

WORSHIP SERVICES

May Theme: BEAUTY

Sunday, May 15, 10:30 a.m.
Beauty Scatters the Seeds of Hope in Us

In a recent interview, Sister Joan Chittister, an advocate for peace, human rights, and women's issues said, "Beauty scatters the seeds of hope in us." What beautiful things have you seen that give you hope? How can you "make beauty" to sow the seeds of hope in others? Join us for reflections on the wonders of beauty around us and how working for peace and social justice cultivates a more beautiful world. Led by the **UUCR Worship Arts Team.**

Special music by **Wayne Crump**, guitar; **Andy Zatman** and **Justin Furnia** on piano.

First Fifteen—Three to four Sundays a month, all ages* join in worship in the Sanctuary for the "First Fifteen" minutes, after which children aged 5-11 follow their teachers to their classroom. Parents are asked to sign their children out from classes ten minutes after the end of worship.

**The Family Room at the back of the sanctuary is available for parents and infants or very young children; it is now set up with some toddler-appropriate toys and activities.*

Please visit uucr.org/zoom for details on how to participate in our worship services online.

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May 11, 2022

Quest

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

Lifelong Spiritual Discovery Beloved Community A Just World

Volume LXV, Number 4
May 11, 2022

Editor & Publisher:
Adrian L. H. Graham

A Blessing and a Privilege

by Kirk W. Freeman, Ministerial Intern

I have been counting my blessings as my time as a ministerial intern comes to close. It has truly been a blessing to be a part of this congregation for the last two congregational years. We have been through a lot together, and I have learned so much from this community of seekers and doers who love each other deeply and continuously show up for each other. UUCR is an incredibly special congregation and I am so proud to have been a part of this brief time in its history.



Among the blessings we all shared were the gifts of Mathew P. Taylor's ministry, wisdom, love, and laughter. For me, working with and growing close to Mathew was a great honor and a cherished gift. I am confident that our brief but deep friendship will continue to shape my ministry and life for years to come. I am equally confident that this congregation will continue to be changed by its relationship with Mathew in obvious and subtle ways well into its bright future.

It has also been a blessing to meet and come to know all of you! Whether we've shared a meal, worked together on a committee, had a brief conversation, or have simply been together in the same physical or virtual space, each of you are counted among my blessings. It has been a privilege to learn and serve in this congregation – you will remain forever in my heart and in my prayers.



Quest deadline: **Thursday, June 2, 2022** at 8:00 p.m.,
for mailing on June 8, 2022.
Email queries and possible submissions to quest@uucr.org.

Quest

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Ministerial Intern: Kirk Freeman

Ministerial Intern (*in memoriam*):

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(Worship Services continued from page 1)

Sunday, May 22, 10:30 a.m.

Be Careful What You Pray For

As Unitarian Universalists, we are a people of hope. Whether we name them wishes or dreams or prayers, we each have longings for a better tomorrow. Where do these feelings come from, and to what or whom are they addressed? Do they make any difference? What might they teach us about ourselves? Led by **Ministerial Intern Kirk Freeman**.

Music led by **Cynthia Shires-Thurston, Kris Butler, and Julie Graf**.

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Sunday, May 29, 10:30 a.m.

Legacy Sunday

As we bring our spiritual theme of the month, Beauty, to a close, we turn to witnessing the sacred in our everyday lives by remembering our beloved kin who have died and those who have gone before us to make this possible. With gratitude for lives well lived and tender hearts still grieving, we honor Legacy Sunday. Led by **Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage and Ministerial Intern Kirk Freeman**.

The **UUCR Community Choir** will sing; **Justin Furnia** on piano.

Special Programming—Children aged 5-11 will gather outdoors (weather-permitting) for special activities.

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June Theme: BLESSINGS

Sunday Service Leaders:

6/5 Sarah Jebian, Director of Music & Arts (Music Sunday)

6/12 Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage (Flower Communion)

SHARING THE MINISTRY

The Blessing of Celebrating Beauty—Together!

by the Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage

What a delight to meditate on the spiritual theme of “Beauty”! When I muse on this theme, I appreciate physical beauty: the loveliness of nature and creation, the inspiring and stunning art from our UUCR members that is gracing our walls, the warm smiles of congregants and friends when we greet each other, the things that make my heart glow. I also appreciate the soulful Beauty of being gifted the blessing of witnessing the interdependence of this congregation and our shared ministry. As your minister, I am often aware of the vast complex web of relationships at UUCR and outside with the community. Who has shown up for others with big heart and what a difference it is making in other’s lives. How lay leaders are giving of their time and talent to shepherd important and impactful programs and committees. The time it has taken for lay leaders to create and sustain important projects that make living out our mission possible. The return of our children and youth and watching them with joy all over UUCR. These are all deep and beautiful blessings that make UUCR such a special spiritual home for so many.

