



The Searchlight

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, Missouri

2615 Shepard Blvd., Columbia, MO 65201 • 573-442-5764 • <https://uucomo.org> • Volume 60, Issue 11, May 2020

A Joint Letter from Board President Mindy McPherson and Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

Dear UU Churchers,

With gratitude for the generosity and care of this community, we write together to share with you some of the discernment and decisions of your Board of Trustees and Minister in this uncertain time. We have been moved by all of the ways you have been supporting one another and voicing your support to our leadership. The courageous love, radical welcome and deep connection of our congregation is undiminished.

Our building closure

It seems clear that the UUCC building will remain closed at least through May. We will be working with a team of UU Churchers to discern together the circumstances under which we will be comfortable opening our building and resuming various kinds of in-person gatherings. This is less a question of a certain date and more a question of what science-based criteria will need to be met in order for us to feel that we are making a responsible decision for the health and wellbeing of our members and the general population. It seems wise to consider the possibility that it will be quite some time before it is safe to gather in the large numbers we usually see in our Sunday morning services. We grieve the lack of physical presence to one another in this time and are committed to continuing to innovate in creating deep community across any necessary distance.

Our annual meeting

While typically held in the month of May, our by-laws (Article 4, Section 3) state that the annual congregational meeting shall be held during the last fiscal quarter. In order to have as much information as possible and time to figure out the technology, your Board of Trustees has scheduled our annual meeting a bit later than usual – on Sunday, June 7. To maintain social distancing, this congregational discussion will be held virtually. We will use a secure digital platform to conduct elections of new board members and adopt the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Our budget

We believe it is prudent to anticipate a difficult financial situation in the coming year given the economic upheaval we are all currently experiencing. We know some among us have lost jobs, job security, in-

come, savings, and/or investments, and that there may be more loss to come. We anticipate this reality will affect annual giving to the church, and we are budgeting accordingly. All payroll and ministry team budget lines will be held flat at their FY2020 levels as we create the budget for FY2021, and we will seek cuts as much as possible in the least painful areas, such as board discretionary spending. Thankfully, we know that our members and friends are committed to our congregation and will continue to give at the levels they are able to afford in their own circumstances. Additionally, because of the wisdom of many lay leaders over many years, we have a healthy reserve and emergency fund, which we will draw upon as necessary to weather this time of global crisis. Between these resources and a conservative approach to spending, we believe that we will emerge from this downturn intact.

Our application for additional resources

After much in-depth discussion about the many pros and cons of participating in the program, the board voted at its April meeting to apply on behalf of the congregation for a Payroll Protection Program loan from the Small Business Administration. We believe that participation in this program can provide additional security in the coming months, as we are faced with uncertainties in our income from pledges and other revenue sources. Specifically, this will help us keep our commitments to all of our staff, including hourly Sunday morning staff. When we continue our commitment to keep our staff on payroll, the loan will be forgiven. The additional financial security

Continued on page 2

Highlights of what's inside

May Worship; Annual Meeting.....	2
Summer Worship; Minister's Online Office Hours; Grounds Team.....	3
President's Perspective; Helping others; Festival of Sharing	4
Caring Ministry; Sanctuary Team; Social Action....	5
Programs and Events.....	6
REflections.....	7

May Worship

Sundays at 10:30 a.m. - Online Only

Sunday, May 3

“A Chance to Dream”

Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

Sunday, May 10

“The Soil and the Blossom”

Annual Flower Ceremony

Sunday, May 17

**“Go to the Limits of Your Longing”
and Celebrating Our Graduates**

Sunday, May 24

Rev. Dr. CW Dawson,
Philosopher-in-Residence

Sunday, May 31

“Complicating Ally-ship”

Rescheduled Youth Service

Our worship continues online in May. Worship services are offered on “Webinar Setting” which means the only video and audio will be from presenters. Services are followed by a digital coffee hour, where you will be able to see, hear, and visit with each other.

The web address for our weekly worship is:

<https://zoom.us/j/380411489>

You can also join by phone: 312-626-6799

Webinar ID: 380 411 489

The web address for our weekly

11:30 a.m. coffee hour is:

<https://zoom.us/j/652315354>

You can also join by phone: 312-626-6799

Webinar ID: 652 315 354

If you have any trouble accessing the technology to join us, send an email to techhelp@uucomo.org with your contact information, and someone will reach out to help you.

Online pledge payments

UUCU members and friends who are accustomed to paying their pledges by checks placed in the offering plates at worship services can easily continue their regular pledge payments online while we engage in virtual worship during the coronavirus pandemic.

