

the choice

Published by the
Unitarian Church of Sharon
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APRIL WORSHIP SERVICES

10:00 Family Service / 10:30am Adult Service

For Zoom information [click here](#)

For Order of Service [click here](#)

April 2 The Stories That Change Us

important Jewish holiday, whose traditions include retelling the Exodus story, we will reflect on the power of stories. What does storytelling have to do with liberation, for us as individuals and as members of a larger whole? **Rev. Jolie preaching.**

April 9 Incremental Renewal

Today is Easter, the day that Christians celebrate Jesus' resurrection, a message of hope out of the depths of suffering. Anne Lamott writes, "Every time we choose the good action or response, the decent, the valuable, it builds, incrementally, to renewal, resurrection, the place of newness, freedom, justice." Our worship today will focus on how we create hope in difficult times by our small actions towards the good. **Rev. Jolie preaching.**

April 16 Animal Blessing - Intergenerational Service

Bring your animals to church today for a blessing! Yes, real live pets are invited, as well as cherished stuffies or photos. Together we will delight in all the beings we share this Earth with. **Rev. Jolie leading the service.**

April 24 Earth Day Service: Dr. Ricky Stern Guest Speaker:

From Darkness to Light – A Road We can Travel. A celebration of Earth Day with a message of hope during troubling climate justice times.

April 30 Celebrating the Religious Education Program

In this annual service, given in conjunction with children and youth, we'll catch a glimpse of what's been happening in RE, hear from children and middle schoolers, and thank all those who made the programs possible this year!

From the Minister



Dear Ones,

Happy Spring! I often joke that I know winter is truly over when street cleaning begins once again in Boston. But seriously, I track with delight the return of the Red-winged Blackbirds, the blooming of the crocuses, and the lengthening days. I'm sure many of you also find joy and satisfaction in noticing signs like these.

And then, of course, there is the garden. My family and I have a small plot in a community garden about a 5 minute walk from our house. It's on a funny little patch of land at the back of a parking lot belonging to the State Laboratory of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. We first joined this community garden in the very early days of the pandemic, and we especially cherished what it offered us at the time: a place to go and do something fun and constructive with our kid (we only had one at the time...) during what was otherwise an isolating and confusing time. It was all the more poignant that our garden happened to be located there, next to the very building where our state's public health researchers were doing all they could to learn about this new virus that had already changed so much about our lives, and taken so much from us. I often had the inclination to shout "THANK YOU!!" up at the building as we walked through the parking lot towards our garden, spades in hand.

Another feature of our garden is that it borders the Arnold Arboretum. So though it's not huge, it is contiguous with a large expanse of open space. As a result, we get all kinds of wildlife visiting us there - rabbits, coyotes, one gardener even reported spotting a deer once. And in the spring and fall we have some very special visitors: migratory warblers who flash their pretty colors, trill their lovely songs, and confound my rather marginal bird identification skills.

As for what we do in the garden, well, we don't focus too much on maximizing production or efficiency. Our plans and plantings are more about what it offers our kids: a place to get their hands dirty, to dig for worms, and to taste carrots from the ground and beans from the vines. From seed to plants to compost, the garden is a place of cycles and learning and wonder, a place to remember that we come from the earth and that we count on it for everything. A garden is holy ground indeed.

So I hope you join me in welcoming the return of spring. What signs of spring are important in your life?

Yours in faith,
Rev. Jolie

From the President



Words matter to me. That won't surprise anybody because the consensus is I talk a lot. One of the symptoms of my neurodivergence is that if something comes into my head it falls out my mouth.

The words of our mission statement matter to me. When we were drafting it, someone suggested replacing "tolerating our differences" with "honoring our differences" and that's how the statement reads now, and I rejoice in that language every time I read it.

The words of our covenant matter to me. Since I'm a humanist—I don't believe in anything supernatural—the words "all souls shall grow into harmony with the divine" grate on me, and for 28 years I've recited the covenant as "all souls shall grow into harmony."

The words of our hymns matter to me. In "We'll Build a Land" there's a line, "where sisters and brothers anointed by God shall then create peace", and I sing it "inspired by love . . ." In my favorite hymn, "Morning Has Broken" (which by the way was NOT written by Cat Stevens), I sing "THE recreation of the new day" and "where MY feet pass", instead of "God's".

