



THE FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF MIDDLEBOROUGH

25 South Main Street, Middleborough, MA 02346

www.uumiddleboro.org

508-947-1935

April 2021

We are offering virtual worship services at 10:30 a.m. The link to each service will be posted on our website every week.

Sunday, April 4
Rev. Sarah Person preaching
Easter Sunday
At the Dawning

All things can be made new. In our latitudes, Easter is part of Spring, our growing season, our reclamation of Earth and the promise of things to come. We are blessed by possibilities and surrounded by beginnings. Special music will be offered by Nicola Wilbar singing *Be Still*.

Sunday, April 11
Rev. Sarah Person preaching
It Doesn't Have to Be This Way

There is a kind of freedom in maturity, especially if we are able to challenge all the assumptions that guide our actions and ask "Why?" Right now, what is the mantra in your life that you would share with others? Right now, when you look at what is going on around you, what is the worldview that defines your response?

Sunday, April 18
Susan Hotchkiss leading
Music Sunday

Music in the Time of Covid: a one-year celebration of transitions and transformations. Join members of the Chalice Zoom Choir as we share insights on music as a bright spot holding us together. There will be vintage clips of prior Music Sunday performances, high spots from this past year, dialogues, and surprises.

Sunday, April 25
Rev. Sarah Person preaching
Sacred Spaces

Have you ever been in a place that made you stop and wonder, or think, or give thanks? Today, let's share with each other the places we've found, and perhaps how we create sacred space in our own homes.

Minister's Meditation

Band-aids for Broken Hearts

Because I care deeply about you, please do not read my meditation today if you are sorely distressed about the recent spate of gun violence. I will understand.

As of this writing, eighteen people have died in two mass shootings since March 16. In 2020, the FBI reported a 40% rise in background checks, meaning a 40% rise in gun sales. In 2020, the number of mass shootings skyrocketed to 611. It is past time for us to demand gun safety measures to protect all of us. We are grieving the loss of too many to gun violence, not just in mass shootings but tens of thousands every year. I cannot accept the abominable claim that the death of innocents is the price of freedom. That means absolutely nothing; nothing to the millions of loved ones of those killed for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or being the wrong color, or gender, or political party – the list goes on. We are not guaranteed the right to intimidate or kill people even if we somehow think it necessary. It is the responsibility of all of us to make it as difficult as possible for that to happen, and, if it does, to prove it necessary in a court system free of bias. This is not a political or a cultural issue, it is a moral and a spiritual issue.

Gun violence robs the humanity of the perpetrator as well as the victim. We are human. We are more than the sum of our fears, more resourceful, more resilient, more capable of understanding than we give ourselves credit for. We can be done with this assault on our humanity.

When I was in high school, we had a gun club that focused on skills and safety. Becoming a member of the NRA meant one pursued competency, maybe even excellence, in a sport. Some of you hunt regularly and enjoy target practice. You are not hunting human beings or preparing to do so or even imagining that you would. That requires a mindset that is profoundly disconnected from one's humanity. A couple of years after I graduated, a faction of the NRA redirected the hundred-year-old association toward opposing gun control and protecting gun rights. Since then, every effort to mandate something as basic as background checks has been stymied in Congress. According to a nationwide poll conducted by USA Today and Suffolk University in August, 2019, 90% of Americans, including 74% of NRA members, support background checks.

So far, we have been offered only weak band-aids to bind our grief; weak posturing, blaming, and pretending violence is not a public health menace. We deserve more.

Rev. Sarah



APRIL MUSIC MUSINGS



Emerging from the Woods

Such welcome news that come May first, Covid-19 vaccines will become available to all people aged 16 and older. Although it will take weeks and maybe months to fully shake down into the population, we are witnessing a game-changer with bright hopes for moving out of the restrictions of pandemic. For us, the question is, “When can we sing together again?” And the answer is, “We don’t know!” We DO know that we will not sing together as a congregation or a choir until science supports that decision. Emerging from the woods will come in stages.

Members of the Chalice Choir continue to meet as a “Zoom Choir” of 18 to 20 singers each Tuesday night, as much for fellowship as singing. It’s important to SING in order to be ABLE to sing, which means we warm up and sing repertoire old and new. We also have offerings from choir members who lead warm-ups, share songs, and challenge us with music games. This is a time of finding new ways to build community through music. New singers are welcome to our Zoom Choir rehearsals. Please let me know if you’d like to receive a link.

Music Sunday is April 18, which is also Earth Day. You can expect a collaborative effort to raise the rafters with a virtual celebration. Hope to see you all in your little boxes on Sunday, April 18!

