

the chalice

Published by the
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JANUARY WORSHIP SERVICES

THEME: IMAGINATION

10am Family 10:30 Adult
(unless noted otherwise)

For Zoom information [click here](#)
For Order of Service available Friday before the service [click here](#)

Sunday, January 3

Imagination Chalice Circle

For our first worship service of the New Year, join us for a reflection and discussion on the beauty of imagination. "Chalice Circles" include all the usual worship elements such as music, readings, meditation, and joys and concerns, with the added element of time for those who wish to share their own reflections. Rev. Jolie will lead this service and offer her own reflection to start the discussion.

Sunday January 10

Our First Source, Transcending Mystery and Wonder

Six Sources Series

Many of us may be familiar with the Seven Principles that Unitarian Universalists covenant to affirm and promote. But do you know about the Six Sources of our living tradition? We will reflect on one source each month for the rest of the church year. We begin with our first source, the direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder.

Sunday, January 17

The Radical Imagination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Tell them about the dream, Martin!" Mahalia Jackson urged Dr King off his prepared remarks at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. Because none of us has ever known a US without systematic racism, it takes radical imagination to work toward a new reality of justice and equality we dream of. Zoom discussion with Rev. Jolie and the Anti-Racism Working Group to follow the service at 1 PM.

Sunday, January 24

Climate Justice and Food

Everybody eats, and everybody has to live on this planet. In collaboration with the Green Team, our worship service today will reflect on the stakes of the climate crisis and food system-based solutions. We must again call upon our imaginations to build a new way and ensure our continued survival.

Sunday, January 31

Healing in the Midst of Suffering

In these difficult times it is hard to feel centered and peaceful, to find ease and rest. Lauri will explore some ways to navigate the impatience frustration and fear that accompanies being human and in particular under the present challenging conditions. Loneliness and isolation exacerbate what is already hard. Perhaps this can be an opportunity to do some of the work of healing that we all need no matter who we are.

Our Guest Speaker today, **Lauri Klein**, LICSW is a psycho-therapist and Mindful Meditation Instructor with a private practice in Hingham. She has over 35 years of experience as a helper and teacher. Lauri is a member of First Parish UU in Scituate and has been conducting lay led services and sermons periodically over the past 10 years. Most of the topics of her sermons are rooted in her study of Buddhist teachings. She is a long time meditator and regularly attends silent retreats at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA.



From the Minister



Happy New Year, beloveds. Many of us are saying, "good riddance!" to 2020. I watched comedian John Oliver blow up a giant 2020 sign in the season finale of his show Last Week Tonight, I scrolled past a show on Netflix called "Death To 2020," I've gotten holiday cards expressing relief that 2020 is behind us. Indeed, it is good to think we could be starting anew. We have two effective COVID-19 vaccines out there, and more are being developed. We may be wondering whether a different administration in the executive branch will bring different approaches to pandemic management that could mean less loss of life and more relief to individuals and communities struggling with lost livelihoods. We may feel hopeful about the possibility that COVID precautions such as wearing masks could become less politicized and more universally adopted. Or, something different - I wonder, what are you hopeful about in 2021?

For all our yearning for a fresh start, we are under no illusions that the date changing from 2020 to 2021 means we are magically delivered out from under the weight of pandemic. My three-year-old often asks me when we can get back to the "good old days" (yes, that is a direct quote), when we can go into other people's houses. I want to be able to answer her, but of course I don't know. When will things be normal again? Soon, I hope. But also, I have to remember that what is "normal" for me is also part of unequal and unsustainable way of structuring and powering our world. I saw a *Financial Times* article by author Arundhati Roy back in the spring that I keep returning to, as it calls me to rethink my yearning for the "normal." She writes:

Coronavirus has made the mighty kneel and brought the world to a halt like nothing else could. Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to "normality", trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists. And in the midst of this terrible despair, it offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves.

Nothing could be worse than a return to normality. Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.

We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.

Our worship theme for January is imagination. All month

we will consider the power of imagination to help us move through this "portal." As people of faith, how are we called to use our imaginations to be part of building a better world? I hope we can reflect on this question together.

Yours in faith and love,

Rev. Jolie

Thank-yous from Rev. Jolie:

I want to offer deepest gratitude to those who helped make our December 18 "Candles, Labyrinth, and Song" event possible. Thank you so much for all you did to create a special evening full of winter magic and beauty:

Colin Plumridge
Ena Bordman
Ellen Bordman
Laurie Wallace
Kathy Farrell and Don Fail
Lauren Grasso
Nathaniel Plumridge
Jessica Plumridge
Peter Raskin
Steve Tapper
Christine Bulman

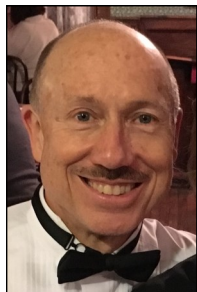
A huge thank you to everyone who helped create a virtual version of our annual Winter Solstice service! It was a powerful evening of words and music, and such a joy to keep the tradition alive in this strange time.

