



Volume 25 Issue 9 | May 2021 | Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society of Westborough

May Worship Schedule

Worship Theme of the Month: **Story**



SUNDAY MAY 2, 10:30 AM

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

Stories of Things Gone Perfectly Wrong

So often in life, things don't go as we had planned. This can be a source of disappointment, but this Sunday we're going to tell stories of when things went perfectly wrong. In lieu of a formal sermon, this service will include short stories on the theme from within our congregation.

Join us following service for our congregational Social Justice Conversation #2: Come hear what we learned through our first congregational conversation about social justice. Hear and share ideas about how social justice could be an integral, active, joyful part of the congregation's life. And think about how you might want to participate! **We will meet on [Zoom](#) at 12:00 pm.**

SUNDAY MAY 9, 10:30 AM

Sunday Service on [Zoom](#) – led by Phyllis Samara

Radical Roots of Mother's Day

This week's service will visit radical mothers in history and today. There will be a re-enacting of the story of the Mother's Day Proclamation given by Julia Ward Howe in 1870, and mothers telling their stories. No two mothers' stories are the same; we'll reflect on the diversity of mothers, the capacity of mothering relationships, and the importance of our relationships with mother figures and how it impacts our decision to mother. (Please note: the sermon will include references to methods of conception and miscarriage.)

SUNDAY MAY 16, 10:30 AM

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

Stories of Serendipity and Awe

Continuing with the month's theme of storytelling, this service will focus on serendipity and awe. We'll have time for "views from the pews" so think about moments in your own life when you have experienced moments of serendipity and awe - maybe it was a chance encounter that lightened your spirit, or a moment of wonder at the beauty of the natural world.

SUNDAY MAY 23, 10:30 AM

Sunday Service on [Zoom](#) – led by Meredith O'Brien

A Single Story, Many Perspectives

We share our collective and individual history through stories, some of which have tenuous connections to reality and others which are spot-on accurate. Writer and Northeastern journalism faculty Meredith O'Brien will discuss how - in a quest for truth - it's a good practice to collect stories rather than focus on a single one.

SUNDAY MAY 30, 10:30 AM

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

Bridging: Stories of Resilience in Hard Times

On this Memorial Day weekend, we will be celebrating our teens who are graduating from high school and planning to go out into the world. In a year that has been challenging for everyone and disrupted the celebration of milestones, we'll take time today to honor our teens in this bridging service.

From the Minister

Dear UUCSW,

As we head into May and the rest of the church year, warmer weather and higher vaccination rates, there's the question of what comes next. After more than a year of pandemic life, there is so much eagerness to get out of our homes, and still so much that remains unknown. Much of our work this spring is about planning ahead, to the best that we can.

The UUA has recommended that congregations plan for next year being hybrid: both in person and online, depending on how the pandemic progresses. We have put together a "hybrid task force" of some of our Sunday morning tech hosts, staff, and congregants who rely on digital access. This group is putting together a survey to get a sense of what matters most to our congregation as we plan for next year. Their task is to create a plan for how to make UUCSW digitally accessible once it's safe to gather in person. Please make sure to fill out the survey when they send it out.

The religious education task force has also been hard at work planning for next year's RE program. After researching and thinking together about how we can best serve our children and youth, we are now working on the details of hiring a new RE staff member and the possibilities for partnering with other UU congregations. It's been a hard year for young people and their parents, so I want to thank everyone who has supported our RE program this year. We're looking forward to greater possibilities next year.

And it feels only fitting that we'd have a good celebration now that spring has sprung. Our spring fundraiser team has been hard at work planning this year's auction, which is focused on supporting local businesses and the arts. We have some awesome new packages (think dinner, flowers, wine, and a recording of your favorite song by Kala), old favorites (homemade ice cream!), and art items (I'm donating a custom garment). After a year that has been so hard, let's gather together and celebrate.

Maybe you come to May feeling hopeful, maybe you're exhausted beyond your imagining, maybe you feel confused about how to move forward, grief-stricken, or angry. All of that is valid – it has been quite a year. And through it all, we find our way together.

Blessings,

Rev. Laurel

*Please note that my days off are typically Friday 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, like so many of us, working from home. If you'd like to make an appointment for pastoral care, you can schedule time for a phone or Zoom call here: calendly.com/revlaurelgray. She can also be reached by email at laurel.gray@uucsw.org or 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 April 1, the Board held its monthly meeting. That first meeting of meteorological spring was a great opportunity to discuss many of the ways the UUCSW is blooming and renewing itself in this time of change.

