

January 2024

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 at 10:30 am. Please see the all-church email for the Zoom link. Masks are recommended but not required for worship services and other church functions. A section of seats in the Sanctuary will be reserved for people who wish to remain masked and prefer to sit among other people who are also wearing masks.

January 7: *Practice for the Spirit*, Rev. Kristin G. Schmidt

The beginning of a New Year is a great time to focus inward on rituals and practices that help us to grow emotionally and feel most alive. This week we focus on the meaning, purpose, and promise of spiritual practice.

January 14: *Bayard Rustin, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, and the Art of Holy Troublemaking*, Rev. Caitlin Cotter Coillberg

Bayard Rustin famously said "We need, in every community, a group of angelic troublemakers." This profound statement encapsulates the essence of the transformative power held by individuals who challenge societal norms and fight for justice. What does it mean for us, as Unitarian Universalists of All Ages, on this holiday weekend celebrating the civil rights movement and our ongoing work for equity?

January 21: *Under Construction*, Rev. Kristin G. Schmidt

Deconstruction is often important and necessary. Much like the demo taking place right now in our Community Building, taking apart beliefs we no longer affirm can be uncomfortable. It has led some of us to leave past religious communities, support systems, and even family and friends. The purpose of demo is to make space to build something new, but learning how to make meaning in a new way can bring its own challenges. This week we explore what's possible after deconstruction.

January 28: *What Will We Bring to the Table?* Rev. Kristin G. Schmidt

As participants in a congregation we are often asked to support our shared ministry with financial generosity, but our ministry extends far beyond just those who call UUCSS their own. This Sunday, as our Annual Budget Drive (ABD) begins, Rev. Kristin considers what we as a congregation can bring to the table in the service of our wider community.

INSPIRE

Minister's Column by Rev. Kristin G. Schmidt



Our free faith, like many others, encourages us to grow in spiritual and emotional maturity. This is the quality that allows us to stay calm and upbeat despite having a rotten day, to have faith in the potential for human goodness despite the evils we experience in the world, to learn to observe and choose how to respond to our feelings rather than allow them to control us. Ours is a faith that values such maturity, and we come together to learn, worship, serve others, and grow friendships so that we can help one another along life's path.

Our Unitarian and Universalist ancestors referred to the ways we can work toward this maturity as spiritual—or devotional—practices. Whatever words work best for you, these are all activities that, pursued regularly, help us connect with our deepest and truest selves and grow in emotional and spiritual strength. They can even become inner havens, emotional spaces that come to sustain us through life's most difficult times.

Some of us might already have a spiritual practice, others not. In the interest of practicing what I preach, I am challenging myself to pick back up my spiritual practice every single day for the month of January. Whether it's meditation or journaling, prayer or gardening, reading sacred texts or hiking, making music or something else entirely, I hope you will join me in this month-long inner challenge and either return to a long-familiar practice or try on a new one. It's temporary, low-risk, but it just might make a difference in your life. I'll let you all know how it goes and what difference it makes for me, and I hope you'll do the same!

Happy New Year!

Message From Catherine Buckler, Board President



Happy 2024! While it's a new calendar year, we are well into our church year. We've already accomplished a lot and still the New Year inspires me to think about future possibilities. We have good reason to let our minds wander in that direction as we begin the renovations of our beloved Community Hall! In December, we gathered in the building for a celebration of all that building has held in the past while opening our minds to dreaming of how we'll partner with it in the future for the good of the world. At the ceremony we thanked those who have kept us going along the road to renovations. Those thanks bear repeating here.

First to us, the congregation. Together we have held onto our dream even in the face of the inevitable disappointments that come along with such a major project. We have given our time, offered our opinions, and opened our wallets. This project belongs to all of us, just as the building will continue to be our responsibility in the many years ahead. In these times, when many congregations are having to let go of their buildings, we have been lucky enough—as well as committed enough—to be able to continue caring for our treasured Community Hall. How will we share our treasure with those who may not be so lucky to have a space to live out their dreams?

No project like this can happen without incredible commitment by a group of individuals working as a team on behalf of the congregation. One could argue that this project began in 2013 when the congregation began thinking about the relationship between our mission and our buildings. The “Dream Builders” team, led by Phyllis Ryder, listened to the congregation's dreams and turned them into a vision of what might be possible. In 2014, Erik Leaver stepped up to chair an amazingly successful capital campaign to fund our dreams. He hasn't stopped since and now co-chairs the Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) that has gotten us through repairs and renovations of our Sanctuary building and on to the plans for the community hall we are starting now. After the capital campaign in 2016, Fred Teal took on the role of co-chair of the Dream Builders (along with Jim Paoletti) who then had the tough work of reconciling our dreams with reality (also known as “making the sausage”). He's now the co-chair of the CIC with Erik. Have you done the math yet? Erik and Fred have been on this project for a long time!

