

May 2022

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

In this Issue...

WORSHIP SERVICES

INSPIRE

[Minister's Column by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt](#)
[Message From Maggie Hayes, Board President](#)

LEARN

[Message From Rev. Dr. Laura Solomon](#)
[Assistant Minister of Spiritual Growth](#)
[Sunday RE Schedule for Children and Youth](#)
[Children and Youth RE Activity](#)
[Adult RE](#)
[Intergenerational Activity](#)
[UUCSS History: UUCSS, Civil Rights, and Rev. Fred Cappuccino—Part II](#)

CONNECT

[Events](#)
[Pathways to Membership Class](#)
[Committee Updates](#)
[Racial Justice Task Force](#)
[Join us for Monthly Church Workdays](#)
[Member Spotlight: Steve Leete](#)

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

[Staff Hours and Contact Information](#)

WORSHIP SERVICES

In-Person Worship Resumes!

COVID rates have subsided in our area, and we are excited to welcome the congregation back at 40% capacity in the sanctuary for worship on Sunday mornings, having begun on Sunday, February 27! Worship will continue to be offered virtually as well, though the transition to live worship in the Sanctuary means services will again be streamed via Zoom rather than YouTube. Please see upcoming all-church emails for service links and more details.

Beginning on Sunday, March 6, Religious Education will resume in-person classes on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Children will begin 1st and 3rd Sundays in the Sanctuary for the first third of worship after which they will be sent to their classrooms. It will be so wonderful to be together in worship as a multigenerational community again!

While we will not be offering childcare until children under 5 can be vaccinated, families with young children are always welcome in the Sanctuary. We will be adding some rocking chairs and a small play area in the Sanctuary for grown-ups and young children who may need more freedom of movement. We have also recently installed a flatscreen TV in the Dolan Lounge (in the Administrative Building) where grown-ups with young children who wish to be on campus but in a space with fewer people can watch the service.

May 1: The Beauty of Beltane Lora Powell-Haney

It's May, the merry month of May! Our Unitarian Universalist living tradition invites us to explore: "Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature." Guest preacher Lora Powell-Haney will lead a service that includes a ritual celebrating this second blossoming of Spring and renewed, abundant growth.

About Lora: Lora Powell-Haney served for nine years as Director of Religious Education (DRE) at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick (UUCF). She graduated from Meadville Lombard Theological School in May 2020 with a Master of Divinity; her study included a ministerial internship at Towson Unitarian Universalist Church in Lutherville, MD, and a chaplain residency in Hagerstown, MD. She currently serves as part-time interim religious education coordinator for the UU Congregation of Wyoming Valley, PA, and as an itinerant preacher. Lora loves reading, drinking tea, creating stories, and standing barefoot on the earth, especially in springtime.

May 8: Arise, All Who Have Hearts Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Join us this Sunday as we remember the origins of Mother's Day and pray for the most beautiful gift of all: peace for all parents and children, everywhere.

May 15: Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Inspired by Star Trek, this week in worship we go beyond the tyranny of conventional beauty standards and into the ways uniqueness gives shape to the deeply beautiful

May 24: Taking Up Space Rainbow Alliance with Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

So much of what's harmful in our society is rooted in assumptions about how much of which spaces are appropriate for people to occupy. In this service we push back against confining notions of what's appropriate and explore how liberation invites us to show up in new and different spaces.

May 29: Memorial Day Rev. Ashley Burzcak

UUCSS Community Minister Rev. Ashley Burzcak contemplates ways to build peace as we remember the losses of war.

INSPIRE

Minister's Column by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt



Our worship theme for the month of May is “nurturing beauty” which seems right on cue as the beauty of springtime unfolds around us. Though I must say the last two years I’ve related more to beauty as something that nurtures me rather than the other way around. Desperate for exercise and escape from the house, I did more daily hiking and walking during the pandemic than ever before. The movement was good for my body, but the beauty of nature and the changes brought on by the seasons were what kept me strapping on my walking shoes. And while I’ve always loved fresh flowers, the last two years we got some nearly every week to help bring some beauty and color into lives that felt monotonous

and gray.

