

March 2023

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 Doneby Smith, Board President](#)

LEARN

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

[UUCSS History: The Miller Room, AKA The New Room AKA The Old Miller Room](#)

CONNECT

Events

[SPRING FLING Auction is almost here!](#)

[Pathways to Membership class: Saturday, April 1](#)

[Food Bank Donations: Sunday, April 2](#)

[Men's Book Group: Sunday, April 16 at 7pm](#)

Committee Updates

[UUCSS Music Needs You!](#)

[UUCSS Religious Education Wish List](#)

[Update from the Finance Chair](#)

[Green Team Monthly Garden Tips](#)

[Member Spotlight: Jim Street](#)

[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.

March 5: **Ours and Theirs: Navigating Pluralism**, Rev. Kristin G. Schmidt

Unitarian Universalism has been pluralist for generations, and wisdom from other traditions is one of our named sources of faith. But putting these values into practice isn't always easy or straightforward. Join us this week as we consider our faith's approach to pluralism, and how we strive to relate to other faiths with humility and respect.

March 12: **Raising Unitarian Universalists**, Rev. Christian Schmidt

One of the key missions of a church is to raise young people to be engaged, healthy members of our community. The ways we do this, the specific targets we work towards change, but the goal never changes: raising new Unitarian Universalists.

Rev. Christian Schmidt currently serves as Interim Minister at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church in Alexandria, VA, and owns his own small business specializing in tax preparation for clergy. Rev. Christian is a Texas native, a University of Houston grad, and a proud feminist. He earned his Master of Divinity at Andover Newton and since then has served congregations in Massachusetts, New Jersey, California, Texas, Maryland, and Virginia. He enjoys sports, reading, watching Modern Family, and spending time with his family.

March 19: **Wakanda Forever: Afro-Futurism, Vulnerability, and the Power of Black Panther**, Rev. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg

This month a new exhibit celebrating Afrofuturism opens at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in DC. Just what IS Afrofuturism, and why is one of the centerpieces of this exhibit Chadwick Boseman's Black Panther suit? Join us for a service exploring these questions and inviting us to imagine a less oppressive, more liberatory world.

March 26: **Community with Purpose**, Rev. Kristin G. Schmidt

Religious community means different things to different people, but what is the purpose that gives our congregation meaning? This week begins our shared work to revisit our church mission and vision. Whether you've been part of UUCSS for many years or have just begun attending and getting connected, you are invited to participate in the workshop after today's service! A light lunch for all ages will be served and childcare provided.

INSPIRE

Minister's Column by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt



One of the first things people ask a new minister is “What’s your vision for our church?” It may disappoint some people to know that I have no specific vision for UUCSS, other than envisioning our future as one where we’re deeply engaged in our surrounding community and functioning in more sustainable ways (financial, staff capacity, volunteer engagement, etc.). If I’ve learned anything in my dozen-plus years in this line of work, it’s that ministry is contextual. In other words, what I might want for this congregation is less important than the difference this community of unique people are equipped to make in this particular time and place.

This month’s worship theme is “vulnerability.” It might seem an odd topic to delve into the same month as we revisit our congregation’s mission and vision, but there is a lot of wisdom where vulnerability and purpose intersect. Wendell Berry put it well when he wrote:

*It may be that when we no longer know what to do
we have come to our real work,
and that when we no longer know which way to go
we have come to our real journey.
The mind that is not baffled is not employed.
The impeded stream is the one that sings.*

Healthy vulnerability means being able to be open about our growing edges, weaknesses, fears, and uncertainties rather than trying to hide or ignore them. In this way, it’s connected to what Zen Buddhists call *shoshin*, which is usually translated as “beginner’s mind.” *Shoshin* is about setting one’s ego aside, releasing any need to be an expert, and adopting an attitude of openness and eagerness, the way a curious new student would when starting to learn something new.

