



The Searchlight

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, Missouri

2615 Shepard Blvd., Columbia, MO 65201 • 573-442-5764 • <https://uucomo.org> • Volume 61, Issue 8, February 2021

February Worship

Sundays at 10:30 a.m. – online only

As we continue worshipping online, if you have any trouble accessing the technology to join us, please send a note to techhelp@uucomo.org with your contact information. Someone will reach out to help!

Sunday, Feb. 7

**“The World Is on Fire
(and We Still Fall in Love)”**

Rev. Erin Walter, Pulpit Guest

After almost a year of pandemic life, some days may feel almost normal, while others still bring us to our knees. Drawing upon the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke and her own spiritual practice of music-making, Unitarian Universalist Rev. Erin Walter will reflect on how we may endure ongoing isolation and struggle while also embracing moments of love and joy along the way.

Rev. Erin J. Walter (she/her/hers) is a minister, activist, and musician based in Austin, Tex. and winner of the 2017 Sermon Award from the UU Women’s Federation. A former YMCA director, Rev. Erin is the singer/songwriter for the band Parker Woodland, whose music you’ll hear in this service. She serves as a board member for the Texas Unitarian Universalist Justice Ministry and is the Affiliated Community Minister of Wildflower (Unitarian Universalist) Church in Austin. You can find more about her music and ministry at <http://www.erinjwalter.com/>.

Sunday, Feb. 14

“Love Each Other, Love the World”

Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

What have we learned about what Love asks of us in these times? Join us for a Valentine’s Day service to ponder where the personal and political meet in our efforts to love the world more fully.

Sunday, Feb. 21

“Loving Well”

Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

Join us for some musings on loving well in relationships and community. How do we grow in our capacity for compassion, relational health and connection?

Continued on page 2

From the Minister

Worship Arc 2020-21

How do we . . .

Love Well?

*“Love isn’t just one thing;
it’s fierce and soft,
intimate and collective,
wild and sincere and deliberate and just.
Love can be more chaos than order.*

Love can be a boundary.

Love can be conflict.

It’s complicated.

It’s multifaceted.

Love is hard work.

Love is natural.

Love is a process and practice.

*Though its paths are many and varied,
love always leads to life.*

*Love is an ever-unfolding thing
we are all still figuring out.”*

*– enfleshed, spiritual nourishment
for collective liberation*

Whenever I find myself with someone facing a difficult decision or inner conflict, I always ask the same question: “What does it mean to love well in this moment?” This question can be as frustrating as it is centering. Love is so many things, so multi-faceted, so rigorous and beautiful and simple and difficult and sacred.

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Worship – continued from page 1

Sunday, Feb. 28

Kim Hampton, Pulpit Guest

A graduate of Earlham School of Religion, a Quaker seminary in Richmond, Ind., Kim Hampton is an independent consultant for churches and a Friend of Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, Calif. She spends most of her time doing consulting work and research on the intersections of race, religion and popular culture.

Worship Zoom information

Worship services are offered via Zoom. Services are followed by a weekly digital coffee hour.

The Zoom address for our Sunday 10:30 a.m.

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

You can also join by phone: 312-626 6799

Webinar ID: 380 411 489

The Zoom 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

Services are also streamed live to Facebook at:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/](https://www.facebook.com/pg/UnitarianUniversalistChurchOfColumbiaMO/videos/)

[UnitarianUniversalistChurchOfColumbiaMO/videos/](https://www.facebook.com/pg/UnitarianUniversalistChurchOfColumbiaMO/videos/)

Adult Religious Education

**Race, Law, and
the Body Politic –
with the Rev. Dr. C.W. Dawson**

**Six-session seminar
7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays
Jan. 12-Feb. 16**

Join our favorite philosopher this winter for a seminar series exploring some of the issues of the day through a critical lens. Mark your calendar, and read more at <https://uucomo.org/adult-re/>.

Zoom Classroom Link:

[https://zoom.us/j/99415868465?](https://zoom.us/j/99415868465?pwd=aXFGKzhKYmJ5MitZQjI2SGREQ2hvUT09)

[pwd=aXFGKzhKYmJ5MitZQjI2SGREQ2hvUT09](https://zoom.us/j/99415868465?pwd=aXFGKzhKYmJ5MitZQjI2SGREQ2hvUT09)

Zoom Meeting ID: 994 1586 8465

Zoom Passcode: 966227

From the Minister – continued from page 1

The question doesn't provide a clear-cut map forward through difficulty, but it always, always offers a north star. What does it mean to love well in this moment? Let us journey the question together this month, step by faltering, faithful step.

