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## WORSHIP SERVICES

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**June Theme: PLAY**

**Sunday, June 6, 10:30 a.m.**  
BRIDGING SUNDAY

UUCR honors high school seniors who will cross a figurative "bridge" as they graduate and our middle school students as they rise to high school. Our time in worship will celebrate the various bridges we navigate in this time of global transition.

**Virtual Gatherings**—Please visit [www.uucr.org/zoom](http://www.uucr.org/zoom) for details on how to participate in our online worship services, and for the schedule of our Faith Formation classes for children and youth.

**Sunday, June 13, 10:30 a.m.**  
FLOWER COMMUNION

This Sunday is the official end of our congregational year. On this day when we observe the traditional Unitarian ceremony of community called Flower Communion, we will offer thanks and appreciation for the leaders in our community, especially those who have offered pastoral care and helping hands, and those who have been volunteer teachers. Toward the end of the Zoom service, those who are nearby are invited to drive, bike or walk through the UUCR parking lot to give and receive flowers.

**Virtual Gatherings**—Please visit [www.uucr.org/zoom](http://www.uucr.org/zoom) for details on how to participate in our online worship services, and for the schedule of our Faith Formation classes for children and youth.

*(continued on page 2)*

June 2, 2021

# Quest

*The Newsletter of the  
Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Rockville:  
A Welcoming Congregation*

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*Lifelong Spiritual Discovery Beloved Community A Just World*

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Volume LXIV, Number 3  
June 2, 2021

Editor & Publisher:  
Adrian L. H. Graham

## Transitioning to a New Year

*by Betsy Wilder, Board President*

Dear Beloved UUCR Family,

On May 23, UUCR elected an amazing slate of new Board and Nominating Committee Members!

Marie Vivas – Board Vice President  
Myra Remigio-Leonard – Board Secretary  
Karl Irikura – General Trustee

Mia Morris – Nominating Committee  
Karen Pittleman – Nominating Committee

These new UUCR leaders bring rich experience and commitment to our community, and I am so enthusiastic about working with them! I am also deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to work with our outgoing leaders: Mary Carvajal as Past Board President, Kendall Watson as General Trustee, and Jaime Chao Mignano and Sean Hickey as Nominating Committee Members. Thank you, thank you, thank you, for your service!

We also previewed major Board projects for the coming year at the May 23 meeting, each of which will need participation from many people to be successful. These projects extend from work that is ongoing but will be “kicked up a notch” to really get underway this year. These projects, and a Board contact for each, are briefly described below. Please get in touch (contact info available via Realm) to get involved with these important projects!

*(continued on page 9)*



The *Quest* publication schedule is TBD due to the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Email queries and possible submissions to [quest@uucr.org](mailto:quest@uucr.org).  
Ongoing UUCR updates available at [uucr.org/covid-19](http://uucr.org/covid-19).

# Quest

**Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Rockville**  
100 Welsh Park Drive  
Rockville, MD 20850  
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UUCR@UUCR.ORG  
WWW.UUCR.ORG

## Staff

Senior Minister:

Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage

Ministerial Intern: Kirk Freeman

Ministerial Intern: Mathew P. Taylor

Director of Religious Education: Carla Miller

Director of Music: Sarah Jebian

Director of Communications & Membership:

Adrian L. H. Graham

Congregation Administrator:

JeKaren Olaoya

RE & Youth Assistant: Aiden Chernikoff

Technology & Communications Assistant:

Erin Dowridge-Rodney

Pianist: Justin Furnia

## Board of Trustees

Betsy Wilder, President

Marie Vivas, Vice President

Myra Remigio-Leonard, Secretary

Don Helton, Treasurer

Brian Haugen

Larissa Johnson

Kendall Watson

Elsa Powel Strong, Immediate Past President

## Officers

Secretary: Myra Remigio-Leonard

Treasurer: Don Helton

Assistant Treasurers: Eric Burch

Barbara Harrison

## Quest Staff

Editor-in-Chief/Coordinator: Adrian Graham

Desktop Publisher: Adrian Graham

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(Worship Services continued from page 1)

**Sunday, June 20, 10:30 a.m.**

*Go Forward*

Join the Wonder Twins (Ministerial Interns) **Kirk W. Freeman and Mathew P. Taylor** as they invite you on a journey to embrace the spirit of Divine Play.