Jennifer Spencer
Beth McGregor
Rory McGregor
Linden Fingerson
Christian Roulleau
John Schumacher
Janet Schmidt
Gary Webber
Edele Panessidi
Bernie Greenberg
Valerie White
Jean Fox
Jeff Rose, Tech Support



December 18: Candles, Labyrinth, and Song event

From the President



FEED THE HUNGRY

The McGregor family letter to the North Pole had a special request this year because we thought Santa, Mrs. Claus and the Elves might be able to help. People throughout the world are hungrier than ever according to news reports. Even in our country, the wealthiest nation in the world, many families have less to eat today compared to a year ago. Worst of all, there are children who are missing meals because there is little food in their cupboards. Hopefully, Santa would know what to do!

One Boston-area organization that our church has assisted in the past is La Colaborativa based in Chelsea MA. Their Executive Director, the energetic Gladys Vega, explained to us that their mission is empowering Latinx immigrants enhance their community by taking care of themselves. However, since the start of the Covid pandemic, food lines have quadrupled in length and the need for help has become the greatest it has ever been!

When Christmas morning arrived at the McGregor homestead, grandsons Oskar and Holden were keen with excitement as they beheld the tree with presents underneath. Each had received multiple gifts from the North Pole containing a selection of packaged foods with special notes: "For immediate delivery to those who are hungry". The boys knew that our church supports the nearby Stoughton food pantry, so they loaded up the station wagon and deposited the goods in the grey bin outside the church front door.

Family discussion about food shortages faced by so many also influenced me to defer receiving personal gifts this year and instead request that charitable donations go to foodbank organizations struggling to keep up with growing demand. In addition, my New Years' resolution is a permanent new line item on every grocery list to buy \$10 worth of food for the Stoughton Food Pantry. Oskar and Holden have confirmed that this is a good thing to do.



Rory McGregor

UCS Parish President

Church closed until April 2021

The Task Force for Safe Reopening recommends continued closure of the church building, as already defined, until the beginning of April with the provisions that

1. The Board of Trustees will send a firm reminder of the use limits and that all uses of the building must be scheduled and approved, and
2. That the Task Force will reevaluate the risks of Covid for consideration of a possible reopening or further extension of the current closure, **relying on recommendations of the UUA and local public health experts.**

The Board of Trustees will vote on this recommendation at its January 13th meeting.

Join a Connection Circle!

Our Fellowship Committee is seeking to form new Connection Circles. Contact Rev. Jolie if you wish to join one. Not sure what a Connection Circle is? Enjoy this testimonial from Patty Fitzgerald:

I've been part of a weekly UCS Connection Circle for several months now, and I have to say I've really enjoyed and appreciated it. It's been a bright spot for me in an otherwise socially quiet and stressful time.

The group is really laid back, and if I forget to log in at the appointed hour or just don't feel like seeing people (or have them see me) that day, I don't have to feel guilty. No judgments!

It's been a chance to get to know and "hang" with people I normally wouldn't spend that much time with, what with the craziness of our often bustling coffee hours. There's no meeting agenda to cover, we just chat and tell bad jokes.

It's like a circle supper — without the circle ... or the supper.

It's been a comfort to know the group is there, especially some weeks when I've felt as though I was in a hopeless and permanent quarantine and the gray days of winter cast a pall. Seeing members' friendly faces has been such a joy!

We've gotten together distantly two or three times in the summer at our homes, and when the chill came we once had burned hotdog and marshmallows and made s'mores by a fire pit!

When we reopen the church and slowly return to life as we've known it, I will look back fondly on my trusted, Covid-inspired Connection Circle. Maybe we could even have Connection Circles post-Covid. A silver lining!

Interfaith Gathering for MLK Day Sunday, January 17, 4pm on Zoom

Join your fellow church members and others who worship all over town for this interactive event on Zoom, all about dismantling racism. Led by members of the Sharon Interfaith Clergy Association. Families with young children will be invited to participate in a town-wide read of children's books on the topic - stay tuned for more details! Zoom link will be shared prior to the event.

Spiritual Autobiography, Part 1 Sunday, January 24, 7:00 - 8:30 PM on Zoom

Join Rev. Jolie and your fellow congregants for this three-part series to inspire us to write our "spiritual autobiographies." Open to theists, agnostics, and non-theists alike, this series will ask you to consider, how does your story connect to the story of the human family, the story of the cosmos, or God's story? We will work with writing prompts and have time to write and share with each other during each session. Limited to 10 participants. Contact Rev. Jolie to sign up: minister@uusharon.org. Sign Up deadline Sunday, January 17.

