

September 2022

Uniter



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING
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WORSHIP SERVICES



All Sunday services are offered in-person in our Sanctuary and broadcast live on Zoom. Please see the all-church email for the Zoom link. Masks are still required inside all buildings at UUCSS.

September 4: Labor Day: The Music That Shaped the Movement, Rev. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg

This Sunday in worship we celebrate workers, remember the gains and sacrifices of the Labor Movement, and recommit ourselves to building a world where all people have enough regardless of their productivity.

September 11: The Congregation is the Curriculum, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

People often think of religious education as something that primarily happens in a classroom. In this first service after 9:30 am Religious Education classes for all children, youth, and adults, we consider how every aspect of our community contributes to the formation of faith for all ages. We will also honor our pianist, Phyllis Stanley, for 30 amazing years of service at UUCSS. Today our Nursery reopens from 9:15-11:45 am.

September 18: Finding Purpose, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

Changes in the world and our lives often push us to reexamine our sense of purpose. This is as true for congregations as it is for individuals. Join us for a service about the work and joys of discernment.

September 25: Turning: Autumn Wisdom, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

This Sunday many in the congregation will be together camping in the Catoctin Mountains. Here at UUCSS we gather for a service of music and readings welcoming the change in seasons, and autumn's yearly reminder of the beauty of finitude and importance of letting go. There is no RE today and the Nursery will be closed.

INSPIRE

Minister's Column by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt



The last two years have been a time of big changes, but there have been other times when our society and religious communities have seen rapid transition. Religious Education (RE) in particular has changed a lot in the last century. These days most of us probably equate religious education with a Sunday School-type class, but for most of the history of religion faith formation didn't happen in a classroom. Young, old, and everyone in-between went to worship together, and faith and values were reinforced during work, chores, and life's daily tasks. It wasn't until the mid-20th century that RE as we know it came into being. The baby boom meant that most Sanctuaries were no longer big enough for everyone to worship together, so they scheduled RE for kids to happen at the same time

as worship for adults. This resulted in children and their parents having very different experiences on Sunday mornings. This RE model also emerged at a time when many homemakers were in a position to devote a lot of time and energy to these programs.

I grew up in a church whose identity was closely linked to this kind of model. We had over 400 kids in RE and grade-specific classes were offered simultaneously during two worship services. In some respects it was a great way to grow up. But it wasn't without downsides. While many people who grew up UU continue to identify as UU, statistically very few go on to join UU churches as adults. Now, I fully support each person choosing the right religious community (or not) for them. But I also believe UUs could do better at retaining our own youth because our congregations, our values, and our faith are important, perhaps now more than ever. As the "sticky faith" movement has long shown, attending worship regularly is the thing most likely to lead a child to become part of a congregation as an adult. While RE is important, worship is where children get to share a common spiritual experience with people of all ages that can include singing, thinking, crying, reflecting, listening, and laughing. It's these experiences shared over years, through times of joy and sorrow, that demonstrate for our children why faith community is important.

I think we also need to acknowledge just how much the world has changed in the last 70 years, even as many of our structures and systems haven't. Many more households with children now need more than one parent to earn income, and we no longer live in a society where church is the only activity scheduled on Sundays. Every congregation I've ever served has struggled with recruiting volunteers to teach RE, not because people aren't committed to the kids or our values, but because they're likely already over-committed and may not want to miss worship.

So, given the history, the research, the statistics, and especially the limited space we have for programming this year while the Community Building is repaired, UUCSS is trying out a new way of approaching RE. Beginning on Sunday, September 11, we will offer RE classes for children and adults at 9:30 am and worship at 10:30 am (kids will have the option to leave halfway through the service to do a supervised activity). This means volunteers won't have to choose between teaching RE and going to worship. It also means we can offer classes for adults, and kids can be in worship for longer

without eating into RE time. I'm most excited about the multigenerational choir on the first Sunday of most months. Anyone of any age who wants to sing in the choir at the 10:30 service just has to show up at 9:30 to learn the music.

As a tradition that values ongoing learning, spiritual growth is important for everyone of every age, not just kids. And perhaps the most prominent space we impart the values and ideas of our UU faith is in worship. In this way, worship is RE because **everything** we do as a congregation is RE. Everything we do as well as the way we do it, everyone we include or exclude (whether explicitly or implicitly), is the truest reflection of what we value and treasure as a community.

