



The Chalice and the Flame

Diverse people. Diverse beliefs. One community.

A Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem, OR

March 2021

Join Us in March for Building Sacred Ground

Building Sacred Ground will be a three-week experiential group on Sundays, March 14, 21 and 28, from 1 to 3 pm via Zoom. The series covers the historical and theological roots of Unitarian Universalism. It also involves the participants personally, through the sharing of their spiritual journeys, and provides guidance on how to get involved in the life of the congregation. The group experience can help those who are new to our community to decide if this congregation is the right fit for them. If it is, there will be an opportunity to sign the Membership Book at the end of the last session. For established members, the series is a great way to refresh their personal search for truth and meaning and an opportunity to get to know new friends. All are welcome to join! The group will be facilitated by the Membership Team. After the first session, the group will be closed to new attendees. [Use this online form to register.](#)

UUCS Celebration Honors George and Elsa Struble

At the virtual Congregational Celebration on Saturday evening February 27, we spent some time together as a community. After the chalice lighting and welcome we enjoyed a [Prayer Flag parade](#). Then Rev. Rick gave a tribute to George and Elsa Struble with [a slide show](#). They were honored with the George and Elsa Struble Mighty Oak award for their continued support of our congregation over many years. Janet Stevens shared plans for an award plaque to be mounted in the foyer, honoring this year's and future years' recipients of the award.

After the ceremony, George and Elsa expressed thanks to the congregation. "We deeply appreciate the honor of having The Mighty Oak Award named for us." George went on to say, "I like helping to make good things happen, and I am grateful to UUCS for giving me opportunities to do that. The main reason for success in projects I have undertaken is based first on my mental commitment to do *whatever it takes* and second on my willingness to ask others to help. Working together on projects brings great satisfaction to all who work on them and builds our congregation."

2021-22 Estimate of Giving Forms Due by March 15

Our annual pledge drive kicked off on Saturday, February 27, with a nice online gathering and a tribute for those who've contributed to the well-being of the church in the past, especially George and Elsa Struble. We learned about all the things that our teams are still doing – even while the church is closed, and we are unable to meet in person. During this meeting, we also learned that **the basic costs to keep the church running have risen about 9% since 2017-18 yet pledge amounts have remained flat**. Congregants are encouraged to help close the gap by increasing their pledge. If you have any questions about your pledge or our budget, you can send an email to Sharon Pierson using treasurer@uusalem.org. [Click here to submit your 2021 Estimate of Giving form](#). Forms are requested by March 15.

Bateman Woods Unsafe after Ice Storm

UUCS sustained quite a bit of landscape damage during the ice storm, but thankfully not to the building or the front garden! However, until further notice Bateman Woods is unsafe, with limbs hanging from the trees.

The Landscape Team has:

- Removed, with help of our neighbor, a large tree that fell near the garbage collection area;
- Removed, with neighbor's help, limbs along the east side of the parking lot;
- Removed broken limbs from bushes on the west side of the building

We are:

- Working on getting an arborist to come out and help us make the Woods safe. However, at this time it's challenging to get an arborist out!
- Deciding how to deal with the birch trees that were damaged near the driveway entrance and the back patio.



Reverential Ramblings

~ Rev. Richard Davis, UUCS's minister

I remember feeling very anxious some years ago, during an ice storm here, when I heard huge, heavy limbs crack and crash down during the night. Several times during the recent ice storm heavy limbs from the towering willow oak tree next to our house crashed down on our roof. Yet, oddly enough, my anxiety level was lower. When the thud of limbs crashing on the roof awakened me, I quickly went back to sleep thinking I'd deal with it the next day unless the ice and rain came pouring through the roof, which they didn't. Everyone I've talked to was affected by this storm—one we won't forget.

Maybe I'm just getting worn down by catastrophes and can't rise up to the anxiety levels I achieved when the pandemic first began to spread about a year ago. What a trying year it has been as one catastrophe or crisis piled up on top of another!

