult and oppression. 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.

## Anti-Racism Parent Group

As we move forward in doing meaningful anti-racism and social equity work, it still seems that there is space needed to process being an anti-racist parent. While there is a standing Zoom group scheduled for parents on Wednesdays from 7-8pm ([Zoom link!](#)), the interest in participation is sometimes spotty. If you are interested in continuing the Anti-Racism Parent Group, please email me at [IDREUUCSS@gmail.com](mailto:IDREUUCSS@gmail.com).

## Widening the Circle of Concern Learning Group

Religious Education is currently collaborating with the Eighth Principle Task Force to schedule and facilitate discussions surrounding the [Widening the Circle of Concern](#) resources provided by the UUA. These resources can be found [here](#). Please watch the All Church Email for information regarding this upcoming event.

# CONNECT

## EVENTS

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

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

**March 4, 7:30 pm.** Masterworks of Music: Wolfgang A. Mozart – Symphony No. 40. [Zoom Link.](#)

**March 7, 1 - 2:30 pm.** Soul Matters Monthly Conversation: Beloved Community, led by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt. Links to the Zoom conversation will be available in the all-church emails.

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

**March 12, 7:30 pm.** One Year Later. Service with Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt, Marsha Thrall, and Michael Holmes. Link in the all church emails.

**March 11, 7:30 pm.** Masterworks of Music: John Corigliano--Symphony No. 1 "Rage and Remembrance" (Written for those lost to HIV-AIDS). [Zoom Link.](#)

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

**March 18, 7:30 pm.** Masterworks of Music: Great Jazz pianists from Jelly Roll Morton to present. [Zoom Link.](#)

**March 19-21.** Jubilee Three workshop. Hosted by Paula Cole Jones, Dr Leon Spencer and Lutricia Callair. RJTF highly recommends this opportunity for a weekend of antiracist analysis and learning. [More details here.](#)

**March 20, 10 am - 2 pm.** Church Clean Up. Workers will receive BBQ pork sliders for an outside, socially distanced lunch.

**March, 21, 1 - 2:30 pm.** Reading, Resilience, and Resistance, led by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt. Links to the Zoom conversation will be available in the all-church emails.

**March 21, 7pm.** Men's Book Group. We are reading Norwegian Wood, a 1987 novel by Haruki Murakami. A nostalgic story of loss and burgeoning sexuality told from the first-person perspective of Toru Watanabe, who looks back on his days as a college student living in Tokyo. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Richard Lorr ([rlorr4@gmail.com](mailto:rlorr4@gmail.com)) to get the Zoom link and come to the next meeting!

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



**March 22, 7:30 - 9:30 pm.** Women's Book Group. Reading Kindred by Octavia E. Butler. After a brief check-in, we have an open discussion of the book. 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 details.

**March 25, 7:30 pm.** Masterworks of Music: Brahms: Requiem (Remembrance of those we have lost). [Zoom Link](#).

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

**All Month:** Help Needed for Little Free Pantry Project. If you have skills and talents that you would like to share in creating this meaningful project, please contact Marsha Thrall at [IDREUUCSS@gmail.com](mailto:IDREUUCSS@gmail.com).

## Committee Updates

### Annual Budget Drive: Rolling Up Our Sleeves

Your Annual Budget Drive (ABD) co-chairs Margo Kelly, Teresa Meeks, and Jamie Jorgensen, are working with church members and staff for the opening of the 2021 ABD Campaign: Rolling Up Our Sleeves. The campaign launches on March 21. Stewardship visits will be scheduled following the launch, and we hope all congregants will say yes to meeting with a volunteer steward and work with them to schedule a virtual meeting. Your pledges are as critical as ever! Those interested in being volunteer stewards can contact the chairs at [abd@uucss.org](mailto:abd@uucss.org). Stewards should plan to attend one of two trainings--March 7 at 3pm or March 18 at 7pm.

### Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF)

Little Bits of Progress

It's hard to believe a month has passed since the inauguration. While changing our President couldn't immediately repair the damages done in the last few years or the history of animosity and oppression that enabled it, we are starting to see little bits of progress shine through. Here's some of the good news from the last month on the racial justice front.