Just go to <https://uucomo.org/financial-support/#Pay> and fill out the brief form there to make your payments.

Joint Letter from President and Minister

Continued from page 1

will help to ensure that we continue to effectively carry out our mission and champion social and economic justice in Columbia and beyond.

Rev. Molly’s sabbatical is postponed

After discernment and consultation with various leaders, Rev. Molly has decided to delay her sabbatical for one year in order to remain steadily present to the congregation through the uncertainty of the coming days and months. This delay will also help ensure that Molly’s sabbatical allows for rest and renewal as intended. The new sabbatical dates will be May 10 to September 7, 2021.

Our commitment to and agreement with Rev. Dr. CW Dawson

Your board and Rev. Molly unanimously agree that the just and faithful approach to our changed sabbatical plans is to honor the commitment and employment agreement we entered into with Rev. Dr. CW Dawson for this summer. We also believe that this will be a fruitful decision for the congregation, who will benefit this summer from the Rev. Dawson’s many gifts. Rev. Molly and Rev. Dawson are working to revise the sabbatical minister job description to a Philosopher-in-Residence position and are very much looking forward to the opportunity to work together this summer. We hope that we will also be able to enter another agreement with Rev. Dawson next summer to lead through the rescheduled sabbatical, as we had planned. However, we expect we will need to delay that decision until we have more information about our financial circumstances as they unfold in the coming year.

Please do be in touch with any questions, concerns, or thoughts you might have about how we can continue to practice courageous love and deep connection in new and unfolding ways as we endure these strange and troubling times.

In Faith,
Mindy McPherson, Board President
Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

**UUCU Annual Meeting
Online
Sunday, June 7
Watch for additional information
regarding the time, contact links
and agenda.**

Volunteers needed

Social distancing issues lead Worship Associates to revise their vision of summer lay-led worship

The Worship Associates Team has changed plans for our summer lay-led worship services and needs your help to make them a success. The team is determined not to allow the COVID-19 virus to undermine our long tradition of the lay pulpit.

The team is looking for two to four volunteers on each available Sunday to address the important questions specified below that may have even deeper meaning as we figure out together what this difficult time will ultimately mean for our future as a church, as a community and as a country. Volunteers will have about five minutes to share their thoughts on the chosen topic. That's equivalent to two or three double-spaced, typed pages.

We don't know now whether this summer we will be meeting in person or will need to continue online services, but that won't significantly impact the volunteers' role. Volunteers are welcome to suggest other worship features, but the Worship Associates will be responsible for putting together the rest of each service. This includes all technical aspects if we are still meeting virtually.

The available topics, dates and assigned Worship Associates are:

- **June 28** – What sacred or centering practices sustain you? – Cande Iveson, Worship Associate
- **July 5** – What does Justice look like to you? – Todd Iveson, Worship Associate
- **July 19** – What values are most important to you? – Tim Dickerson, Worship Associate
- **Aug. 2** – What gives you hope? – Sam Otten, Worship Associate
- **Aug. 9** – In what do you place your trust? – Rebecca Graves, Worship Associate
- **Aug. 16** – What makes a place sacred? What places are sacred to you? – Jeff Ordway, Worship Associate

If you are willing to share your thoughts on any of these important questions, please contact the designated Worship Associate. Thank you for your help in continuing this valuable tradition.

If you have any questions, please contact any member of the Worship Associates (Tim Dickerson, Rebecca Graves, Cande Iveson, Todd Iveson, Jeff Ordway, and Sam Otten), or send an email to worship@uucomo.org.

Rev. Molly's online office hours

Rev. Molly's weekly online office hours are Tuesdays from 9 to 10:30 a.m. and Thursdays from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at <https://zoom.us/j/2115663859>.

She is also always happy to meet by appointment. You can schedule an appointment by email to minister@uucomo.org.

Please reach out if you'd like to chat about life, find your place in the church, process something difficult, find a listening ear, or discuss a project.

Spring is here! Pandemic or not, the ground is bursting to life!

We, the UCC Grounds Team, hope you and yours are well. Over the last several years the Grounds Team has been transitioning the front beds to native plants. Native plants are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions where they naturally occur. These important plant species provide nectar, pollen and seeds that serve as food for native butterflies, insects, birds and other animals and therefore honor the Seventh Principle of Unitarian Universalism.

