



THE FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF MIDDLEBOROUGH

25 South Main Street, Middleborough, MA 02346

www.uumiddleboro.org

508-947-1935

February, 2021

*We are offering virtual worship services.
The link to each service will be posted
on our website every week.*

Sunday, February 7, at 10:30 a.m.

Rev. Sarah Person preaching

The Light of Returning

Two years ago, our Soulful Sanctuary service featured music and readings about the slow turning of the season to longer days and anticipating spring. Imbolc, or St. Brigid's Day, is an ancient Gaelic festival day marking this time of year. Today it is celebrated as a holiday by Pagans. Join us as we celebrate both our return to the light and a sense of all things new.

Sunday, February 14, at 10:30 a.m.

Rev. Sarah Person preaching

Siding with Love

We are a church that puts love at the heart of everything that we do. In these times, it may take us a long while to understand what love demands of us. It is especially significant in our interactions; when one is driven by a need to heal and another is driven by a need to be right. There are no easy answers, but maybe there are clearer choices. Special music provided by Dan Hotchkiss singing *Stranger in Paradise*.

Sunday, February 21, at 10:30 a.m.

Rev. Sarah Person preaching

President for a Day

What would you do if you were President for a day? If you could sign three proclamations, what would be yours? Let's share with one another our dreams for this country of ours.

Sunday, February 28, at 10:30 a.m.

Rev. Sarah Person preaching

Be This Our Vision

It is the time of year when we begin to imagine and declare how we, as a congregation, want to be to one another and to the world. Join us as we explore how a congregation blends intent and understanding into a clear and active purpose.

Minister's Meditation

Having been raised in an interfaith household, and having raised our children in one, I have always enjoyed the commonalities between forms of worship. They are times out of the ordinary, dedicated to praise, affirmation, petition, gratitude and - after each service - a gathering of food and fellowship. Jews call this the oneg shabbat. Oneg means "delight." Staying after service to talk, sharing food and enjoying one another's company strengthens the bonds of community. It is a reflection of "Chesed," or steadfast love, the spirit of lovingkindness in the universe. Early Christians adopted a Greek name for the meal, "Agape," or love feast. Agape is the Greek word for unconditional love, goodwill toward strangers, love of nature, and love of God.

Of all the things I miss on Sunday mornings because of this pandemic, I realize I miss fellowship the most. It is ironic because I am such an introvert. But there is something so satisfying about being in the midst of goodwill. The pandemic is forcing us to consider another kind of love, a love the Greeks named "Philautia" or love of self. It has two faces; pride and arrogance certainly but another of self-esteem and a sense of self-worth. For the foreseeable future we will be taking our everyday meals alone or with only a few others. Let us intentionally prepare them as an expression of love, of care, of endurance, of gratitude, and of anticipation for the day when we can be together again.

Rev. Sarah



FEBRUARY MUSIC MUSINGS



“Draw the Circle Wide” – Virtual Choir Anthem

It's been one long ongoing adventure since we started the transformation to virtual-only church. In relation to computing, Oxford Languages defines “virtual” as “not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so.” I'm thankful for talented musicians and techies in our community who currently hold our music program together, virtually, even as we are apart. I could not do my job without my husband Dan's ongoing technical support.

The latest example of musician/techie wizardry was achieved by Bet Giddings who was central to our project around “Draw the Circle Wide.” Bet was involved in this project since its inception about three months ago. After careful set-up, fifteen Chalice Choir singers recorded 18 individual tracks which Bet collected, “massaged” and fit into ensemble. It was painstaking work which yielded a beautiful and heartfelt collaborative virtual choir performance.

There were several steps in creating this virtual choir, starting with an accompaniment track, a container that set the tempo, dynamics, and basic rhythm. Then came the vocal quintet of voice parts created by Bet Giddings (soprano, alto 1, alto 2, tenor) and Dan Hotchkiss (bass). The accompaniment and five voice tracks were combined to create “buddy tapes” featuring each voice part, which singers used to record their solo voices. Using a computer and special software, Bet literally created the choir. Alan Melchior assembled a series of thoughtful images to accompany the final audio recording which made its debut on January 10.

Kudos to our virtual choir participants: Dody Adkins-Perry, Katie Allen, Cindy Benard, Joan Breen, Valerie Fontaine, Bet Giddings, Dan Hotchkiss, Susan Hotchkiss, Dorine Levasseur, Mal Marvill, John Mullen, Andrea Priest, Ed Priest, Patty Simon, and Nicola Wilbar. Through the powers of technology, our spirits are alive and intertwined. To paraphrase Bet, perhaps we are “phantoms of the cyber world!”