**Virtual Gatherings**—Please visit [www.uucr.org/zoom](http://www.uucr.org/zoom) for details on how to participate in our online worship services, and for the schedule of our Faith Formation classes for children and youth.

**Sunday, June 27, 10:30 a.m.**

GA SUNDAY

**General Assembly Sunday Morning Worship:** Recognizing the importance of shared ministry and the many innovative approaches to worship created by congregations during the pandemic, UUA President, Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick Gray, selected the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis to serve as worship leaders for this year's GA Sunday Morning Service. UUCR will stream the service at our regular worship time of 10:30 a.m.

**Virtual Gatherings**—Please visit [www.uucr.org/zoom](http://www.uucr.org/zoom) for details on how to participate in our online worship services, and for the schedule of our Faith Formation classes for children and youth.

## Summer Theme: JOY FOR THE EARTH

*Service Leaders:*

7/4 Mathew P. Taylor

7/11 Cassie Montenegro

7/18 Cynthia Shires-Thurston & Wayne Crump

7/25 Rev. KC Slack

8/1 Laura Shay & Scott Reilly

8/8 Jim Blue & Glenn Griffin

8/15 Nancy Spencer & Ginny Folsom

8/22 Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage

8/29 Verdis Robinson

9/5 Kirk Freeman & Mathew P. Taylor



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## SHARING THE MINISTRY

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### From Your Minister

*by the Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage*

Since March of 2020, most Sundays I have been coming to UUCR to lead or attend virtual worship from my office. My desk is now my pulpit and I have three different lights to brighten me and our beloved chalice from the chancel adequately. I never thought I'd be worrying so much about lighting, internet connection and sound quality this often. If there's a hiccup during in person worship, there's a team there and ready to respond. There are staff, leaders and people around always. That's the best part of being in community - the people! So at first, I found arriving at the empty parking lot to be jarring, and the quiet rooms and wide, open hallways to be a jolt to the regular boundless energy of Sunday morning. Then, my energy poured into being present, fully present with heart open and Spirit awake, to our beloved congregation during virtual worship. We can all feel the power of connection, even through wires and devices. I've loved watching the bubbles of our lives, the families and couples snuggled together on couches, the sky behind people sitting outside, and the playful virtual backgrounds. I've loved having the real time engagement in the chat, as we share what's on our hearts and banter back and forth. And I know, for some, this has been a desert time where virtual worship and programming is just too much to take on each Sunday and over the course of the week (after many, many hours already on virtual platforms). I understand this as well, and I pray that you know that you are a part of US and we look forward to being together again. As we say, we'll leave the light on.

I'd like to share one thing about the quiet buildings of UUCR: there are relics of the "before times" everywhere. The print out of the weekly happenings posted on the door to the workroom is from March of 2020. The newsprint of the staff's rapid fire brainstorming around virtual worship is still up in room 44, just four short days before our first virtual service. Flyers from events last spring are still on bulletin boards. Reminders of where and who we were last spring are everywhere. I decided that it's endearing to leave them up. For me, it reminds me of the vitality of this congregation, of things to look forward to, of the people and programs that make UUCR so special. All of that gives me hope and the energy I need to sustain myself through this time and the resilience to show up, and show up big. Because, that's what we do and who we are.

As we are moving towards more expansive reopening plans, I pray that we will come together with the same gusto, heart and courageous love that I know has carried us through this time.

With a humble heart,  
Rev. Rebekah



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## SHARING THE MINISTRY

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### Planned giving

*by Sharrill Dittmann, Chair, Planned Giving Committee*

Over the past year, our lives have been changed suddenly and by forces beyond our control. The most serious losses have been of family members and friends. Compounding that has been the loss of support in our grief for those losses. People we know have lost jobs, housing, schooling, and dignity. Plans to go to college, get married, see family and friends, and travel have been shelved. Each of us has stories to tell.



