

June 2021

Uniter



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING
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New Layout Co-Editor Needed for Uniter!

We need a new co-editor for next year's Uniter, which is monthly from August through May.

Lynn will continue to gather and edit articles, but Becca and family are moving to British Columbia, so we need someone to take her place doing the layout.

What would the layout co-editor do? Currently, Becca uses a Word template to format each edition, designs a monthly Facebook post, and does a final copy edit. There's plenty of room to follow the current format or flex your creative muscles!!

Training is included -- please volunteer NOW to help ensure a smooth transition. Email Uniter@UUCSS.org.

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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
with your name and phone number to be connected with a volunteer who can help.

June 5, 2-5pm: In-Person Flower Communion

Before we gather for our virtual Flower Communion service on Sunday June 13 everyone is invited to sign up for a 20-minute time slot and join Rev. Kristin for a simple in-person ceremony. She will have a table set up in the church parking lot with vases where everyone can place the flower they've brought and seeds for everyone to take home to plant flowers to remind us of UUCSS all summer long. The link to sign up will be in a future all-church email. Hope to see you there!

June 6: Bridging Sunday, Led by Marsha Thrall, Interim Director of Religious Education

Join us for this beloved annual service where we reflect on the many thresholds of our lives and celebrate our youth bridging toward adulthood.

June 13: Flower Communion, Rev. Kristin Schmidt

This week in worship we celebrate the challenge and blessing of being part of the bouquet of community. Watch your all-church email for a sign-up link and bring a flower to church on Saturday, June 5th. You'll receive seeds to take home and grow flowers to remind you of UUCSS all summer long. The Annual Meeting will be held on Zoom immediately after this service.

June 20: Pride Service, Led by the Rainbow Alliance

Have you ever wished you could go back to your younger self and tell them the life lessons you know now that you wished you had then? In this service, the Rainbow Alliance will be reading from a letter by a queer author doing just that, and taking from it lessons on identity and acceptance.

June 27: UUA GA Sunday Morning Worship, Speakers include Rev. Jen Crow, Rev. Arif Mamdani, Julica Hermann de la Fuente, Karen Hutt, and Lauren Wyeth

This week we join congregations around the world for the largest annual gathering of UUs in worship. A UUCSS watch party will begin at 11:30 on Zoom, and at Noon we'll log onto General Assembly worship service from our own computers.

INSPIRE

Minister's Column by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt



Our worship theme for June is “play” and I imagine most of us are eager for more relaxed schedules and vacations this summer. I’m looking forward to taking July off to spend some much-needed time at the beach and handle some house projects that have been piling up. The shift to summer and the change it brings for many of us is one kind of threshold, but this time of year is filled with others. This is a season of graduations and retirements, and here at UUCSS it’s a month of Bridging Sunday, Flower Communion, and Annual Meeting.

These milestones and celebrations remind me each year how much we are defined by community. They remind me of those who love and nurtured us into being, pass on wisdom and tradition to us, lead and govern on our behalf, create and innovate, those whom we love and who will live on even after we are gone. They also remind me of the values that shape our communities, especially this congregation. They remind me that for every graduation there are children who won’t graduate without society making a lot of change, for every retirement there are people who will never enjoy that privilege, and for every Flower Communion there are people who have yet to find what our community has to offer. Our congregation is a place to celebrate life’s joys and blessings, and where we learn to center on those with the deepest need and vulnerability so we can help make a world where everyone can share in life’s abundance.

This practice of placing needs and safety at the center of our concern is what guided us to close our church doors and open our Zoom meeting spaces and virtual sanctuary. Now that many have been vaccinated, it is guiding our careful decisions about church policy. Many of us with health conditions that make us more vulnerable to this virus, those of us who can’t be vaccinated for a medical reason, and those with children under 12 carry more anxiety right now than others. It is still possible for vaccinated people to transmit the virus to those who are not yet vaccinated. While the CDC has given very good news to those who are vaccinated, everyone who can’t get vaccinated has been largely left out of that joy. And as your minister, it is my job to make sure they are not also left out of the joy of this community.