We are writing this in mid April, and in bloom at this time at UCC are roundleaf ragwort with bright yellow flowers, sand phlox with little purple flowers, celandine poppy with yellow flowers, golden current bush with yellow flowers, and columbine (not a native), as well as an abundance of henbit, dead nettle and dandelions that you may have heard of. We are itching to get at those beds.

Over the course of the summer you will also see the following: purple coneflower, butterfly weed, Missouri primrose, purple penstemon, little bluestem, wild petunia, stone crop, blue eyed grass, aster, common milkweed and blazing star.

Stay safe. For more information on the UCC Grounds Team, email:

- JeanneMurphy – jmurphy1203@socket.net, or
- PattyDaus – pajods@gmail.com, or



**There will be no
Walk on the Wild Side
in May**

Our Seventh Principle

by Mindy McPherson, 2019-20 President

April 22 marked Earth Day and a poignant time to recall our Seventh Principle: "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Certainly, on this day, nature encourages a celebration. Tulips and redbuds are in bloom. The new leaves spring yellowy-green into the bright sunlight. My mind briefly transports me to festivals of years past, carefree enjoyment of parks and trails in and around our community. Then, I'm very abruptly engulfed by thoughts of our current situation.

For me, *this* has the up-and-down feel of a wooden roller coaster...the rickety ride that races and twists and turns. On one hand, it is new, different, thrilling, exciting. On the other hand, wow, is it incredibly jarring! I try to focus on the joy and excitement; I do love roller coasters. But the tear through this sharp turn and crack through that dip leave me exhausted and at times ready to get off the ride and back on solid ground.

Through this roller coaster of social distancing, I'm finding solace in the bits of normalcy that peek through. A special UUCC Intergenerational Earth Day Worship, my kids playing outside in the dirt, working with students to end the academic semester on a high note. The monthly rhythm of UUCC Board meetings and church business also centers me to what

once was and continues to be in a slightly different way.

We, the board, continue to meet via Zoom and communicate through phone calls and emails. Several noteworthy items to share: To accommodate the flexibility needed now, our yearly church meeting will be carried out in the form of virtual discussion and electronic voting on June 7. Agenda items will include election of new Board members and approval of the annual budget. Two of our current Board members, Elaine Martin and Michela Skelton, have resigned their positions. Therefore, our elections will be to fill the positions not only of the Board members rotating off (Sam Buffaloe, Gretchen Maune and Barbara Rupp), but to fill the additional two vacant positions. We are working with Rev. Molly to make thoughtful decisions about the budget. If you have not already done so, as you are able, I encourage you to submit your stewardship pledge so that we might have as much information as possible in this planning.

The logistics for the virtual discussion are not yet finalized, but be on the lookout for supporting documentation to review and further information regarding the voting process in the coming weeks. We are most certainly working to make the voting process accessible to all.

Consider donating to help others during the coronavirus emergency

UUCC benevolence funds

You can donate to our church's benevolence funds at <https://uucomo.org/donate/>. Be sure to note "benevolence funds" as the purpose of your donation.

Other community organizations

Other community organizations working to help those in need during the crisis include:

Community Foundation of Central Missouri's COVID-19 Regional Relief Fund

<https://cfcfoundation.org/donations/covid-19-regional-relief-fund/>

COVID-19 Crisis Shelter for the Unhoused

<http://comocrisisshelter.com/>

The Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri COVID-19 Response

<https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E164454&id=77>

Festival of Sharing is on hold for May

The Festival of Sharing is on hold for May because the logistics of dropping off and picking up packages are too complicated in these times of "stay at home" and "social distancing."

We will resume our projects as soon as we can.

– Bonnie Johnson
Festival of Sharing Chair

**Our website address is
<https://uucomo.org>**

*Visit for information on church activities
and our online calendar of events.*

UUCC Caring Ministry needs many hands and caring hearts!

The ministry of the Caring Ministry Team is based on the belief that we are all inherently worthy of care and meaningful connections with others. This ministry provides support in times of celebration and challenge. Support may include cards, calls, visits, meals, and assistance with errands, transportation, or other needs. There are many church members and friends who perform and support caring ministry activities.

Many hands do make light work, and the work of your hands is needed and appreciated. Please consider joining our team and/or helping out periodically with a specific service or task. See below for how to volunteer to help.