Susan Hotchkiss, Director of Music

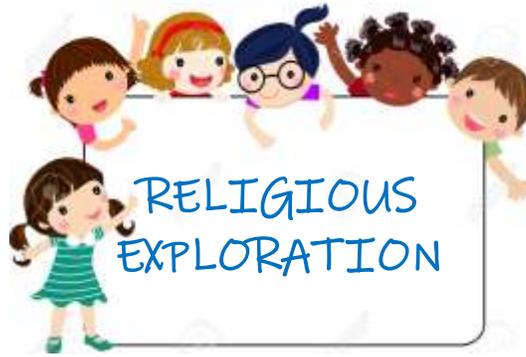


JUSTICE, EQUALITY, AND PEACE VIGILS

For our winter schedule, we are bowing to the elements and scheduling weekly ½ hour vigils on **Saturday mornings from 11:30 to 12 noon**. In addition, we will be offering training to help us respond to folks with strong opinions. Keep an eye out in our Updates for dates and times. If you are interested in standing with us, but would like the training first, please add your name, but put an X in the first column. Sign up for training and/or the vigil by clicking on the following link:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bh50g1GJo86U_kwcs9k95_PaZTPNP7i8CugTK77hd6o/edit?usp=sharing





Junior and Senior Youth

Junior and Senior Youth have gone to virtual meetings until the weather warms up. Senior Youth continue to meet the first and third Sundays in the afternoon, and Junior Youth meet the second and fourth Sundays.

Junior and Senior Youth will have an in person outing once a month for both groups together. In January we met at Pratt Farm. We shared a walk and pizza on the 18th in the afternoon. We wore masks and socially distanced. We were blessed with warmer weather and the sun.

Dungeons and Dragons - A small group of mostly Junior Youth have engaged in a monthly Dungeons and Dragons group. We have created our characters and are getting ready to play. We meet virtually for this group the second Sunday of the month during Junior Youth. Greg Stevens is running our group.

Unexpected Heroes

We continue to meet at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. The Zoom link goes out on Saturday; and if you need a link, please be sure to email dre@uumiddleboro.org. We meet for a half hour and are working on a curriculum about our UU values. January has been about caring and sharing. We are also working our way through the *Change the World* book and examining a different way to make an impact in the world each month. This month is about raising money, and we are planning a craft that we can make that we may be able to sell or auction off in a future church fundraiser.

RE Committee

Our RE Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 5:30 pm. We are open to new members. Please email dre@uumiddelboro.org if you are interested.

Family Coffee Hour

Our first coffee hour of the year was on the Second Sunday of the month at 11:30. We will continue to meet on the second Sunday of the month and will change the time to 11:45 so people have time to be at church coffee hour. The group is open to RE parents.

Kelly Lownds, Director of Religious Exploration

VIRTUAL ZOOM OFFERINGS

COFFEE HOUR

Tuesdays: February 2, 9, 16, 23
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.



Links will be sent out for this event.

LET'S DO LUNCH

Thursdays: February 4, 11, 18, 25
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Links will be sent out
for this event.



JUST THIS SANGHA

Fridays: February 5, 12, 19, 26
6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

We meet every Friday at 6:00 p.m. Contact
Tom Tanguay at tomjtanguay@gmail.com
for further information. All are welcome.



NEW MOON MEDITATION

with Natalie Johnson
Thursday, February 11
6:00 - 6:45 p.m.

February is a time when the landscape is still very much in the throes of winter, and yet.....against the backdrop of grey skies, bare branches and chill winds, we sense the very first stirrings of new life.....of the promise of renewal yet to come. The sun increases its trajectory each day, and we feel encouraged to begin to hope once again.

Join us under this dark Aquarian moon as we contemplate the way forward and find new ways to communicate our values and truths in the world that we are creating anew. All are welcome.

The link will be sent out for this event.



VIRTUAL ZOOM OFFERINGS (continued)

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Saturdays, February 13 and 27
9:30 – 11:00 a.m.



The Social Justice Planning Committee is continuing its virtual presentation of films, discussions, and some exercises for deepening our understanding of racial injustice in our country. This is part of our process for deciding what actions we would like to take.

In February we will watch films which deepen our understanding of our history with Indigenous peoples on this continent. In March we will continue films which go deeper into the discussions of both January and February. In April and May and perhaps June, we will be looking at various manifestations in our present day of what our history has produced in our legal system, housing, education, policing and personal interactions. All through this process there will be conscious work at building our own tools for becoming more effective racial justice advocates.