Participants are encouraged to attend all three sessions, fourth Sundays from January to March 7:00 - 8:30 PM.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84255472558?pwd=Vk9PVmxlcURvZEMzTHhSSUtyRHJ5dz09>

Zoom Chats with Rev. Jolie Every Thursday at 10AM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/98093769487?pwd=T3ZqM2NwQnVDd3RPYUIGLzFvSWZiUT09>

Thursdays at 10 AM. Log in and share whatever's on your hearts and minds. Join us for this relaxed, friendly, open chat time. Please note there will be no Zoom Chat with Rev. Jolie on Thursday, January 14.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021



Rev. Jolie preparing for the Candles, Labyrinth and Song event in December right after a snow storm



We received Christmas greetings and an expression of gratitude for our financial support from Rev. Lorant Tokes and our partner congregation in Gyulakuta, Romania.

Another successful GFK year, thanks to generous support

This year's Gifts for Kids program, celebrating 30 years since founder Pat McDougal and her team including Peggy Greenfield and Wendy Mullin, was a big success. While we were unable to shop for preferred items from individual wish lists, over \$8500 was raised from UCS patrons to brighten the holidays for more than 1200 youth in our region. Our combined effort was another sign of the generosity of this community during stressful times - well done!



Committee Events and Updates

Monthly Stewardship Chat

Your Values Guide the UCS

What are the important values that guide you? How does our church help you live those values? It's inspiring to hear your personal stories. Together, we can do more for all and your generosity enables our church and the UUA to promote those values in the larger world. On Sunday, January 10, 2021, join the Stewardship Committee at noon after services for a 30-minute conversation about the values we share and how our church supports them.

The Stewardship Committee: Colleen Tuck, Wilbur Edwards, Susan Olson Drisko, Karin Hendricks, Pat McDougal, Fred Bramhall and Peter Raskin

Peter Raskin, Chair

Fellowship Committee

Fellowship Committee is Coordinating a Secret Pal Gift Exchange!

Join us to spread some cheer in our church community! In the month of February the Fellowship Committee is hosting Church Cheer, a secret-pal style gift exchange. You can [sign-up here](#) via google docs to participate, or, if you need help with the online form, contact the exchange coordinator, who can help sign you up.

Exchange coordinator: Chelsea Gould 203-240-5570 or chelsea.c.gould@gmail.com

[More detailed information and FAQs is available here.](#) Sign-up by Feb 8th. There is no expectation for purchasing a gift - re-gifting and home/hand made options are encouraged - but if someone chooses to purchase there is a \$25 spending limit.

Chelsea Gould, Co-Chair

Endowment Committee Update

How do you build an endowment for the Church? An endowment is a sum of money invested wisely, the income from which can support the activities of the church in perpetuity. When Ellen and I think about the money that will go to the church from our estate, we think of it as a pledge to the church that will continue after we are gone and will insure the church's good work for future generations.

Currently the endowment fund has only \$22,000 in it, far less than would allow any contribution to the programs of the church. During the 42 years that Ellen and I have been members the church has succeeded in raising funds to hire a full time minister, had several

major repair projects including fixing a steeple which was about to collapse and has built a beautiful new wing as well as making the church nearly completely accessible. These wonderful projects took our members energy and commitment and we didn't have time to work on building an endowment.

Endowments are largely built by members including a bequest to the church in their estate plans. Of course we all want to follow the maxim "Retire rich and die poor". So that many, if not most bequests, will be small. But if most church member's estate plans include the church, the endowment will accumulate.

The Unitarian Universalist Association has programs that can help the church build an endowment. These include a mutual fund managed by the UUA for investing the money wisely and in a socially conscious manner and a program which allows gifts of stocks, bonds or appreciated assets and gift annuities which allow future gifts to reduce current tax obligations.

When I sit in the sanctuary I often think of the people that built and maintained the building for the past 150 years, so that I could enjoy it now. Equally important they kept the institution of the church alive through good times and bad. An endowment is an enduring gift from the past to the future. In the months the follow the endowment committee will try to contact those church members who might consider a bequest to the church in order to begin this important project.

David Schoenfeld, Chair.



A thoughtful Christmas Card livening up the UCS office. Thank you!

Our Security Upgrade

Over the years, keys to our church have been issued to pretty much all who have asked, and no one really knew anymore who had one. After much thoughtful discussion, the Board of Trustees has decided to implement a keypad system that allows us to know who is in the building and when.

We are very grateful to Jeff Rose, who took on the research, commissioning and implementation of the new system. We also thank Linda Cveckova for participating in the planning meetings and providing much insight on access needs. A research of options resulted in the new keypad locks that have been installed on the front door, the admin office, the Minister's Study and the RE office. All other doors that have locks have been re-keyed.