From the steeple renovation project (thank you to Bruce Hall, Stacy Spies, and others that made that possible) to new landscaping plans in front of our church (special thank you to Robin Fleming), work is underway to give our church a fresh, clean look.

The Board also met with Erica Baron, who many of you have now had the opportunity to meet and work with, to develop a framework for thinking about UUCSW's commitment to social and racial justice. Thank you to Jane Walsh and all those on the Racial Justice Committee for your continued attention to these important issues.

With our facilities and grounds looking their best, and with a renewed sense of purpose and direction in our social justice endeavors, we're in a great place to start looking at options for a phased return to our beloved space. I hope to see you all in church very soon.

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

- Scott Owens on behalf of the UUCSW Board of Trustees

"Good in the 'Hood" Auction May 15th

The auction team has been hard at work preparing this year's auction and we're ready to unveil what we've come up with. We are excited to invite everyone to our auction and party on May 15th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Our theme is "Good in the 'Hood" and we're focused on supporting local businesses through this effort. In addition to bidding on items, we'll be eating our goodies, playing games, and enjoying each other's company.

The auction website is now up and running! Please head to the site and check it out! charityauction.bid/UUCSW2021

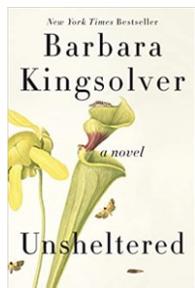
Here are the steps everyone should take to get started:

- Purchase a ticket now for the event on May 15th. Click on Tickets then add the appropriate ticket to your cart and check out.
- If you purchased a ticket to last year's auction, don't worry! If you prefer, we will honor those for this year's auction. Purchase a "Last Year's Ticket" for \$0 and check out, so you can get registered and get a goodie bag.
- If you don't plan on attending the live event but still want to bid on items, that's okay too! You'll still need to register an account on the auction site.

There will be several types of items available this year:

- Fixed price events - There are some available slots from last year's events that will be for sale, as well as some all-new events. All of these items are immediately available and it's first-come, first-serve with limited numbers.
- Silent auctions - Many items are being sold as silent auctions (think eBay) where bids can be made during the entire week of May 9-15th. These are all scheduled to finish on May 15th during our live event.
- Live auctions - Finally, several items will be sold live during our party on the 15th! Bidding will still be done through the website, these items will use a traditional auction process.

We look forward to this fun event and hope it's a success! If you have any questions or problems accessing the website, please reach out at auctions@uucsw.org. - Auction Team (Amy, Ben, Erin, Rev. Laurel, Lisa, Pauline)



Book Group May 14th

For May, we are reading **Unsheltered** by Barbara Kingsolver. 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 at Judithteacake@gmail.com.

Grounds Committee Volunteers Needed

Itching to get out of the house? Have a Green Thumb? Have a Not-So-Green-Thumb but like to be outdoors and help make our grounds look good? You are perfect for the new Grounds Committee.

If you have driven past the church building in the last few weeks, you might notice something (big) missing. Our very overgrown shrubs have been removed in order to make way for the steeple repair lift and to make way for more appropriately-sized shrubs that will enhance but not hide our lovely building. Robin Fleming has generously offered to get the Grounds Committee started and needs your help to plan for planting and maintenance and to lend a hand as needed. Please contact Robin at rflaming31@gmail.com.

- Stacy Spies, UUCSW Board of Trustee liaison to Buildings and Grounds

SMOC Food Drive for May

Please consider participating in a congregational food drive to benefit the South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) which provides meals for people in Worcester. They are especially in need of: 6-8 ounce juice boxes/pouches; fresh fruit especially apples 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, May 27th between 4:30 and 5:45 pm at the Ruggles Street door of UUCSW. Please reach out to Libba Moore at libbamoore13@gmail.com ahead of time if there's a better time for you. Food will be delivered to SMOC on Friday, May 28th. Thank you for help with this. - *Your friends on the Social Justice Committee*