Members and friends needing help should not hesitate to contact the team in a time of need. We can help in many ways. Here are a few examples:

- **Do you need temporary meals at home?** We have offers from many volunteers who can prepare and bring a meal to you to tide you over for several days until permanent arrangements can be made.
- **Do you need telephone contacts?** If you or someone dear to you needs regular telephone contact with a caring person, let us make arrangements for regular calls from one of the church's telephone friends.
- **Do you have a financial emergency?** The church has a Minister's Discretionary Fund and a Benevolence Fund that can be used to provide limited funds for a member or friend.

Email Meredith Donaldson at mjdonlson@gmail.com or call the church office at 573-442-5764 if you need help or want to volunteer to help

Sanctuary and Immigrant Justice Team continues family support

Although UUCC has not received any requests for sanctuary since becoming a sanctuary church, the Sanctuary and Immigrant Justice Team continues to help financially support, on a limited basis, the sponsorship of a local Honduran family seeking asylum. UUCC helped the family of four last year with a lunch-and-learn fundraiser, and members of the team and others from UUCC have continued to help in various ways.

As with other marginalized communities, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the immigrant community. There are many ways to assist others at this time, and if anyone would like to get involved with assisting the family please contact:

- Allie Gassmann at alliegassmann@socket.net or 573-356-1210, or
- Dave Gibbons at dgibbons@mchsi.com or 573-864-2161.

Social Action Team has opened up online nominations for Faith-to-Action recipients for 2020-2021 church year

Yes, it seems like spring just arrived, and spring worship services nourish us week after week. But fall is just around the corner, and with it, a new church year and a new set of Faith-to-Action (FTA) collections.

Roughly twice a month, Faith-to-Action collections are taken for organizations, programs, or agencies that align with our church mission and vision.

Nominations of FTA recipients will be accepted until early fall (cutoff yet to be determined – perhaps Sept. 1?).

You may submit nominations online or in writing. This is your chance to nominate an organization that reflects your UU values and brings good to our community.

Programs and Events

UU Life Writers

10:30 a.m. May 2 and 16 - online

“Necessity is the mother of invention!” Since we cannot meet in person, UU Life Writers have been writing to prompts on “Inheritances” and emailing to each other. We will continue to do so in May.

Tentatively, on May 16 we will meet at Grindstone Park (Old 63 S.) and walk (6 feet apart!) and then write (6 feet apart!).

Choose a prompt (or use your own) and write a short story (two pages or less typed, double-spaced) and send it to all via our email list. Send feedback to the stories you receive. Ideas for feedback:

- Tell what you like. Be specific and positive.
- Keep it short.
- Talk about your responses while reading the work.

Remember you are giving feedback on the writing, *not* the writer *nor* the events in the story. We are not a critique or editing group.

All are welcome to join the group online. For further information, email Fran Reynolds at freynolds@centurytel.net.

Revelio Como

1 p.m. Sunday, May 10 - online

The local “Harry Potter and the Sacred Text” group meets on the second Sunday of each month from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Join us to use rigor and sacred practices to explore along with the podcast.

For more information, email April Rodegghero at rodegghero@gmail.com or Jamila Batchelder at dre@uucomo.org. Check out our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/796589344101673/?ref=share>

Unitarian Universalist Church of



**Kaleidoscope
Pagan Gathering on
Friday, May 1 – canceled.**

**Xennial Supper Club
on Sunday, May 17 –
canceled**

UUCC Book Discussion

5 p.m. Friday, May 8 - online

The group will meet online at 5 p.m. Friday, May 8. We discuss books keeping us occupied. If you have questions, contact Pam Springsteel at 445-642 or pspring@socket.net.

Conversations, Etc.

Noon Wednesday, May 13 -
via telephone

Conversations, Etc., the UUCC women’s group, will meet at noon Wednesday, May 13 via telephone conference.

Phone in and enjoy the company of friends. Questions? Call Melinda Farhangi at 573-445-6325.

Social Action Team

1 p.m.. Sunday, May 3 - online

For details, contact Fred Young at fred_young_3@yahoo.com or 573-443-2154.

Sanctuary/Immigrant Justice Team

11:45 a.m. Sunday, May 10 -
online

Send an email to Allie Gassmann at alliegassmann@socket.net for details.

UUCC provides Loaves and Fishes meal on third Sundays

May 17 this month

We have changed procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Loaves and Fishes Director Ruth O’Neill has instructed all participating groups to provide boxed/sack meals, as we did last month. The SAT will purchase 100 meals from a local restaurant.

You can support this effort by making an online donation at <https://uucomo.org/donate>, specifying “SAT Fund.”