And the continued generosity of this congregation is astonishingly beautiful. You have shared of your time, talent and treasure with great love and dedication, for which I am truly grateful. We have weathered the pandemic for two years now and we are still going strong, with so much to look forward to, because of You!

I am looking forward to the next significant milestone for UUCR: the **Installation Service on Sunday, June 5 at 4:00 p.m.** The members of UUCR voted to call me as your minister back in May of 2020 and because of the pandemic, we have delayed the service until now...and it is Time. It is the beautiful and right time to proceed with the ritual act of Installation, to affirm in word and deed our covenant and mutual commitment. Your presence either virtually or in person is vitally important as we say Yes to each other. So let us celebrate together!

Rev. Rebekah

“Beauty Is Our Birthright”

by the Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage

Sometimes we awake in the morning with a heaviness in our chest.

Sometimes we awake in the morning with the endless to-do list rattling through our thoughts, the nagging reminders of what was left undone yesterday, and the pangs of “I have to do it all again today?” pinching at our insides.

*Sometimes we awake in the morning, and we’d rather go back to sleep,
We would rather escape under the covers, a rock, the bottom of the closet.*

And then,

The first sliver of sunshine may dance across our face. Beautiful.

And then,

The wafting scent of a new day may glide over us. Beautiful.

And then,

Signs of life blossom around us, to include inside of us. Beautiful.

Beauty is our birthright. Just as we are born in love, through love, To love.



SHARING THE MINISTRY

Stewardship

by Elsa Powel-Strong, Immediate Past President

This has been an exciting and productive year for stewardship at UUCR. We created the Stewardship Consulting Team to conduct a short-term project to *a)* look at our overall stewardship “health” and determine what was working and what was not working in our existing efforts, *b)* develop the structures needed to enhance our stewardship efforts, and *c)* share our approach and engage the congregation to participate in order to ensure the sustainability of the new structures.

I am delighted to share that this team’s work has concluded. The team is working on a full report to paint a picture of where we are and where we can go!

Our *immediate need* is to build up our newly formed **Service Development Team!** This team will help us connect those who want to serve with the most essential service opportunities that we need to sustain our community. Please reach out to learn more! Contact: president20-21@uucr.org.

Thank You, Team!

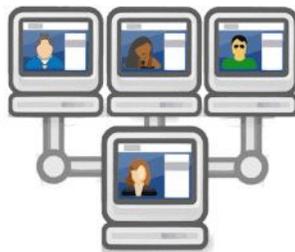
by the Rev. Dr. Rebekah A. Savage

In April, we offered our first multiplatform worship service on the newly upgraded media package! Through the donations of generous (and anonymous) souls, there are new rotating cameras at the back and side of the Sanctuary, large screens on either side of the chancel, and an integrated control system at the back. Our capability to provide seamless multiplatform worship and programming has been amplified exponentially!

The fancy and high-speed equipment are one thing, and the team that made this all happen is another! With deep gratitude, we extend our appreciation to:

Mike Holmes
Bill Hurlbut
Karl Irikura
Sarah Jebian
Narcy Klag
Andy Moore
Bill Newhouse

When you next are around any of these wonderful leaders, please thank them for their service!



SHARING THE MINISTRY

Spotlight On...

by Sarah Jebian, Director of Music & Arts

Blessing is a bit of a loaded word for me. I grew up in the LDS (Mormon) Church where the word blessing belonged exclusively to the men who held the priesthood in our church. If you were sick or hurting, a small group of men would come over, lay their hands on you and give you a ‘patriarchal blessing’. Those on the receiving end reported feeling great peace and sometimes healing after these blessings.



As a young girl, it was clear to me who held the power of God in their hands, and it definitely wasn’t me or anyone who looked like me. Needless to say, I didn’t last long in that faith tradition. I just *knew* that the light of God was inside of me too, even if the ‘patriarchs’ couldn’t see it; and I knew that I could never be a member of any faith that saw me as anything less than the spark of divine light that I know myself to be. We are stardust after all.