The keypad locks are software controlled and monitored. If you regularly visit the church and admin office, you will need an access code. Anyone who requires access will be given a code unique to them. A code can also be given for a one time need to enter the building. Also, the system has been moved to the inside door of the main entrance. This allows delivery packages to be put in the outer vestibule and you to be out of the elements as you are unlocking the door. You may request a code using the following link: <https://forms.gle/uXipDcrH8fYa7XeT9>.



B&G and the Board feel this system will ensure that only authorized people are in the building, providing security to those who work alone and eliminating the chance that the building might be left unlocked. If you have questions about the system, please do not hesitate to contact me at ldrisko@comcast.net. And if you currently have one of the old keys? Go ahead and keep it as a memento, or recycle it. But it will no longer get you past any locked doors.

Lindsay Drisko, B&G Chair

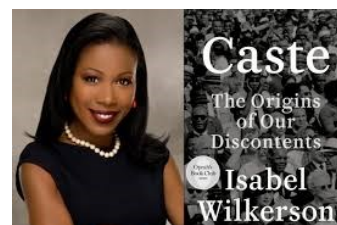
January Programs

The Not Boring Book Group

We will skip our January meeting and will come back together on **January 6th** at 7pm in the Virtual Library, to discuss the short stories of Alice Munro. The stories are available online [here](#).

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/6525468701?pwd=b2JuMlI5TVJzWTNHZ2ZyUzVYcFh1dz09>

In collaboration with the racial justice work being done here at church, we have selected for our **February 3rd** discussion the book *Caste: The Origin of our Discontent* by Isabel Wilkerson. A few books will be available for loan through our church library. See the Social Justice Updates Page for more information.



We meet via zoom at 7pm on the first Wednesday of the month, in the Virtual Library, with occasional breaks for holidays. You don't need to have finished the book, or even started it, to join us - it's likely the discussion will be interesting. You can find the listing on the [calendar](#) as well. Please join us.

Let's Laugh Today

is **EVERY** Wednesday at 7:30pm on ZOOM!

Let's Laugh Today Laughter Club is on ZOOM for 45 minutes every Wednesday at 7:30pm! In these challenging times, there is nothing like a good belly laugh to help release stress and anxiety. These laughter exercises and deep breathing help to bring more fresh oxygen into the body and brain helping you feel more energetic and healthy. It's a great way to connect with other people through eye contact while remaining socially distant and it is thoroughly up-lifting and immunity-boosting!

See www.letslaughtoday.com for link to this free ZOOM meeting and others. This is the perfect time to try something new in 2021!



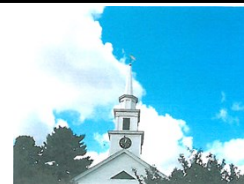
Calendar Link

Check out our Calendar for online events happening this month: <https://www.uusharon.org/calendars/2021-01/>



January Programs, continued

Conversations
At the Meetinghouse



Let's Laugh in 2021 During These Challenging Times

BILL AND LINDA HAMAKER

CERTIFIED LAUGHTER YOGA MASTER TRAINERS, LAUGHTER AMBASSADORS, AND MEMBERS OF UUSHARON FOR NINE YEARS

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 7 PM

ZOOM LINK:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89724469293>

Meeting ID: 897 2446 9293 Password: 3652

Bill and Linda Hamaker, Certified Laughter Yoga Master Trainers and the founders of "Let's Laugh Today" (www.letslaughtoday.com) will show you tools for helping to cope in these challenging times and teach you how to bring more laughter into your life! Laughter Yoga combines guided laughter exercises with breathing exercises to bring more oxygen to the body's cells. This oxygen boost gives enhanced vitality, energy and a feeling of real well-being even after just one session. Any age and any level of physical ability can do these simple exercises. You can sit or stand in front of your computer in the comfort of your own home on Zoom! A pretend laugh even has all the same health benefits as a real one, but turns into a real laugh when practiced in a group. Laughing strengthens the immune system, unwinds the negative effects of stress, lowers blood pressure, lifts your spirits, improves mental alertness and much, much more.

Please join them for this fun, unique, and uplifting experience that will show you how to add more laughter to your life and the life of others. Bill and Linda and have been spreading the joys and health benefits of laughter yoga in this area for eleven years, have run two non-profit successful laughter clubs in the area and have been leading laughter on ZOOM every week for laughers all over the world since March 2020. They have been on [BOSTON CHRONICLE](#), [BOSTON Magazine](#)'s alternative medicine section and have appeared on community television, radio, and have been featured on the front page of many community newspapers.



Conversations at the Meetinghouse is a monthly program held on the first Friday of each month (January to June) at 7PM where members of the community share their expertise and experience about important issues of the day.

Free and Open To Public

Religious Education News

From the Interim Director of Religious Education



What's Next?

