

the chalice

Published by the
Unitarian Church of Sharon
**A Welcoming Congregation
of the Unitarian
Universalist Association**
4 North Main Street
Sharon, MA 02067
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MARCH WORSHIP SERVICES

10:00am Family Service

10:30am Worship Service

For Zoom information [click here](#)

For Order of Service [click here](#)

March 3

10:00 AM Family Worship: The Biggest Story of All

The religions and cultures of the world have given us many glorious creation stories - ancient stories of how we came to be. Yet only recently in the course of time, have scientists discovered evidence of the birth of the Universe and the evolution of life. This is a scientific creation story - the Great Story of the Universe - a story full of awe and wonder that belongs to us all.

10:30 AM Worship: Give Together, Grow Together

Article II Sermon Series: Interdependence

Why do we give our time, talents, and treasure to a UU church? Because when we give together, we grow together. Today's sermon is a two-fer: kicking off our annual stewardship campaign and continuing our sermon series on UU values. We will reflect on the value of Interdependence while considering how this value comes to life in our congregation. Rev. Jolie preaching.

March 10

10:00 AM Family Worship: A Cosmic Creation Story

Last week we referred to the Great Story of the Universe. This week we will tell it, in a nutshell. We'll travel quickly from darkness, into a great explosion, then light, elements, and eventually matter which came to form life and all that we know - including us. Does this make us family with everything that is?

10:30 AM Worship: Credo Service

We are carrying on with a beloved annual UCS tradition today. It's our Credo Service, when members are invited to share about their beliefs and the journeys of their hearts and minds from our pulpit. Ellen Bordman and Dave Slater will share their credos today. Rev. Jolie will share a reflection about why the Credo Service matters.

Continued on next page.....

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March 17

10:00 AM Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, How I Wonder What You Are

Stars are in fact born, live a life of purpose, and die. During the productive years of their life, they churn out life-giving elements, the building blocks of life that you and I are made of. Does this make stars our ancestors?

10:30 AM Worship: Pursuing Liberation - UUSC and Global Solidarity (guest preacher)

In the face of challenges and forces that undermine justice and equity, UUSC has, for more than eight decades, been resisting cynicism and refusing complacency. Through a model that embraces radical trust, UUSC advances human rights in partnership with communities impacted by oppression. Join the Rev. Laura Randall as we explore stories of faithful imagination and determined hope in the pursuit of liberation for all people.

Rev. Laura Randall bio:

As the Director for Congregation Relations at UUSC, the Reverend Laura Randall (she/her/hers) facilitates partnerships to strengthen the impact of the UU Service Committee and the social justice reach of UU communities. Prior to joining UUSC, Laura's ministry included serving as the Legacy Campaign Director for the Unitarian Universalist Association and hospice chaplaincy. She lives in Medford, Massachusetts with her spouse and their two dogs.

March 24 INTERGENERATIONAL

10:30 AM Worship: The Great Story of the Universe Pageant

Join us as we act out the Great Story of the Universe, a science-based, evolutionary creation story that is filled with magnificence awe and wonder. Choose your part in the evolution of life and march into the limelight as we process with music and narration through deep time in a story that is not yet finished.

March 31

10:00 AM Family Worship: The Story of Easter

Who was Jesus and what is the story that Christians tell about him around this time of year? We will learn about Jesus and his message, and we will consider what all this has to do with Unitarian Universalism.

10:30 AM Worship: Rising Anew

It's Easter Sunday! As Unitarian Universalists, we draw inspiration from many faith traditions, including Christianity, from which both Unitarianism and Universalism sprang. In our service today we will consider how we can relate to Easter and its messages of renewal and rebirth. Rev. Jolie preaching.

CHURCH NEWS

First Fridays are for Fellowship!

Monthly Potluck March 1st 2024 6pm. Bring a dish to share if you can and enjoy connecting with your fellow congregants.

🍀 *St. Patrick's Day Potluck and Sing* 🍀

Along

Friday March 1st @ 6PM



Book Study! *A History of Religion in 5 ½ Objects* by S. Brent Plate (Beacon Press, 2014).

3 Sessions, alternating Thursdays. March 7, March 21, and April 4. Hybrid. 7 - 8:30 PM.

Rev. Jolie will lead this adult discussion group beginning in March on religions of our world based on a close reading of the above book. From the book jacket copy: "Arguing that religion must be understood in the first instance as deriving from rudimentary human experiences and from lived, embodied practices, Religious Studies professor S. Brent Plate asks us to put aside, for the moment, questions of belief and abstract ideas." Instead we are invited to focus on five ordinary types of objects - stones, incense, drums, crosses, and bread - with which we connect in our pursuit of religious meaning and fulfillment. We will reflect on how the religious experiences described in the book relate to our own lives, and to our experience as Unitarian Universalists.

