



Volume 24 | Issue 4 December 2020 Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society of Westborough

December Worship Schedule

Worship Theme of the Month: **Stillness**



SUNDAY DECEMBER 6, 10:30 AM

Online Sunday Service on [Zoom](#) – Rev. Laurel Gray

The Sound of Snow

Stillness is so often elusive in life – especially during the holidays. But it can also be something we so want to run from, something we try to escape when we're deep in the valley of life's struggles. This Sunday, I'll tell you the story of how I learned the transformative power of stillness and came to know deep in my being that our worth is inherent and unconditional.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 13, 10:30 AM

Online Sunday Service on [Zoom](#) – Rev. Aisha Ansano

Enjoy the View

There is always so much going on in our lives, so many things to check off our ever-growing to-do lists. What might it feel like to remind ourselves to rest, to breathe, to take the time to be present to our bodies and everything around us?

SUNDAY DECEMBER 20, 10:30 AM

Online Sunday Service on [Zoom](#) – Rev. Laurel Gray

Waiting for the Light

It's holiday pageant time again! This Sunday we'll tell two different stories: one about Hanukkah and one about Solstice. Invite your family, gather up the little ones, and let's celebrate stories that remind us to hold the light and the darkness of this season in balance.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 24, 5:30 PM

Online Christmas Eve Service on [Zoom](#) – Rev. Laurel Gray

The Power of Friends

Come celebrate Christmas Eve with UUCSW! This will be a classic lessons and carols service – we'll tell the age-old tale of the little baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and the wise men who followed the guiding light of a star. In this strange season of spending Christmas physically separate in order to keep each other safe, I'll reflect on the power of friends in the Christmas story and our own lives.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 27, 10:30 AM

Online Sunday Service on [Zoom](#) – Scott Owens

Take from Life the Coals – Thoughts on Life, Fire, and Balance

Our relationship with fire is complex. Like other elemental forms, fire has within it the power to both help and harm, and it can move from one to the other with a simple shift in the wind. Living with fire - both actual fire and the symbolic fire within us - requires a delicate balance and constant attention. The waning days of this challenging year may be a good time to reflect on all those fires, to find our balance, and to take from life, the coals.

From the Minister

Dear UUCSW,

It's December! Are you as shocked by this as I am? I have felt like our country was so focused on the presidential election, that time stopped for a few weeks, and now we're face-planting into December. What a strange and joyful thing!

In my #smallactsbigprinciples posts each week, I've been reflecting on how I live out our UU principles in my day-to-day life. My hope is that this helps us all reflect on the choices we make and the simple changes we can make to live lives that are more in line with our values. As we head into the holidays, I'm going to spend the next few weeks reflecting on how we can give gifts that are mutually life giving. By that I mean gifts that support small businesses, value people over profit margins, and are kind to the earth. I find that gifts are sort of magical in their capacity to spread joy, and I want to make sure that my gifts did good while they were being created, not just when they're opened.

As the season gets colder and the light fades earlier and earlier, I know a lot of people are feeling lonely as we continue to practice physical distance. I want to encourage you to be kind to yourselves this winter. Amidst all the joy of the holidays and the hope for a vaccine, we can also make space for the loneliness, disappointment, grief, and boredom that are part of this strange moment in history. And if you know someone who needs a little more community, whose spirit is hurting, please invite them to church with you. UUCSW is a beautiful and loving place – let's make sure people who need us know that we have love and room to share.

Sending you all blessings for a safe December. Please wear your mask, wash your hands, and know that you are loved.

Blessings,

Laurel

Laurel.Gray@uucsw.org

*Please note that my days off are typically Monday and Saturday. I try to respond to emails within 48 hours, but that is not always possible. I appreciate your patience.

Pastoral Care

The Membership Engagement Team and Rev. Laurel are always here to support you. We know that caring looks different right now, as we keep physical distance. Rev. Laurel is now, like so many of you, working from home.

If you'd like to make an appointment for pastoral care, or have a joy or sorrow that you'd like included on a Sunday when you're away, you can email Laurel at: laurel.gray@uucsw.org. She can also be reached on her cell phone at 401-932-7855. Feel free to text or call if something is urgent or you just need to check in.

Board Matters

On November 5, two days into a Presidential Election that was then still too close to call, and in the middle of a pandemic to boot, the Board held its monthly meeting—as usual and on schedule. Whatever chaos swirls around us, life goes on and with it the business of UUCSW continues.

