



Volume 24 | Issue 6 February 2021 Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society of Westborough

February Worship Schedule

Worship Theme of the Month: *Beloved Community*



SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7, 10:30 AM

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

Weathering the Storm

The last year has been quite the storm, in all manner of ways. And we're still here, still gathering in community, still caring for each other, still doing what we always do. That is something to celebrate!

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 14, 10:30 AM

Online Sunday Service on [Zoom](#) – Amanda Hall, Anya Olsen with, Abbey O'Brien Weiss, and Brennan Thomas

Reflections from UUCSW Young Adults

Join us for this special Valentine's Day service where we welcome back several young adults with ties to our beloved UUCSW community and invite them to reflect on how being raised in the UU tradition has informed their lives.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21, 10:30 AM

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

Whose History?

As we think about beloved community this month, we'll turn our gaze to the past. Stories about who "we" are and who mattered in history shape our understanding of our country and community. But who's missing? What would radical hospitality mean for the way we tell history?

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 28, 10:30 AM

Online Sunday Service on [Zoom](#) – Katie Byron

Discerning the Emergent in the Emergency

We live in times of crisis. There is so much to be outraged about and so many things that feel like, and very well might be emergencies. In these moments, we risk freezing and doing nothing. We also risk trying to fashion ourselves into heroes or saviors, swooping into situations we could not fully understand. When the stakes are so high, how can we make thoughtful decisions about what to do in the midst of crisis? How do we look for what is emerging below the emergency?

After much pandemic rescheduling, I'm honored and excited to invite you to my ordination as a Unitarian Universalist minister. Please see the below invitation for further details. I hope to see you via Zoom on February 6th!

- Laurel

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE ORDINATION OF
LAUREL LITTLEJOHN GRAY



**Saturday, February 6th, 2021
at 2:00 pm EST on Zoom
zoom.us/j/81794261644**

Hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society of Westborough, MA

Please write Laurel a six word blessing or piece of advice.
Send to laurel.gray@uucsw.org or the mailing address below.

Cards and gifts can be mailed to:
Laurel Gray
855 Governor Prencce Rd.
Eastham, MA 02642

From the Minister

Dear UUCSW,

January was a wild ride. Fear and celebration are strange emotions to hold simultaneously. As a country we saw not only the horror of the Capitol attack, but also the beauty of Amanda Gorman's inaugural poem. There was so much concern about safety leading up to Inauguration Day and then all was well and we were left with memes of Bernie's mittens. A wild ride, for sure.

Amidst everything happening on the national stage, we at UUCSW were preparing for Celebration Week while also trying to clarify that elusive separation of church and state. Amanda Hall and I talked more about this in our monthly podcast, so give it a listen. The legal line of churches not supporting political candidates or political parties is clear, but everything beyond that is a matter of what a congregation feels is appropriate and true for their community.

That group ethos is a complicated thing to sort out. The Racial Justice Committee has been doing a great job of helping us consider how much we need to clarify as a congregation. We've started working with a UUA consultant to help us figure out how to have this conversation as a congregation. We're looking towards making a comprehensive plan for our justice work at UUCSW, but first we need to know what issues matter most to the congregation. And we need to get clear about what kind of justice activities feel like a good fit for us and what feels like it crosses the line into being too "political." The plan for bringing the whole congregation into a fruitful discernment process is just starting to take shape, so keep an eye out for updates!

But first, celebration! On February 6th, UUCSW is hosting my ordination, which is not only significant for me (clearly!) but for the congregation. I asked Stacy Spies, our church historian, about the history of ordinations at UUCSW. Turns out, there have only been three in the last century! And the last two were in 1959 and 1966 for two ministers who became Freedom Riders and marched in Selma. Equally cool is the fact that UUCSW hosted an ordination for a woman in 1926. What a history! I must say, I feel incredibly honored and humbled to be part of it.