I will also get a couple of copies to put in our UCS Library, so let me know if you would like to borrow one of them

Casual Music Jam Friday March 8th 2024 from 7-9pm

We'll be gathering on Friday, February 9th from 7-9pm at the Unitarian Church of Sharon (4 N. Main St in Sharon) for our monthly casual music jam. We'll be in Program A/B (head downstairs, then take a right).

CHURCH NEWS



Not Just Another Coffeehouse

Upcoming Performance

Liz Simmons and Caroline Cotter Saturday March 9, 2024

Doors open at 6:30 and concert starts at 7:00.

Suggested donation \$20

Lizsimmons.net

carolinecotter.com

Tai Chi

Tai Chi has been meeting in Room A/B on first and third Saturdays from 8 to 9 a.m. People are enjoying it, and contributing between \$5 and 10 to help defray the cost of the excellent teacher, Vince Jornales. Anyone is welcome to join us at any time. Never did tai chi? Come give it a try; it's fun, relaxing and energizing all at once., basically focusing the mind and body on simple movements and the breath.

Art Wall

The Art Wall beseeches you to add your artistic creations to the church show place. Please share your ideas with Dinah, if not your work. People enjoy seeing the art during coffee hour; please don't be shy.

Meditation Group, weekly on Mondays 7-8 PM

Join Carol Abrams, local meditation teacher, for a simple weekly mindfulness practice in our Vestry. All welcome.

UPCOMING EVENT

New England Country Dance

December 5, 2023 • Dave Gellis

Saturday, March 2, 7 PM – 9 PM



Put on your dancing shoes and come on down to the First Universalist Society in Franklin for a festive evening! New England Country Dance is a fun, accessible "barn dance" that is suitable for people of all ages, from 4 to 80. Families, college students, teens, and the young at heart are most welcome!

The dancing does not require any previous experience. The dance caller walks everyone on the floor through simple steps, helps the group put them together, and then the music starts. Perfection is not expected! — cooperation and laughter among the dancers make sure that everyone stays mostly on track and has a wonderful time together.

Doors open at 7:00 pm. There will be two sets with a brief intermission in between. Water and comfortable seating will be available should you want to sit out a specific dance. Treats will be available for purchase.

Admission is free for children under 12, \$5.00 for students 13-18, and \$10 for adults. Tickets can be purchased online by clicking the link below.

[Buy Tickets](#)

Credit card, checks, and cash will be accepted at the door.

The First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF) is located at 252 Chestnut Street, Franklin MA. If you have questions about this event or FUSF please email info@fusi.org or call 508-528-5348. FUSF is a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation.

First Universalist Society in Franklin-Saturday, March 2.

It's an all-ages New England Country Dance event -- from 7-9 pm at FUSF. I'm the dance caller. This is entry-level dance -- no previous experience is required. Suitable for ages 4-84.

Here's the blurb on the FUSF website: <https://fusi.org/2023/12/08/new-england-country-dance/>. It includes how to get tickets. This is not a free event, but it is affordable family fun.

(The UCS RE Committee offered a program including New England Country Dance in 2017 -- some folks from that time might remember it.)

Louise

CHURCH NEWS

Stewardship Corner



Dear Friend or Member of the Unitarian Church of Sharon:

Every year around this time, our church embarks on our Stewardship Pledge Campaign. Stewardship is about taking care of something we value and enabling it to grow. When we become stewards, we take responsibility and contribute our time, talent, and treasure. No doubt, the Unitarian Church of Sharon is a generous and grateful community. There is joy in giving and it enables us to put our faith into action. There is joy in working together to make our community a more loving place. There is joy in sharing our dreams and our visions, planting seeds for stronger and more resilient tomorrows. Over time, your generosity will nurture our community.

The following materials are included in your stewardship packet, which have been both mailed and emailed to you:

Our theme this year is Give Together, Grow Together. The brochure explains the focus of this year's stewardship campaign and describes three opportunities to participate in small groups to share your values and vision for our community. Being "Together" is what sustains and inspires us and helps us grow. Please RSVP by email (stewardship@uusharon.org) to attend one of the in-person or Zoom Cottage Meetings. Use the link on the church calendar found at www.uusharon.org/calendars/month to join the Zoom meetings.