- Feb.13 Discussion of film *We Shall Remain*
- Feb. 27 Discussion of film *Sand Creek Massacre*
- March 13 Discussion of film *The Color of Fear*
- March 27 Discussion of documentary *Native American Boarding Schools*

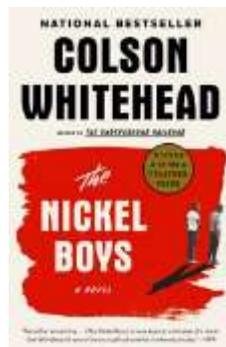
Specific information about accessing the films will be provided in the weekly Updates. We hope you can join us.

Questions/Comments:

Contact Deanne Bonnar, Natalie Johnson or Rev. Sarah Person

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Monday, February 15
6:00 – 7:00 p.m.



Our February 15 selection is *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead.

Carleen will have multiple copies available, and our meetings are held via Zoom with thanks to Dorine Levasseur for hosting.

If you would like to join us or need more info, please contact Carleen Loper: carleenml@aol.com.

VIRTUAL ZOOM OFFERINGS (continued)

FULL MOON MEDITATION

with Natalie Johnson

Saturday, February 27

6:00 - 6:45 p.m.

This Virgo Full Moon shines down on us, calling us all to greater perfection and accountability. As we contemplate our role in co-creating the future, we must each decide the standard to which we will hold ourselves. Will we go with the prevailing winds, or will we find the courage to stand in our truth? Join us as we harness the energy of this full moon to illuminate the path ahead. All are welcome.



The link will be sent out for this event.



<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Promise-of-a-New-Year---January-UU-New-England-Newsletter.html?soid=1102593057446&aid=7j-FvZZxSE>

Claiming Our Spiritual Leadership Now Online!

Originally developed as a popular in-person workshop by the New England Region staff, COSL is now accessible nationwide as an online training through the UU Leadership Institute! Consider taking this training if you and your congregation are looking for ways for congregational life to be more about:

- soulful engagement with your faith;
- finding energy and meaning in the gifts already present in your congregation; and
- the transformative power of communities living their values in ways that challenge dominant culture – both within and beyond the congregation.

For more information, visit <https://www.uuinstitute.org/courses/spiritualleadership-305/>

New Day Rising Conference National

Saturday, February 27 12pm-9pm ET

<https://uua.wufoo.com/forms/mf5qtv1163h30/>

Is your congregation ready to progress in racial justice work? Want to learn what other congregations are working on, and how yours might apply it? Join the Central East Region staff and a continent of UUs as we create Beloved UU Communities.

On Your Own: Watch compelling video TED-talk style testimonials from selected congregations around the continent sharing their learnings, hopes and next steps in their quest for racial equity in their congregations

Together: Worship · Workshops · Caucusing. With plenty of breaks.

THE FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF MIDDLEBOROUGH
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
Sunday, December 27, 2020

WARRANT

Article I: To adopt a budget for the third quarter of the current fiscal year, the period covering January 1, 2021, to March 31, 2021.

Article II: To address any other actions necessary for the business of the Society.

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Meeting was convened by Jim Bonnar at 11:30 a.m.

Jim reported that, at this time, FUUSM is doing well financially. A number of factors contributed to this good news, including:

- Generosity of congregation resulting in an increase in pledges as well as the receipt of \$12,000 in special gifts.
- Fundraising events, which have so far raised \$6000, despite the pandemic and need to have events conducted virtually. This means that we may yet achieve the budgeted goal of \$10,000 in fundraising for this fiscal year.
- Church was able to repair roof at cost of \$12,000. This expense does not impact the budget, as the money came out of the I Love My Church Fund. The remaining funds from that fund will be moved to the Mary Fuller Fund, where there will be higher earnings on the funds.
- Jim reminded everyone that our next fundraising event - *Reboot 2020* - will be held virtually on December 31 at 8:00 p.m. You can register for the event on the FUUSM website at [www.UUMiddleboro.org](http://www.UUMiddleboro.org). Many thanks to Tony Soares, Steve Larrett, and Susan Hotchkiss for their work on this event. Also, thanks to Alan Melchior and Dan Hotchkiss for their extraordinary technological support.

It is not clear when we will again be able to gather in person as a congregation. Jim proposed that we continue with quarterly budget meetings during this uncertain time. As of this date, the church is on target to finish this fiscal year in good financial shape.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept original budget as proposed at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Bob Waterman informed attendees that actions are being taken to reinvigorate the Social Justice Committee. Lauren Haugh has volunteered to chair the Social Justice Committee, which will incorporate the work that has been done by the former Racial Justice Task Group. Lauren and Rev. Sarah will be meeting after the holidays to further discuss forming a small group to be part of the Committee. One of the goals of the Committee will be to offer opportunities for education and service in the areas of social and racial justice. Current activities being offered regarding racial justice include a series of film discussions. The schedule of activities can be found in the Newsletter and the UU Updates.