Beauty nurtures us in profound ways, especially through hard times. But as Mandy Hale writes, “There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life beautiful for others.” Whether through architecture, music, art, cooking, gardening, fashion, or any number of other creative arts, we nurture one another and the world through the beauty we help to bring forth.

Our worship services this month are explorations of the different ways we nurture beauty, and the ways that shapes our world. Guest preacher Lora Powell-Haney starts us off with a service all about the beauty of Beltane; I’ll preach about the origins of Mother’s Day and the next week about “infinite diversity in infinite combinations,” the Vulcan ideal of beauty from the Star Trek series. The Rainbow Alliance will lead the service on the 22nd, and Rev. Ashley Burczak will preach the final Sunday.

Though this congregation isn’t perfect, though this year has had its share of challenges, the community we co-create and the values we work for together are beautiful in a way that matters. It’s my deep privilege to be part of nurturing the beauty in this community, work I’m glad to be entering my third year of doing with all of you.

Message From Maggie Hayes, Board President



Confession: I have found writing these monthly messages for the Uniter a bit challenging. For the first eight I've written, I've managed to find topics—from an experience I've had at church, something I've read, a Board decision, or the worship theme for the coming month. From the little feedback I've received, I've wondered whether anyone is actually reading these dispatches I've labored over. I'm not worried about my final message for June; I'll use it to reflect on the past three years I've served on the Board and express my gratitude to so very many of you. But this past week, I hadn't been able to come up with any ideas for the May issue. This morning, Easter Sunday and coincidentally my deadline for the submission, I went to church with hopes of inspiration. And there it was!

The Sanctuary was almost overflowing with members, friends, and lots of children—more than 100 in all. (Those of you watching from home might not have had that impression, since many in the crowd sat in the back, beyond range of the cameras.) Several visitors joined us. The choir was there full-force, processing down the aisle and bringing us wonderful music. We rang bells and waved pastel flags every time the word “Alleluia” was heard. The children found and opened huge colored eggs that held elements of the Easter story for Rev. Laura's Time for All Ages. And Rev. Kristin delivered an amazing sermon, proposing a startling metaphor for the Spirit of Easter—compost—because each “takes the stuff of death, decay, and stink and out of it brings the stuff of beauty, of joy, of new life.” Hearing her words from just a few yards away was quite powerful. What I experienced this morning was the enhanced energy, fellowship, and spirituality that a larger, in-person crowd provides. Although I couldn't attend our most recent Christmas Eve service, I've heard it described in the same way.

Of course. I support our new hybrid way of “doing church,” which allows people to join us from far-away places or from their homes nearby. There are plenty of good reasons besides distance to Zoom on Sunday mornings: illness or injury, bad weather, caring for family members, lingering concern about contagion, for example. I certainly don't want to criticize anyone who makes that choice. But I've suspected, and actually heard people say, that our church-going habits have changed over the past two years. It's always difficult to forge new habits, especially when the new ones require a little more effort than the old ones.

My hope this Easter is that more and more of us will experience the joy of in-person worship with many others in our Beloved Community.

LEARN

Message From Rev. Dr. Laura Solomon Assistant Minister of Spiritual Growth



They say that April showers bring May flowers...and let's hope that's true! I'm ready for some outdoor adventures in the near future.

I'm looking forward to a number of May RE-connecting events with you in the coming weeks—please see below for more information! I'm particularly excited to build some fairy houses together on campus—I've checked several books out from the local library for inspiration. You might enjoy taking a look at them, too!

I've long been in love with fairies and magic. My mother recently found a t-shirt I had colored with fabric pens when I was young covered in fairies. I had written on the back "If you see a fairy, call [my childhood phone number]. Please describe."

I still love the fantasy and wonder of fairies and magic: it helps me remain in touch with that which is fun and fantastical and beyond belief. Reading and engaging in fantasy and play helps deepen my theology: it opens me to new beliefs and worlds I previously could not have imagined.