Susan Hotchkiss



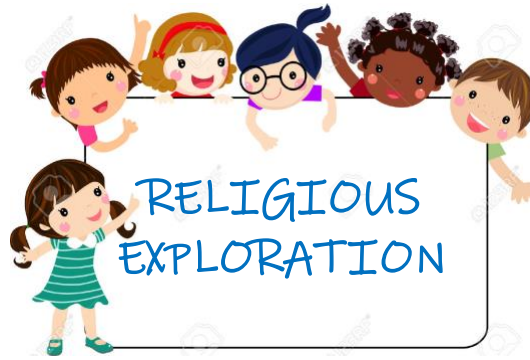
LISTENING CIRCLES FEEDBACK SUMMARY

In January, the Parish Committee organized Listening Circles. It was an opportunity for members and friends of FUUSM to meet in small groups and talk with a PC member about the state of the Church. We talked about the PC’s Vision for the Congregation. We also heard what’s important to everyone as we look toward the future. It was a valuable sharing process that will help shape the direction of future initiatives in the Church. Participants seemed to appreciate the opportunity to engage in this process, and many were eager to hear what others had to say and continue the dialogue.

Visit the link below for a summary of feedback from participants at these meetings:

[LISTENING CIRCLES FEEDBACK SUMMARY](#)





Unexpected Heroes

Our youth helped create a new opening and closing for our Sunday classes. We start by talking about our favorite play items--Legos, Pokémon, soldier and fantasy figurines, and we end by singing the Adios song. Eamon is still teaching us how to sing it the right way, but we are getting there! We are in the middle of talking about welcoming and community, and we were happy to meet a new student--Ianto Quintal. Our Zoom link will continue to go out on Saturday; and if you are interested, please email us at dre@uumiddleboro.org. We meet at 10:00 a.m. until 10:30 a.m., and we have a lot of fun!

Junior and Senior Youth

We have recommitted ourselves to our multiculturalism and anti-racism project and opportunities for meeting together monthly. Senior Youth will meet virtually on the first Sunday of the month from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. and in person on the third Sunday of the month from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Junior Youth will meet virtually the second Sunday of the month from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. (D & D group) and in person on the fourth Sunday of the month from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

Dungeons and Dragons continues to be a monthly group for the Junior Youth. We have created our characters and are off on new adventures with our Dungeon Master Greg Stevens. We will meet the second Sunday of the month at 3:00 p.m.

Message for All Ages

We continue to have great participation in our story project. In March we had Emmet Gun reading *When Spring Comes*. Other stories shared in March were *The 100 Dresses* recommended by Sandy Smiley, *Princess Zara's Birthday Tradition* recommended by Susan Curtiss, and *Jabari Jumps* recommended by the Delage Family.

RE Family Coffee Hour

We will meet again on the second Sunday of the month for a family coffee hour at 11:45 a.m. A Zoom link will go out the Saturday evening prior to the event.

RE Committee

We will meet the first Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. We have adjusted the time to try to make it easier to attend. New members are welcome. A Zoom link will go out to anyone interested.

Kelly Lownds, Director of Religious Exploration

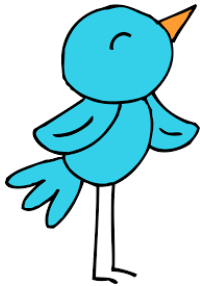
VIRTUAL ZOOM OFFERINGS

LET'S DO LUNCH

Thursdays: April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.



Links will be sent out for this event.



JUST THIS SANGHA

Fridays: April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
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.



COFFEE WITH THE MINISTER

Tuesdays: April 6, 13, 20, 27
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Links will be sent out
for this event.



*please
join us*

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Saturdays, April 10 & 24 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.



The Racial Justice Committee is winding up the remainder of this church year with the following film discussions and activities. You will notice that there are three activities scheduled throughout this segment. For those who wish to join, we will be doing:

the Wampanoag Ancestors Walk in Plymouth on **Saturday, May 1**;

the 28-day journaling exercise based on the book *Me & White Supremacy* on **Saturday, May 22**;

and holding a vigil at the church on **Saturday, June 19**, to commemorate Juneteenth.

What Can I Do About Racism?

For 5 months now, fifteen to twenty of us have been meeting every other Saturday to talk about a film or readings about racial justice. Over and over, sentiments like "I wasn't educated about racism" or "I don't talk about racism with other white people" or "I don't want to feel guilty" have come up. So now we are proposing that we undertake a self-exploratory project to address these points head-on, most especially to begin to answer the all-pervasive question of "What do I do?"