During the interim period between settled religious education leaders, there is a generally accepted series of tasks to be achieved as suggested by the Unitarian Universalist Association which has been offering guidance to its member congregations for almost 60 years. Charting the course for the continued health of the religious education program includes claiming, honoring, and appreciating the program's past as well as illuminating the program's unique identity as a learning community. What are its values, strengths, needs and challenges?

We have begun this discernment together and I am humbled by the dedication, pride, and commitment of so many people, past and present, to the religious education program here at UCS. This deep dive into the history and identity of this lively program that has served generations of UCS-ers will likely take us through the church year.

A first-round of sharing happened in November and we hope to do more in January. Parents and some youth have been reflecting not only on what has been meaningful but also what has been challenging. I appreciate the level of insight that all are offering as it shows a true caring for this community and its beloved program. There are many more voices to be heard, including more parents, people who have taught RE in the past, youth who have most recently been involved in the program, and even adults, once children here, who have long since gone, though still have ties to UCS. Each voice, each reflection adds to the distinctiveness of what you, in collaboration with your religious education staff, have created here over the course of decades.

There is enough substance here to spawn several deep and meaningful conversations with the R.E. Committee as we integrate the feedback, wade through curricula, and identify the core values and pillars of the religious education program in service of what's to come.

And what is to come? This question is made far more complex by a global pandemic with far-reaching effects, many of which will filter in some way right down to the children and adults who walk through the doors of UCS when they once again open - to say nothing of how we are serving those who currently sit in our virtual circles.

While we can imagine returning to normal and the comfort and care that will bring, we must ask ourselves if

"returning to normal" will actually happen. Even if we attempted to do so, will what we were doing before meet the needs of a community of children and youth who have experienced a year like no other in recent history? Likely not. I recently read an article by a retired educational administrator that exhorts educators not to focus on getting children academically "caught up", rather, to meet them at the door with art supplies, paper, music, room to dance and play, and to give expression to, create an outlet for, the traumatic effects of what will be over a year of pandemic life. A year with widely varying impacts on children from the loss of loved ones, to family financial stress, to loss of social life, to the total disruption of all they knew to be a constant.

While that question looms large, I am confident that the discernment process that we are already engaged in is the best thing we could be doing at this time. It will be the enduring values and the heart-centered vision that you arrive at, based on your unique identity as a learning community, that will guide your response to UU religious education in a post-pandemic world. Even if it is a work in progress, because living in the question is one of the things Unitarian Universalists do best. I am honored to witness your process and look forward to what the year births.

In Faith,

Christine

dre@uusharon.org

Social Justice for Families

In our fall survey of families, there was a widely identified desire for a monthly social justice initiative that families could participate in together in tandem with other families working on the same initiative. We did not have to look far to find an opportunity to serve. Our own Social Justice committee has held long ties with Father Bills/Mainspring House Bagged Lunch Program. Members of UCS have been participating in this program for several years. We are working on developing a plan for families to team up (remotely) to assemble and deliver 100 individual bagged lunches between them. [Here is a little more from Father Bill's about the program](#). Stay tuned for an opportunity to learn about this program and how you can team up with other UCS families to get make it happen!

Religious Education News, continued

Being a Parent

A Saturday morning series for UU parents of children and youth

January 9 and 23, 9:00 am - 10:00 am. Ongoing monthly on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays. Zoom details in the online church calendar.

"Being" is a challenge during these times. Being a parent during these times is even more challenging than it normally is. Grab some coffee and join us for a series of drop-in, topical conversations led by various facilitators including Rev. Olivetti, Christine Bulman, Katie Byron, and members of the congregation with special interests. We hope that this space one where parents can connect with others, find support in the challenges and celebrations of parenting in these times, and perhaps find a pocket of quiet to reflect. Katie Byron kicks off the series with a winter segment on parenting in times of trauma. See below for details.

Parenting in Times of Trauma led by Interim Religious Education Assistant Katie Byron, LCSW

These are traumatizing times. And that trauma impacts our minds and our bodies in ways that make it extra hard to figure out how to support our children and ourselves. Join us for a conversation about how the trauma of this moment shows up for our kids and teens, as well as in adults. We'll also share strategies for parents to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotional and physiological responses and tips on supporting children in recognizing and accepting their own experiences in this time and empowering them in their resiliency. See the [church calendar](#) for the zoom link.

Katie Byron is the Youth Coordinator and Interim RE Assistant at UCS. They are also a social worker with experience supporting parents and families who have experienced domestic violence, community violence, and other forms of trauma. Katie brings knowledge from the Attachment, Regulation, and Competency (ARC) Framework, which was designed to support children who have experienced trauma and their caregivers, as well as a desire to build on the strengths that parents already have in supporting themselves and their families.

YOUTH GROUPS

Senior Youth Group

SYG will resume it's weekly meetings on January 10th, 2021. SYG meets on Sundays from 5-6:30pm over Zoom. This month we'll keep checking-in with one another, playing games, watching a movie together, and continuing to support each other through these changing times. Senior Youth Group is open to any and all individuals in grades 9 - 12 and folks are encouraged to invite friends! Past SYG Zoom meetings have involved watching videos, celebrating quarantine birthdays, and playing a lot of games together!