See you in (online) church.

– Rev. Molly

Rev. Molly's February office hours

9:30-11 a.m. Tuesdays on Zoom

11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Thursdays on Zoom

(or outdoors if the weather is particularly nice)

If Thursday office hours will be offered outdoors, I will send out an email announcement.

I remain available to you by Zoom and phone if in-person outdoor visits do not fit your risk level. Simply select “virtual meeting” on the scheduling app – calendly.com/revmollyhoushgordon.

– Rev. Molly

Sign up for a Chalice Circle

As this Covid-era winter stretches on and continues to require physical distance, we thought some of you might be interested in the small group connections we provide through our Chalice Circles Program.

Chalice Circles are groups of 7-10 people who connect deeply through check-ins, reflection on our worship themes, and general contemplative conversation. These groups meet monthly (unless they mutually agree to meet more frequently). Find out more at <https://uucomo.org/chalice-circles/>.

Through the fall we have had four chalice circles running, and in order to increase our capacity for connections and mutual support in this time, we have launched two additional Chalice Circles this winter. These will be offered fully online, at least for the foreseeable future.

Because the two new groups filled up quickly, we will consider adding more. If you are interested in joining a circle and didn't get to sign up in time, please email Rev. Molly at minister@uucomo.org.

Here's to deep connection, even and especially now.

– Rev. Molly

Rev. Molly's sabbatical rescheduled

After delaying my planned sabbatical last summer due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, I have now rescheduled this time for spring/summer 2021. After a year that was taxing for all of us, I am so grateful to be able to take this time for renewal before our eventual return to in-person worship. The new sabbatical dates are *April 5 to Aug. 1, 2021*. This timing will allow me to be back in plenty of time to plan for the new church year – in high hopes that we will be able to re-gather in person sometime in the fall or winter.

What is a sabbatical?

Sabbatical is a long tradition in ministry and academia alike, allowing for an extended time of study, reflection, rest and renewal – all ingredients for effective ministry. In our Unitarian Universalist tradition, sabbatical leave is part of the congregation's covenantal agreement with their minister, who generally earns one month of sabbatical per year of service up to a limit of 6 months.

What will you be doing with your sabbatical?

I know this opportunity for extended renewal is a rare gift in our American culture of overwork and grind, and I am humbled and grateful for the chance to re-charge my batteries in this way, especially after the grueling pandemic year we have all experienced. I hope to rest, do a lot of reading to renew my wells of preaching fodder, and also take on a small writing project that has been tickling my brain. I hope to return refreshed and full of fresh ideas and rekindled energy for a new church year and an eventual return to in-person worship!

What support will we have during the sabbatical?

The board has been saving for sabbatical coverage

since I arrived. We will have a part-time sabbatical minister to fulfill my executive and pastoral capacities and preach twice per month, as well as a “digital liturgist” to help keep online worship running smoothly.

Who will be our sabbatical minister?

I am very pleased to announce that the Rev. Dr. C.W. Dawson has been hired as our sabbatical minister, as originally planned. The Rev. Dr. Dawson is a progressive pastor, professor of philosophy and religion, prolific columnist, and a regular and beloved guest preacher and teacher here at UUC. I am elated that he is available to work with us in this way – to guide the congregation and to provide new perspective to our ministry during this period.

Does sabbatical benefit the congregation?

Yes! A sabbatical can be a time of mutual growth and exploration for minister and congregation alike, as the congregation has the chance to benefit from different perspectives and ideas. Rev. Dr. Dawson will be exploring multi-culturalism and growth with the congregation through his role as sabbatical minister.

Will you be around during sabbatical?

I will be on full leave from all church duties and will not be available for anything church-related, including pastoral care. But I will mostly be in town as my family members go about their usual pandemic-era lives close to home. If we run into each other around town and you recognize me all masked up, please do feel free to say hello. Just know I won't be able to talk church business with you!

What if I have more questions?

Send them my way! Email minister@uucomo.org or call 573-442-5764.

Room at the Inn at UUC until March 14

All is going well hosting Room at the Inn (RATI) at UUC. If you have questions, want to donate, or would like to volunteer, visit RATI's website at RoomAtTheInnComo.org.