The Racial Justice Task Group has completed its survey of the congregation regarding its perspective on moving forward with public actions regarding racial justice. Thirty-eight responses were received, and all were favorable toward the church taking public action (actions to be determined through Social Justice Committee).

# MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING

January 20, 2021

**Present:** Jim Bonnar, Bob Waterman, Marc MacQueen, Katie Allen, Rev. Sarah Person, Lois Aldrich, Eileen Smith

January 6, 2021, PC meeting minutes approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Marc MacQueen reports that the church is financially in good shape. \$80,000+ in pledges collected through December.

**Minister's Report:** Rev. Sarah reports that Sunday service attendance numbers are steady, about 40 households weekly (60-75 people). Bob Waterman asked if it would be possible to follow up with any "new faces" at Sunday service. Rev. Sarah plans to follow up with Dorine Levasseur. Youth are attending their groups consistently. Pastoral Care continues to meet weekly. Attendance for virtual activities hosted by Rev. Sarah (coffee hour, lunch) has been small but steady.

**Social Justice Committee** is moving forward, with good feedback and input from survey. Rev. Sarah has been meeting with Lauren Haugh weekly, and both will work with Bob to develop a Charter for the Committee. Lauren would like to develop a core group for planning and coordination of all social justice issues including racial and environmental justice. All members will be welcome to join sub-groups to work on specific issues.

**Racial Justice:** Katie Allen shared the results of the second survey; overall feedback has been very positive. Next step will be for the Social Justice Team to identify what activities/events might move forward. Many respondents appear to be open to public display/banner.

**Music Committee:** The minutes circulated by email. No questions/comments. Report accepted.

**RE Report:** Kelly Lownds circulated the report by email. No questions/comments. Report accepted.

**Alert System:** Marc reported that the insurance company can provide a warning system for the church in the event of weather concerns. Church Technology and the Building and Grounds Committees would handle the installation. The contact person for emergency warning would be needed – Rev. Sarah offered to be the contact. The PC agreed that a warning system would be appropriate. Marc will follow through with respective parties.

**Cash in the Plate:** Fuel assistance for January and February. Sarah noted the demand at the food pantry has been low as well as the need for assistance with utility bills. Could be due to the COVID forgiveness program.

**Listening Circles:** Bob is looking for volunteers from the PC to host Circles. A summary of the 2020 Listening Circles had been sent out in the April 2020 Newsletter, so no need to rewrite a summary. It was suggested that this summary be sent out with invites to the congregation. Bob sent out the schedule for the Listening Circles to the PC. The PC will confirm with Bob which dates are available. Bob will send out a sign-up schedule to the congregation with the summary of the 2020 Circles.

**Treasurer Opening:** Marc has resigned as Treasurer effective March 31, 2021. Leadership Development Team is working on identifying a replacement.

Marc informed the PC that he believes it is time to terminate the contract with Betty Bissonnette. Both Marc and Eileen Smith report that things have not worked out as planned with Ms. Bissonnette. It was agreed the Church would terminate its relationship with Ms. Bissonnette once the final invoice has been received and paid.

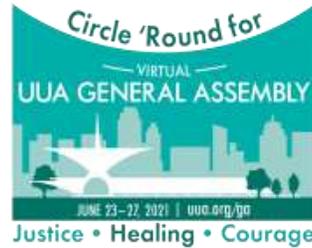
There remains a need for a consultant who can help set up the Church's accounts properly using QB Online, taking into account how to deal with and report on specific donations, pledges, etc.; train new person to operate QB Online; and to reconcile balances. Jim Bonnar spoke to JR Pucillo-Dunphy, who said he is willing to assist in the set up of the accounts for QB Online. JR estimates that, once set up correctly, it should take someone 5-10 hours/week to perform Treasurer tasks. However, there would still be a need for someone to reconcile balances and train a new Treasurer in QB Online. Eileen's business accountant has been providing Eileen with some assistance but may not be willing to take on a larger scope of business.