In a culture that prizes individual freedom, those with the privilege of health and vaccine eligibility have a responsibility to do what we can to make sure everyone else is included. I’m looking forward to being in person on Sat., June 5th for our extended Flower Communion, on Sat., June 12 for the farewell drive-thru, and on most Sunday afternoons for Vespers. But as we expand in-person events I want to be very clear that until further notice we will continue to require everyone to wear a mask at all church events. Because those who can’t get vaccinated or who have lost a loved one to this virus should not have to explain why they aren’t comfortable participating in a gathering without masks. As UUs we are called to place not the vaccine-privileged but those without that privilege at the center of our concern, our policies, and our practices.

I hope all of you enjoy the celebrations of this season, that you get some time this summer to play and relax and maybe even try something new. And I hope you do it all safely, and with the well-being of those with the greatest need among us at the center of your concern.

Message From Carl Miller, Board President



Well, we are coming to the end of the 2020-2021 church year. We had the Fellowship Dinner (fun!!) in mid-May, and are now gearing up for the Annual Meeting (work!!) in mid-June. The board officially makes its transition into a new church year on July 1st.

It has been an honor and a challenge to serve as board president this year. Sometimes the work of the board is methodical and goal-oriented, but much of the time—this year especially—it is about reacting to outside circumstances, and going with the flow as skillfully and mindfully as we can. Fortunately, we had a great team. I've benefited from the work of organizers at UU congregations for many years, and it was nice to have this chance to give something back.

I am pleased (ecstatic, in fact!!) to say that the board has elected **Maggie Hayes** as president for the year 2021-2022. Maggie has been deeply engaged with UUCSS for a long time. When Andrea and I first came to UUCSS in 2016, she was one of the first people who connected with us and got us involved in volunteer activities. With fresh leadership, an already-successful Annual Budget Drive, and reopening plans under discussion, 2021-2022 is going to be a great year.

Lately, in the midst of the interconnected forms of "work" that we all do (at UUCSS and elsewhere) I've had the chance to wonder: what if we actually got everything we were striving for? What would we do then? What if, for example, we actually cured all the infectious diseases? What if we successfully automated all maintenance work and simply didn't have to do any more? What if we settled all the political conflicts (or at least, if all the "right" people won)? What would society actually look like after all of that?

I don't know any definite answers, but I would guess that in this hypothetical endpoint, we'd all just be doing the activities whose values are endlessly renewable—things like music, art, philosophy, fellowship. Everyone would freely choose their own forms of work and play. Our choices would be guided by community feelings, but based on our own internal compass rather than any reaction to external circumstances. Basically, it would be a large-scale version of the experience of a spiritual community (like UUCSS) when things are at their best.

I want to say thanks to everyone for hanging in there this year. See you all again—for real—some day soon.

What is something that you are striving for, and how would life be different if it were achieved? 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 is difficult to believe that this is the last contribution to the Uniter that I will write as your Interim Director of Religious Education, here at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring.

I have spent nearly two years with you, with more than half of that time in isolation due to the COVID-19 crisis.

In the time that I've spent with you, I have learned so much. From the joy and overflowing love that the tiniest UU's bring with them to each RE session, and the deeply inquisitive curiosity that our 2nd thru 4th graders possess, the philosophical brilliance and deep social conscience of your middle school youth, the bravery of our Coming of Age group in the face of a new thing, and finally, the commitment to community that members of YRUU bring to this congregational space and beyond, my time with you has been filled with an abundance of blessings that bring joy to my heart; a joy that I will be carrying with me into my next adventure.

Speaking of new adventures, I'm excited to announce that my next adventure will take me to the Unitarian Universalist Society, located in Coralville, Iowa. At UUS, I will be serving as the settled Director of Lifespan Religious Education; a position that I am excited for, in a multitude of ways. And I will be taking with me an abundance of knowledge and love that I have gained during my time at UUCSS.

As my final task at UUCSS, I am hoping to grow the foundation of volunteers committed to Religious Education here within your congregation, in preparation for your next settled Religious Education professional. If you'd like to have a conversation about how you could best fit within this meaningful piece that is UUCSS, please contact me by June 21 at IDREUUCSS@gmail.com.

As the parents, caretakers, and adult community members who have helped to cultivate the children and youth at UUCSS into wonderful tiny (and not so tiny) humans, you have so much to be proud of. I am grateful to each and every one of you for opening up your community, and hearts, during my time with you.



CONNECT



EVENTS

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

June 5, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. Church Grounds Cleanup.

June 5, 2:00 - 5:00pm. In-Person Flower Communion.