How will you engage with fun and fantasy this month? I hope you'll join us so we can do it together!

Sunday RE Schedule for Children and Youth

May 1: In-person RE

May 8: Virtual RE

May 15: In-person RE

May 22: Virtual RE

May 29: In-person RE

Children and Youth RE Activity

May 7: 1-3 pm *RE-connecting to Each Other: Kid Edition!*

Park day! Join us at Wheaton Regional Park for playground time, snacks, and fellowship among parents and kids alike!

Adult RE

May 14 10-11:30 am at UUCSS or on Zoom *RE-connecting to Spirit: Poetry Share*

Do you have a favorite poem? Have you read a poem recently that moved you, or written a poem that begs to be shared? Many of us connect to ourselves and our spirituality through words we read or write. Let's share them with each other! Bring your favorite poem—your own or someone else's—to share and reflect on.

Intergenerational Activity

May 15: 1:30-3:30 pm *RE-connecting to Magic: Fairy House Building!*

"All you need is faith, trust, and a little bit of pixie dust!" Join us at UUCSS to create fairy houses! Been wondering what to do with that pinecone or acorn collection, or the seashell pile from last summer? Bring your natural materials and we will create homes for the fairies to move into!

MAY AND JUNE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH!

May 1	May 8	May 15	May 22	May 29	June
In-person Children's chapel Middle school YRUU	Virtual grade-based programs	In-person Art Assembly Middle school YRUU	Virtual grade-based programs	Memorial day weekend: no religious education	June 5th: In-person RE (Last day of RE!) June 12th: Multigenerational Worship - Flower Communion

Don't forget! Join us on May 7th at Wheaton Regional Park, and May 15th at UUCSS for a fun fairy house making event!

UUCSS History: UUCSS, Civil Rights, and Rev. Fred Cappuccino—Part II

In observance of the 70th anniversary of the founding of UUCSS, Jo Paoletti is updating the history series originally published in the Unitarian in 2017 and 2018.

About 500 Unitarian Universalists went to Selma. Among them were two members of our congregation: the late Sammy Schneztler and our then-minister, the Rev. Fred Cappuccino. In 2018, I had the privilege of interviewing Rev. Cappuccino from his home in Canada.

His journey to Selma began with disturbing news from a local UU ministerial colleague. Their friend Jim Reeb had been attacked in Selma and was critically—probably mortally—wounded. Within 24 hours, they were on their way to Alabama, remembering Jim as they last saw him—always laughing and full of vitality.

I'll tell the rest of the story in Rev. Cappuccino's own words.

When I first went there, I was intimidated because it was a three-square-block area, and they had the whole thing encircled by police cars...all parked bumper to bumper and you had to crawl over them to get in there. Another minister said, "Fred, don't worry. We're all safe now because of what they did to James Reeb." I didn't actually give much credence to that, but that's how he felt. It helped a little.

Every morning we'd set out from one of the churches and there would be four or five people across and march up to where there was a line of police waiting. Twenty feet back, we'd stop. Somebody would bring out a soapbox and one of the ministers would be up on the soapbox preaching Christian nonviolence. We would be exhorted not to let hatred take over, but we must conquer hatred in ourselves. It went on and on like that. For the first few days, with a charged feeling in the air, I didn't feel much like eating or sleeping. I slept two hours the first night and one hour the second night.

Between the sermons, there was singing, with four part harmony, it was so beautiful...saying we love our opponents, we love Sheriff Clark, we love Chief Baker, we love Governor Wallace. I was crying and laughing the whole five days. It was exhilarating.

On Thursday, when Jim's death was announced, being his friend, I was asked to offer the prayer. I don't usually pray, but it was a distinct honor to be on the soapbox and pray at that time. I was satisfied when I finished that I did okay, but I don't have any idea what I said.

Rev. Cappuccino remembers Selma as the experience that, for him, transformed Gandhi's idea of nonviolent confrontation from a theory to a real force of persuasion. He said, "Gandhi's concept of God was not a personal being in the traditional sense. He believed that there is a power in truth, and in love. This is the highest reality, and this is what Gandhi called God. I had never experienced that power before Selma. Certainly some power was on our side in Selma the police did not have."