Junior Youth Fellowship Group

JYFG meets once a month and is open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in our congregation. Last month, we played online games together. Our January meeting will be on January 17th and we will be cooking together!

Call for Youth Advisors

Looking for something to do Sunday evenings? Want to bring some play into your week? Senior Youth Group depends on adult volunteers to serve as youth advisors. You do not need any special skills, just a willingness to come hang out with us on zoom one Sunday a month and play some games. If you might be interested in serving in this way, please email Katie at yc@uusharon.org.

Have questions about our Senior and Junior youth programs? Interested in volunteering to help with the groups or have a student who might be interested in joining? Email our Youth Coordinator Katie Byron at yc@uusharon.org.



A kind and heartfelt Christmas Card in the UCS office. Thank you!

Religious Education News

Virtual Revels

A Special Thank You from Rev. Jolie Olivetti and Christine Bulman

The annual holiday tradition known as Revels here at UCS moved itself online and adapted itself to our virtual format for a lovely result. Well, that's not exactly true. It did not adapt itself. It was the work of many. Without the contribu-

tions of children, youth and their families, it would not have happened at all. Many of our young people attended several planning meetings on Zoom during a time when "zoom fatigue" along with the darkening days, and continued social distance were surely taking a toll. Their family members were behind the scenes, supporting them to show up the way they did. Adults showed up to hold space for the creative process including Jessica Plumridge and Glenn Rivard for the Santa Lucia meetings. Forbesy Russell creatively engaged the children's choir during a time when singing together is not possible. Several people shared their gifts of music and spoken word: Daphne Theiler, Zoe Plumridge, Chloe Klein, Noura Roustom, Suha Roustom, and Christian Roulleau, the Giammaria/Woods family, the Kinraide family, Charlotte Trivedi, Adric Kinraide, Miranda Roulleau, Ena Bordman, Colin Plumridge, Elena Gallant, Sam Nichamoff, Gabby Pannone, and Charlotte Dussault. This is just some of the love that made up the Revels service.

Yet it was the delivery, in this virtual format that brought it to our living rooms and landed the service in our hearts. Glenn Rivard worked tirelessly behind the scenes, expanding his audio and visual editing and production skills in order to bring to us the Virtual Children's Choir and the Santa Lucia videos. In addition, he tracked and coordinated the presentation of the dozen videos that made up the body of the Revels service. Thank-you Glenn! This was all delivered to us on Sunday by the Zoom Task Force who shared that ambitious slide deck, and whose members have donated countless hours in individual prep time behind



the scenes, as well as shown up every Friday afternoon and Sunday morning to plan and implement virtual services for ten months. On behalf of the congregation, Rev. Jolie and I want to honor the commitment of the Zoom task force to ensure the on-going spiritual

nourishment of this community.

Rev. Jolie and Christine



Religious Education News, continued

Thank you to Forbesy Russell and the Children's Choir

This fall, our family services have been guided by the monthly themes put out by Soul Matters. So far this year we have explored, renewal, deep listening, healing, and stillness. One of the gifts of the Soul Matters materials has been their relationship with Lea Morris, who has written sweet, teachable songs that embrace these themes. Forbesy, our Children's Choir Director has improvised during these times and found a way to teach choir members these songs and has visited them outdoors at their homes to record them signing solos. These in turn have been played as hymns during the family service! If that wasn't a feat - they took it up a notch with a fabulous and festive contribution to the Revels Service! Thanks also to Glenn Rivard for helping put the Children's Choir together virtually for a fabulous season finale!



SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



The Social Justice Committee encourages you to visit the UCS website (uusharon.org) for all the latest news and updates on what's happening at church. The Social Justice pages are a great source for the most up-to-date information on events, opportu-

nities to engage, resources, and for links to partner organizations and groups that we collaborate with in our work.



Brown Envelope Donations

During this most unusual year, the congregants of the Unitarian Church of Sharon have found endless ways to reach out and help those less fortunate as we all struggle through the Covid pandemic. Herewith a sampling of how we remain connected to and supportive of others:

The November Brown Envelope collection raised \$956.89 in donations to the church for the **Gifts for Kids Program**, during this its 30th year. Since April we have known that some of our traditional Brown E donations have gone directly to the organizations that we choose to support, and in this case a quick check with the GFK files reveal that an additional \$7,545 from UCS congregants went directly to their cause, resulting in over \$8,500 in support for youth in our region suffering from economic distress. That represents some 56 children, of the over 1200 cared for this year, whose holidays were brightened by your efforts. Thank You!