Writer and speaker Layla Saad has written a fairly short and wonderful book called *Me and White Supremacy*. As the foreword of the book, written by Robin DiAngelo, says: "White Fragility" states, this book is a "resource for white people willing to align what they profess to value (racial equality) with their actual practice (antiracist action)." It is meant as 28-day "work-book" that we propose we do, each on our own, over the period of April 1 to May 21 (you can begin sooner if you choose). Then on May 22 we will gather on Zoom to share what we learned about ourselves, how we came to consider new ways we can continue to grow and where we think we can go from here, together and individually. This will mean buying the book and taking time on most days to do a short reading, some contemplation and a bit of journaling. But we think this will be very much worthwhile for those of us who participate, including a wonderful opportunity to share our thoughts together on May 22. Please consider joining us in this unique endeavor.

Dorine Levasseur

- 3/27 FILMS: *Dawnland & Dear Georgina* – Discussion; Facilitators: Natalie Johnson & Sandy Smiley
Announcement of May 22 Activity: *Me & White Supremacy* – 28-Day Exercise
Dorine Levasseur to give those interested time to obtain the book, read and begin the exercise.
- 4/10 FILM: *The Central Park 5* - Discussion
Discussion of *How to Hold Difficult Conversations* Facilitators: Deanne Bonnar & Dorine Levasseur
- 4/24 FILM: *Just Mercy* – Discussion Facilitators: Bob Waterman & Lois Aldrich
- 5/1 ACTIVITY: Wampanoag Ancestors Walk 10:00 a.m. - 2 :00 p.m. in Plymouth, MA
- 5/8 FILM: *Urban Rez* – Discussion. Facilitators: Natalie Johnson & Sandy Smiley
- 5/22 ACTIVITY: *Me & White Supremacy* by Layla Saad; 28-Day Exercise - Discussion & Share
Facilitators: Dorine Levasseur & Dody Adkins-Perry
- 6/5 FILM: *The New York Times 26 Mini-Films for Exploring Race, Bias & Identity With Students – A Conversation About Race and Who, Me? Biased?* (6 videos) - Discussion
Discussion of *Microaggressions* paper. Facilitators: Deanne Bonnar & Bob Waterman
- 6/19 WRAP-UP and FORUM for Questions, Thoughts & Insights..... Facilitator: Natalie Johnson
ACTIVITY: Vigil to Commemorate Juneteenth. Facilitator: Lois Aldrich

All are welcome to join any or part of these offerings. Any questions may be directed at Deanne Bonnar or Natalie Johnson.

NEW MOON MEDITATION

with Natalie Johnson

Sunday, April 11

6:00 – 6:45 p.m.



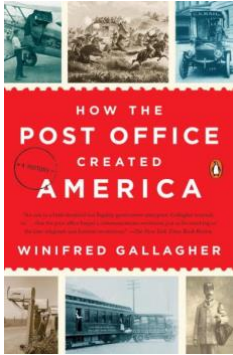
This month's New Moon is in Aries, as we come full circle back to the start of the Zodiac Cycle. Having just passed through the gentle, somewhat dreamlike energy of Pisces, we now encounter the fire and passion of Aries, the bringer of Spring, of new beginnings, of limitless possibilities. Whatever we can dream, Aries will help us reach our goals, ablaze with the fire of the Sun and the determination of the Ram. Join us as we contemplate what it is we want to bring forth, who is here to stand with us and what will it take to bring our dreams into reality.

All are welcome.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Monday, April 19

6:00 – 7:00 p.m.



The Book Group continues to meet on the third Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. with thanks to Dorine Levasseur for hosting our Zoom meetings.

Our April 19 selection is *How the Post Office Created America* by Winifred Gallagher. Our May 17 selection will be *Bettyville: A Memoir* by George Hodgman.

Carleen Loper will have multiple copies of the selections available. Contact her for more info: Carleenml@aol.com.

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

with Natalie Johnson

Thursday, April 22

6:00 - 6:45 p.m.



We invite you to gather with us this night in ceremony to honor our Mother, Goddess Gaia, Pachamama, Mother Earth. This beautiful green and blue planet gives us life and nurtures us throughout all the stages of our being.....offering us a home, shelter, water, food, medicine, beauty and deep belonging. Our destiny is intertwined with Her own in ways we as yet do not fully understand. We are in symbiotic relationship and need each other in order for each of us to reach our full spiritual potential.

Let us spend some time this night in deep gratitude and acknowledgement of all that She gives to us, and perhaps form a new resolve to take better care of Her, to stand up in defense of Her and to honor Her as She deserves to be honored as the Mother of all Life.

Please consider sharing an offering for Her in the form of a poem, a drawing, a simple prayer or something else.

All are welcome.