"I'm not easily moved to tears," he continued, "but down there, many times something would occur and I would break down and cry, not for danger to myself, but by a recognition of overflowing human nobility, sensing the courage of the people who lived in Selma. After all, we brave fellows who came down from somewhere else would return to our secure homes; these people would have to face the bigots."

When he returned to Maryland, Rev. Cappuccino shared his experience with our congregation.

He remembers, "We laughed and wept together, and sang in harmony as never before."

CONNECT

Events

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

May 1. Deadline for lay-led summer worship sermon proposals.

May 7, 9:30 am-12pm. Pathways to Membership Class. (See below)

May 7, 1-3 pm. RE-connecting to Each Other: Kid Edition! Wheaton Regional Park. (See LEARN this issue.)

May 14, 10-11:30 am. At UUCSS or on Zoom. RE-connecting to Spirit: Poetry share for adults (see LEARN in this issue).

May 15, 1:30-3:30 pm. Intergenerational RE-connecting to Magic: Fairy House Building! (see LEARN in this issue).

May 15, 7 pm. Men's Book Group. We are reading *She*, subtitled *A History of Adventure*, an 1887 novel by the English writer H. Rider Haggard, If you are interested in joining the discussion, let Richard Lorr know (rlorr4@gmail.com), get the book, and join us on Zoom with the link or come to an in-person meeting, depending on what the group decides.

May 28, 9 am-12pm. Church Workday (See Committee Updates)

May 30, 7:30 pm. Women's Book Group. We are reading *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernadine Evaristo. Interested readers are welcome without a long-term obligation. Contact: dweiner04@gmail.com.

Pathways to Membership Class

May 7, 9:30 am - Noon

Are you interested in learning about the privileges and responsibilities of membership at UUCSS? Would you like to do a deeper dive into the history of Unitarian Universalism and the particular history of UUCSS? Perhaps you'd like to learn more about what UUCSS has to offer and what you may have to offer in return. The Membership Committee and Reverend Kristin Grassel Schmidt will be hosting our first in-person Pathways class in two years on campus in the Dolan Lounge, brunch included! Pathways is an opportunity to learn, ask questions, share histories, and make connections. We hope you'll consider joining us. For more information or if you're interested in attending, please contact Mary Beth Lerner at membership@uucss.org.

Committee Updates

Racial Justice Task Force

By Jake Ryder

Where does the time go? I could've sworn 2022 just started, but somehow it's already May? Dear reader, let's revisit what all happened last month, as much for my sake as for yours.

The great news is that Ketanji Brown Jackson was confirmed by the Senate to become the next Justice of the Supreme Court! She's made headlines for being the first black woman to serve at the highest tier of our judicial branch, and notable among her many achievements is her time as a federal public defender - unique amongst the current prosecutor-laden court. We hope that she can bring her perspective to the journey towards justice for many years to come.

More good news: the UUA Common Read is starting soon! The 2022 selection is *Defund Fear: Safety Without Policing, Prisons, and Punishment* by Zach Morris. The role of police (or lack thereof) has been a source of fiery debate since long before the protests of 2020, but it can still be difficult to imagine a society without police. We welcome you to join us (and congregations all across the nation) in exploring ways we can reinvest in community instead. *Defund Fear* is available from Beacon Press, and the RJTF has a few copies and book funds available too! In the weeks to come, we'll announce and host discussion groups to deeply engage with these issues. See you there!

Of course, it wasn't all good news. We've seen another wave of anti-transgender legislation introduced for 2022 sessions in many states, in spite of an overwhelming lack of public support and with disregard for the great harm that these bills cause, whether or not they are made law. The war in Ukraine continues to displace millions from their homes, and shows no signs of slowing down soon. We are heartened by the global outpouring of support for the people of Ukraine, and are mindful of the many people suffering under war and oppression around the world, in places like Afghanistan, Syria, China and Palestine.