June 7, 7:30 - 10:00 pm. Online Men's Group.

June 10, 7:30 pm. Masterworks of Music: David Uffelman will be talking about 50s R&B Roots and their influence on later music. <https://zoom.us/j/96529557241?pwd=OXFFVVJSNzdzTFZBcGxqcUwrNGNodz09>

June 11, 8:00 pm. Ladies Night Out. Currently, a Zoom chat for UUCSS women interested in connecting with other UUCSS women. To join the group and receive announcements, subscribe to the the church's UUCSS | Ladies-Night-Out listserv, which is a subgroup of the main UUCSS groups.io listserv.

June 14, 7:30 - 10:00 pm. Online Men's Group.

June 21, 7:30 - 10:00 pm. Online Men's Group.

June 27, 7:00 pm. Men's Book Group. We are reading *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* by Dinaw Mengestu. A haunting and powerful first novel that views the streets of Washington, D.C. and Addis Ababa through the eyes of Sepha who, seventeen years ago, fled Ethiopia during the Revolution, and now runs a failing convenience store in a poor African-American neighborhood in D.C. If you are interested in joining the discussion, contact Richard Lorr (rlorr4@gmail.com) to get the Zoom link, and come to the next meeting.

June 28, 7:30 - 10:00 pm. Online Men's Group.

June 28, 7:30 - 9:30 pm. Women's Book Group—*Behind the Scenes at the Museum* by Kate Atkinson. 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) for further details and the Zoom link.

Annual Congregational Meeting—June 13

Mark your calendars for the annual congregational meeting on Sunday, June 13, beginning shortly after the service on Zoom. An ASL interpreter will be available.

We will vote on:

- Budget for fiscal year 2021-2022
- Resolution to adopt the 8th principle (There is information about the resolution to adopt the 8th principle in this newsletter.)
- New Board members
- New Leadership Development Committee members.

Members who have made a financial contribution within the last 15 months are eligible to vote.

The Leadership Development Committee put forward the following slate for new Board and new Leadership Development Committee members:

- Susannah Numa (Board Secretary, to replace Emily L. Harris)
- Katie Kirk Haag (At-Large Board Member, to replace Ken Iobst)
- Doneby Smith (At-Large Board Member, continuing)
- Emily L. Harris (VP for Personnel, to replace Stephanie McConachie)
- Jan Kretz (Leadership Development Committee)
- Steven Hirsch (Leadership Development Committee)

Look for the complete agenda, supporting materials, and the Zoom link in future emails.

Questions? Contact the Board Secretary: boardsecretary@uucss.org

Hope to see you there!

Committee Updates

Hybrid Ministry Task Force, Part II

The May Uniter introduced our Hybrid Ministry Task Force and outlined our safety precautions and ideas for moving Sunday services from pre-recorded broadcasts to a combination of live and online. In September and October, with safety measures in place, the Worship Team plans to include a few church members for services and coffee hour onsite. Video cameras will provide a live feed to most of the congregation in their homes. Parts of the current service will remain: given Covid concerns, the choir, for example, will continue to videotape their music, which will be broadcast as before and appear on a TV monitor in the sanctuary.

Today's FAQ's will focus primarily on the goals for our Hybrid Ministry as articulated and discussed by Rev. Kristin, the Board of Trustees, the Task Force, and the relevant church committees. At this point, it's fair to say that we have a general vision for what our hybrid ministry at UUCSS might become, but the path to get there will involve playful exploration, inevitable setbacks, and new discoveries. As before, if you wish to offer feedback on our goals and process as we move into hybrid services together, please contact Bruce McConachie, at worshipchair@uucss.org. Or talk with other members on the Task Force, which includes Tina Borrer, Rob Dahlstrom, Michael Holmes, Steve Leete, Nadine Raley, Jacob Ryder, and Kandra Strauss-Riggs.

With COVID restrictions easing, why don't we push to get all UUCSS members vaccinated and completely return to live services?

First, it's likely that COVID will be with us for a long time and there may be some UUCSS members who cannot be vaccinated. Second, and just as important, we are now pretty good at broadcasting our services and there are parts of our ministry that may work better online. In feedback we've gotten so far from the congregation, many people like the intimacy that Rev Kristin and others have been able to establish online and the ease children have for seeing pictures during storytelling. Further, some parts of the service could not be done if everything were live. Think of the recordings we have enjoyed with kids in their homes and the mix of faces and voices with Miako's ASL interpretation in the middle of a video surrounded by choir members. At the end of June, the Task Force will ask the congregation which parts of our broadcast services during the past year have worked well and what they would like to see continued when we combine live and live-stream services.