I'm excited about beginning a new year of learning and growing here at UUCSS, my third together with all of you. I'm excited about working collaboratively with our talented staff team which now includes the amazing Rev. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg, Assistant Minister for Spiritual Growth. I'm excited about seeing some of you at the Catoctin Trip, hopefully bringing back the Women's Retreat, and to all of the memories we will make while serving our values together.

Message From Doneby Smith, Board President



What an exciting year we have ahead of us!

As we begin to pull out of “pandemic survival mode,” I have the honor of working with the Board and staff as the new Board President to help chart our way forward. Starting with a new schedule for Sunday mornings and RE, we will be welcoming our new Assistant Minister of Spiritual Growth, Rev. Caitlin, resuming our beloved annual retreat at Catoctin Mountain Park, partnering with UU the Vote to defend democracy as midterm elections draw near, taking next steps in exploring our commitment to the 8th Principle, seeing our 7th principle in action as we watch the renovations of the Community Building and installation of solar panels, and exploring and updating our mission as a church. And, oh yeah, all the rest of the day-to-day, week-to-week stuff.

We are nothing if not ambitious! The way we can do all that and more is by grounding ourselves over and over in love: the “love beyond belief” we speak of during Joys and Sorrows and the way that love manifests in the care and respect we show to each other within our walls and beyond. Comfort and challenge; challenge and comfort. May we be blessed with enough of both!

LEARN

Contemplations from Rev. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg, Assistant Minister of Spiritual Growth



If you came to our Ingathering/Water Ritual Sunday, you will have seen my old elementary school backpack. On its own the bag isn't a particularly special thing, but it had just exactly the right number of pockets for a school day, and I loved it. So when it first started to fall apart (it was truly not a fancy or even well-made bag) I used the sewing skills I was learning from my mother and grandmother to put it back together. And, while I was at it, I sewed on some beads from a jewelry making kit and a patch I bought in a pirate themed store while on vacation. That poor backpack has fallen apart and been mended a lot more since then, and I've sewed on a lot more patches and beads and such as I repaired it--things people have brought me back from trips, or I got myself on my own adventures, or I found amidst my craft supplies. It's become a symbol, for me, of how I've created and healed myself over time with support from others, how my scars have become intentional parts of me, how I wear my experiences and carry what I've learned over the years.

This year I'll be getting to know each of you and this wonderful congregation--learning about your scars and patches and how you have created beauty in the midst of what threatened to unravel you. My patched-up backpack is full of all sorts of tools and I am so excited to learn what tools you bring, and what we can create together.

Together, as this congregational year unfolds, we will be learning and exploring and stretching and growing. It won't always be easy, and some of our experiments won't work (just like not all the repairs and beadwork I've done on my old backpack have held up), but it will be fun, and it will be worth it.

Religious Education begins at 9:30 am on Sunday, September 11!

REGISTER YOUR CHILD

If you haven't yet, please register your child(ren) for Religious Education (RE). It's important for us to have a registration on file for every child who will participate in RE and only takes a couple minutes to fill out. Click [here](#).

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER

Whether you have kids at home or not, whether you're able to volunteer regularly or just a few times this church year, and whether you'd like to volunteer with little kids, youth, adults, or elders, we hope EVERYONE will sign up to help out with RE in some way this year. It only takes a couple minutes to fill out the form, and you can sign up to volunteer when you know you're available. Click [here](#).

CLASS OFFERINGS AND SCHEDULE

This year UUCSS is trying out a different Sunday schedule. In past years we've offered Religious Education (RE) classes for children and youth during Sunday worship services. That's made it harder to recruit volunteers, since it forced people to choose between teaching RE and going to the service.

So, this year, we will offer RE classes for people of all ages from 9:30-10:15 am and worship from 10:30-11:30 am. Children and their parents may choose whether they stay for the whole worship service or leave about halfway through to do an adult-led activity or play supervised on the playground (weather permitting). One Sunday a month RE for people of all ages will be the opportunity to sing in the Multigenerational Choir, led by Michael Holmes. Another Sunday a month kids in middle school and younger will get to sing in the Children's Choir. The other two Sundays a month we will offer a class for elementary schoolers and another for middle schoolers. High schoolers will have their own classes most Sundays, and so will Adults. We are excited about the opportunities for growth and learning both in age-targeted and multigenerational settings this year. We will share a lot more detailed information about RE once Rev. Caitlin begins her work with us.