UUC Caring 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. Please consider joining our team and/or helping out periodically.

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

What did we learn?

by Rebecca Graves, 2020-21 President

As I write this, it is a week and a half since a mob attacked the Capitol in Washington, D.C. Wednesday, our new president will be sworn in. As you read this, this event too will be past. We will know whether the day passed without violence, and if we held to our national story of peaceful transfer of power. It bears noting these events so that we may include them in our stories and learn from them.

December through March is when the board looks at the work of the church, our minister and our board. How do we evaluate our plans, actions, goals? Evaluation is such a weighted word. We abuse each other with evaluations in school and in the workplace. We use them to criticize, to belittle. We use them to give vague praise, which really isn't praise and is no guidance at all. Yet, if one has a destination, a beloved community to achieve, spiritual growth to attain, social injustice to right, surely there are indicators that one has made progress and is not simply wandering.

All of this is complicated by the Covid-19 Pandemic. A year ago, we as a congregation were looking to launch a capital campaign, our minister was planning her sabbatical, and the board was reviewing our vision and end statements. All of this changed, and survival

and making sense of it all became the goal. How do we evaluate this?

A couple weeks back, I had a conversation on this topic of evaluation with Sharon Dittmar, Congregational Life consultant at the UUA MidAmerica Region. She proposed two questions:

- How did we do?
- What did we learn?

Board members are asking ourselves these questions and discussing our answers. I also informally ask them of you. I ask them of your work in the congregation, of your committees and ministries. Discuss them with each other with the goal of deepening our community. Ask them with compassion for yourself and each other. If our responses are, "We survived," count that as a success this year. Ask, what have we learned? Where are the hurts, the hassles, the wrong turns? Where are the helps, the joys and the successes?

Share these conversations with each other and with the board members. Knowing then what we have learned, we can use these conversations to help us stay on a path of love and to continue useful, healing work for social equity and justice as we survive these hard, hard times.

Festival of Sharing – February 2021

For the month of February, the focus is on the "Missouri Baby Bundle Pack." Each box will consist of the following items:

- 2 receiving blankets
- 1 sweater or sweatshirt
- 2 sleepers
- 3-pack of onesies
- 8-12 count disposable diapers

1,365 of these packs were requested in 2019, but only 1,186 were provided. In particular, agencies do not usually have a large supply of diapers.

You can leave your donations at the church administrative office or immediately outside the office door.

– Bonnie Johnson, Festival of Sharing Chair

Whitt speaks to Social Action Team

James Whitt graciously accepted an invitation to meet with the Social Action Team at its regular Zoom meeting in January. He told us about sponsorship opportunities that remain for a marker on the African American Heritage Trail in central Columbia. He also spoke about the Sharp End Entrepreneurial Development Fund, which provides support for emerging black-owned businesses in Columbia.

Do you think UUC should provide financial support for these endeavors? How can the Social Action Team best support the social justice work of our church? If these questions interest you, please consider joining us on the first Sunday of the month at 1 p.m. Just click the Zoom link on the UUC website.

– Fred Young, Chair, Social Action Team

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

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

Programs and events

Kaleidoscope Pagan gathering

7 p.m. Saturday, March 20 -
online

Come celebrate the rebirth of the Earth, bunnies and eggs and Nature courting. Celebrate all things new, joyful and wonderful.

Join Kaleidoscope as we celebrate Ostara, the spring equinox, on Saturday, March 20. All are welcome, no matter what their personal paths. Email barbara.carter@centurylink.net for further information.

To find the Zoom link, go to <https://uucomo.org/zoom-links/>.

Conversations, Etc.

Noon Monday, Feb. 1 - online

Conversations, Etc., the UUCC women's group, will meet via Zoom and by telephone conference at noon Monday, Feb. 1. We get together to enjoy the company of good friends.

If you have questions or would like to join us, contact Pam Springsteel at 573-445-0642 or pspring@socket.net.

Revelio Como

1 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14 - 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



UU Life Writers

10:30 a.m. Feb. 6 and 20 - online

UU Life Writers will meet Feb. 6 and 20 on Zoom. All are welcome. The theme for February's writing has not been decided yet. Send an email to Fran Reynolds at freyholds@centurytel.net if you would like more information or would like to join us.