FULL MOON MEDITATION

with Natalie Johnson

Monday, April 26

6:00 – 6:45 p.m.



This month's Full Moon is in Scorpio and falls on Lunar Beltane. In Earth-honoring traditions, Beltane is when fertility, youth, passion and the blossoming of all life is celebrated with joy and abandon. The Earth is suddenly bursting with life.... plants, trees, flowers, birds and baby animals. It is a time for love, for betrothal, for sowing one's oats. We are in full ecstatic celebration of the abundance of Mother Nature, and all of Creation shares in our rejoicing.

We will gather to see how the seeds we planted months ago are now in full bloom and offer gratitude to all the many beings who held us safe and nurtured, tended and midwived what we sought to bring to life at this time.

All are welcome.



JUSTICE, EQUALITY, AND PEACE VIGILS



Spring has sprung, but for now we will continue 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



Parish Care

Parish Care help is available to assist with meals, transportation, emergency babysitting, and hospital visits during illnesses or other family emergencies. We are a diverse, active and caring community; and we welcome your questions and your participation. You are always invited to call or visit our minister to discuss any matter of concern to you.

Lay Ministry Coordinator: Susan Curtiss
Lay Pastoral Minister: Sue St. Germain
Meals: Juli Gould

Parish Committee

President: Jim Bonnar
Vice President: Bob Waterman
Treasurer: Marc MacQueen
Assistant Treasurer: Eileen Smith
Parish Clerk: Lois Aldrich
Members At Large: Katie Allen
Nicole Sykes

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING

March 17, 2021

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

Guests: Gil Cote, Kelly Lownds

Minister's Report: Rev. Sarah reviewed the Minister's Report for March. Main focus is that building repairs are needed to the chancel ceiling, walls and steps. The work on the roof worsened the cracks in the ceiling, and dust has been settling in the chancel area and into organ pipes. Paul Macuch, the building contractor who has extensive experience working on older houses of worship, will be submitting a plan for making needed repairs and painting.

Due to his consulting business, Dan Hotchkiss may be more limited in what he can provide for adult education this coming church year. He has proposed a new curriculum, which Rev. Sarah will review.

Nicole Sykes asked if there is any planning going on for the re-opening of in-person church, once people are vaccinated. Rev. Sarah would like to see a "hybrid" model when in-person church re-opens, with the ability to continue virtual capability for those that are unable to participate in person. Rev. Sarah suggests a Safety Committee be formed to develop a plan for the re-opening of in-person church.

Cash in the Plate: The Social Justice Committee will make recommendations for April recipients.

Treasurer's Report: Marc MacQueen shared the most recent budget report. Overall, church funds are in good shape. Revenue is on target for this year. We may have a surplus at the end of this fiscal year but need to take into account PPP carry over and special gifts, which likely will not be available this coming year.

Both Marc MacQueen and Eileen Smith report they are feeling more comfortable with accounts, reports, and Quick Books on-line due to assistance provided by Liz Snay. However, some questions still remain. Rev. Sarah suggests Marc and Eileen pull together a list of questions for Liz to clarify some of our questions.

Quarterly Budget meeting is scheduled for March 21, after the service. Marc included budget reports (both long and short form) in the UU Updates that were recently sent out to the congregation. There was discussion around changes in the budget for next year. Include in March 21 meeting any new or additional expenses, such as: new committees (social justice initiatives), any technical needs to continue virtual services post pandemic, increases in salaries and professional expenses. Our goal should be to fully fund the budget without using deficit spending.

Pledge goal for 2021-22 is estimated to be \$180,000. The congregation should be aware of why this pledge goal is greater than last year's, and what the additional money will fund.

RE: Kelly Lownds provided an update on RE. Junior and Senior Youth will start meeting in person this month, outdoors, with masks. They are planning for a June service and a play. Curriculum has been focused on "Be the Change" and discussing racial justice. Dungeons and Dragons group is ongoing and has been successful. Continuing to meet with younger children, offering various activities, involving kids in planning.

Rick Benard and Bill Howe have volunteered to teach youth about basic financial planning.

CORI for staff needs to be renewed for new church year.

Pledge Drive Update: Gil Cote provided an update on the Pledge Drive. Materials (pledge cards, thank you cards) have come in. Pledge team in place. Waiting for pledge package (letter, brochure) to send to pledge Stewards (who will send to their assigned church members/friends). Since in-person visits are not possible this year, Stewards will be communicating to their assigned church members/friends either by phone or Zoom. Rev. Sarah offered to provide Zoom links if needed. There was discussion around the need for pledge forms, and the decision was made to continue to use pledge forms to maintain records. The steward will complete the form over the phone/Zoom and mail to member.