But they haven't done it alone. Others helped. Dream Builders team members, at various times included Marty Atias, Melanie Berkemeyer, Patty Bryan-Taff, Rob Dahlstrom, Laura Ellis, Larry McAneny, Jim Paoletti, John Robinette, Doneby Smith, and Sara Tarr. Those currently serving on the CIC are Linda Barrett, Brian Beard, Robin Moore Laskey, and Doneby Smith. Doneby, we see you there serving long enough to have been on both teams!

Focusing on the most recent past, I want to raise up some of the dedicated work of the Capital Improvements Committee. They began their work in the fall of 2018 when they committed to honoring the dreams of this community while working in the reality of their times. They identified construction companies and worked with them on project scoping. They chose tiles and paint colors and hvac systems. They monitored the Sanctuary repairs and made adjustments as needed. They looked for lenders and found one that supported our dedication to environmental sustainability. They worked through the pandemic which disrupted not only their personal lives, but supply chains and prices and the pace of everything. One of the most visible and meaningful things they have done is to find a way to preserve and eventually re-display the cherished stained glass window that has lived so long in the Community Hall.

For these things, and so many others I could not possibly list here, the board is thankful. I'm sure we are all thankful. When you see any of these dear ones who have served us for so long and so well, I'm sure you, too, will want to say, “thank you!” for your years of dedication on behalf of our community and the dreams it holds.

With joy in serving as your board president,
Catherine Buckler, board president (president@uucss.org)

LEARN

RE This Month

Jan. 7: Children and Youth Worship Breakout Groups resume in Fellowship House using the Holy Troublemakers and Unconventional Saints curriculum!

Jan. 14: No RE. Services for All Ages—Happy Martin Luther King Jr Day

Jan. 21: Children and Youth Worship Breakout Groups in Fellowship House

Jan. 28: Children and Youth Worship Breakout Groups in Fellowship House

What's the RE Taskforce Up To?

This month your Religious Education Taskforce will be watching and discussing the 2023 Fahs Lecture on Religious Education- you are welcome to watch this too!

Here's the link: <https://vimeo.com/839332464/1c96e86c98?share=copy>

We're also working to launch a new collaborative storytelling and worldbuilding program for our youth group and junior youth group- stay alert for more information- and planning summer and fall curriculum for all ages.

Update about Adult OWL!

For the first time (so far as we're aware), UUCSS is going to offer Adult Our Whole Lives (OWL)! Our fabulous team of teachers has gone through the training, met with staff and ministers, and decided to go for an Saturday Intensives approach.

This means there will be an orientation/interest meeting on Jan. 28 after the service, and then three Saturdays when sessions will be held before and after a shared lunch (as an alternative to weekly classes for a few months).

Please reserve these dates in your calendar: **Sunday Jan. 28, Noon- 2pm, Saturdays, March 2, March 16, and March 23.**



Honest, accurate information about sexuality changes lives. It dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, improves decision making, and has the potential to save lives. For these reasons and more, we are proud to offer Our Whole Lives (OWL), a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curriculum.

Using values, communication skills and spirituality as starting points, this program explores sexuality issues for adults of all ages. Builds understanding of healthy sexual relationships, affirms diversity and helps participants accept and affirm their own sexuality throughout their lives.

Our 7-9th grade OWL group is meeting **Jan. 7, Jan. 21, and Jan. 28** from **12-2pm**.

The 4-6th grade OWL group will be meeting on those same dates, with **Jan. 7** being the mandatory orientation for both students and parents.

The Adult OWL Team will hold their orientation/introductory session after the service on **Jan. 28** in the sanctuary.

Save the Dates for Adult Religious Education

For Adult OWL, mark on your calendar Sunday **Jan. 28**, and three Saturdays in **March (2, 16, and 23)**.



On **Mar. 9**, you are invited to a special Saturday of Adult Religious Education of Spiritual Practices and “resting deeply” with Rev. Caitlin.



And we ask you to reserve Saturday April 6 on your calendar—be on the lookout for more information! If you have something you’d like to collaborate with Rev. Caitlin about for Adult Religious Education, please let her know by emailing amsg@uucss.org.



Questions, comments, want to get involved? Email Rev. Caitlin or our RE Coordinator Sara Scott at recoordinator@uucss.org.

Remember Rev. Caitlin's usual "office days" are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (and Friday and Saturday are her usual days off). Her Google Voice Number is 301-679-5832, and you can schedule zoom meetings with her via this link: www.calendly.com/revcaitlin (or reach out to schedule a coffee or what have you). Rev. Caitlin will be with her family the first week of January and back in the office Jan. 8.