Our reading from the meeting seemed a good reminder of how to continue to move forward amidst what often seems a constant barrage of bad news:

Take from life its coals, not its ashes. Fan the flames of love and justice; join hands and hearts in common endeavor; and there will be no limit to what we can achieve together. - Rev. Laurel S. Sheridan (1940-2008)

Among November's topics was approving an annual budget, a task made challenging by the fiscal uncertainties of the current climate, but one made infinitely more approachable and manageable by the great work of Lisa Shumway and the Finance Committee. Even with the expectation of reduced rental incomes and increased costs associated with COVID response, we anticipate a stable budget posture based, in no small part, on the commitment of our members through their pledges and other giving. Thank you.

The Board also continued its work to formalize Rev. Laurel Gray's contract renewal for the next two years. After many months compiling Laurel's minister evaluation to the UUA, the Board was reminded over and over again what a welcome addition Laurel has been to our community.

Coordination with the Reopening Advisory Panel has continued as we looked for ways to maintain a robust community, while keeping our friends and family safe. Anyone needing to enter the church facilities should reach out to the RAP or a member of the Board to coordinate appropriate protocols for how and when to most safely enter our church spaces.

You can read about much of the other hard work of our community throughout The Vista and in our weekly updates. Keep fanning those coals!

Scott Owens on behalf of the UUCSW Board of Trustees

Board Meeting Dates:

- December 3, 2020
- January 7, 2021
- February 4, 2021
- March 4, 2021
- April 1, 2021
- May 6, 2021
- June 3, 2021

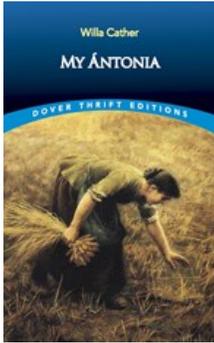
Food Collections

Last year, our congregation made and delivered hundreds of lunches to a homeless shelter in Worcester. The need remains, but the pandemic is blocking us from repeating our success of last year. We will adapt to ensure that we can provide at least the same level of assistance to one of Worcester's most vulnerable populations.

Please watch for notices of and support monthly food collections, and, if you would like to do more, please reach out to:

- Ed Walsh (walshnboro@aol.com)
- Jerry Breecher (Jerry@breecher.com)
- Pauline Sciarappa (psciarappa@gmail.com)
- Marjorie Fisher (mfisher2898@gmail.com).

Book Group – December 11th



For **December**, we are reading *My Ántonia* by Willa Cather. Please join us.

The group is open to all. You are welcome to attend.

Because of the pandemic, Book Group will be [online](#).

If you are planning to attend for the first time, please email

Judith: Judithteacake@gmail.com.

Racial Justice Committee

What is white supremacy? KIPP Public Schools defines it this way: “white Supremacy captures the all-encompassing centrality and assumed superiority of people defined and perceived as white, and the practices based upon that assumption. White Supremacy is not simply the idea that whites are superior to People of Color (although it certainly is that), but a deeper premise that supports this idea—the definition of whites as the norm or standard for humans, and People of Color as an inherent deviation from that norm. It is a historical and institutionally perpetuated system of ideas and beliefs that exploits continents and nations and oppresses People of Color. The purpose of white supremacy is to maintain and defend a racialized system of wealth, power, and privilege.” For more information visit https://www.kipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/KIPP-Equity-Glossary_071520.pdf

Join us December 9, from 4:00 – 5:30 pm, as we consider hallmark characteristics of white supremacy culture. You may be surprised by what you learn! What are they? Where do we see them in our personal lives? work lives? church lives? Curious but unable to join us? You can learn more at <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html> If the meeting time does not work for you, please let Jane know of your interest; you can reach her at janenboro@aol.com or 508-393-9206. Otherwise, the meeting Zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84599163211>.

New Email and Schedule for Vista Articles

Please send all Vista articles directly to amk32@cornell.edu. Vista articles will be due six days before the end of each month. Please put “Vista” at the beginning of the subject line. I will acknowledge each email I receive. Here are the due dates for the rest of the year:

- January 2021: December 26th, 2020
- February 2021: January 26th, 2021
- March 2021: February 23rd, 2021
- April 2021: March 26th, 2021
- May 2021: April 25th, 2021
- June 2021: May 26th, 2021

Thanks

Andy Koenigsberg, your friendly neighborhood Vista editor

December Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
10:30 AM – Online Sunday Service	6:30 PM – UU Knits (online)			7 PM – Board Meeting		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
10:30 AM – Online Sunday Service	6:30 PM – UU Knits (online)		4:00 PM – Racial Justice Meeting		7 :00 PM – Book Group (online) 	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
10:30 AM – Online Sunday Service	6:30 PM – UU Knits (online)	7 PM – Program Committee				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
10:30 AM – Online Sunday Service	6:30 PM – UU Knits (online)			5 PM – Christmas Eve Service		6 PM - Vista Articles Due **
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
10:30 AM – Online Sunday Service	6:30 PM – UU Knits (online)					

** Send Vista articles to amk32@cornell.edu