Some discussion on the brochure but will follow up on it and Jim Bonnar's letter at the next PC meeting.

Next PC meeting (check-in): Tuesday, March 23, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

APRIL 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 12:00 noon Virtual Let's Do Lunch 7:00 p.m. Virtual Spirituality Group	2 1:00 p.m. Organ Practice, Sanctuary 6:00 p.m. Virtual Just This Sangha	3
4  Happy Easter 10:00 a.m. Virtual RE 10:30 a.m. Virtual Worship Service 4:30 p.m. Virtual Senior Youth	5 2:00 p.m. Recording, Sanctuary	6 10:00 a.m. Peaceful Quilters, Parish Hall 10:30 a.m. Virtual Coffee Hour 7:00 p.m. Virtual Choir Rehearsal	7 5:30 p.m. Virtual RE Committee	8 12:00 noon Virtual Let's Do Lunch 7:00 p.m. Virtual Spirituality Group	9 1:00 p.m. Organ Practice, Sanctuary 6:00 p.m. Virtual Just This Sangha	10 9:30 a.m. Virtual Social Justice Film Discussion
11 10:00 a.m. Virtual RE 10:30 a.m. Virtual Service 11:45 a.m. Virtual RE Coffee Hour 3:00 p.m. Virtual Junior Youth 6:00 p.m. Virtual New Moon Meditation	12 2:00 p.m. Recording, Sanctuary	13 10:00 a.m. Peaceful Quilters, Parish Hall 10:30 a.m. Virtual Coffee Hour 7:00 p.m. Virtual Choir Rehearsal	14 7:00 p.m. Virtual Music Committee	15 12:00 noon Virtual Let's Do Lunch 7:00 p.m. Virtual Spirituality Group	16 1:00 p.m. Organ Practice, Sanctuary 6:00 p.m. Virtual Just This Sangha	17
18 10:00 a.m. Virtual RE 10:30 a.m. Virtual Worship Service 4:30 p.m. Senior Youth, Parish Hall May Newsletter Deadline	19  2:00 p.m. Recording, Sanctuary 6:00 p.m. Virtual Book Discussion Group	20 10:00 a.m. Peaceful Quilters, Parish Hall 10:30 a.m. Virtual Coffee Hour 7:00 p.m. Virtual Choir Rehearsal	21 6:30 p.m. Virtual Parish Committee	22 12:00 noon Virtual Let's Do Lunch 6:00 p.m. Virtual Earth Day Celebration 7:00 p.m. Virtual Spirituality Group	23 1:00 p.m. Organ Practice, Sanctuary 6:00 p.m. Virtual Just This Sangha	24 9:30 a.m. Virtual Social Justice Film Discussion
25 10:00 a.m. Virtual RE 10:30 a.m. Virtual Worship Service 4:00 p.m. Junior Youth, Parish Hall	26 2:00 p.m. Recording, Sanctuary 6:00 p.m. Virtual Full Moon Meditation	27 10:00 a.m. Peaceful Quilters, Parish Hall 10:30 a.m. Virtual Coffee Hour 7:00 p.m. Virtual Choir Rehearsal	28	29 12:00 noon Virtual Let's Do Lunch 7:00 p.m. Virtual Spirituality Group	30 1:00 p.m. Organ Practice, Sanctuary 6:00 p.m. Virtual Just This Sangha	



New England Region

Planning Worship for the Post-Pandemic World Thursday, April 15 & Saturday April 17

Part 1 - Decision Making About Post-Pandemic Worship. Led by New England Region Staff

Before we can get to the questions of HOW to do post-pandemic worship, we need to think about WHAT to do, and WHY. Who, specifically, are we hoping to serve in our congregations as we move into the post-pandemic world? What do they need? What else do we need to consider in our decision-making? Lots of congregations are considering hybrid or multi-platform worship post-pandemic. These conversations will help you to focus on the specific needs of your congregation as you consider your options and make initial decisions.

This program is free and we are offering two sessions of it. They are the same material, so attend either one.

- **Thursday, April 15, 7:00 - 9:00 pm**
- **Saturday, April 17, 10:00 am - Noon**
- **While this program is free, you do need to register to receive the login information.**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/planning-worship-for-the-post-pandemic-world-tickets-147578259547>

Sharing the Journey: Gathering(s) for those Leading Groups through the COIC Thursday, April 29 7:00 - 8:30 pm

This online gathering is for those who have already led, are currently leading or are thinking about leading a group through the Widening Circle of Concern Congregational Study/Action Guide.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sharing-the-journey-gatherings-for-those-leading-groups-through-the-coic-tickets-145696483103>