Serving meals at Loaves and Fishes is a project of our Social Action Team. Email Diane Suhler at drsuhler@ccis.edu for more information.

Men’s Group

8 a.m. Saturdays, May 9, 23, 30 -
online

The UUCC Men’s Group ordinarily meets in person on the second, fourth, and fifth Saturdays of each month. The group has now arranged for online meetings. For more information, contact Wiley Miller at 573-864-8574 or millerwi@missouri.edu.

Non-toxic Masculinity Men’s Group

7 p.m. Monday, May 4 - online

Contact Jeff Ordway at 573-476-2834 or ordwayj63@live.com for meeting information.

Get your UUCC Social Action Team T-Shirt!

*Your \$20 helps UUCC with our
many social action projects.*

*Contact Caya Tanski,
Allie Gassmann or Sarah Wolcott
for more information or
to place your order.*

Reflections

Jamila Batchelder
Director of Religious Education
dre@uucomo.org
573-442-5764
Office Hours: Wed. 10 a.m.-noon

May is a time of sweet traditions at UUCC, as we close the regular church year and head into the summer: The flower communion, the graduation/bridging service for our seniors, the last day of our RE classes. I know many of us are sad that we won't be together in person for these moments. However, we are looking for ways to continue these precious rituals and make them meaningful in our online services. More than anything, it is finding the way to connect with each other that gives these special times their meaning. And we will always find ways to create that deep connection that is our mission.

As we complete our first month of online worship services, I know being able to be together in this way has kept up many people's spirits. I know I love seeing our community of children every opportunity I have. Many people have particularly told me how much they have enjoyed seeing young people in elements of the service – singing songs, doing readings, making art. I hope our children know what an important part of our congregation they are and how much joy they are bringing to so many.

Sincerely,
Jamila
Director of Religious
Education



Youth lay-led service

Our move to online services has delayed a very special service – the High School Youth Group Lay-led service, that they had worked extremely hard on. We have now rescheduled for May 31, and this is a service you will not want to miss!

The youth will be exploring the theme of allyship and how we sometimes fall short in being good allies.



Junior Youth Night 6:30-8 p.m. Friday, May 8

We won't be able to eat pizza together, but we will still have fun together! We will try out some online games together.

Do you have a child finishing high school this year?

As is our tradition at UUCC, we will honor our youth bridging into the adult community of our church in a service on May 17. Part of our tradition is that we will read anonymous letters from parents, sharing memories and celebrating their child. Please have letters to Jamila Batchelder by May 10.



RE Zoom Schedule

Potter Class – 9:45 a.m.
Schweitzer Class – 10 a.m.
Thoreau Class – 10:15 a.m.
Adams Class – noon
YUUTs – 1:30 p.m.

May 3: Regular RE classes

May 10: Flower Communion
Intergenerational Services at
10:30 a.m.

May 17: Regular RE Schedule +
Graduation/Bridging Service at
10 a.m.

May 24: Service Sunday – all
children will meet for a time
together at 9:45 a.m.

May 31: YRUU lay-led worship

THE SEARCHLIGHT

The Newsletter of:
Unitarian Universalist Church
2615 Shepard Blvd.
Columbia, MO 65201-6132

Return Service Requested

Our Staff

Rev. Molly Housh Gordon, Minister

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 1-4 p.m. at church

Thursdays 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Kaldi's Coffee Downtown

By appointment (including evenings and weekends)

Email: minister@uucomo.org

Suzanne Clark, Administrator

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Telephone: 573-442-5764

Email: uuchurch@uucomo.org

Visit our website: <https://uucomo.org>

Jamila Batchelder, Director of Religious Education

Office Hours: 10 a.m.-noon Wednesdays and by appointment

Email: dre@uucomo.org

Jeremy Wagner, Director of Music Ministry

Email: music@uucomo.org

Hans Bridger Heruth, Collaborative Accompanist

Email: music@uucomo.org

April Rodeghero, Sunday Morning Assistant

Email: uuchurch@uucomo.org

2019-2020 Board of Trustees

Mindy McPherson, President

Sam Buffaloe, Secretary

Jeremy Duke, Treasurer

Barbara Rupp, Past President

Gretchen Maune

Mark Johnson

Rebecca Graves

Unitarian Universalist Church of



Columbia, Missouri

The Searchlight is published monthly by the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, Missouri.

Submissions:

Email to uuchurch@uucomo.org
or mail to Church Administrator.

The deadline for submissions is noon on the third Monday
of each month for the following month's edition.