The truth is, the world has changed rapidly over the last few years, and no one really knows how to “do church” anymore. Not even the large congregations or so-called experts! According to Pew research, fewer people are joining congregations, and even those who consider themselves very involved in theirs attend less than half the time. Some of the larger congregations in the DC area have experienced such a shortage of volunteers they have had to hire paid RE teachers in order to sustain their programs. Let me be clear: as a non-coercive free faith, it’s anything but a crisis for Unitarian Universalists to enjoy community, find beauty, do justice, or learn and grow in other places on Sunday mornings. But it’s also not sustainable when our congregational programming and governance require higher levels of engagement than the data and our weekly attendance shows us is realistic to expect.

This month you will receive a special all-church email with lots of details about the different ways everyone can be part of the mission and vision process. **Whether you are a long-time member, just started joining us for services last week, or are somewhere in between, I hope you’ll plan to join us on Sunday, March 26, after**

the service for our first all-church mission workshop. A light lunch and childcare will be provided, and it will be an opportunity for everyone to add their input and feedback.

And don't forget to join us for the Auction the week before on March 19!

As we begin this process to rearticulate our purpose in ways that resonate today, and as we discern the preferred future that truth, love, and justice are calling UUCSS to live into together, may we all practice "beginner's mind." Because even as patterns of engagement shift, even as the world around us keeps changing, UUCSS has precious and important gifts to share with a world that badly needs us to share them.

Message From Doneby Smith, Board President



It's just a few weeks until the Spring Equinox. I'm no gardener, but my thoughts turn to seeds and planting. With the success of the Capital Campaign, we have prepared the ground. Along with the Equinox, we pause in the moment of balance before moving forward. This spring as we examine anew our mission and vision with the guidance of Rev, Kristin, we will be planting seeds for our future. The openness of the season invites us to look ahead with fresh eyes and awakened senses, throwing off the torpor of winter. The Board will be revisiting the 8th Principle while the UUA is revisiting all the Principles in the proposed Article 2. As we build a new way, we will find out where our roots are strongest. Dig deep, grow strong, reach high.

LEARN

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



This Month in Religious Education at UUCSS

Each week we hope to have the nursery open starting at 9:15!

Note that we are still looking for one more childcare professional and for backup volunteers. If you have someone to recommend for the job or are willing to spend a few hours once a month or so with our youngest UUs, please email Rev. Caitlin or Sara.

March 5 (1st Sunday): before the service will be Multigenerational Choir and Archive Explorers, with a special Pizza Potluck and Movie after the service (note the movie this month is PG 13 and will begin after 12:15)

March 12 (Second Sunday): at 9:30 will be Superhero Academy (Elementary School) diving into the lessons we can learn from Black Panther while Building Bridges (Middle School) will begin studying Christianity, and Rev. Kristin will continue teaching Unitarian Universalist History (adults). For this month we're switching things up and Coming of Age will meet on 2nd and 4th Sundays at 11:30 so as not to conflict with the Auction, they are now meeting in the Fellowship House.

Also on this day will be the launch of our Centering Love Art Gallery, featuring art made by you!

March 19 (Third Sunday): at 9:30 will be Children's Arts (Elementary) and Connecting through Games (for Youth), as well as Gifts and Challenges of Aging (for Adults) and Casual Caring Conversation for Caregivers.

March 26 (Fourth Sunday): at 9:30 will be Superhero Academy (Elementary School) continuing to explore the lessons we can learn from Black Panther while Building Bridges (Middle School) will begin studying Christianity. Coming of Age will meet at 11:30 in the Fellowship House.

On Sundays:

9:15:

Nursery opens downstairs in the Administration building for ages six months to five years.

9:30:

Superhero Academy (Elementary School) will meet in their Superhero Base Camp in the Community Hall and then (weather allowing) work on their Secret Hideout Fort before heading to the service together. Please dress your kids warmly! Multigenerational Art in the Sanctuary—gather in the back of the sanctuary to create collages about the newly proposed seven values of Unitarian Universalism!

Building Bridges (Middle School) will be talking about Buddhism downstairs in the Community Building

Connecting through Games (High School) will be in Dolan Lounge for hot chocolate and a rousing game of Baloney.

Lectio Divina (Adults) will also be downstairs in the community building. All are welcome to join us for this opportunity to explore this ancient spiritual practice! This week we'll be diving into the proposed text from the Article ii Commission proposing a form to the covenant connecting us as Unitarian Universalists.