CONNECT

Book Club Events

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

Sept. 18, 7 pm. Men's Book Club. We are reading *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, a 2021 historical and speculative fiction novel by Pulitzer-prize winning author Anthony Doerr. 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 at Sean Randol's home, depending on your preference.

Sept. 26, 7:30 pm. Women's Book Group. We are reading *Creatures of Passage*, by Morowa Yejide. All interested readers are welcome; please see our description in the subgroups at <https://uucss.groups.io/g/Womens-Book-Group>. Contact is Deborah Weiner, dweiner04@gmail.com

Registration Open for UUCSS's Annual Catoctin Retreat Occurring September 23-25

Join us for UUCSS's annual, intergenerational fall retreat on Catoctin Mountain, September 23-25. Registration is open, and you can do so at this link <https://tinyurl.com/catoctin2022>. The link will also be shared in all the usual places including the Facebook group, the listserv, and in an email to all members.

You must register, even if you think you already signed up.

All are welcome. You can come for just the day, or stay overnight Friday or both weekend nights. We are in dormitories this year with real bathrooms! Together, folks hike, relax, read, play board games, share music, sit around a campfire, carve pumpkins, and make new friends. Everyone shares in the setup, cooking, and cleaning tasks. If you stay over, you must stay to clean up Sunday afternoon.

The cost is just \$50 or less per person, and we welcome anyone to offer or receive a scholarship.

Please read the registration page carefully to determine if you are comfortable with the COVID policies.

We hope to see you on the mountain!

Questions? Reach out to Meg Nolan, margaretnolan@gmail.com.

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Five UUCSS members attended June's UUA General Assembly, the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists. Jim and Jo Paoletti traveled to Portland, Oregon, while Emily Harris, Maggie Hayes, and Mary Beth Lerner participated online.

Board of Trustee elections. Two races were contested. Candidates chosen by the UUA Nominating Committee, Rev. Suzanne Fast and Rev. Justine Sullivan, were challenged by Rebecca Mattis and Rev. Beverly Seese, both running via petition. The latter two candidates were concerned about the “erosion of UU faith tradition” and objected to the UUA “telling UUs what to think and how to act.” Rev. Fast was elected with 89.6 percent of the vote; Rev. Sullivan by 90.8 percent.

Actions of Immediate Witness (AIW). Each year the GA adopts as many as three AIWs, which urge congregations to take immediate action to deal with social justice issues.

This year the Assembly considered three:

- [“We Do Not Consent: Rejecting Legal Challenges to Abortion”](https://www.uua.org/files/2022-06/2022%20AIW%20We%20Do%20Not%20Consent.pdf)
<https://www.uua.org/files/2022-06/2022%20AIW%20We%20Do%20Not%20Consent.pdf>
- [“Stop the Privatization of Medicare”](https://www.uua.org/files/2022-06/2022%20AIW%20Stop%20the%20Privatization%20of%20Medicare.pdf)
<https://www.uua.org/files/2022-06/2022%20AIW%20Stop%20the%20Privatization%20of%20Medicare.pdf>
- ["Anti-Racism and Reparations via Restorative Justice"](https://www.uua.org/files/2022-06/2022%20AIW%20Anti%20Racism%20and%20Reparations%20via%20Restorative%20Justice.pdf)
<https://www.uua.org/files/2022-06/2022%20AIW%20Anti%20Racism%20and%20Reparations%20via%20Restorative%20Justice.pdf>

Each AIW passed by a considerable margin.

Article II Study Commission. During three of the General Sessions, the Article II Study Commission explained the work it’s done so far in reviewing and proposing revisions to Article II of the Bylaws, “Principles and Purposes.” The Commission is scheduled to propose its revisions to the 2023 GA for a first vote. If the vote is yes, the final vote will be held at GA in 2024. Here’s a link to the Commission’s website:
<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission>

Resolutions. The Assembly adopted two resolutions proposed by the Board of Trustees. Business Resolution 1, “Renewing UUA Bylaws for Theologically Grounded and Mission-Focused Governance,” instructs the Board to appoint a task group to conduct a thorough review and rewrite of the UUA Bylaws. A progress report of the UUA Bylaw review detailing which changes are being considered will be issued at least annually, beginning in 2023, and the substantial bylaw replacement will be brought to the GA for consideration at the 2023 and/or 2024 GA. Business Resolution 2 concerned how the GA is planned.