And we do all of this together. In a Congregationalist system (versus one with Bishops) you, the congregation, are the decision maker. I am ordained not by some high authority, but by you. And how we decide to work towards building a more just world, that's your decision, too. We UUs value a process in which everyone has an equal voice and an equal vote.

So, join us for the celebration as well as the conversations about who we are and how we want to be in the world. We do it all together.

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

Glad tidings! I am writing this message from the board on January 20th, inauguration day. Glad tidings indeed! Our theme for February is Beloved Community. As President Biden said in his inaugural address, speaking to the nation, "we have much to do in this winter of peril and possibility. Much to repair. Much to restore. Much to heal. Much to build. And much to gain". The chance to grow in our Beloved Community offers us similar opportunities.

On January 31st, we welcomed new members into our community during our Members and Friends Celebration Sunday.

The Auction! Now that's a fabulous Beloved Community event. We are still not ready to hold an in-person auction, but there are some very exciting ideas being planned for this year's auction. This is the "teaser": quarantining has given some of us an opportunity to sharpen our skills - cooking, painting, sewing, crafts, a secret talent. We will be exploring how to offer not only our tried and true dinners and activities but also share some of the offerings that have sharpened (or dusted off) over these last months. Stay tuned this will be fun!

The Pledge Campaign will start soon. It gives us a chance to reflect on the unique experience we have shared this past year on Zoom. With the help of the dedicated worship team, techs, greeters, service leaders, and associates as well as the many committees and activities that continued throughout the year, we united toward getting our needs met in beloved community. While we focused on our "spiritual" needs other needs have clearly presented themselves - the church steeple for one. We are all caretakers of the church. The weathervane was damaged (and removed) and the steeple is in dire need of repair and restoration. As custodians for the refurbishment, we hope you will contribute to the cost of the renovations.

This month's quotes:

What do we live for if it is not to make life less difficult for each other? - George Eliot

We are called to be persons who embody hope for one another. - Paul J. Wadell

Judith Nicholson on behalf of the UUCSW Board of Trustees

Board Meeting Dates:

- February 18, 2021
- March 4, 2021
- April 1, 2021
- May 6, 2021
- June 3, 2021

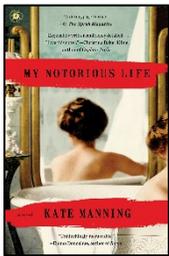
Food Collections

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 – February 12th



For **February**, we are reading *My Notorious Life* by Kate Manning. 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.

Contribution Statements for the 2020 Tax Year

You may review your giving and pledge history at any time through your Realm account or by contacting Susie Wells, our collector, at susie48winnip@gmail.com. Contribution statements for the 2020 tax year were emailed to you (or mailed to your home if we don't have your email address) on January 25th. Click on the "View Your Giving Statement" link to open your document. Statements will also be available for printing yourself on Feb 1st through Realm. If you have any questions please contact Lisa Shumway, treasurer@uucsw.org

Spring Fundraiser Planning

We are gearing up for our spring fundraiser. We don't know yet what 2021 will look like and what we will do for a fundraiser. If you are interested in brainstorming plans for the spring, please contact Ben or Erin Gold to be added to the contact list for the first meeting. We'll be meeting on February 17th to talk about what will be possible and fun so bring your best ideas!

Ben Gold's email: bengold@gmail.com

Erin Gold's email: kentuckybluerose@gmail.com

Racial Justice Committee

Those regularly participating in the committee include Kris Allen, Andrea Burke, Jerry Breecher, Kathe Scott, Phil Mighdoll, Marge Fisher, John Metzger, Scott Owens, Sheila McPharlin, Jane Walsh, Kim Hall (as Liaison from the Board) and Rev. Laurel. Feel free to contact us at our group email rjc@uucsw.org with topics and issues you'd like to learn more about or initiatives you think should be considered by the congregation. We look forward to learning what is on your mind and in your hearts as it relates to creating racial equity.