Throughout November UCS families were encouraged to participate in the UUSC program **Guest at Your Table**, with home collection box kits and discussion materials meant to encourage conversation and reflection. Donations submitted to the church of over \$108 will be bundled and sent to the UUSC, while again we know that many further donations sent directly to their program represent additional support from the UCS.

The December Brown E recipient has been **The Sanctuary Boston** (thesanctuaryboston.org), a program founded by UU young Adults who often find themselves without a spiritual home. Sanctuary is a contemporary worship community and is one of the largest ministries to UU Young Adults in the country. Sanctuary Boston is a powerful presence and they're contributing new music, new leaders, and new possibilities to Unitarian Universalism. Your Brown E donations totaled over \$542 this year (plus additional direct

donations via their website).

In keeping with our longstanding tradition, all donations collected during our **Christmas Eve** services this year are being donated to **Father Bill's & MainSpring House** in Brockton to support the vital work for our regional homeless community.

Additionally, the collection taken during the **Blue Christmas** service in December was added to our ever growing collection in support of the local food pantries in our region. To date, since Covid struck last winter, we have collected over \$28,000 for this pressing need - a remarkable sum. Sadly, the need at the pantries remains critical, and we encourage your ongoing donations in support of our neighbors who continue to struggle.

The January 2021 Brown E donations will go to support another program helping to feed communities in Boston suffering from economic distress: **Fair Foods** (fairfoods.org). For the past 32 years, Fair Foods has provided healthy produce to low income families in the greater Boston area with a unique \$2 Bag Program, which goes beyond emergency hunger relief by making an affordable diet of fresh fruits and vegetables a reality. Based throughout Boston, including a key distribution site at First Parish Roxbury (home of our UUUM programs), your support of Fair Foods will have a lasting impact on folks struggling to remain healthy and safe in these troubled times.



UCS youth assist at the Fair Food distribution event at UUUM, fall 2018

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued

While the **CommUnity Closet**, a free clothing pantry project of the Five Point Cluster of UU churches, remains closed indefinitely due to the pandemic, a recent **Winter Coat collection** among the partner churches resulted in many bags of winter clothing being shared with community service agencies in Brockton. The UCS filled Jim Mullin's truck with donations!

A final example of UCS outreach: during our December interactions on the church grounds (Fair Trade Marketplace and the Labyrinth Spiritual Walk, all with proper safety protocols in place), we collected hats, mittens and scarves in support of the programs at the **C.O.P.E. Center** in Brockton. The Community Outreach, Prevention and Education Center provides HIV outreach, education, counseling, and testing to individuals at highest risk for HIV and opiate overdose including injection drug users and their sexual and drug-using partners; sex industry workers; gay and bisexual men; transgender individuals; and other populations disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. Our donation of warm winter gear supports their community outreach efforts.

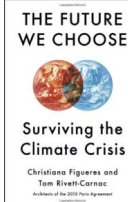


MainSpring House lunch making goes on and on

Never willing to let Covid keep us from our appointed rounds, the SJC has maintained our monthly commitment of assembling and delivering **100 Brown Bag Lunches** to the **MainSpring House** homeless shelter in Brockton every month; that's over 900 meals donated since we last worked together during Coffee Hour in the Vestry after Sunday services at church last spring (remember when that was what was *normal*?). Now Christine Bulman, our Interim DRE, is working on [coordinating family units](#) to engage in this task as we enter 2021, and we are looking for shoppers, assembly teams and a delivery squad to keep this program humming. Interested? Contact Christine, or Gare Reid and we will see about bringing your talents into the mix (and not to worry, our 'secret' receipt for PB&J sandwich-making will be shared with any who want the details...!).

Sustainable Sharon Coalition Common Read

The SJC and the Sustainable Sharon Coalition are sponsoring a Read for the Planet initiative. The book for January 2021 is **The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crises** by Figueres and Rivett-Carnac. For more details go to the [SSC website](#).



Louis D Brown Peace Institute update:

For the past two years, we at UCS have participated in the **Mother's Day Walk for Peace** in support of the work of the Louis D. Brown Institute in Dorchester, MA. The Institute's services are dedicated to survivors of murder and the focus is on healing. In 2018, we walked in Roxbury with the community and groups in support of the Institute to advocate for the work the Institute is doing. In 2019, because of the COVID pandemic, the walk was a virtual event. Both events were partnered with fund-raising to support the many services the Institute provides. Both years, UCS exceeded our fund-raising goals and we plan to do the same this year in May.

To reacquaint you with the work of the Louis D. Brown Institute: The services are (and the list is growing): Survivors Outreach, Community Re-entry, Wholistic Healing, Stars and Stripes Girls Group, Healing and Recovery, Writing Workshop, Brothers on the Mend, and Mindfulness. Survivors Outreach program provides emotional and practical support for families in the first 24 to 72 hours after a homicide happens using The Survivors' Burial and Resource Guide - a Step-by-Step Workbook for Regaining Control and ongoing advocacy. All of the services are structured to serve as resources for healing, teaching, and learning for families and communities impacted by murder, trauma, grief and loss. This work's goal is to create and sustain an environment where all families can live in peace and all people are valued.