11:30:

Coming of Age might meet in the Fellowship House.

Coming Up in Religious Education:

On April 1st you are invited to a congregational field trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture to see their new Afrofuturism exhibit! Our group tickets are for 10:45, so we'll be meeting in front of the museum at that time. For more information on the exhibit that opens March 24 (or to book your own tickets if you can't make it that day) visit <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/afrofuturism>

ALSO, we are starting to get organized for OWL (Our Whole Lives) for next fall! Are you already trained to teach OWL, or interested in becoming trained in OWL for children, youth, or adults? Please reach out to Rev. Caitlin or Sara!

Remember, ALL PARENTS of kids and youth in our program need to sign up to help out with Children's Community Time during services! Here's the link to that sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4AACA72DABF5C07-supervision>

Is your kid actually registered for Religious Education? If not, we've created a new form:

<https://forms.gle/8yKEHgh8YU4qjSV98>

And here's our RE Wish List, if you would like to contribute to the RE program by contributing materials:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YhImlv8lyrP5WYIR1reFSJp_SjQWNldhnLL4ICh9LIU/edit

Questions, comments, want to get involved? Email Rev. Caitlin at amsg@uucss.org or our RE Coordinator Sara at recoordinator@uucss.org. You can also text Rev. Caitlin at 301-679-5832, or schedule zoom meetings with her at www.calendly.com/revcaitlin (or meet her for coffee or whatever!).

Remember that Rev. Caitlin is typically most available Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and usually takes Friday and Saturday as her days off.

UUCSS History: The Miller Room, AKA The New Room AKA The Old Miller Room

Here at UUCSS, you can tell how long someone has been attending by how they describe the buildings. If they call the place where we hold worship “the new sanctuary,” they’ve been around since at least the early 90s. I have had to resist telling people looking for the restrooms to turn left “where the turtle tank used to be”. Then there is the “pianoless room,” formerly known as the piano room.

Long ago, when there was just one building on this site—and it has been “the Fellowship House” ever since it was transformed from its original existence as a stable—we needed places to meet. Worship space, religious education spaces for all ages, office space for the staff, and meeting spaces. During the week, the Fellowship House could accommodate the minister in an “office” formerly the hayloft, and there was enough space for meetings and adult classes downstairs. On Sundays, the entire congregation, including children, gathered at local schools. The first few months we met at Rolling Terrace Elementary School; in December of 1952, the congregation moved to Hillandale Elementary School (now CHI), which was our home until we completed the first sanctuary building in 1964. During that entire time, meetings were held either in the Fellowship House or in members’ homes.

Between 1964 and 1980, the space downstairs in the sanctuary (now the Community Hall) was used for meetings, religious education, choir practice, and the co-operative nursery school. According to Becky Hedin, who was nursery school director and a member of the choir during the 1970s, what is now “the Old Miller Room” was home to two-year-olds a couple of days a week. Because they sat on the floor and required little equipment, the room could easily revert to an adult-friendly space for the rest of the week.

Many articles in the *Uniter* refer to this space as “The New Room”. This suggests that it did not exist when the sanctuary was originally built. In my imagination, I see the “open classrooms” typical of elementary schools of that period. The interior wall that created the “triangle room” upstairs was not part of the original plan, and the hallway in the administration building was added since I joined in 1982. Becky recalls that the “renovation” of the downstairs was designed by one of the nursery school moms who was an architect; the search continues.

In 1980, a covert celebration was announced in the *Uniter*. The New Room was to be dedicated to Max and Alice Louise Miller, two of the founders of the congregation. Alice was in on the plan, but only thought it was a party in honor of Max’s 80th birthday. She could make sure he was there and would invite as many of the extended Miller clan as possible.

I realized while researching this story that the Miller Rooms—new and old—have had a special role in our church life. While I can appreciate the coziness of living room meetings, and the convenience of Zoom, the best gatherings—for me—are the ones around a table where I can rest a beverage, spread out my notes, or just bang my head if necessary. In recent years, the full-grown human sized furniture in our meeting rooms has been replaced by tiny chairs, and equally tiny tables, or no tables at all. Consider this my plea for a New New Miller Room that works for meetings, adult RE, and your humble archivist in search of a comfortable, convenient workspace.