For some, the imposed quiet has been a relief from the pressure cooker that is Washington. Perhaps you've had a chance to re-evaluate some priorities around balancing work, family, social life, and volunteerism.

Growing out of the re-evaluations and losses has been some thinking about our personal futures. Should anything happen to me, are plans in place to ensure that my values, both personal and financial, have been clearly stated to my heirs? Will my children be taken care of? An estate plan is one important way to do this. It can bring peace of mind, and the process of developing one can bring personal clarity. Many of you will think about leaving something to your college or a favorite charity, and I want to encourage you to include UUCR in your personal legacy.

As you begin to imagine meeting together again in our beautiful sanctuary, look back for a minute. What would your Pandemic experience have been without UUCR? Can you even imagine it? I can't. UUCR was my anchor, my rock, my tie to real people. I listened to wonderful music, I attended Vespers on Wednesdays, I attended services on Sundays. Some of you attended Emerson's Evening Café and Socrates' Café. RE Programs were enhanced and generous. Committees and small groups continued to meet. We even had the Action Auction! We were able to do this because we are a strong, loving community that worked hard to provide so many opportunities for fellowship and service during difficult times. I'm asking you today to express your gratitude by including UUCR in your estate plans.

Whatever your reasons, I hope you will consider leaving a generous bequest to UUCR in your will. The Endowment Fund provides our security net so that we can meet the next unplanned needs with agility and skill, just as we have done with the Pandemic. There are many ways to do this, and I encourage you to visit our website, read our new brochure, or drop a note to [planned-giving@uucr.org](mailto:planned-giving@uucr.org). As always, remember that no gift is too large, no gift is too small. Generous bequests are recognized with membership in the Legacy Society. Our Endowment Fund now stands at \$623,000, and there are 44 members in the Legacy Society. Won't you join us?



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## SHARING THE MINISTRY

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### **UUCR's Memorial Committee Is Here to Serve**

*by Kent Hancock & Bruce Baskett, Cochairs, Memorial Committee*

UUCR provides loving attention to all of life's passages, from beginning-of-life celebrations to end-of-life memorials. Our designated memorial areas remind us of the hallowed nature of our grounds and provide the congregation with a place to remember and, in turn, be remembered. With Rev Rebekah's blessing and guidance, UUCR now offers the assistance of a Memorial Committee. The committee oversees UUCR's areas for remembrance and contemplation -- our Memorial Garden and Memory Board.

Please contact us at [memorial@uucr.org](mailto:memorial@uucr.org) to learn more and receive a copy of our memorial brochure. Along with the Minister, we serve as a point of contact for UUCR's memorial practices. This includes protocols for placement of ashes in the Memorial Garden and purchasing nameplates for our Memory Board. Additionally, we assist the Minister in end-of-life recognitions and have partnered with the Planned Giving committee to encourage legacy giving and building UUCR's Endowment for future generations.



### **We Are Looking Forward to September!**

*by Mark Shannon & Terrie Barr, Cochairs, Lay Ministry Council*

September is when our children will be back in school full time. It is when we will be having more gatherings at UUCR. It is when we will be anticipating the all congregation celebration of Rev Rebekah's installation. September is when we will invite new people to consider leadership or current leaders to consider new leadership roles.

Answering the Call!

Rev Rebekah's message:

*"We want to hear from you. Who do you think would make a great leader at UUCR? Who embodies our UU values in their lives and how they interact? Who makes connections with others with ease and inspires them to participate? Who would you like to see play a more visible role at UUCR? Is that someone you know - or is that you? Let us know!"*

We will be looking for new lay ministers and for emerging leaders. We hope to inspire eight new leaders to serve UUCR and to commit to leadership development. For questions or comments, please contact us at [leadershipdevelopment@uucr.org](mailto:leadershipdevelopment@uucr.org).