Wednesday, February 10, 4:00 – 5:30pm: All welcome! After tending to 'business', the concept of unconscious bias will be revisited. In advance, you may want to take the Race Implicit Association Test found at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>. You'll be invited to share your results and reactions, as we support each other in considering how to counter unconscious attitudes that produce harmful behavior. Contact Jane Walsh with questions or to let her know you are interested but unable to attend: janenboro@aol.com or 508-393-9206 (leave a message). Here's the Zoom meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84599163211>



Please join us for a congregation-wide brown bag, shortly after the Sunday morning service on **February 21, 2021**, when we will re-convene virtually from **Noon – 2:00 pm**. Make yourself a bite to eat, then join us for lunch as we consider the roots of racism in our country. After the podcast, a facilitator will help us consider our reactions, questions, and concerns so that we can know ourselves better (individually and collectively), as we journey together in understanding race, how race has been used to hurt people, and what we are called to do to promote justice. Stay tuned for more details.

February Share the Plate

Team Brownsville was founded in July 2018 to address the humanitarian crisis in Brownsville and Matamoros, Mexico, by a small group of like-minded educator volunteers to help asylum seekers who find themselves in Brownsville, Texas and at the Brownsville/Matamoros international bridges.

Team Brownsville has provided humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable families from around the world that are seeking asylum in the United States by way of the port of entry in Brownsville, Texas.

Since its inception, the membership and mission expanded with the help of volunteers and donors from around the globe inspired by Team Brownsville, providing humanitarian assistance and spreading love and hope for a better world.

Team Brownsville provides food, water, shelter, and necessities as well as education through an "Escuelita de la banqueta" program for school aged children, and a variety of legal, medical, and other services for this vulnerable population.

With the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, most of the programs transitioned from being delivered by volunteers to being supported by donations and delivered by local suppliers in Matamoros.

Team Brownsville began a humanitarian movement that has been recognized in Washington D.C. on Sunday, December 6, 2020 at the yearly Anti-Defamation League in Concert Against Hate, a 25-year tradition, which is a premier event

that honors real-life heroes, who have performed extraordinary acts of courage and compassion when confronted with anti-Semitism, hatred, and bigotry.

If you would like to learn more about the tireless efforts of the volunteers who affirm human dignity for asylum seekers go to: teambrownsville.org

The month's theme is Beloved Community: the practice of bending the arc of the universe toward justice. From the messages we receive this month we will be challenged to believe not only that others are worth our effort but that we will be worth the effort in the eyes of others!

Henri Nouwen once described beloved community as "the place where the person you least want to live with always lives. That person is always in your community somewhere; in the eyes of others, you might be that person."

During the month of February, we have a chance to Share the Plate. Each month, UUCSW shares our Sunday collections equally with a non-profit organization that does work in the wider community that is aligned with our UU principles and values. Our ability to act can start with our contribution to Share the Plate. Please consider donating so they can continue to provide basic meals and supplies to families living outdoors on the Gateway International Bridge, classes for children awaiting asylum and assistance at the bus station once it has been granted.

Your donation would make a meaningful difference to Team Brownsville's organization.

Thank you.

Before COVID home-made meals were wheeled in wagons to the asylum seekers.



Sharing the Plate Results for 2020

2020 was our first full year of the new UUCSW Share the Plate Program. Thanks to all of you and your generous donations, the following organizations received donations from UUCSW in 2020.

- Social Justice Meal Packaging (Jan 2020): \$197
- Massachusetts Bail Fund (Feb 2020): \$342
- Genesis Club (March 2020): \$119
- CASA (April 2020): \$86.50
- UU Mass Action (May 2020): \$112.50
- Westborough Pastoral Counseling Center (June 2020): \$125.00
- Community COVID-19 Fund (Sept 2020): \$332.50
- UU the Vote (Oct 2020): \$187.50
- Community Harvest Project (Nov 2020): \$592.50
- One Mission (Dec 2020): \$614.00

Lisa Shumway, treasurer@uucsw.org

Thank You from SMOC!