For more information about the 2022 GA, see: <https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2022>. Next year’s General Assembly will be held in Pittsburgh.

Committee Updates

Afghan Resettlement Task Force: A Busy and Eventful Summer!

July marked completion of our formal six-month commitment of support to the Thina family in partnership with Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSS). Task Force members will meet on September 11 at 2:00 pm to discuss whether we will continue to work with LSS to support another family, or seek other volunteer opportunities to support our refugee and immigrant neighbors.

Transition and what's next: Since late July, the Thina family has been enrolled in a more intensive case management program at LSS and has a new case manager who is better able to meet their many needs.

Meanwhile, a small group of dedicated UUCSS volunteers has worked during the summer on transitioning our relationship with the Thina family. While we are continuing to offer friendship and some targeted support, we have been instructed by LSS to step back from our more active involvement as their new case manager works with them to build independence and self-sufficiency.

We will call upon the UUCSS members and friends again in the fall for additional support as baby Arsalan and Sharif both have upcoming medical needs (for privacy reasons, we are not disclosing medical information here). If you are interested in future volunteer opportunities, please ask Jane Larrick to be added to the Lotsa Helping Hands volunteer list.

UUCSS volunteers who wish to continue their relationship with the Thina family are welcome to do so on an individual basis. The family is very appreciative of all the support and friendship we have provided.

What we have achieved: Here's a brief summary of what we achieved over the past several months. Thanks to all the volunteers and generous donations that made this possible!

- Assisted the family with move-in, furnishings, and a welcome meal in their permanent home: We had excellent participation from UUCSS members in providing furnishings and helping with move-in, culturally appropriate groceries and spices, and more. The family is enjoying their new home and happy to be Silver Spring residents.
- Provided orientation on public transport: We helped Sharif navigate public transport and he is now using the the bus for work and other basic errands.
- Provided transportation and childcare support: Volunteers provided transportation for health appointments, job interviews, and more.
- Assisted with school enrollment: Volunteers also helped with school enrollment for Zameer (who has been attending summer school) and Sanea (who will start preschool soon). Both children are very excited about going to school!
- Provided conversational English language support: Volunteers have worked hard to bridge language barriers and create opportunities for the family to learn and practice English language skills. A small group of volunteers continues to meet with Jamila, providing 1:1 private tutoring until she is ready to enroll in a group class.
- Providing friendship and support: We've stood by the family through an incredibly difficult time, wearing many hats from counselor, advocate, emergency responder, healthcare navigator, tech support, employment placement specialist, family, and friend. For many of us, this friendship will continue and inevitably evolve as the family adapts and thrives in their new home.

How to stay involved: Updates about the future of this program as well as short-term opportunities to volunteer to support the Thina family will continue to be communicated through io.groups, the Uniter, and via the Lotsa Helping Hands website/app. Please direct questions and expressions of interest to volunteer by emailing the Task Force at resettlement@uucss.org.

New Program Offered by Green Sanctuary

The Green Sanctuary committee invites you to an informational meeting at 9:30 am on Sunday, September 18, before the worship service to hear about an exciting program that has been successful in over 200 cities in helping people reduce their carbon footprints 25% or more, in creating stronger connections within communities, and in making households and neighborhoods safer, healthier, and more resilient. Can you or someone from your household come?

Please RSVP to greensanctuary@uucss.org.

Auction Team Seeks New Members

Want to add some hilarity to your life? Join the auction team!

We are looking for a few people to join the team for December's auction. You can contribute your talents: public relations, enthusiasm, communications, comfort using computers, enthusiasm, creativity for writing skits (and puns), comfort being silly in front of the congregation, project planning, or food coordination, and did we say enthusiasm!

If you are interested or have questions, send an email to auction@uucss.org.

Your faithful (and hoping to be bigger) Auction Team: Linda Barrett, Emily Harris, Emily Tien

Staff Hours and Contact Information

Rev. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg, Assistant Minister of Spiritual Growth

amsg@uucss.org

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.

Jeannette Jackson, Administrator

administrator@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
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FIRST CLASS

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Submissions are due by the 17th of the prior month.
Uniters are published monthly September-June by the Unitarian
Universalist Church of Silver Spring.

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**
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