Every Sunday recently we've been singing "Spirit of Life" as a centering hymn. When I first encountered this hymn I didn't like it much. It ends on the "wrong" note and the words don't make much sense. How can one being (spirit or not) have both roots and wings? But a few years ago at the denomination's annual meeting, General Assembly, I was waiting with a bunch of other people for the beginning of the banner parade in the opening worship. I had the UCS banner and I was looking forward to carrying it into the assembly hall in front of several thousand co-religionists.

Somewhere amongst the crowd of waiting banner carriers, there was a stir, and we learned that someone had collapsed from a medical emergency. An inspired person started singing "Spirit of Life" very softly and we all joined in. We sang it over and over, focusing our love and thoughts to the stricken person, until the EMT's arrived. I have loved "Spirit of Life" ever since.

Nevertheless, words do matter. And so I'm going to use mine to remind you that your pledge is due! We build this beloved community together, with our presence, with our work, with our voices, with our words, and with our money.

Valerie White

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A note from the Interim Director of Religious Education:

Spring is upon us and that means lots of special celebrations at church! We celebrate the religious education program itself on April 30th with a service given by children and youth. We'll catch some glimpses of what's been going on in the religious education program this year and will thank all of the volunteers that made it all possible! On May 7th, the 9th and 10th graders will officially "come of age" in the eyes of the congregation and will have an opportunity to share their working credo statements. Finally, on May 21st, we dedicate the Little Free Diverse Library, welcome new members, and participate in the bridging of three of our high school seniors, alongside a special visitor.

And those are just the Sundays that pertain specifically to RE! There is also Easter and an Animal Blessing ceremony, a Committee Fair, and the Mother's Day Walk for Peace! Spring has sprung and the vibrance of this community is in step with it! The RE Committee is bustling with activity - be sure to stop by their table after church on April 2 and get a taste of the action!

In Faith,
Christine Bulman

For more details on the RE program this month, [follow this link](#)



The high school youth provided the congregation with a thoughtful and inspiring service on March 26th!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, Continued

HATE

from:
each other, always backstabbing and
behind-back talking and
back-burnering with no warning

from:
adults who were supposed to be trust-
ed
twisting love into lies
and vices versa

from:
the television
where we are unfailingly failures
the butt of bad jokes
the addicts, the objects, the half-
human lessons

from:
photoshop and filter bots
distorting our image
until we are left in front of a mirror,
starving,
screaming 'i am not enough'

from:
strangers on the street, neighbors
to whom ripped jeans and
cropped tops are the sign of the devil

from:
every ear turned away

from:
every eye averted

from:
every touch rescinded

from:
everywhere.

SOLACE

from:
each other, always backing and
backing up when space is needed and
being able to bank on you, and you
me

from:
adults who we really can trust
who were us not long ago
who reassure us of a future
that will be ours someday

from:
the television where
we find our laughter again
the only place we can see
ourselves clearly is with others

from:
simple compliments, soft smiles,
thumbs up, assurance that we are,
in fact, beautiful, each and every
one

from:
those tiny moments of connection,
bean sprout and trellis communities
some place to belong

from:
every good laugh among friends

from:
every hug we didn't know we needed

from:
knowing something is out there wait-
ing for us

from:
everywhere.

- s.h.r.

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



The Social Justice Committee encourages you to visit the UCS website (uusharon.org) for news and connections about what's happening for social justice at church. The Social Justice pages are a great source for information on

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



Brown Envelope Collections

The February Brown Envelope donation joined our ongoing commitment to support the work of local food pantries during

this extended period of great food insecurity for many of our neighbors. Sunday donations raised \$1,787, which was added to ongoing donations of \$1,063 for a combined total of \$2,850 being shared for February. With an emphasis on our longstanding support for the Sharon/Stoughton Food Pantry, serving clients in both towns, and including additional pantries in Foxboro, Walpole, Canton, Norwood and another pantry based in the Congregational Church in Sharon, donations were converted to grocery cards at local stores through our Shopping for Justice grocery program.

