

January 2023

Uniter



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING
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In this Issue...

WORSHIP SERVICES

INSPIRE

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

LEARN

[Contemplations from Rev. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg, Assistant Minister of Spiritual Growth](#)

CONNECT

Events

[Men's Book Group](#)
[Women's Book Group](#)
[Interested in donating securities to UUCSS?](#)
[We Can Use Your Help with Sunday Support!](#)
[Committee Updates](#)
[UUCSS Resumes Donations to SOME \(So Others Might Eat\)](#)
[News from the Green Sanctuary](#)
[The Auction is Coming in March!!!!!!](#)
[Member Spotlight: David Rodriguez](#)
[Staff Hours and Contact Information](#)



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 except for specific events as determined by the event organizers.

January 1: New Year's Jazz Service, Led by UUCSS Musicians

Start the New Year off right with our annual jazz service! This service will be offered online only.

January 8: The Search for Truth, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

NOTE: This service will be Zoom only due to flooding in the basement of the Sanctuary Building. This week in worship we use the Epiphany as a jumping-off point to consider the nature of truth, and how we recognize truth when we find it.

January 15: What He Dreamed Be Ours To Do, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

This Sunday we honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., by considering how his ministry is calling us, here and now, to build a world of equity for all.

January 21: Faithfully Working for Freedom in an Age of Control, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

This Sunday marks the 50th anniversary since the Supreme Court recognized a constitutional right to abortion in Roe vs. Wade, a landmark case overturned last year. This week in worship we explore this new chapter of work toward liberation and the gifts our liberal faith offers us for the journey.

January 29: The Gifts of Brigid: Goddess and Saint, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

This time of year it can seem like the cold of winter will last forever. Yet it is right about now that farmers of old in the northern hemisphere began preparations for spring planting. Join us for a service honoring the Imbolc and Candlemas holidays, exploring the mythology of Brigid, and celebrating the oncoming of Spring.

INSPIRE

Minister's Column by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt



As we begin the first month of a brand new year, our theme for worship is "Finding Our Center." I'm glad to have had some time to find my center again through rest and relaxation between Christmas and New Year's, and I hope many of you did, too. While this month we will be wrapping up the Capital Campaign that will enable us to renovate the Community Building and begin addressing accessibility on our campus, we will also gear up to "find our center" in a process to re-engage with our shared mission and vision.

Writer and minister Frederick Buechner once wrote, "There are all different kinds of voices calling you to all different kinds of work, and the problem is to find out which is the voice of God rather than of society, say, or the super-ego, or self-interest. By and large a good rule for finding out is this. The kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work that you need most to do and that the world most needs to have done. The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

The last time UUCSS did a mission and vision process was many years ago, before many of our current staff and members were here. And a whole lot has happened since then! This congregation has experienced a lot of transition, our surrounding community has changed, and the pandemic has profoundly reshaped many areas of our lives and our world. While the purpose of a church doesn't change much from generation to generation, the way we go about serving out our purpose will naturally evolve as the gifts and needs of our members and surrounding community change.

As UUCSS moves into the future we will not be writing a new book together, but we will be writing a new chapter in the life of this community. I continue to be astounded by the generosity and passion of this congregation. Now it's time to channel that energy into considering what we're being called to be and do into the future!

This month I will begin assembling a team to help tailor a process that will help our community explore questions like "What are the most precious qualities of this community when we've been at our best?" and "What gifts and strengths do we have as a congregation that we can offer in service to our wider communities?" This process will begin in February and will include workshops, a survey, and lots of communication with the whole congregation. If you'd like to be part of this team, please email me at minister@uucss.org. What an exciting honor to discover with all of you the future trajectory of this wonderful faith community!

Message From Doneby Smith, Board President



I have to say that, while there is cause for sorrow and anger and a host of other “negative” emotions in response to the world today, I am feeling happy and hopeful about where we are now at UUCSS. Yes, Covid is still a threat and forcing caution, but in coping with it, we have opened our doors to those near and far who can’t attend in person by continuing hybrid worship services. We have started work on the Fellowship House so that door can be open for use by our teens and others. The success of the Capital Campaign means that we will be opening the doors to the Community Building next fall and will have the means to figure out how to improve campus accessibility so we can open our doors to people with mobility challenges.

This spring, led by Rev Kristin, we will be opening deep discussions about our mission and vision— who are we now, who do we want to be, what is our capacity for action, both within and outside our walls, and many other questions. When the 2024 due date for the Community Building bridge loan forced us to quickly launch the Capital Campaign, I thought it was too bad that we didn’t have time to revisit our mission statement first. Now I think maybe the timing was propitious. The Capital Campaign visits provided opportunities for many of us to re-connect one-on-one. The success in reaching financial goals and the large number of people making contributions, big and small, are testament to our shared commitment. Having a functional Community Building will provide physical space and contribute to our financial stability so that we will be positioned to go full bore in whatever direction our mission calls us. To extend the architectural metaphor, we have a good foundation, and we are ready to open the door to our future together.

Happy New Year!