Jo Paoletti

CONNECT

Events

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

SPRING FLING Auction is almost here!

*Time for last-minute donations
(due March 1st)!*

Donate items: <https://tinyurl.com/UUCSSdonate>

Upcoming events

- Review how to bid: Wednesday, March 8, 7:30 pm (<https://uucss.org/zoom5>)
- Kick-off celebration: Saturday, March 11, 7:30 pm (<https://uucss.org/zoom5>)
- Silent auction (online): Saturday, March 11 to Sunday, March 19
- Oral auction (in-person): Sunday, March 19, after the church service



Things to do before the auction

- Register (if you have NEVER registered before): <https://tinyurl.com/UUCSSauctionregistration>.
- Sign in to your Auctria account, and add credit card information to your registration (if you want to pay via credit card): auctria.events/SpringFling2023.
- If more than one person in your household will bid and you want your accounts to be linked (to avoid bidding against each other), send an email to auction@uucss.org.
- Review the (currently draft) catalog to plan your bidding: <https://tinyurl.com/UUCSScatalog>.

Questions? auction@uucss.org

Join Us for Monthly Church Workdays

It's time to beautify our church building and grounds. We need your help with:

- Clearing vines & weeds
- Pruning bushes
- Digging out plants
- Dusting & tidying
- Boxing stuff in Community Bldg

Mark Your Calendar and Join Us on Saturdays...

- March 25 10 am - 12 pm
- April 29 10 am – 12 pm

- May 27 10 am – 12 pm
- June 24 9 – 11 am
- July 22 9 – 11 am
- August 26 9 – 11 am
- September 23 9 – 11 am
- October 28 10 am – 12 pm
- November 18 10 am – 12 pm



An outside lunch will be served after. 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.

Pathways to Membership class: Saturday, April 1

Are you interested in becoming a member of UUCSS? Our next Pathways to Membership class will be from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm on April 1 in the Dolan Lounge in the Admin Building. Rev. Kristin will be joining a couple of us from the Membership Committee to provide you with the opportunity to learn more about the history and principles of the UU faith, about UUCSS in particular, and about the privileges and responsibilities of becoming a member. We will host a light brunch as well. For more information and to RSVP, please email membership@uucss.org.

Food Bank Donations: Sunday, April 2

UUCSS will collect food donations on the first Sunday of every month for the food bank at Silver Spring Christian Reformed Church (1501 Arcola Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20902). Please bring 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, dried beans or rice, nuts, oils and vinegars to church on Sunday, April 2. If you will not be at church on April 2, you can leave your donation in the kitchen, labeled "food bank donation." If you want to volunteer to deliver our donations, please contact Teresa Meeks (meeksteresa@yahoo.com) to join the 2023 delivery schedule. Thanks!

Men's Book Group: Sunday, April 16 at 7pm

The Men's Book Group is considering opening membership in the group to all Church members and friends who enjoy reading. At our next meeting, we will discuss this issue and our next book, ***The Magician, by Colm Toibin***, an intimate, astonishingly complex portrait of Thomas Mann, his magnificent and complex wife Katia, and the times in which they lived—World War I, rise of Hitler, World War II, Cold War, and exile. If you are interested in joining the discussion, let Richard Lorr know (rlorr4@gmail.com), get the book, and join us.

Committee Updates

UUCSS Music Needs You!

We have several spots available in our choir and music committee. Please join our exciting team of wonderful volunteers who are at the heart of our worship services and other events! For more information, contact music@uucss.org.

UUCSS Religious Education Wish List

(Things We Would Love to Have Donated or Borrow, Instead of Buying)

Fort Building Materials for Superhero Academy ,2023

- Old Tarps
- Wooden Spools
- Wooden Pallets
- Branches/Bamboo
- Old Rope

Active Play During Service Time

- Jump Ropes
- Hula Hoops
- Soft Balls
- Balancing games
- Legos (like a big container of colorful mixed legos, not kits)

Table Games for YRUU (to borrow!)