The March Brown Envelope donations support the work of UTEC (United Teen Equality Center, utecinc.org), a youth empowerment program based in Lowell, MA. Their mission and promise is "to ignite and nurture the ambition of the most disconnected young people to trade violence and poverty for social and economic success." Thank you for your support.

For April, the Brown Envelope donations will be split between two organizations supporting Climate Justice efforts: the Sustainable Sharon Coalition (sustainablesharon.org) works to "inspire, educate, connect, and catalyze our community to protect the planet [and] to make Sharon a lead-

ing sustainable community." We also ask for support for the Neponset River Watershed Association (neponset.org), whose mission focus includes "Climate change affects Neponset land, water, people and wildlife, changing what we view as 'normal.' Species adapt to these changes, migrate elsewhere, or deal with the consequences. We can reduce our contribution to climate change as well as help natural communities to adapt." Both organizations work to support habitat restoration of native trees and plants, and invasive species controls, among their many programs. Your donations are greatly appreciated.



[SSC Annual Youth Tree Planting Program]



NEPWRA Habitat Restoration Program

SJC Meeting for April: the monthly SJC meeting will be on Sunday, April 2nd at 12:30pm. Look for the link in the UCS Calendar. We will continue to offer zoom participation, while some folx may be ready to resume gathering in the physical Library for face-to-face conversation. Please join us as we look for opportunities and challenges to work together as we make a difference in the world.

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



Here is what it takes each month to assemble 75 bag lunches for the guests of MainSpring House in Brockton, funded via Shopping for Justice grocery cards purchased by the UCS community. (Please note the new brand of bread on the table.) Missing ingredient: many helping hands needed on the assembly line....

MainSpring House lunch making: join in for an intergenerational project on Sunday, April 16th (note, this is the 3rd Sunday this month, a week later than usual) during Coffee Hour as we assemble 75 brown bag lunches for the guests of MainSpring House in Brockton. Each month we send lunches to the shelter, and we need your help to put them together. Want to help more? Contact Gare Reid (agreed@rcn.com) if you want to be a shopper, or to deliver the boxes of lunches. Do you and your household eat food too? We fundraise to purchase supplies for this effort with our Shopping for Justice program (S4J), where we ask you to purchase grocery cards from local chain stores for your personal shopping needs. We buy the cards in bulk, and get a 5% discount, which funds the lunch program (your grocery purchases are one-to-one, dollar for dollar, since the 5% donation comes from the stores). Stop by the Social Justice Table in the Vestry during Coffee Hours to learn more about this user-friendly program. And then wash your hands, grab a mask, and find your spot on

the assembly line on the 16th!



Learn more about the story behind Dave's Killer Bread

Did you know...? At the recent workshop on how we do spiritually grounded social justice work while building The Beloved Community, lead by UUSC coordinator Heather Vickery, we learned about the story behind Dave's Killer Bread, a bakery "built on the belief that everyone is capable of greatness. What began as one man's journey has turned into so much more. Today, one third of the employees at our Oregon bakery have a criminal background, and we have witnessed first-hand how stable employment sparks personal transformation." Since we purchase bread each to make our bag lunches for the guests of MainSpring House in Brockton, we are trying to support this social justice employment vision by using Dave's Killer Bread for the sandwiches each month. Does it cost a bit more? Yes, but it is another piece of the work we do together to make change happen. Want to help? Consider using our Shopping for Justice grocery card program to do your own food shopping. We raise the funds for the MSH lunches and other hunger related programs each month with this program, which costs you nothing but generates 5% donations by the grocery stores to our

ANTI-RACISM WORKING GROUP (ARWG) formerly 8th Principle



Anti-Racism Working Group (ARWG) REPORT

27th ANNUAL MOTHER'S DAY WALK FOR PEACE (MDW4P) with the LOUIS D. BROWN PEACE INSTITUTE (LDBPI) - SAVE THE DATE: SUNDAY, MAY 14TH From 7-10AM, Dorchester, MA

Put on your walking shoes and join us for the LDBPI's largest yearly fundraiser, begun in 1996, by Chaplain Clementina Chéry, whose 15-year old son Louis, was murdered in December of 1993, when he was caught in a fatal crossfire shootout near his home in Dorchester, MA. Back then, Boston did not provide any services to survivors of homicide victims and Louis' family left the hospital without any help – "empty-handed and empty-hearted." In an effort to prevent other families from having to endure the same experience, Chéry created the LDBPI as a "Center of Healing, Teaching and Learning for families and communities impacted by murder, trauma, grief and loss." This year's theme is Cultivating Cycles of Peace: "In our society, we are constantly looped into cycles of violence that overshadow the transformative power of peace. Like a blooming flower, cycles of peace flourish when carefully cultivated."