On the national stage, President Biden has signed executive orders to begin addressing systemic inequality, providing support to underserved communities and shaping pandemic response around them, and ending contracts for privately-owned federal prisons. The President's Cabinet nominations include important BIPOC perspectives in Deb Harlaand, Marcia Fudge, and Lloyd Austin, the first of whom could be the first Native American Cabinet secretary in U.S. history. And in Congress, the For the People Act finally has a chance to make it to the Senate and improve voting rights throughout the country. These are all solid steps in the right direction, and hopefully we can carry this momentum a while longer.

Closer to home, the Maryland Legislation is still considering multiple bills that would enable meaningful police reform, including repealing the prohibitively powerful Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights, raising the legal standards for use of force, and implementing Anton's Law / Public Information Act to allow for meaningful oversight of police misconduct. If you haven't already, writing to your representatives to lend your support on these issues is a great way to make our voices heard and contribute toward making our community of communities a little more just.



## COMMITTEE UPDATES CONTINUED...

Justice is a process, not a destination, and there's still plenty to do in our journey toward dismantling white supremacy and all the intersectional oppressions it entails. Still, celebrating the progress we've made is an important part of that process. Before we get back to it, it'd do us well to take a deep breath, and breathe it out as love.

-----

Our regularly-updated calendar of events, actions, and resources can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/UUCSS-RJTF>.

### Green Sanctuary Update

Last month, we reported on a number of climate-related bills in the 2021 legislative session. Here we provide information on some other environmental bills as well as opportunities for quick actions you can take to support these and other environmental and social justice bills.

But first, some good news on the local level. Last month, the Montgomery County Council unanimously passed legislation that expands composting in the Agricultural Reserve! Montgomery County currently produces 147,000 tons of food waste per year--the largest contributing factor to the county waste stream. Composting helps keep this waste out of the landfill and is used to produce healthier soils, which also improve water quality. Regenerative practices like composting are an important part of Montgomery County's goal of eliminating greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. Consider taking a moment to thank the Council for their action.

! **Take Action:** You can support additional measures to enhance the composting infrastructure at the state level by supporting HB 264. [Tell your legislator to support organics recycling and waste diversion](#). This bill would require entities that produce 2 tons of food waste per week to compost or otherwise divert the waste from the waste stream if they are within 30 miles of a compost facility. Read more about it here: <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/maryland-legislators-support-organics-recycling-and-waste-diversion-legislation-hb-264/>.

Another success to share--the legislature just overrode Governor Hogan's veto of The Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program. HB1488/SB0985 establishes a system for state agencies, such as four-year universities, to purchase food from local Maryland farms. This supports Maryland farmers while helping to create a more secure and resilient food system in Maryland.

Updates on bills we are following closely:

1. **Public Private Partnerships (P3)--Process and Oversight:** As reported last month, this will toughen oversight and reviews on P3s and is key to slowing or stopping the misguided plan to widen parts of 495 and 270. Read more about it here: [Don't widen 270.org](#).

! **Take Action:** Write to Del. Kumar Barve, chair of the House Committee on the Environment and Transportation, and urge him to bring HB 0485 bill to a vote in his committee so it can move forward to the Senate in a timely manner. It's important to write even if you don't live in his district, as the overall volume of correspondence received is important.

## COMMITTEE UPDATES CONTINUED...

2. **Climate Solutions Now Act:** This bill will require Maryland to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 60% and to work with disproportionately impacted communities and labor in creating and implementing the regulations. Read more about it here: <https://act.ccanactionfund.org/page/26192/action/1>.

Feb. 11 Update: Joint hearing with Environment and Transportation Committee, and Economics Matter Committee, was held on this date.

! Take Action: Continue to support this important legislation here: [Support Climate Solutions Now](#).

3. **Community Choice Energy:** This pilot program for Montgomery County would both lower electricity rates for residents and quickly move us to clean, renewable energy. Read more about it here: <https://secure.foodandwaterwatch.org/act/md-community-choice-aggregation>.