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## SHARING THE MINISTRY

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### Spotlight On: Reflections from the Past Year

by Sarah Jebian, Director of Music & Arts

*What has been the hardest part of living through this pandemic for you and your family?*

Finding a healthy work/life balance and fighting my own mental health demons. When you're working from home and suddenly doing a job that requires skills you haven't used in years (or have zero skills at all and have to learn it RIGHT NOW), it is incredibly challenging to be able to walk away from work and pay attention to other things. Managing my depression and anxiety was a real challenge as well, harder than any other time in recent memory.

*What has been surprising, even a gift?*

Learning to enjoy the process of creating virtual music. One of my great joys in life is singing in front of live humans and when that went away, my grief was profound. I was deeply resistant to feeling forced into making virtual music but once I learned the technology and started to appreciate the degree of artistic control I have over the product, I find I quite enjoy it now. I'm still chomping at the bit to get back in front of a live audience though. Like TOMORROW please!

*Who, what and how are you grieving?*

Three weeks after UUCR shut down our in-person activities, my mother died. At the time, my grief was so huge that I absolutely buried myself in work so I wouldn't have to process it all at once. I still don't think I've fully come to terms with spending the rest of my life without ever hearing my mom's voice again. Compounding that grief, my beautiful and much beloved dog Bella died very unexpectedly this past February and it just about broke me. Writing songs has helped me process some of these BIG feelings and put them into melodies that I hope to share with you someday.

*What have you enjoyed about virtual UUCR worship and programming?*

I've loved being able to program musical artists from all over the country and have appreciated the musical and cultural diversity that we've been able to bring to our worship. I've LOVED having the luxury of teaching our choir singers more about the vocal instrument and they will tell you that I am a certified vocal geek! I can talk about the voice for hours. Literally.

*How has your program area/leadership area changed for the good?*

I think all the musicians at UUCR have grown in a lot of different ways and none more so than the choir singers. They've had to develop stronger independent practice habits, learned about how to use their voices more effectively and developed more confidence in learning and holding their own vocal parts without depending on other people in their section. I can't wait to hear them sing again in person!

*Do you have a story to share with us?*

Yes. Too many to share here.

All in all, it's been an amazing year - one I will never forget.



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## SHARING THE MINISTRY

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### Reflection

*by Kirk Freeman, Ministerial Intern*

On August 30 of last year, I got into the car and drove to UUCR for the first time. I brought with me my oldest child and a vial of water from Keuka Lake in New York's Finger Lake Region. I was so happy to see UUCR's campus for the first time and I enjoyed telling Harrison about my excitement and anticipation about beginning an internship with the congregation a few days later.

I was excited for another reason, too. Despite being a Unitarian Universalist for almost 20 years, this would be my first Water Communion. We pulled up to the table, I introduced myself to JeKaren, and we joined our water with water shared by many of you. I did not know you yet, but it felt like such a nice way to mark the beginning of our relationship.

Virtually all of my interactions with the congregation this past year have been on Zoom in front of the webcam on my desk, though I have been back on campus a few other times to help decorate the mitten tree and to celebrate Canvass Sunday. I'm looking forward to returning on June 13 to celebrate my first Flower Communion.

As this unusual year comes to a close, I am grateful for all of the creative ways that this Congregation has stayed connected this past year, whether online or through re-imagined drive-thru rituals and celebrations. I have been blessed to be a part of this community for this year and I am once again filled with excitement and anticipation and I look to the year ahead.

### Reflection

*by Erin Dowridge-Rodney, Technology & Communications Assistant*

These poetic words cannot express the angst in my soul. The pandemic has been a long, unending night that has left the world with a loss of spirit, hope and conviction, myself included. As I gaze outside of my window, I am witnessing the dissipation of the warm milky moon and the descent of the bright orange horizon. We are on the precipice of an extraordinary revelation; the pandemic is ending. I aspire to reclaim my social life through the warm embrace of friends, intimate chats, and once again enjoying Asian BBQ with others. Although the sun hasn't yet risen, we are on the horizon.