LEARN

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



This Month in Religious Education at UUCSS

We are heading into 2023 tired but excited! In late fall we did a few RE listening circles, and I've had one-on-one conversations with many of you as well.

It's been great hearing about what is working for folks and how you are excited to help us meet the challenges of this year and this time! I appreciate all who have volunteered and given me and the Religious Education Ministry Team feedback. If you missed out on those opportunities or have thought of something new you want to share, I've created this form: <https://forms.gle/P89Q7LnCr2dWGuWX7> Thank you for taking a moment to fill it out!

We also need all parents to sign up for time slots for Supervision During Service! I'm asking everyone to sign up for at least three Sundays (also I had so many folks cancel last minute, I'm now asking for three volunteers for each Sunday). I know not everyone knows their calendars for the next six months, please make your best guess. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4AACA72DABF5C07-supervision>

Here's our schedule for Religious Education for January 2023.

January 8: No RE due to flood in bottom of Sanctuary Building

January 15: Children's Arts will meet in Children's Chapel to share music and story while Adults gather for Adult RE classes and the Dolan Lounge is open for teens to connect with each other. Coming of Age (COA) will meet from 11:30 to 1pm.

January 22: Launch of Superhero Academy, Hopepunk Book Group for Adults, and a new game-focused curriculum for Teens! Middle Schoolers will continue their Building Bridges curriculum.

January 29: This is a fifth Sunday; time for some Multigenerational Learning! We are scheduled to talk about Taoism (are you a Taoist? Reach out to Rev. Caitlin to get involved in this Sunday's teaching!). COA youth will be gathering the day before for a special winter retreat.

I'm so excited for what's ahead! Please reach out to me with your questions, concerns, and offers of assistance!

CONNECT

Events

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

Men's Book Group

January 15 at 7 pm

On January 15, 2023 at 7 pm, we will discuss *A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories* by Flannery O'Connor. We will meet at the home of Jerry Herbers and on Zoom. If you are interested in joining the discussion, let Richard know (rlorr4@gmail.com), get the book, and join us in person or on Zoom.

Women's Book Group

January 23, 2023 at 7:30 pm, we will discuss *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell. The Women's Book Group meets on the fourth Monday of the month in the UUCSS sanctuary. Time: 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm. All interested readers are welcome. Please contact Deborah Weiner at dweiner04@gmail.com with any questions or suggestions.

Interested in donating securities to UUCSS?

If you are interested in donating stocks, bonds, or mutual funds to UUCSS, please contact the collectors at collector@uucss.org to learn about procedures for your donations. Stocks and bonds can be easily transferred to UUCSS via E*TRADE. Each mutual fund family has its own form to complete before making the transfer.

If you already know how to transfer stocks and bonds via E*TRADE, be sure to alert the collectors at collector@uucss.org about the transfer. E*TRADE does not alert us that a transfer has been made; we depend on you to let us know.

Donation/pledge question?

Have a question about your donations or pledge, or need to change something? Please remember to send an email to collector@uucss.org. You'll get a quicker response that way.



Have a Little Extra Time Some Sundays to Welcome People to UUCSS? We Can Use Your Help with Sunday Support!

What does Sunday support do?

- Greet people before RE (9:15am) and before services (10:15am)
- Make people feel welcome by ensuring that the sanctuary is in order (e.g., checking candles and replacing them as needed, making sure the sanctuary looks tidy)
- Staff collection during the service, count money, give report and collection to collector
- Count attendance
- Make sure that snacks, condiments, and serving items (e.g., plates, napkins) are available for coffee hour
- Make coffee and hot water (training available)--Nothing says welcome more than a cup of coffee!
- Set up snacks, condiments, and beverages for coffee hour
- Stay after coffee hour to clean up

If you can help even **once a year**, that would be great! [Click Here](#) to sign-up as:

- Greeter
- Sanctuary set-up and collection
- Coffee hour set-up and clean-up

Thanks!

Committee Updates

UUCSS Resumes Donations to SOME (So Others Might Eat)

THANK YOU to Oliva Pickett, who has managed UUCSS donations to SOME since at least 2013. After a hiatus during the pandemic, we are resuming donations on January 15. SOME has requested fresh fruit and vegetables, canned fruit in its own juice or water, canned vegetables with no added sodium, canned meats (chicken, salmon, tuna), low-sodium soups, meals in a can (such as chili, beef stew, spaghetti), whole wheat pasta and pasta sauce, low-sugar cereal and oatmeal, healthy snacks, nuts, and oils and vinegars. If you will not be at church on January 15, you can leave your donation in the kitchen, labeled "For SOME".

The Auction is Coming in March!!!!!!

Hold these dates:

- Kick-off--Saturday, March 11, evening
- Silent auction (online)--Saturday, March 11 to Sunday, March 19
- Live auction (in-person!)--Sunday, March 19, after the church service



We're looking for people to join the auction team!
Could you help us with...

- Theme ideas
- Event planning
- Advertising
- Managing information in auction database
- Emcee/auctioneer for live auction



Please email auction@uucss.org if interested.