Why Participate: For those of you who joined us for any of the episodes of the documentary *Race: the Power of an Illu-*

sion, it is clear that a society which cultivates and sustains true peace ensures that all people are treated with equity and fairness and provided with the opportunities to receive the basic resources they need. Supporting the MDW4P, whether through a donation and/or as a walker on May 14th, helps us:

1. Bring alive the messages of the 8th Principle and our commitment to the social justice and anti-racism work we do at UCS,
2. Build connections which cross geography, race and class.
3. Celebrate the strength and hope of Chaplain Chéry and the folks at LDBPI. The story of Louis' murder and the resulting creation of the LDBPI exemplify some important facts when it comes to race and communities of color:
 - Louis' murder, which became a high-profile case, highlights the biases and assumptions made when it comes to communities of color. There was speculation that because he was murdered in broad daylight, he was either a gang member or had been involved in a drug deal gone bad. The truth was that Louis was an honor student and was killed on his way to a Teens Against Gang Violence meeting.

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and Peoples of Color) communities tend to be disproportionately poorer than white communities and often underfunded and under-resourced resulting in less safety, more violence and more crime. This disproportion in wealth is a result of a white supremacist system which has existed throughout the entire existence of the United States. Episode 3 of the documentary . The House We Live In– reaffirms

ANTI-RACISM WORKING GROUP (ARWG) formerly 8th Principle, continued

that race is not biological but rather a construct and narrative that has been told and retold and baked into our social institutions and policies which create the idea of race "by disproportionately channeling resources, power, status and wealth to white people."

While the Louis family eventually received an outpouring of support when the public learned the truth about Louis, for his family it "begged the question of what the response to their family would have been if he were in a gang or selling drugs? Would the same resources be poured in?"

And it is clear that without the resources needed to break this loop of violence, more often found in poorer communities and communities of color, the violence has become intergenerational. **Please visit the WEB-SITE at <https://ldbpeaceinstitute.org/>** for more information about the LDBPI. **For details about the May 14th walk, [Click Here](#).** We plan to provide more information on how to donate and join our walking team in the upcoming weeks, both in the Friday Chalice and in congregational emails.

RACE: THE POWER OF AN ILLUSION

A big thank you to Ellen Schoenfeld-Beeks and Lauren Grasso for facilitating the viewing and discussion of the 3 episodes of this informative and often disturbing documentary as well as to those of you who attended at least 1 episode. There were some very deep and uncomfortable conversations as we learned about not only the construct of race, which is in truth NOT a biological reality, but also the true history of the United States, which was based on the purposeful system of white supremacy, from its inception, and the current reality of the existing wealth gap between White and Black folks.

Due to its success, we intend to provide another opportunity to view the 3 episodes. This time, in order to hopefully make it more conducive to families with younger children, we plan to provide childcare and schedule it earlier in the evening.

NEW THIS MONTH – RECOMMENDED LINKS FROM ARWG MEMBERS

The 'cool Black girl effect' is actually a nightmare. Here's why. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/06/30/migroagressions-cool-black-girl-effect-bianca-xunise/> (Patty)

Doin' the Work: Frontline Stories of Social Change - Episode 39: White People Organizing for Racial Justice: Deep Canvassing <https://open.spotify.com/episode/22CE9P1uVabdWRIHkfcSdy?si=htwlu9ppTGa2HF3CVWkE0g&context=spotify%3Ashow%3A3VccAnlITyL829VEAQkQ6A> (Lauren)

Interview with Beverly Tatum on "White Privilege"

<https://www.racepowerofanillusion.org/interviews/interview-beverly-daniel-tatum-2002> (Ellen)

WE WELCOME YOUR INPUT

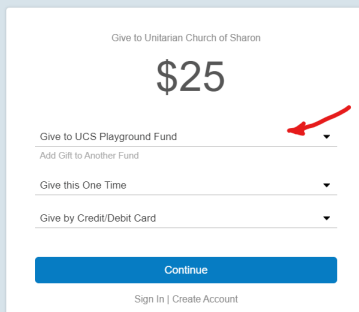
As always, we seek and welcome your input. Please reach out to Barbara Nelkin-Rose with any thoughts or suggestions about future events you would like to see offered, as together we work towards becoming an intentionally and proactively anti-racist and anti-oppressive faith community.