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## SHARING THE MINISTRY

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### **...the story begins...**

*by Mathew P. Taylor, Ministerial Intern*

The story begins in the dark  
In the damp hidden places  
In seed  
With a new life hidden with the shell  
Waiting to emerge  
Waiting to create roots  
Fed by the life that surrounds it

The story begins in the roots  
In the nourishment of our environment  
And ourselves  
Growing, expanding, and emerging  
Breaking free of the expectations of the world  
And just growing  
Embodied  
Holding the spark of life  
And sending it out to the branches  
And leaves  
And other extensions of ourselves



The story begins in the leaves  
Taking in the light and the rain  
The nourishment of the soil  
That comes together in the being  
In our bodies  
Our plant bodies  
Our magickal bodies  
Our bodies in motion  
Taking and transmuting energy  
The story begins in the spirit  
Before the roots  
Before the leaves  
Before the seed

The story begins with the Gardener  
Preparing the land  
Nurturing the soil  
Cultivating and conjuring  
The right mix

The story begins  
Beyond the Gardener  
Beyond thought  
Beyond the work

The story begins with  
Love

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## SHARING THE MINISTRY

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*(Transitioning...continued from page 1)*

1) **Post-Pandemic Planning** – Planning for our post-pandemic life as a community will be a multi-faceted effort to a) establish a vision, b) take care to keep us safe as we move in a phased way toward full reopening, c) determine technical requirements for hybrid services and meetings so that people can engage wherever they are, and d) plan for a celebration when we're fully able to meet in person. This celebration will overlay the installation of Rev. Rebekah as our settled called Minister and will thus truly represent a celebration of UUCR's future! Contact Marie Vivas to be a part of any of the facets of our Next Normal!

2) **Widening the Circle of Concern and Strategic Planning** – The UUA's Commission on Institutional Change issued "Widening the Circle of Concern" in 2020 as a report with recommendations for systemic change to address structural racism and support Unitarian Universalism values. This report will guide UUCR's strategic planning efforts over the coming year as we strive to enhance inclusivity and "widen our circle" of beloved community. Contact Larissa Johnson to learn more and volunteer.

3) **Stewardship Development** – Recognizing that we are all stewards of UUCR, we hope that this project engages the entire congregation - with each Member or Friend doing a part to help this community thrive. Stewardship encompasses five "pillars" of work: a) Fundraising includes the annual canvass but also the Action Auction, Fall Fundraiser, and potentially new ideas for keeping UUCR financially secure; b) Outreach and Growth to Rockville and the surrounding area is necessary to ensure that we remain a vibrant and healthy congregation; c) Leadership Development will ensure that we have leaders across the congregation who are prepared to lead small and large efforts; d) Fellowship and Engagement are fundamental to the life of UUCR, and we aim to develop new ways for groups to self-organize around areas of shared interest; e) Volunteer coordination and celebration will be needed if we are successful in engaging everyone in the actions above. UUCR enjoyed the benefits of having over 250 people actively involved in one or more service projects, small groups, or committees. Our UU principles call us to be together in service, and working together in service builds and reinforces our community. Contact Elsa Powel Strong to participate in any of these areas.

4) **Leveraging our Communication Tools** – Realm and our Website provide key communication tools that will enable the success of the other projects listed above. We aim to enhance the use of Realm as a self-organizing tool for groups coming together around a variety of interests, from bike riding to book clubs to small group ministry. We will be reviewing and updating our website to ensure that information is up to date and easy to find. Contact Karl Irikura or Myra Remigio-Leonard to help with these critical tools.

The coming year promises to be one of change, but that means we are at a time of vision setting. Please plan to take an active role to ensure that your ideas and perspectives are reflected in the plan for our future.

Betsy Wilder, President, Board of Trustees



## Quest

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville  
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Rockville, MD 20850

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### Unitarian Universalist Principles

As a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association, we covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

In addition to these Seven Principles, the members of UUCR voted to support the UUA in moving toward incorporating a proposed Eighth Principle that may be as stated below:

- Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

### Our Mission and Vision

The mission and vision of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville is to  
*Practice Courageous Love.*

### Our Values

Lifelong Spiritual Discovery ~ Beloved Community ~ A Just World