Feb. 18 Update: Hearing was scheduled for this date.

! Take Action: Continue to support this key piece of climate related legislation here: [Support Community Choice Energy](#).

4. **Transit Safety and Investment Act:** This bill provides the funding for the MTA transit system that has the most breakdowns of any transit system in America. Read more about it here: <https://savemdtransit.org/>.

Feb 3 Update: Committee hearing was held on this date.

! Take Action: [Save Maryland Transit](#).

Below are three important environmental justice bills under consideration this year. You can learn more about and quickly support them by clicking on the links below:

1. [Help Low-income Families Reduce Energy Costs](#): This bill would help families take advantage of the emPOWER program to weatherize their homes and reduce their energy costs. [Read more here](#).
2. [Support Food & Farm Worker Protection Acts](#): These are 4 different bills that provide worker protections for food and farm workers, including paid sick leave, personal protective gear and sanitation, housing standards, and health and safety protections. [Read more here](#).



## Volunteer Spotlight

### Carolyn Savadkin



Carolyn Savadkin and her husband Allen came to UUCSS from Paint Branch UUC in Fall 1966. They were looking for a church that was socially active--willing to preach and work against both the Vietnam War and racism. On the day they signed the Membership Book, Fred Cappuccino was in the pulpit and announced he was leaving. Despite this inauspicious start, Carolyn has been with us through every minister except the first, David MacPherson.

Carolyn has worked in a number of roles over the 50 plus years she's been a member. She's been on the board three times, worked with her late husband on the social action committee, and was on the ministerial search committee that brought Rev. Elizabeth Lerner Maclay to UUCSS. Carolyn taught RE when her children were young, helped organize a Women's retreat, tutored Spanish, and was on the Worship Committee multiple times, including most of the time from 1995 to the present. Right now, she splits time between the Worship Committee and the Racial Justice Task Force. She believes deeply in antiracism work and wants us to adopt the 8th Principle.

It's hard to capture Carolyn with a list of achievements. There is her sense of humor, a smile always on the edge of peeking out, and deep and profound optimism. So, when asked if she had some words for the congregation, it was simply, "We've had really hard times before and we've always managed to pull ourselves together and go forward." And so with her help and the help of a lot of others, we shall.

## Charity of the Month

### Montgomery County Renters Alliance

The Montgomery County Renters Alliance is the first and only regional nonprofit dedicated exclusively to renter outreach, organizing, education and advocacy. Since its founding in 2010, it has built an alliance of more than 30 nonprofit, civic, religious, labor organizations, and tenants associations, as well as thousands of renters. It is also the leading co-founder of Renters United Maryland, a coalition of more than 25 statewide organizations that work to advance renter protection legislation in the Maryland General Assembly, and to defend against legislation hostile to renters. Every day the Renters Alliance, staff and volunteers, work with renters seeking assistance to resolve issues such as poor building maintenance, mold and vermin infestations, broken appliances, and abusive, irresponsible and threatening landlords seeking to retaliate against tenants for seeking promised or required services, or their rights to organize. The Renters Alliance works collaboratively with the county and state government to advocate for renters, as well as to urge improvements in the way governments protect stable, quality, affordable homes.

# ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

## 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)

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

FIRST CLASS

**Staff and  
Board President**

**Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt**  
Minister  
[minister@uucss.org](mailto:minister@uucss.org)

**Michael Holmes**  
Music Director  
[musicdirector@uucss.org](mailto:musicdirector@uucss.org)

**Marsha Thrall**  
Interim Director of  
Religious Education  
[idreuucss@gmail.com](mailto:idreuucss@gmail.com)

**Lindsay Cowett**  
Religious Education  
[REassistant@uucss.org](mailto:REassistant@uucss.org)

Church Administrator  
[administrator@uucss.org](mailto:administrator@uucss.org)

**Carl Miller**  
Board President  
[president@uucss.org](mailto:president@uucss.org)

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.**