What are some of the goals we want to accomplish by moving to hybrid services?

There are several. First, Rev Kristin has spoken about finding better ways to integrate religious education, adult RE, worship services, and coffee hour on Sunday mornings. If we think about the 10 am to 12:30 pm block as a time, literally, "for all ages" and play with online as well as live access for these activities, many options open up, giving families, teachers, and others more flexibility in planning.

Also, many of us want to make UUCSS a more inclusive and welcoming congregation—racially, spiritually, and in terms of minority rights. This will require several initiatives, of course. But if we have a live-stream presence on Sunday mornings, first-time visitors can check us out online, without getting all dressed up, driving over to attend church, and worrying (unnecessarily) that they may be left sitting alone during the service.

What about Deaf Access?

Our mix of live and live-stream will allow for a better integration of ASL interpretation into our services. Now, as you know, our interpreters spend much of their time in a separate ASL chat room. That will change when we broadcast from the sanctuary. In addition, the church is pursuing grant money to substantially expand the number of potential congregants asking for ASL. Our online broadcasts will enable us to reach many more hearing-impaired people than we are doing at present.

Racial Justice Task Force

By Phyllis Ryder

We invite you to vote Yes! for the Resolution to Adopt the 8th Principle.

The Resolution to Adopt the 8th Principle is up for a vote at our Congregational Meeting on June 13. Some people have asked what it means to adopt the 8th Principle. If you vote yes, what, exactly, are you agreeing to DO? Is there a list of actions you'll be required to take? Does the 8P Task Force have a plan for how to "dismantle racism and other oppressions"?

When I first attended Jubilee—a three-day workshop that focuses on racism within the country, our UU Congregations, and ourselves—the most important thing I heard was that we were going to start by learning how to BE, and then we would know what to DO. Learning about how racism has been baked into the fabric of our nation, into the daily moments of our lives, required some deep introspection and honesty. Most of all, it has taken a commitment to keep at it: learning how to BE antiracist is a life-long journey. As Ibram Kendi has said, "'Racist' and 'antiracist' are like peelable name tags that are placed and replaced based on what someone is doing or not doing, supporting or expressing in each moment. They are not permanent tattoos. . . Like fighting an addiction, being antiracist requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination." (How to Be an AntiRacist p. 23).

In moments when I am able to activate this new, critical lens, I have seen the actions I can take—when to push back in a conversation with a friend, how to revise my lesson plans, whether to adjust the structure of a church meeting. I ask myself: Whose perspectives have I sought out? How transparent have I been about my decisions? When am I falling back on habits without examining their potential impact?

Saying yes to the 8th Principle means that you, too, commit to the work of "building a diverse, multicultural Beloved Community" and taking "actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions." You agree to join with others to critically examine "ourselves and our institutions." You agree that this work is necessary to "journey toward spiritual wholeness." You agree to hold yourself and each other and our Congregation accountable to carry out this work.

If you'd like to read the 8th Principle, the Resolution, or information about how we'll conduct the vote, please see the 8P page on the UUCSS website <https://uucss.org/the-8th-principle/>.

You can also reach the Racial Justice Task Force at RacialJusticeTaskForce@uucss.org or by coming to any of the 8P Breakout rooms in coffee hour, which we'll have every Sunday until the vote.