This is my final *Quest* article at UUCR and it is bittersweet, to be sure. While I am ready to move on, I will miss you so. I have been immeasurably blessed by this congregation. You have taught me so much—I am a better musician, better conductor, and more grounded person than I was when I arrived on your doorstep. I have stretched myself in ways I never could have imagined...and whatever I do next, please know that I will carry these lessons, and your love, with me. Forever.

I hope that you feel that I have blessed you too. I hope I showed you the potential that exists at UUCR for using music and arts to further your goals—in worship, in social justice, in community building, and in your own growth as a human being. I hope you will continue to lean into your potential and always challenge yourselves, and your Music & Arts Program, to stretch the limits of what you think is possible.

I never intended to work in music ministry, but it has been one of the great blessings of my life. Each of you is also a blessing to me. I love you and am forever grateful for the time we’ve had together. And so I leave you with this blessing: May you know your worth. May you dance with the utter abandon of a small child. May you sing loudly and with joy. May you live boldly. May you never stop learning, growing, and allowing yourself to be changed by those who cross your path. May you know unconditional love, and may the universe bless you again and again and again.

With boundless love and gratitude,

Sarah



CONGREGATION WORKS

Building an Endowment for UUCR

by Sharrill Dittmann, Chair, Planned Giving Committee

Each spring, the Board and Canvass Team launch a major fundraising event—the Annual Canvass Drive. Now that the Canvass has been successfully completed, it's time to turn our attention to building our Endowment to assure UUCR remains a relevant force well into our future. Please think carefully about how you possibly might make a legacy gift—a contribution of a lifetime—to UUCR.

Planned Giving actively encourages UUCR members and friends to build a generous Endowment Fund. Legacy gifts—through wills, special gifts, or through other arrangements—are a wonderful opportunity for those who wish to make a commitment to the future of our liberal religious faith and to UUCR. One of the most common ways to leave a legacy gift is through a bequest in your will. If/when you make provisions for UUCR in your estate plans, please contact the Planned Giving Committee at planned-giving@uucr.org.

Bequests through wills are not the only way you can make a legacy gift to UUCR. There are ways that you can use your savings to provide you, and your loved ones, with an assured income, and with the residual value coming to UUCR as you specify. Please contact the Planned Giving Committee about a variety of ways planned giving can take place. Contributors make donations on their own terms in accordance with arrangements made through their personal legal advisers. But, the Planned Giving Committee has resources to guide you, as does the UUA. Please feel free to contact the us (Sharrill Dittmann, Kent Hancock, and Bruce Baskett) for more information.

Congregants can join the Legacy Society by completing a Bequest Commitment Form* found on our website at uucr.org/donate, in coordination with the Planned Giving Committee.

**You may also find the form on the facing page; or [click this link if viewing online](#).*



CONGREGATION WORKS

CREATE A LEGACY OF HOPE - Savor the Joy of Giving

BEQUEST COMMITMENT

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION of ROCKVILLE

Name(s) _____

Address _____

I/ we wish to make a legacy gift to UUCR to assure the future prosperity of this congregation.

I have/will set aside an estate gift in my will to be realized upon my death.

Its provisions for payment(s) are/will be:

In lieu of an estate gift, I am giving an immediate cash gift of \$ _____ or
appreciated assets of _____ to benefit UUCR today.

This bequest or gift shall be placed into the following program(s):

- () Endowment Fund. “No part of the Fund shall be used to subsidize the annual operating budget.”
The Board can use investment earnings to maintain and enhance our facilities, reduce debt,
provide scholarships/grants to UUCR members, fund outreach into the local community and
support the wider mission of Unitarian Universalism. *
- () Unrestricted. The Board of Trustees will place the bequest/gift into the area(s) of greatest need.
- () Restricted for a specific purpose: _____
Please contact the Treasurer for UUCR’s Restricted Funds list.
- () Please donate \$500 of my bequest/gift directly to the Remembrance Fund to purchase a
Memory Board nameplate for myself and to further the upkeep of UUCR’s Memorial areas.

Signature of Donor(s)

Date

Note: This form is used for record keeping only. It is not a legal document. It may be changed by the donor at any time. However, all bequest details are kept confidential.