CHURCH NEWS

Playground Fund

Do you like the sound of children playing? Do you like knowing that the children of this church have a safe and fun playground? Of course you do! Help us finish creating our new playground by contributing to the Playground Fund. Funds will go toward paying for the new equipment already installed as well as the very special two-story tower that will be the centerpiece of the playground. You can contribute through Breeze, or by sending a check to the church directly with Playground in the memo line.

Every cent is important to our mission so please only use online giving if you are able to cover the processing fees (2.9% + \$0.30/transaction for credit cards and 1% + \$0.25/transaction for bank transfers). Otherwise, dropping off the money or sending a check to the Unitarian Church of Sharon 4 N Main street will let us keep all of your donation. Thank you!



Help spread the word about the [new sign up page for Greeters, Flowers and Coffee Hour at church](#). Ask a friend to be a greeter with you, or to make the coffee. new link!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0d4daba92ea2f49-coffeegreeterflo>

We need your help! Point your phone's camera at this QR code to sign up to be a greeter, bring flowers, or make coffee.



Art Wall

The art wall needs new pictures; please bring in your art work. Dinah can assist with getting it ready for hanging.

Youth artists wanted, middle-aged artists wanted, older artists wanted!

It's spring! Whatever your inspiration, if you've translated it from feeling to form, why not share it with the congregation on the art wall?

Perhaps a poem....

Any questions please contact Dinah Altman at drpa18@gmail.com or text 781-956-0238 or see me in person.

Easter Can Hunt Donations Needed



The annual Easter Can Hunt to benefit the Food Pantry in Sharon will be on Sunday, April 9. The more cans we have to hide, the more fun for kids, and the more we deliver to the food pantry! It's a win-win! Donation box in the church foyer.

CHURCH NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS

Committee Fair: April 2 During Coffee Hour. Learn how to volunteer at UCS to help make our church run.

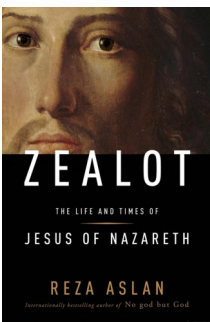
Casual Music Jam: April 7, 7-9 PM, Program A/B. Join your UCS friends to sing and strum folk songs together every first Friday from 7 - 9 PM.

Tai Chi Class begins Saturday April 1, 8- 9 AM at UCS.

Breathe in, breathe out. Add motion and you have tai chi, a moving meditation, a flow of vital energy. The controlled movement and breath, lead to better balance and better health. Several of us in this congregation have been attending tai chi classes with Vincent Jornales at the Canton Senior Center. He is a great teacher; very engaged, knowledgeable, clear and helpful. Vince owns, and is the main instructor at, Easton Martial Arts and, with dedication, operates "tai chi to go;" beyond his school's walls. He can come to us here at the UUSharon, two Saturdays a month, before the start of his school day. We are going to have a trial run for the months of April, May and June, on the first and third Saturdays, from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. The first class will be on April 1. The classes will be open to everyone; a small monetary donation of \$3-\$7 is encouraged to ensure that they remain sustainable. Though early on a Saturday, it is a great way to begin a weekend.

Dinah Altman would be more than happy to answer any questions: drpa18@gmail.com.

Book Study!



Join Rev. Jolie for a book study of *Zealot: the Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth* by internationally acclaimed writer and religious scholar Reza Aslan. We will discuss the book in three parts, meeting on fourth Thursdays. In person in the UCS Library, but can be hybrid if anyone wants to participate remotely. **Each meeting is 7-8 PM.**

Please RSVP to minister@uusharon.org. For assistance obtaining the book, contact Rev. Jolie.

Thursday, April 27 - Part II

Thursday, May 25 - Part III