Help UUCSW Help People in Need



SMOC in Worcester has identified the need for clothing, especially for men. Donated items can include: *new* socks and underwear, and *gently used* sweatshirts, sweatpants, T-shirts, and jeans. Please bring your donations to UUCSW on Thursday, May 27th 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 at Nsiegal185@msn.com or Pauline Sciarappa at psciarappa@gmail.com for other options. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Racial Justice Committee

UJIMA – pronounced oo-JEE-mah, it is Swahili for ‘collective work and responsibility’. The Racial Justice Committee spent the winter in search of understanding and therefore it engaged with several learning opportunities. There were webinars, special Zoom meetings and lots of discussions. We also sponsored two well-attended Lunch ‘n Learn events that were filled with new information. We were stretched by all of these learning opportunities as we understood new things about ourselves and our social world. Here’s a sampling:

- unconscious bias that if not addressed and adjusted can lead to destructive behavior
- a history of laws that in the beginnings of the country established the legitimacy of slavery and gradually created increased restrictions on the rights of Black people
- White people creating programs intending to be helpful, but actually creating new burdens for people of color (some will argue that it was done intentionally)
- reversals of fortune that came about in the 1950’s and 60’s as integration laws were created causing some towns to close their public pools and parks to avoid integration and thereby deprive everybody of a public good
- the GI bill not really giving all war veterans access to higher education and housing
- the cost of public higher education ever increasing as states reduced financial support for college students when more women and people of color enrolled in them

Overwhelmed, we asked what can we do to be helpful? We recognize that we must follow the lead of and collaborate with those of color. [The Boston UJIMA Project](#) may be one such opportunity. It is an organization run by people of color for people of color to create community access to small business loans and mentorship, among other things. The Unitarian Universalist Community Endowment Fund (UUCEF) has already invested in the UJIMA Project. A few UU congregations in Massachusetts are exploring investing possibilities in the Project. UU Mass Action is promoting it. The investing decision comes with the opportunity to develop as an ally with the UJIMA Project’s leadership and membership.

The UUCSW Finance Committee is currently positioned to invest funds in the near future. **Collaborating with the Racial Justice Committee, the two committees are examining the UJIMA Project as an investment tool and as a racial justice educational opportunity for UUCSW membership.** Watch this space for more information! Have questions? Please reach out to Sheila McPharlin or Kathy Metzger.

Join the RJC for our monthly meeting!

Our next meeting is May 12th from 4:00 to 5:30 pm. All welcome! Discussion will include addressing questions left over from the April Lunch & Learn: *The Hidden Cost of Racism*. Here’s the link to the interview: npr.org/2021/02/17/968638759/sum-of-us-examines-the-hidden-cost-of-racism-for-everyone. Contact Jane Walsh with questions or to let her know you are interested but unable to attend at janenboro@aol.com or 508-393-9206 (leave a message). And here’s the Zoom meeting link: zoom.us/j/84599163211.

May Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10:30 am – Sunday Service 12:00 pm – Justice Workshop 7:00 pm – Coming of Age	6:30 pm – UU Knits	7:00 pm – Membership Team Meeting		6:30 pm – Board of Trustees Meeting		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
10:30 am – Sunday Service	6:30 pm – UU Knits		4:00 pm – Racial Justice Committee Meeting		7:00 pm – Book Group	6:00 pm – “Good in the ‘Hood” Auction
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
10:30 am – Sunday Service 7:00 pm – Coming of Age	6:30 pm – UU Knits	7:00 pm – Program Committee Meeting				
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
10:30 am – Sunday Service	6:30 pm – UU Knits		<i>June Vista Articles Due</i>	4:30 pm – SMOC Food and Clothing Drive Collection @ UUCSW Ruggles Street Door		
30	31					
	<i>Reports to the 2021 Annual Meeting Due</i>					

**All services, meetings, and events are held remotely on Zoom unless otherwise indicated*

**THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY OF
WESTBOROUGH**

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Judith Nicholson, Co-Chair Scott Owens
 Stacy Spies

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ClerkAshleigh Swain
Collector.....Susie Wells
Assistant Collector.....Kathe Scott
Historian.....Stacy Spies

VISTA SUBMISSIONS

Announcements, suggestions, or questions?
The *Vista* newsletter is published monthly and
submissions are welcome. Please email
submissions to: vista@uucsw.org

**June articles are due by
Wednesday, May 26th. Thank you!**

**For updates, visit:
uucsw.org**