* For details, please refer to the UUCR Endowment Fund Policy
Board approved: March 9, 2021

FAITH FORMATION

Blessings for the Difficult Person

by Carla Miller, Director of Religious Education

“May I be happy, May I be healthy, May I be safe and free from harm, May I have energy and zest for life, May I know peace.”

This is a “metta” meditation, metta being the Pali word translated as “lovingkindness.” My yoga class has been working with metta, in this version and others, for the past several weeks. The practice is essentially one of wishing for blessings upon the world. We begin by asking these blessings upon ourselves, and then send our blessings for one another, our loved ones, a “neutral person,” a person with whom we have a difficult and challenging relationship, and finally, to All Beings.



Each concentric ring of lovingkindness ripples out into the universe. The yogis teach us that such “thoughts and prayers” reach the other soul and literally change the vibration of the universal energies. This understanding of sending prayers and blessings may not make sense logically, and yet many of us feel it holds truth. What I do know for sure is that this practice changes my own energy. Breathing deeply in the peace and lovingkindness of the metta meditation, my heart opens to greater compassion; my thoughts for my small self move outward to embrace those I am with, those I love, even folks I do not even know! Wishing them the blessings of happiness, health, safety, energy, and zest (isn’t that a great word?). And then...I get stuck.

I seem to hit a rock and get at least a little bit stuck when it comes to that difficult person. Not so much when I am imagining the grocery store clerk who annoyed me by packing my bags all wonky, or even the driver who cut me off in traffic. I can let go of and wish them all good things. But when I challenge myself by chanting this meditation while holding my difficult family member in mind, I feel some tension in my chest and throat. I am aware of the need to breathe more deeply in, and even more consciously breathe out slowly and fully.

I say the phrases, and on a deeper level I truly want these blessings for this difficult person, who I also happen to love very much. I understand only too well the pain they carry. And even while the metta opens me to compassionate empathy for their suffering, the voice in my head feels the need to respond to these words with self-serving reasoning that falls just a little short of true lovingkindness... okay, maybe more than a little.

This is the kind of dialogue between my heart and head that begins happening as I chant metta for the difficult person: May you be happy *{because then maybe you’d stop making me so miserable}*. May you be healthy *{and stop complaining so much about your health woes}*. May you have energy and zest for life *{so you aren’t trying to control my life}*. May you know peace *{and leave me in peace}*. Deep breath in... Deeper breath out...

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FAITH FORMATION

(Blessing the Difficult Person continued from page 3)

With a sigh of relief, I move on to bless all beings. This feels simpler—this universal lovingkindness and goodwill—then goodwill to any particular, and challenging, person. And so, how real is it? Until I can fully love and hold only good will toward the difficult person, the wishes for the good of all remain a little more shallow than I would wish them to be.

This is the tough stuff—the place where religion dares us to break through our ordinary judgmental and egoistic selves and open ourselves to an extraordinary love. Religious traditions say ridiculous things like “Love thy enemies,” and “Pray for those who persecute you.” The Quran goes so far as to say, “Repel evil with good. And he who is your enemy will become your dearest friend.” Dearest friend...that seems a stretch too far! Well, all of these words of great wisdom feel like a stretch, don't they?

On my good days I can truly believe these great and gracious truths. But on a day when that enemy, that difficult person, is saying things that hurt either me or others I love...can't go there. Not feeling it. If I could simply stop clenching my teeth and feeling a weight drop into the pit of my stomach, I would consider it a win. Never mind this friendship idea!

Yet, my need to let go of these resentments is also clear to me. Carrying this hurt and anger surely does more harm to me than them. My anger will do nothing; I can't control them or change them. What I can do is care for myself in this difficult relationship; and part of that would be to find happy and healthy boundaries for myself, allow distance, and breathe in peace. I truly do yearn for their peace and happiness as well, despite the persistence of the ego's voice in my head.

Clearly, I am no bodhisattva. But I can commit to doing this work in hopes of becoming a better human. It is not hard to stay motivated to practice metta, as it promises that I, too, may be happier, healthier, and more at peace. Tomorrow I will sit on my meditation cushion, as the soft light of morning grows brighter, and repeat:

“May all be happy. May all be healthy. May all be safe and free from harm. May all have energy and zest for life. May all know peace.”



Quest

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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