The UUA's Fair-Share Contribution Guide will help you determine a "fair" pledge based on your income. For many, the Guide is an "aspirational" suggestion. Please do what you can and consider increasing last year's pledge, if possible.

Your mailed copy of the pledge form shows your pledge for the current fiscal year; the emailed copy will not show that information. You may submit your pledge in several ways - by clicking on a link in the emailed package; mailing your completed form to the church; or dropping it into the pledge form box in the church entryway by Sunday, March 24th. It is important we have your pledge form by that date so our Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees can finalize the 2024-2025 budget.

The Brochure, the UUA's Fair-Share Contribution Guide and the online pledge form are available online at www.uusharon.org/pledge/.

If you have questions about your pledge or contributions, please go to the Church on-line directory. You can find the Breeze link on the church website's homepage. Search for your name and go to "Giving."

If you would like to talk with a member of the Stewardship Committee, contact Peter Raskin at stewardship@uusharon.org or call him at 781-771-6084. We will be happy to chat or meet with you virtually to answer questions you may have about our stewardship campaign.

Thank you for your generosity,

Your Stewardship Committee:

Peter Raskin, Chairperson

Fred Bramhall, Susan Olson Drisko, Tikerenn Quinn, Kathy Farrell, Jessica Plumridge and Colleen Tuck

In Memoriam

Joyce Bramhall

December 13, 1946- -February 19, 2024 (age 77)



Alice Guilday

October 27, 1925—February 23, 2024 (age 98)



From the Minister



Dear Ones,
From time to time we offer up a “Question Box” in our family services, when everyone is welcome to submit their questions for the Minister and the Director of Faith Development. People of all ages ask all kinds of questions on all kinds of topics, from the meaning of life to how or whether to be kind to someone who is not being kind to you. Lots of our community’s questions are about space, the origin of the Earth, and our place in the universe. Inspired by our community’s curiosity about the cosmos, we are delving into our amazing universe this month, and what it has to do with our UU faith. Our family services for the first three weeks in March will be on this theme, and they will continue exploring downstairs during children’s programming each week as well. This will culminate in a pageant on the topic for the whole congregation on March 24.

There are many important holidays and holy days all happening at once in March. Ramadan begins on the evening of March 10. Ramadan is the holiest time of year in the Muslim faith. It is a month of fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and a time for the observant to reconnect with God. Ramadan culminates in Eid-al-Fitr, a festive time to break the fast and celebrate with friends and family. We are also in the middle of Lent, a Christian time of fasting, which culminates in Holy Week and Easter. Of note, this year is one of those relatively uncommon years when Passover and Easter do not coincide. Holi, the Hindu festival of spring, is on March 25 this year. Holi commemorates the eternal love of the divinities Radha and Krishna, as well as the triumph of good over evil. Celebrants playfully throw colored powder and water at each other and enjoy special foods together. And let’s not forget the vernal equinox, when the northern hemisphere starts to tilt toward the sun, giving us sunnier, longer days, and ushering in the spring season. What will you be celebrating this March?

On another note: I have been advertising a book study on *A History of Religion in 5 ½ Objects* by S. Brent Plate. So far I have only heard from one person from our Five Points Cluster who is interested in participating. I will need a minimum of five participants to run the class. I can order copies of the book for anyone who cannot obtain it themselves. It will be three sessions, alternating Thursdays starting on March 7, 7-8 PM. Please let me know if you’d like to participate! If the books don’t come in time I can scan the first chapters for those who need it.

And finally, I will be on vacation from March 13 through March 19. If you have a pastoral emergency while I am away you can reach my colleague, Rev. Dave Egan. He is a kind and caring person and he serves our UU congregation in Medfield. His number is 617-620-1149 and his email address is minister@firstparishmedfield.org. For help with needs such as rides and meals you can reach out to our Caring Committee: caringcommittee@uusharon.org.

Yours in faith,
Rev. Jolie

From the President



I guess when you are as old as I am it shouldn't be surprising that your circle of friends and acquaintances increasingly includes people who die.

I was thinking about this because of the sad news of the loss of Joyce Bramhall. Looking back on my almost thirty years of connection with this beloved community, I remember dear, dear people we have lost. Bill Fox, Suzy Gray, the Baileys, Bev and Tom Kinraide, Irving Post, Tim Theiler, Brad Larson, Jim Mullin, Linden Fingerson, Dan Huse, Beverly Wilkins, and now Joyce Bramhall & Alice Guilday. May their memories be for a blessing. And there are all those who are still living but no longer part of our congregation, having moved or moved on, and we think of them fondly too.