The PC will explore other options and report back to Bob and Jim. Rev. Sarah will check with other churches to see how books are managed, will contact UUA to see if there are any assistance/ideas they can provide, and will contact Marie Belanger to see if she may have some ideas. Marc will contact Dan Hotchkiss to see if he has ideas. Massachusetts CPA Society may have volunteers available and can be contacted at <https://www.msccaonline.org/>

Next PC Meeting - February 3, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

## FEBRUARY 2021

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Monday                                                                                                                                                                              | Tuesday                                                                                                                                  | Wednesday                                      | Thursday                                                                                                                                    | Friday                                                                                      | Saturday                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1                                                                                                                                                                                   | 2<br>10:00 a.m.<br>Peaceful Quilters,<br>Parish Hall<br>10:30 a.m.<br>Virtual<br>Coffee Hour<br>7:00 p.m.<br>Virtual Choir               | 3<br>5:30 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>RE Committee      | 4<br>12:00 noon.<br>Virtual<br>Let's Do Lunch<br>7:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Spirituality Group                                                 | 5<br>1:00 p.m.<br>Organ Practice,<br>Sanctuary<br>6:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Just This Sangha  | 6                                                                                                              |
| 7<br>10:00 a.m.<br>Virtual RE<br>10:30 a.m.<br>Virtual<br>Worship Service<br>4:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Senior Youth                                                                                                                                  | 8<br>2:00 p.m.<br>Recording,<br>Sanctuary                                                                                                                                           | 9<br>10:00 a.m.<br>Peaceful Quilters,<br>Parish Hall<br>10:30 a.m.<br>Virtual<br>Coffee Hour<br>7:00 p.m.<br>Virtual Choir               | 10<br>7:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Music Committee  | 11<br>12:00 noon.<br>Virtual<br>Let's Do Lunch<br>6:00 p.m.<br>Virtual New Moon<br>Meditation<br>7:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Spirituality Group | 12<br>1:00 p.m.<br>Organ Practice,<br>Sanctuary<br>6:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Just This Sangha | 13<br>9:30 a.m.<br>Virtual<br>Social Justice<br>Film Discussion                                                |
| 14<br><br>10:00 a.m.<br>Virtual RE<br>10:30 a.m.<br>Virtual<br>Worship Service<br>11:45 a.m.<br>Virtual RE<br>Coffee Hour<br>4:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Junior Youth | 15<br><br>2:00 p.m.<br>Recording,<br>Sanctuary<br>6:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Book Discussion<br>Group | 16<br>10:00 a.m.<br>Peaceful Quilters,<br>Parish Hall<br>10:30 a.m.<br>Virtual<br>Coffee Hour<br>7:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Choir Rehearsal | 17<br>6:30 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Parish Committee | 18<br>12:00 noon.<br>Virtual<br>Let's Do Lunch<br>7:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Spirituality Group                                                | 19<br>1:00 p.m.<br>Organ Practice,<br>Sanctuary<br>6:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Just This Sangha | 20                                                                                                             |
| 21<br>10:00 a.m.<br>Virtual RE<br>10:30 a.m.<br>Virtual<br>Worship Service<br>4:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Senior Youth<br><span style="color: red;">Newsletter<br/>Deadline</span>                                                                     | 22<br>2:00 p.m.<br>Recording,<br>Sanctuary                                                                                                                                          | 23<br>10:00 a.m.<br>Peaceful Quilters,<br>Parish Hall<br>10:30 a.m.<br>Virtual<br>Coffee Hour<br>7:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Choir Rehearsal | 24                                             | 25<br>12:00 noon.<br>Virtual<br>Let's Do Lunch<br>7:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Spirituality Group                                                | 26<br>1:00 p.m.<br>Organ Practice,<br>Sanctuary<br>6:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Just This Sangha | 27<br>9:30 a.m.<br>Virtual<br>Social Justice<br>Film Discussion<br>6:00 p.m.<br>Virtual New Moon<br>Meditation |
| 28<br>10:00 a.m.<br>Virtual RE<br>10:30 a.m.<br>Virtual<br>Worship Service<br>4:00 p.m.<br>Virtual<br>Junior Youth                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                          |                                                |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                             |                                                                                                                |



**June 23 – 27, 2021**

[uua.org/ga](https://uua.org/ga)

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process.

The UUA Board of Trustees has passed a resolution making the 2021 UUA General Assembly a 100% virtual event. Let's reach record-breaking attendance June 23-27, 2021!

### **Why Virtual General Assembly?**

General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. That remains true even when we cannot gather physically. Last year, GA had more than 4,900 registered attendees participate from remote locations around the world. Although we give up the face-to-face interaction and hugs that are prevalent when we meet in-person, we retain our dedication to community and make our experience more accessible and more environmentally sustainable.

Registration for virtual GA 2021 is now open! Registration is \$200 per person. Financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available. General Assembly registrants receive access to the 2021 Online Participation Portal, including live, simulive, and on-demand video content, the virtual exhibit hall, chat features, support, and a (new!) GA mobile app.

<https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>