- Nature Fluxx
- Five Minute Dungeon
- Jenga Maker
- OuiSi Nature
- Spot It
- Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza
- Telestrations
- Tsuru
- Legos (like a big container of colorful mixed legos)

Craft Materials

- Old magazines with nice pictures for collaging (Smithsonian, Nature, etc)

If you can bring these things, please email Rev. Caitlin at AMSG@uucss.org or our RE Coordinator Sara at SaraScott.UUCSS@gmail.com

Update from the Finance Chair

By Tamara Bowman

Here's the updated information on UUCSS finances. The amounts for ABD Pledges and Capital Campaign are the monies received this fiscal year, not the amounts pledged.

Budget period from July 1, 2022 through February 15, 2023

Income		
	ABD Pledges	\$287,055.75
	Capital Campaign	\$186,901.26
	Rental Income	\$24,105.00
Expenses		\$408,148.62
Endowment		\$84,462.93

Other Finance Activity

As you may have noticed, the work to repair the water damage on the first floor is nearly completed. We should receive a settlement from Church Mutual shortly to cover the majority of the costs.

If you have other finance related questions please direct them to finance@uucss.org.

Green Team Monthly Garden Tips



- Keep bird feeders clean & filled
- Finish any pruning of trees or shrubs. Not sure when to prune?

Click [here](#) for a tree pruning calendar Put off cleaning up the garden until the end of May. We have several species of insects that winter in the ground/or in leaf litter and do not emerge until May

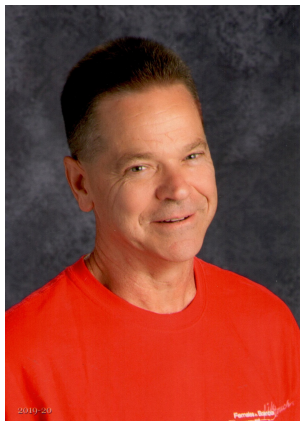
- Let the violets and dandelions grow—they provide early nectar for our native bees
- Cut perennials stems and overwintering ornamental grasses to 8 inches above the ground.

Leaving these stems provides a place for spring & summer insects to lay larvae—the larvae will develop over the winter and emerge spring 2024

- End of March—plant cool season crops (lettuce, peas, carrots, spinach, kale, collards, etc.)



Member Spotlight: Jim Street



Jim Street grew up near Four Corners and never moved away, going to school at the University of Maryland, and then becoming a teacher in the area. He did not set out to teach, but in his third year at UMD, teaching seemed like a reasonable thing to do as he saw a way of taking his love of doing things by becoming a shop teacher. Jim was not a natural, and there were times in his first two years when nothing seemed to work, but in his third year he found a way forward, enjoying the kids and getting a kick out of showing them how things worked. Forty years later, he looks back at a wealth of relationships with former students, on Facebook, as fellow teachers at Blair or Takoma Park, and as personal friends who have children of their own. Jim met his wife Emily Tien when Emily's master's degree had her observing a school where he was teaching. They married, and soon brought two

boys into the world, William and Brian. As with so many of us, having children became the impetus for finding a church and Jim and Emily found in UUCSS a good place to provide a religious education.

Jim left teaching last year to try something new when many of us would be looking at how to spend our retirement. He's taken his skills in teaching and doing things to become a seasonal park ranger for the National Parks Service. In his spare time, Jim likes hiking with Emily, playing senior level ice hockey, and fixing things. For the latter, UUCSS has been a beneficiary. Jim is the property committee chair, maintaining our physical plant and most recently shepherding repairs in the aftermath of the flood in our main building. He especially likes the camaraderie of working with folks to solve problems and seeing something tangible and meaningful for his efforts. Jim was also a co-chair of an annual budget drive. Asked what he'd like to say to the congregation, Jim said, "It's a great community with lots of really wonderful, engaging, giving, and caring people. Get in there and do stuff and you'll meet them."

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

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. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg

Assistant Minister
of Spiritual Growth

AMSG@uucss.org

Jeannette Jackson

Church Administrator

administrator@uucss.org

Doneby Smith

Board President

president@uucss.org

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.**