As you know, members of the Social Justice Committee have been working with a Worcester Shelter (SMOC - Southern Middlesex Opportunity Council), dropping off food and clothing donations, that our congregation has so generously provided. Jerry Breecher and Ed Walsh initiated the project by organizing members once a month to pack and deliver actual lunches to the Worcester shelter. With the onset of Covid, we have shifted to providing the ingredients for lunches, once a month: packages of bologna, juice boxes, fruit, granola bars, etc. In addition, in December, we started collecting warm clothes as well.

Our friends at the shelter have been so appreciative of the deliveries, and of the support and friendship they feel coming from our Congregation. We want to pass that message along to the whole community, and thank members for their donations. For instance, in December, we delivered 30 pounds of bologna, 9 bags of apples plus a box of 100 apples from Stop and Shop, a bag of oranges and a bag of pears, 342 granola bars, and 310 juice boxes, and a van full of warm clothes for the men and women at the shelter. You can see why they are so grateful!

Thank you to our entire community for supporting all these types of giving projects. It makes such a difference in the lives of our friends in need, especially during such tough times.

The Social Justice Committee SMOC team

Marge Fisher, Libba Moore, Pauline Sciarappa, and Nancy Siegal

SMOC Food Drive for February

Please consider participating in a congregational food drive to benefit the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) which provides meals for people in Worcester. At this time, they are especially in need of: 6-8 ounce juice boxes/pouches; fresh fruit, especially apples, pears, and clementines; 16 oz. packages of bologna, pre-packaged; and boxes of chewy/soft granola bars. There will be a collection for these items on Thursday, February 25th between 4:30 and 5:45 pm at the Ruggles Street door of UUCSW. Please reach out to Libba Moore at libbamooore13@gmail.com ahead of time if there's a better time for you. Food will be delivered to SMOC on Friday, February 26th. Thank you for help with this. - Your friends on the Social Justice Committee

Help UUCSW Help People in Need

SMOC has identified the need for men and women's warm winter clothing, especially socks, coats, sweatshirts, sweatpants, long sleeve shirts, hats and gloves. New socks only please, other items should be new or gently used and clean; note the ratio of men to women served is 70:30. Hand warmers and ponchos are also welcome. Please bring your donations to UUCSW on Thursday, February 25th between 4:30 and 5:45 pm, the same day/time as the monthly food drive. If this timing does not work for you please reach out to Nancy Siegal via email at NSIEGAL185@msn.com or Pauline Sciarappa at psciarappa@gmail.com for other options. These clothing drives will happen monthly at least through February. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

February Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
10:30 AM – Online Sunday Service	6:30 PM – UU Knits (online)					2 PM - Rev. Laurel's Ordination
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
10:30 AM – Online Sunday Service	6:30 PM – UU Knits (online)		4:00 PM – Racial Justice Meeting		7 :00 PM – Book Group (online) 	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
10:30 AM – Online Sunday Service	6:30 PM – UU Knits (online)	7 PM – Program Committee		7 PM – Board Meeting		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
10:30 AM – Online Sunday Service	6:30 PM – UU Knits (online)	6 PM - Vista Articles Due **		4:30 PM – SMOC Food and Clothing Drive @ UUCS Ruggles Door		
28	1	2	3	4	5	6
10:30 AM – Online Sunday Service	6:30 PM – UU Knits (online)					

** Send Vista articles to amk32@cornell.edu

**THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY OF
WESTBOROUGH**

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**THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATIONAL
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Minister EmeritaThe Reverend Cindy Frado
Music Director.....Kala Farnham
Office Administrator.....Elisa Scully

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Assistant Collector.....Kathie Scott
Historian..... Stacy Spies
Moderator..... Andy Koenigsberg

DUE DATES

FOR VISTA NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Announcements, suggestions, or questions?
The VISTA is published monthly and submissions
are welcome. Please email submissions to:

Andy Koenigsberg at amk32@cornell.edu.

Please put "VISTA" in the subject line.

**March Vista articles due by
6 PM, Tuesday, February 23rd.**

**For updates visit
uucsw.org**