From Linda Barrett, Emily Harris, & Emily Tien

News from the Green Sanctuary

UUCSS Tree Planting

The morning of December 20 was cold and clear when Casey Trees arrived at UUCSS to plant 13 native trees on our campus, made possible by a grant from Interfaith Partners of the Chesapeake. Urban forester Liam Ulasevich helped us select appropriate trees for various locations on the property. Our new trees include a

River birch (*B. nigra*), Southern magnolia (*M. grandiflora*), an American hornbeam (*C. caroliniana*), two Hackberry trees (*C. occidentalis*), two Honeylocusts (*G. tricanthos*), two Sweetgums (*L. styraciflua*), a Black tupelo (*N. sylvatica*), three Basswood trees (*T. americana*), and a White oak (*Q. alba*).

Our 13 trees are a small, but important part of Maryland's commitment to plant 5 million trees by 2030, in an effort to reduce carbon in the atmosphere and fight climate change. Maryland's contribution is in turn, part of a national effort to plant one billion trees over the next decade to tackle climate change.

In addition to the Casey Trees crew, we were joined by representatives from Interfaith Partners of the Chesapeake, the Chesapeake Bay Trust, and the Maryland Department of the Environment.

New Recycling and Composting Bins

Our new three-part recycling, compost, and trash bins debuted at the Christmas Eve cookie event. We now have a dedicated green bin for compostable trash—this includes food waste and compostable cups, plates, bowls and utensils used at coffee hour and other events. While we will continue to have monitors nearby to assure items go into the correct bin, we hope the new system will help simplify things for all. Volunteers still need to haul away the compostable trash to an off-site location at the end of each event. We hope to further streamline the process in the future by contracting for pick-up of our compostable trash. Why does all of this matter? Because food waste sent to landfills generates methane, a greenhouse gas that is more potent than carbon dioxide, and therefore contributes to global warming and climate change.

Join Us for Going Green(er) in 2023—Meetings Start January 15

Green Sanctuary will be meeting in-person after Sunday services beginning on January 15 at 11:45. Please feel free to attend a meeting and learn more about what Green Sanctuary and the Garden Group are planning for 2023. You do not need to join the committee to participate! We plan to spring into action with lots of outdoor activities and events from April to June. Meanwhile we will be tracking environmental legislation during the General Assembly's 2023 legislative session, January through April. For more information about meetings or events, please email greensanctuary@UUCSS.org. And look for announcements about how to engage with us in the weekly All Church Emails, Groups.io, and on the UUCSS Facebook page.



Liam Ulasevich from Casey Trees installs one of 13 new trees on the UUCSS campus on December 20, 2022

The Gardener's Guide

Each month, the Green Sanctuary Committee will publish a short article about what you can be doing in the garden for that month. Here's what you can do in January to care for your garden & wildlife...

- Around the holidays—it's a good idea to moderately prune evergreens, like hollies to be used for indoor decorating
- Browse seed catalogs & order seeds for spring flowers & vegetables

You'll be starting tomatoes, peppers, and other vegetable seeds inside in February

- Prune out damaged tree or shrub branches
- Keep bird feeders clean and filled throughout winter months
- Take time to sharpen all your tools now
- Be sure to gently sweep snow/ice off shrubs

Member Spotlight: David Rodriguez



David Rodriguez grew up in New Jersey, the youngest of nine, in a Catholic Puerto Rican immigrant family. He did not have a strong attachment to Catholicism and when two older siblings became UUs he became interested. An older sister became a UU hospital chaplain and an older gay brother found an inclusive community. The latter was most significant as it demonstrated UU values about the essential worth and dignity of every human being.

David worked in the computer industry in the NY/NJ area but wanted to try something new, so he took a computing job in San Antonio. It was there that he really found a church home, initially through involvement with his stepson's religious education programs. Being involved with young people from grade school through YRUU was rewarding, and he is still connected with some of the youth he worked with who are now married with children of their own.

In addition to RE programs, David became involved with many other aspects of the church, such as worship and social justice and was a covenant leader (like our InReach groups) and board president. He missed his family on the East Coast, though, so after a divorce he moved here, midway between the constellation of his relatives across the Eastern Seaboard. He came to UUCSS because he knew both Rev. Kristin and Rev. Christian and thought this would be a good place to be.

David is looking forward to getting to know more people in the church and has already been deeply involved in church life, including the Capital Campaign, IT webmaster, and as a Coming of Age advisor. He likes learning about other faiths and enjoys long walks in the woods and biking, which is a sort of meditation for him. He's thankful for the folks he's met and looks forward to building new things here.

Staff Hours and Contact Information

Rev. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg, Assistant Minister of Spiritual Growth

Caitlin is most available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays--Mondays and Fridays are her flex days (either used for writing and planning or as days off, according to the needs of the church and her family). You can email her at amsg@uucss.org, text her at her Google Voice number (301-679-5832), or schedule a meeting with her via calendly: www.calendly.com/revcaitlin.

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 to UUCSS, Attention: Collector**.