Lastly, we would like to raise up the good and tireless work of our siblings in the Rainbow Alliance, Defending Democracy, and Green Sanctuary. The work of justice is sprawling and interconnected, so our call to action this month is to heed their calls twice as much.

Join us for Monthly Church Workdays

It's time to beautify our church building and grounds.

We need your help with:

- pruning bushes & small trees
- clearing vines
- weeding & mulching
- fence repair
- power washing
- sign repair
- painting
- window washing
- kitchen cleaning

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR FUTURE WORKDAYS

Please join us on the following Saturdays, anytime between 9 am – 12 pm:

- May 28
- June 25
- July 23
- August 13
- September 17
- October 22
- November 19



An outside, socially-distanced lunch will be served.
Please bring a side dish to share!

Hope to see you there!!!

Brian Beard and Linda Barrett (UUCSS Garden Group)

Questions? Please email brianbeard@hotmail.com and limabean290@gmail.com.



Our first Clean Up of 2022!

Back row (l to r)

Emily, Stephanie, Rick, Doneby, Bob

Front row (l to r)

Christine, Teresa, Bruce, Dina

Not pictured –

Brian, Mark, Linda

Member Spotlight: Steve Leete



Prepare for an adventure when you talk to Steve Leete. The subject may be music, dramatics, tech management at UUCSS, orbiting power generators, religious personification of natural forces, or human colonies in space. The last topic is a longstanding interest. As a teenager Steve saw the turmoil of the 70s and was looking for a way that he could make a difference. That led him to Princeton University where he sought out and then worked for a major figure in the field of Earth normal gravity colonies, Gerard K. O'Neill, who he supported as a researcher for his entire college career. He's stayed in space science since, including working on orbiting solar generators beaming down power to Earth.

At UUCSS, Steve has been a decades-long stalwart in our music program, primarily as a tenor in our choir, and often as a soloist. Outside of UUCSS he has been in dramatics and *a cappella groups*, at least until raising a family began to take priority. He's also been our IT committee lead for the last four years including our transition to online worship. He counts bringing Jake Ryder onto the committee as one of his most brilliant moments. Along with Jake and Matthew Rice

he's made online worship possible at UUCSS.

Over the years Steve has filled many roles at UUCSS – board member, chair of the ministerial relations committee, IT committee chair and just all-around helpful guy. Even though he and Kathryn have moved to Ashburn, VA, they still plan to contribute as long as it's reasonably possible. There have been patches of difficulty over the years, but overall staying with the church has been rewarding in good times and bad.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Staff Hours and Contact Information

Jeannette Jackson, Administrator

administrator@uucss.org

Rev. Dr. Laura Solomon, Assistant Minister of Spiritual Growth

Laura is available by appointment Tuesday through Friday at amsg@uucss.org and (443) 671-2845. Monday is her day off. If something urgent comes up outside normal office hours or over the weekend please text or call her. You can schedule an appointment with Laura at www.calendly.com/uucssdsg

Michael Holmes, Music Director

Michael works Thursday evenings, Sunday mornings, and is available at other times by appointment. Michael can be reached at musicdirector@uucss.org.

Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt, Minister

Rev. Kristin works Tuesday through Thursday from 10:00am to 4:00pm. Mondays is her writing days and Friday is her day off. She is available at minister@uucss.org and 202-780-7164. If you experience a pastoral care emergency outside normal office hours or over the weekend please text or call her. You can schedule an appointment with Rev. Kristin at www.calendly.com/rev-kristin-schmidt

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

Michael Holmes

Music Director

musicdirector@uucss.org

Rev. Dr. Laura Solomon

Assistant Minister
of Spiritual Growth

AMSG@uucss.org

Dominique Robinson-Coleman

Religious Education Coordinator

REassistant@uucss.org

Jeannette Jackson

Church Administrator

administrator@uucss.org

Philip Browne

Tech Support

Maggie Hayes

Board President

president@uucss.org

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 **Caroline Stauss**.

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**.