CONNECT

Events

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

UUCSS Yard Clean Ups for 2024—Please Mark Your Calendar Now

We have an awesome “Green Team” of gardeners that help to maintain & improve our landscaping. No task is too big or too small, as folks work together to get the work done. Tasks often include weeding, weedwacking, pulling invasive shrubs and vines, laying mulch, and planting new native pollinator plants. If you like gardening—we’d love to have your help!

Mark your calendars now for 2024 clean up days—always the second Saturday of the month!

April 13

May 11

June 8

July 13

August 10

September 14

October 12

November 9



Food Bank Donations this month: January 7

UUCSS collects food donations for the food bank at the Silver Spring Christian Reform Church on the first Sunday of every month. 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, Jan. 7. If you will not be at church this Sunday, you can leave your donation in the kitchen, labeled "Food Bank Donation."

Women's Book Group

The book group will continue to meet on the **third Monday of each month** in the UUCSS sanctuary foyer at **7:30 pm**.

For **Jan. 15, 2024**, we are reading and discussing *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks.

For **Feb. 19, 2024**, we will read *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone: A Therapist, Her Therapist, and Our Lives Revealed* by Lori Gottlieb.

We welcome all interested readers and new members of the church!

Sunday Book Group

We are reading *Trust Exercise* by Susan Choi, winner of the 2019 National Book Award for 2019. We will meet at the home of Sean Randol on Sunday, Jan. 21, to discuss the book and enjoy a few snacks. If you are interested in joining the discussion, contact Richard Lorr (rlorr4@gmail.com), read the book, and come to the next meeting!

Jazz is Back for UUCSS in February



The UUCSS Music Committee is delighted to announce the return of jazz@uucss with a concert on Sunday, Feb. 4, 2024, at 4 pm, featuring the Alfred Yun Trio (Alfred Yun, piano; Steve Arnold, bass; Keith Butler, Jr., drums). The program will pay tribute to the centennial anniversary of pianist Elmo Hope, whose works have been overlooked compared to his contemporaries like Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk.

Alfred Yun is an in-demand pianist who has performed across the globe from South Korea to Boston and Washington DC. He was recently selected as an Artist-in-Residence at Strathmore, where he will host concerts on Jan. 10 and 24 and a workshop on Jan. 17 (see [Alfred Yun](#) for tickets and information). His performance at UUCSS will highlight Elmo Hope's compositions and help us re-examine his genius.

This concert is FREE, thanks to a generous grant from the Music Performance Trust Fund.

Lea Morris Residency at UUCSS!! March 2 and 3

Lea Morris, the illustrious and much sought-after musical artist/songwriter who graced our computer screens and sanctuary monitors during the pandemic, will now be in residence (in person) at UUCSS during the first weekend in March! The UUCSS music committee has sponsored musical residencies over the years, where artists present relevant and inclusive musical experiences for both our musicians and non-musician church members alike. If you enjoy singing hymns during our services, that is the only prerequisite to join in the fun! The residencies involve Saturday afternoon workshops, where the focus is on expression through music, and sometimes movement. That is often followed by a concert on Saturday night given by the artist(s), and then the artist(s) join us on Sunday morning for our regular worship service the next day. The last residency UUCSS presented was with Lea Morris in 2021, and even though it was fun and brilliantly led, we all knew that ultimately, one day we would be back together again to sing in joyful harmony and unity. Lea's residency coincides with the closing weekend of our Annual Budget Drive (ABD), so we hope that there will be much to celebrate with her! Please stay tuned for further information regarding Lea's residency in the new year. Registration information will be provided in the next Uniter issue, and in all-church emails and on Facebook.



Save Dates for Women's Retreat in April

UUCSS's beloved Women's Retreat is back. Please mark your calendars for April 26-28, 2024, at the Claggett Center (near Frederick, MD) for a great weekend of fun, reflection, and friendship. More information coming soon.



Committee Updates

December 2023 Auction and All-Ages Party a Success!

As with many things, it “takes a village” to have a successful auction. This time, we held an online auction; and topped it off with an all-ages party in collaboration with the Religious Education program, and in-person silent and oral auctions. Based on the laughter, friendly chatter, and many smiles, and the funds raised (\$30,000!), the December 2023 auction and all-ages party were a huge success. Many thanks to all who contributed, through committing their time and effort, contributing items and events to donate, and bidding on items and events. We look forward to joining you at many fun events this coming year.

As always, we welcome new members to the auction team; and feedback about what you enjoyed, and what you would like to see in future auctions. Contact us through auction@uucss.org.