We at the Unitarian Church of Sharon are committed to continuing our support and advocacy for the Louis D. Brown Institute. We will be updating you, the congregation, each month on the growing work of the Institute and some exciting new programs as the Institute brings its services to communities outside of Massachusetts. Stay tuned!

Elizabeth Siftar, Advocacy and Fundraising Liaison



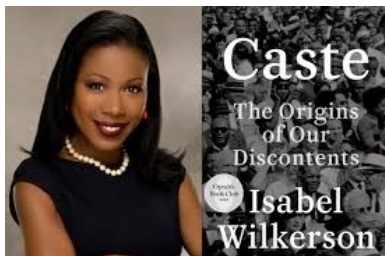
SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS

Anti-Racism Working Group

As stated in the November Newsletter, "Racial injustice is deeply rooted in our culture, and the ongoing work for social justice calls us to examine this problem in all its complexity." The UCS Anti-Racism Working Group has recently facilitated two church-wide programs to assist in this endeavor, and plans to continue offering opportunities on an ongoing basis this year and in the years ahead, recognizing that this work requires a lifelong commitment.

Our current programs focus on the book ***Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent*** by Isabel Wilkerson.

In the book, Wilkerson "gives us a masterful portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America as she explores, through an immersive, deeply researched narrative and stories about real people, how America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings." (Source: Politics and Prose, an independent bookstore located in Chevy Chase, Washington, D.C.)



Dwight Garner, the chief critic of The New York Times, called *Caste* "an instant American classic and almost certainly the keynote nonfiction book of the American century thus far."

The program on *Caste* has begun with a series of discussion groups in December and January, with a video interview of Isabel Wilkerson by the historian and author John Meacham. Use the link below to find one of several workshop series to join; then we will then have an opportunity for a congregational read of the book, with group discussion(s) available, including one by **The Not Boring Book Group** at its February 3rd meeting.

During the Meacham interview of Wilkerson, we hear Wilkerson's report that the U.S. is actually built on an unrecognized caste system which has created substantial barriers to those at the bottom of the system, with African Americans being the lowest caste. The video offers an important new perspective on American history, and we have broken it down into 3 separate sessions in order to provide more time for reflection and discussion of the information being provided. We will be offering a variety of dates and times to watch and discuss the video with other congregants, as provided below. We encourage you to attend all 3 sessions with the same group; however, we understand that there may be times you need to attend other dates. We also urge you to pre-register for the sessions if possible, using this [RESPONSE FORM](#).

Five Point Cluster Mask Making update

I want to send a huge congratulations to everyone who has participated in the Five Points Cluster COVID mask-making effort over the last several months. I have just completed a count of the total number of masks you have made in this effort, and I am seeing near 4000(!) masks for adults and children. The masks you have made were supplied to Brockton ER when they did not have access to PPE's, to Brockton community through Brockton Mutual Aid and Brockton Interfaith Committee, Brockton schools, day care, churches, senior centers. Masks were distributed to Pembroke Psychiatric Hospital, and nursing homes in Taunton, Roxbury, Dorchester. Children's masks were given to the Nathan Hale School to help them open when they fell short of funding by more than \$4000. I just received 50 children's masks which I will be donating to Cross Street Family Shelter in Somerville. The needs have been great and your efforts have been great, as well. And, the needs will continue, I am sure.



I have been inspired by working with you all and seeing the beautiful masks you have consistently made, sometimes in record time! I will be stepping down as coordinator for the Five Points Cluster mask-making effort at the end of December. I am hoping someone will be inspired to step up to coordinate this effort. The needs will continue and your work can help keep people safe and save lives.



Please contact me if you would like to talk about stepping up as coordinator, or better yet, just step up!

I wish you all many blessings in the season of light in spite of the darkness. Stay Safe and Be Blessed!

Elizabeth Siftar, Coordinator
Five Points Cluster mask-making group

Hold the date:

SJC Fair Trade Marketplace on 20 January

While keeping an eye on political developments down in Washington, DC earlier that day, plan on picking up your Fair Trade chocolates and coffees, Shopping for Justice grocery cards, and dropping off Food Pantry donations at our monthly Fair Trade Marketplace in front of the church, 3-5pm on January 20th. (We are looking to consistently reserve the 3rd Wednesday of each month for this recurring event, so pencil in 17 February, and again on 17 March (Green Chocolates???) for stocking up on essentials.)





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

UNITARIAN CHURCH
OF SHARON
4 NORTH MAIN STREET
SHARON, MA 02067



*A Welcoming
Congregation of
the UUA*

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT
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SEND AN EMAIL TO
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