These, named and unnamed, are gone, but this congregation they loved and worked for and supported lives on. This covenantal community continues to be a nurturing, caring, supportive system for all of us and will be into the future for those who find and join us.

Why is that? Because we make it so. Because we pledge. Because we volunteer: we greet, we make coffee, we sign up to supply meals and rides, we teach in the faith development program, we maintain the building and beautify the grounds, we serve on the board and committees and task forces, we organize potlucks and coffee-houses yard sales and music jams. Because we contribute to the endowment.

Did you know we have three task forces working currently? One on a possible name-change, one on the sanctuary project, one on a signage/display policy.

Even in the midst of grieving for our losses, we feel blessed to have this precious community,

Valerie White

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

March Faith Development

As we move through the Article II values each month, March's theme is Transformation: we are ever adapting and never complete. Our take on this will be a deep dive into the ever-changing universe and our place in it, beginning during the Family Service and following us down to the classrooms. This exploration will culminate in a super-fun, no rehearsal, intergenerational pageant enacting the Story of the Universe. Watch for a sign-up to choose your part in the evolutionary drama (no lines required) and arrive the day-of dressed the part. During classtime this month, as the children explore the timeline of 28 major "events" in this story they will prepare props needed for the intergenerational enactment on March 24th.

Mar 3: Introduction to the Story of the Universe Creation stories and how this is the creation story for all "Earthlings". We'll begin to put together the timeline of 28 events along with creative representations that will help us act out the story later this month.

5th & 6th Grade OWL 10:30 am -12:00 pm

Mar 10: The Big Bang, Galaxies, Stars and the Solar System We'll continue the timeline with a focus on these early creations of the universe. Prop making.

5th & 6th Grade OWL 10:30 am -12:00 pm

Mar 17: Evolution of Life on Earth. From bacteria to humans, an evolutionary history that spans millions of years. Where do we fit in? Prop making, especially for children's parts.

5th & 6th Grade OWL 10:30 am -12:00 pm

Mar 24: The Great Story of the Universe - an intergenerational, participatory, no-rehearsal pageant. Though the story is far from complete and we could spend a lifetime learning about this story, we will culminate our exploration this month with this interactive pageant! Watch for ways to get involved!

Come for Breakfast! **The annual PanWaff, hosted by UCS middle and high school youth will begin at 9:00am!**

Mar 31: Easter! This is not an intergenerational service, nor is it a typical religious education Sunday. There will be a time for all ages during the worship, followed by the annual Easter Can Hunt and other Easter-themed activities. Volunteers needed! Christine is off this day! Please [email Christine](#) if you can help.

Honoring Joyce Bramhall, Chair of the Faith Development (RE) Committee

Among the many ways that Joyce gave of herself to this church community, most recently she took the seat of Chair on the Faith Development Committee. Not only are we mourning the loss of a good friend, but also a strong and selfless leader. Joyce was a champion of religious education who despite medical challenges this past year, chaired the committee with joy and grace. Thoughtful to the last, she united us in the spirit of both love and work with her choice of chalice words, kept an eye on the big picture, challenged us with philosophical questions, and found ways to do hands-on work in support of Sunday morning. Joyce will very much be missed.



Here is a photo of Joyce cheerfully chairing the committee on Zoom in January.

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



The Social Justice Committee encourages you to visit the UCS website (uusharon.org) for information about the social justice programs at church. The

Social Justice pages are a great source for information about opportunities to engage, resources, and links to partner organizations and groups that we collaborate with in our work.



Brown Envelope Collections

The January Brown Envelope collections once again supported the **6 local food pantries** in our surrounding communities of Foxboro, Walpole, Norwood, Canton, Stoughton/Sharon and the First Congregational Church of Sharon's local pantry. Very generous donations totaling \$2507, plus the 5% from stores where we get the grocery cards to make these transfers, means that \$2632 has been sent to help our neighbors in need. This brings our 4 year effort since Covid struck to over \$69,000 directed to local food insecurity (plus many hundreds of pounds of actual staple food items collected in the lobby). Well done – but the work continues!

In February, the Brown Envelope donations built our ongoing **support for immigrant families** currently in temporary housing in Sharon. There are over 200 folks in transition, comprising 64 families, from Chile, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, as well as from within the US. More information can be found on the Sharon Town website at Migrant/Homeless Families in Sharon page.



In March, our Brown Envelope offerings will help the UU Service Committee support grassroots partners working for human rights for migrants and other vulnerable people here and around the world (visit uusc.org). The UUSC's **Guest at Your Table** program introduces us to local leaders of some of these remarkable partners, and invites church families to make them our "guests", especially at our Easter and Passover holiday tables. We'll be sharing their stories with our Faith Development children and youth, as well as the whole congregation, including the traditional GAYT collection boxes, useful for home conversations and family giving.