Your faithful auction team: Linda Barrett, Emily Harris, Allison Leaver, Emily Tien

UUCSS Annual Budget Drive 2024-25 Gets an Early Start!

Planning has already begun for our next Annual Budget Drive (aka ABD)--and this year brings some exciting changes that you won't want to miss! What will not change is the need to continue to work together to support our beloved community at UUCSS.

As a reminder, each year the ABD is an opportunity to learn more about the UUCSS annual budget for the next church year, and how those resources are put to use to achieve our mission. It is also a time for building fellowship, providing feedback to our church leadership, and making your pledge of financial support to UUCSS. Pledges are paid over the budget year (in this case July 2024-June 2025), and more information about the many options available to you will be shared during the ABD.

This year's ABD theme is: **What Will We Bring to the Table?** Given UUCSS's aspiration to make a positive impact locally and globally, we are using the vision of a community table to invite all to contribute their time, talent, and treasure to ensure our congregation's continued viability and sustainability.

Please mark your calendars NOW with these important dates:

Jan. 28, 2024—*ABD Kick-Off Sunday*. Plan to attend the morning service to hear more about what you can expect this year and how you can participate. Importantly, you will hear more about the salivating cupcake bakeoff and how you can be involved as a baker, judge, or taster!

Feb. 18, 2024—*Cupcake Baking Competition*. Start planning your recipe now to show off your baking skills and win prizes—more information to follow!

Feb. 26, 2024—*2024-25 pledge deadline*.

March 3, 2024—*Celebration Sunday*. Our grand finale celebration will feature special music and a special celebration of our generosity.

Interested in volunteering to serve as a steward or to help organize special events? Please contact Reverend Kristin or Pat Scheid.

Your ABD 2024-25 Task Force:

Pat Scheid, Teresa Meeks, Jamie Jorgensen, Margo Kelly, and Deborah Weiner

Updates from Green Sanctuary

On **Saturday, December 2**, Green Sanctuary members Maureen Malloy and Linda Barrett led a workshop on "Milk Jug Sowing of Native Seeds." Native plants have to go through stratification (freezing and thawing) to crack the seed coat in order to germinate. The 15 participants assembled milk jug "mini greenhouses" with soil and native seeds. Once seeds are sown, the milk jugs stay outside over winter, open to sun and water. In the spring, the seeds will germinate and provide a wealth of native plants for their gardens.



Upcoming Green Sanctuary Events—Mark Your Calendar

Feb. 11—Pruning workshop

On this Sunday, Green Sanctuary members Maureen Malloy and Linda Barrett will lead a workshop on “How to Prune Small Trees and Shrubs.” We will meet in the Sanctuary after the service to discuss pruning and then go outside to practice basic pruning skills.

March 17—Getting your yard ready for pollinators

April 28—Earth Day table

May 19—Pollinator Garden dedication

Member Spotlight: Sean Randol

Sean Randol grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, attending Roman Catholic Mass weekly with his family. Despite the strict sense of duty in the air, he described his family as joyful. Yes, there was his “hippy” high school teacher talking about world religions, but things would only change when he left home for a small, upstate New York college. Without the structure of family and friends his attendance at Catholic services dropped off. A freshman trip to Thailand opened his mind to Buddhism and studying the Bible academically was eye opening, leading to a minor in religion.

After a year of teaching English in Japan, Sean began working in the DC area. Zoe and Sean met through a mutual acquaintance. They had a wonderful experience at her Grandmother’s UU Church in Williamsburg, Va. They attended All Souls a few times and were married by the Minister from her father’s UU Church in Stow, MA. As first Simone and then Desmond came along, they started seeking a spiritual home. In 2018, after moving to Maryland for more space and proximity to work, they found UUCSS. They felt immediately welcomed by Gulnar Nagashybayeva and Robin Moore Lasky but took their time getting to know us while still exploring who they were religiously. They joined UUCSS in 2019.

In a lot of ways, Sean could be considered a spiritual humanist. As a UUCSS board member leading the Operations Council, he has a belief verging on spiritual practice that if he listens carefully and acknowledges the experience and values of everyone, he will grow as a person and everyone will succeed together. He’s had great interactions through the Book Club and working on events like Catoctin. Being a parent has been rewarding in the same way, with lots of events with the Cub and Girl Scouts creating opportunities to learn and experience new communities as a family. And in all of this Zoe has been an essential life partner, always asking how they can do the work of being a family better. There seems to be a continuous thread in Sean’s life from the family-based Catholicism of his youth to a richer mindfulness at UUCSS. That joy is why he’s here, and it’s something he wishes for all of us.



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 G. Schmidt, Minister

Rev. Kristin works Tuesday through Thursday from 10:00am to 4:00pm. Mondays are 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

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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**.