UUCSS Gardening news

Garden Cleanup Crew—next clean up June 5 between 9 am-1 pm

The monthly garden cleanup crew is helping to maintain and beautify the grounds around the church. We appreciate Jean Alexander's work to carry on Daisy Grubb's initial gardening work, by safeguarding the landscape records. Jean has become our institutional memory for keeping our grounds well maintained. Weed warrior Bob McGaughy is a pro at removing invasive weeds and vines around trees. Teresa Meeks, Doneby Smith, Jean Alexander, Maureen Malloy, Stephanie McConachie, Deb Weiner, Laura Nelson, Kathryn Leete, Catherine & Dale Stephens, Deborah Thornton, Deborah & Finn Sorrenson, & Rick Ehrenreich are awesome at weed and vine removal from along the paths, among the ivy, and on the hillside behind the community building. Steve Leete, Jimmy Schreiber, Brian Livelsberger, Bruce McConachie, Jim Paolitti, John Henderson, Erik Leaver, Brian Hopkins, Mark McBride & Ben Needle take on weeding, pulling vines, trimming bushes & trees, hauling dirt and mulch, weed whacking, mowing, leveling the slate path, and much more. Jim Street has all the home improvement gadgets and is frequently seen removing dead or diseased trees, mowing, or weed whacking. In addition to attending the monthly clean ups, Brian Beard & Linda Barrett help plan and advertise the events.

If you'd like to be part of the Garden Cleanup Crew, please contact Linda Barrett (limabean290@gmail.com)

UUCSS Garden Group

(Jean Alexander, Brian Beard, Teresa Meeks, Bob McGaughy, Robyn Moore Lasky, Linda Barrett, Maureen Malloy)

In January 2020, a group of UUCSSer's were asked to review the Daisy Grubbs era history of the gardens and review the current state of our church grounds. Daisy had a great overall plan for the garden and asked many members to take sections of the grounds to maintain. Some of the trees, shrubs, and statuary were placed as memorials to past UUCSS members.

Over 30 years, some areas have been well maintained while others are more difficult to access and have gone weedy and wild. The monthly garden cleanup crew is working diligently to maintain the areas close to the front of the sanctuary, admin, and community hall. But there is much more work to do.

After our review of the garden history and current state of the church landscape, the group has identified a few things that will need to be addressed in the near future.

- Landscape plan—a comprehensive plan to address removal of invasive weeds, vines & shrubs as well as a plan for a mostly native (non-invasive) garden environment
- Water management plan—a comprehensive plan to ensure water flows around buildings in a controlled manner, and water is trapped for use by plants (Rainscape or conservation garden)
- Handicap accessible emergency exits—behind sanctuary pulpit to NH and exits from community hall
- Enclose dumpster area (more visually appealing/less neighbor trash)

Volunteer Spotlight

Jamie Jorgensen



Jamie Jorgensen was happily Mormon for most of the first forty years of his life. He remembers with affection the structure and community that the church gave him with special fondness for his year and a half doing missionary work in Brazil. Over time, differences began to build up. Jamie leans non-theistic and socially liberal, neither of which are standard Mormon doctrine. While Jamie taught Sunday School for LDS pre-K, he moved his son into a non-Mormon Cub Scout troop. It was there that he met Kai's parents, Corita and Andrea Waters. Corita and Andrea talked about UUCSS and Jamie came to believe that any church that they attended was probably a good place to be. The transition was actually pretty easy as the services were very similar, and the sermons reflected his values.

It is an axiom of the Mormon church that you do not volunteer for service, you are assigned jobs. That was a bit of a culture shock, but within a year he found himself teaching our middle schoolers. He appreciates how they have their own ideas and strong opinions that make teaching both challenging and interesting. Art is one of his avocations and working on art projects with the youth has been a rewarding experience. When asked about his experience Jamie said, "I'm grateful to be part of the congregation and to be welcomed here by everyone. I'm glad what I contributed has been appreciated." This is a common thread among our volunteers, responding to the love and appreciation that the congregation shows.

Community Partner of the Month

Carpe Diem

Carpe Diem Arts is our Community Partner for June. The general theme for UUCSS worship services in June is "play." Accordingly, our service on Sunday, June 20th will include a special offering for this Silver Spring nonprofit educational and community-building arts organization. Carpe Diem has special ties with UUCSS; Michael Holmes has worked with them and many of our families have participated in their programs.

According to its website, Carpe Diem—the Latin phrase means "seize the day"—aims to "engage communities across generations and cultures through the visual, literary, and performance arts." With values that embrace "social justice, diversity, inclusion, and joy," Carpe Diem primarily provides arts' engagement opportunities for children and their families. Although the pandemic forced the organization to postpone some of its work, their current and upcoming activities include after-school programs, summer camps, and continuing instruction in a range of arts. Before the pandemic, Carpe Diem Arts reached roughly 6,000 people per year, including many DC children on low-income scholarships.

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 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

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FIRST CLASS

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

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.

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to UUCSS, Attention: Collector.