Big News! Our 2020 *Stories – Just Stories* anthology will soon be available. It is full of great memoirs by UU writers and will be available for purchase soon.

Green Sanctuary Team

7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4 - online

UUCC Book Discussion

4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13 - online

Change of date and time!

The group will meet online and by phone to briefly discuss books we have read. If you have questions, contact Pam Springsteel at 445-0642 or pspring@socket.net.

Unlisted Meetings

Contact your team leader if you are unsure of meeting status.

Social Action T-Shirt!

Your \$20 helps UUCC with our many social action projects. Contact Caya Tanski, Allie Gassmann or Sarah Wolcott for more information.

UUCC provides Loaves and Fishes meal on third Sundays

Feb. 21 this month

The Social Action Team is looking for volunteers to prepare 20 servings of various dishes, which are assembled into boxed meals at the Wilkes Boulevard United Methodist Church.

This system requires the volunteers providing food to take the food to Wilkes Boulevard United Methodist Church by 3:30 p.m. The volunteers who assemble the boxed meals are asked to be at the church by 3:15 p.m. Sign up online at uuomo.org.

You can also support this effort by making an online donation at <https://uucomo.org/donate>, specifying "Loaves and Fishes Fund."

Email Diane Suhler at drsuhler@ccis.edu for more information.

Sanctuary/Immigrant Justice Team

1 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 7 - online

Email alliegassmann@socket.net for details.

Men's Group

8:15 a.m. Feb. 13 and 27 - 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, Feb. 8 & 22

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

Reflections



This month we are reflecting on how we love well. We UUs think a lot about how we love our world by caring for it, showing up for it, serving it – which are all incredibly important. But loving well is not a one-sided relationship, and viewing it that way has led to some of our worst paternalistic instincts in UU history.

This outlook stems from our roots as a religion of often very privileged individuals. And still today, many UUs hold positions of privilege in our society. And it is necessary to be aware of that privilege.

But what if loving well is acknowledging our own vulnerability, allowing ourselves to admit we need others too? How would acknowledging this help us better stand in solidarity with others in need? How would it acknowledge the power of those we seek to help?

I am writing this on the day of the Inauguration, and the line in President Biden's address that most struck me was, "There is no accounting for what fate will deal you. There are some days when we need a hand. There are other days when we are called on to lend one." When we approach life from this perspective, we move beyond charity to mutuality, and I think ultimately, we build stronger bonds of love.

With these thoughts in mind, I hope many of you participate in our upcoming ComUUnity Connections Project (see below). And I hope if there is one thing we have learned in this year in isolation is that we need each other and love each other more than we ever realized before.

Sincerely,
Jamila

ComUUnity Connection Project

From February through May, we will be starting a project to pair congregation members and families with the goal of building deeper connections of friendship and care. Imagine sharing a story over Zoom with a church member who is feeling lonely. Imagine a retiree eager to help an over-burdened family with their recycling. Imagine the start of a new relationship that could grow into a lifelong family friend...

Join us for our worship service on Feb. 21 to learn more about this project and find out how to sign up.



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

Valentines Workshop Noon Feb. 14



We will be doing some Valentines crafting together. Call ASAP to receive crafting materials.

Thank-you cards to hospital staff due Feb. 7

We started a project in January to collect thank-you cards (and pre-packaged treats) for hospital staff. We will be delivering on Feb. 14. Drop materials by the church (or contact Jamila for alternate drop-off).

February Schedule

- Feb. 4**
6:30 p.m.–Family Movie Night
- Feb. 7**
10 a.m.–Morning Tea Party
Noon–Valentines Workshop
- Feb. 12**
6:30-8 p.m.–Junior Youth
- Feb. 14**
10 a.m.–Morning Tea Party
Noon–Adams Family Class
- Feb. 18**
6:30 p.m.–Family Movie Night
- Feb. 21**
10 a.m.–Morning Tea Party
Noon–Workshop
- Feb. 26**
6:30-8 p.m.–Junior Youth
- Feb. 28**
10 a.m.–Morning Tea Party
Noon–Adams Family Class

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

Online office hours at <https://zoom.us/j/2115663859>:
Tuesdays 9:30-11 a.m.

In-person or Zoom office hours Thursdays 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

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

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April Rodeghero, Sunday Morning Assistant

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Unitarian Universalist Church of



Columbia, Missouri

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