Accompaniment as an Antidote to Fascism: a workshop worth your time

We are witnessing the rise of right-wing nationalism through fascist tactics around the world and in the United States. This moment is calling us to connect ever deeper to our UU values in order to resist these forces and counteract them. Join **UUSC's Rev. Laura Randall** for an interactive workshop where we will learn to recognize the tactics of fascism and explore concrete ways to be in solidarity with those being targeted by state violence. Following Coffee Hour on 17 March (Rev Randall will be our guest minister at both services that morning), noon to 2pm, light lunch will be offered. Please preregister for food planning and child care at the Fair Trade table at Coffee Hour.

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued

MainSpring House lunch making: once again our UCS Youth will take the lead as we assemble 75 brown bag lunches for the guests of the shelter in Brockton. On Sunday, 10 March, during the second service upstairs, the team will assemble the meals on our behalf. If there is still work needed to finish the project, please give a hand during Coffee Hour. Thanks!

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“How do we pay for those lunch making supplies?” You too can help make the MSH lunch program a success when you shop for your own groceries. 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 Hour to learn more about this user-friendly program. Strength in numbers works here: more UCS shoppers using the S4J pro-

gram equals more resources that we can direct to helping address local food insecurity. And we all need to shop for apples and such, so get the stores to give the church 5% of your weekly total for this program – it’s easy!

SJC Meeting for March: the monthly SJC meeting will be on Sunday, March 3rd, starting at approximately noon. Rev Jo Murphy from UU Mass Action will join us to explore potential collaboration efforts with their work on many social justice issues and our own endeavors. It should be a lively conversation. We will continue to offer hybrid-zoom participation, with some gathering in the physical Library for face-to-face conversation, and others on the small screen. Look for the zoom link in the UCS Calendar. All are welcome; please join us as we look for opportunities and challenges to work together as we make a difference in the world.

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued



Impacting Climate Change with Equal Exchange Products

Our congregation supports Equal Exchange for many important reasons, including its focus on sustainable, organic agriculture. When we purchase Equal Exchange fairly traded food products, we're assisting producers in co-ops who use regenerative, organic agricultural methods. Their crops are free of fossil fuel-based fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides which pollute the environment and expose the farmers themselves to toxic chemicals. Rather than clearing fields and forcing crop exposure to full sun, co-op farmers plant assorted trees on their plots using a method called "shade-grown" farming. These biodiverse areas encourage native bird, amphibian, fish, and insect populations to thrive. As a result their coffee, tea, and cacao trees are stronger and more resistant to disease and pests. The co-ops use techniques such as natural composting and mulching to conserve water and keep it cleaner. These combined agricultural practices assist producers in helping the environment rather than harming it.

Healthy Soil is Key

Nature is full of amazing and complex systems. Take soil, for example. Healthy soil contains multitudes of microbes and has the ability to function like a sponge, which is the key to nature's ability to return carbon to the land to cool the earth. When the farmers use sustainable techniques to enrich the soil by adding organic compost and minerals, moisture is retained and makes the soil "spongy" in texture. This "soil carbon sponge" absorbs more water in heavy rains and retains more water in times of drought. When farmers introduce fungi and other microorganisms, it stabilizes the soil carbon. Both erosion and evaporation are slowed by these sustainable practices which help

to lower the earth's temperature, a key component in fighting climate change.

The COMSA Cooperative and Farm School

Equal Exchange works with many groups who are leaders in developing a sustainable approach to agriculture that increases crop yields and adapts to changing environmental conditions. One such partner is COMSA, a coffee-growing cooperative based in Honduras, which has become a leader in sustainable agriculture by creating a model farm and a school. It has developed effective practices and soil enrichments through the use of natural microorganisms. COMSA offers educational classes to its own co-op members and to farmers throughout Latin America. It started in 2001 with 60 producers and has since grown to more than 1200 farmer members who are viewed as innovators in the area of sustainable agriculture.

Equal Exchange is a worker-owned U.S.-based cooperative of about 100 employees which sources organically grown coffee, cacao, tea, nuts, fruit, and other products from over 40 farmer cooperatives in 20 countries. An important component of its fair trade model is supporting sustainable agricultural methods which help to work against climate change.

Above left, hiking through the COMSA coffee farms in Honduras. Right, Fredy Perez leads COMSA's technical assistance team.



Learn more at equalexchange.coop