Over half a million people in our country have died from this virus—a staggering loss of life. These losses hit the elderly, the marginalized and minorities in our society the hardest. Millions of hearts have been broken by personal losses.

Then there are the many other losses and disruptions caused by the pandemic, especially for the young.

During this year our democracy was imperiled by the incendiary lies our nation's worst president fed his cult-like followers. The damage done to our increasingly polarized political system and social fabric is extensive and ongoing.

The wildfires and the acrid smoke that filled our skies in September gave us all a grim preview of the actual consequences of global climate change.

Likewise, the ice storm showed the types of extreme weather conditions scientists predict will also be a consequence of anthropogenic climate change.

Meanwhile, we have become acutely aware of festering wounds afflicting our national body: racial injustice, worsening economic inequality, social isolation and loneliness and increasing rates of mental illness.

In our world religions class, we discussed how in ancient times when the small Kingdoms of Judah and Israel were conquered, the Hebrew prophets would note how their own society's injustices and inequalities made them complicit in their own demise. Historians could argue that even if these two ancient Jewish Kingdoms had lived up to their ideals the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires would still have conquered them. The danger here is that the victim gets blamed when the fault lies elsewhere.

Yet, there can be great value in this practice of recognizing our collective social failures and shortcomings—this creates an opportunity to envision a better way, to choose something different. There do come those historical moments when circumstances arise that demand that society lift itself out of old ruts that lead nowhere good. This is such a time. I pray we will make the most of it.

This is the last newsletter of the Winter. Even now the crocuses and daffodils are beginning to break into bloom. A new season is coming. Take heart. Life and love always finds a way to regenerate.

Love,
Rick



Lifespan Religious Education

~ Lily Walker, Director, Lifespan Religious Education



C is for...

I grew up in the 1980's, and one lesson from my childhood that definitely stuck with me is that "C is for Cookie, and that's good enough for me!"

However, after taking a look at the lesson plans for the Children and Family Service for March, I am beginning to see that there may be more to the Letter C than the Cookie Monster leads me to believe. Maybe it's true that C is for some other important things, and that stopping at Cookie actually might not be good enough for me!

For instance, C is for Curiosity. Curiosity allows us to be flexible, and to accommodate other viewpoints. It also helps us to "Welcome Questions of Wonder such as: What is God? Is there a god? How do we live a good life? Why do people die? How did the universe come to be?"

C is also for Change. As we know, the universe is in constant flux. Everything changes. As Heraclitus said, "You can never stand in the same river twice." It is also true that sometimes when things change, our understanding also changes. In other words, sometimes we change our minds. For this reason, our Soul Matters packet advises that it is wise to "keep an open mind about anything that might challenge and change our faith!"

C is for Conscience. Like the prophet Elijah we too have the still small voice of "inner conscience" that helps us to know right from wrong, to make decisions, and to know which way to go. Conscience helps to guide us on our journeys through life, and our faith teaches us to "Always trust our conscience/inner voice/gut to help us tell right from wrong."

C is for Compassion. As a faith tradition, we teach our children to have "open minds, loving hearts and helping hands." When our heart and mind come together in love, compassion is the natural expression of their action. Compassion is what we do—we offer compassion. Compassion is how we offer our "helping hands." "Compassion helps us to free others from suffering and teaches us to put our love into action."

And, finally, C is for Commitment. This month during the Children and Family Service time we will be learning about the ways our UU Faith encourages Commitment to the 4 C's: curiosity, change, conscience, and compassion. Each week we will share stories together, practice mindful meditation, play games, do some science experiments, and practice our learning with activities and games, and you are cordially (another "c" word) invited!

Should you wish for your child to receive a packet of craft materials to accompany these lessons, please contact Lily Walker at dlre@uusalem.org to be added to the delivery list.



Fellowship Time via Zoom

If you're really missing coffee hour after the service, sign up to join Fellowship Time via Zoom. The meeting will last about 30 minutes. You'll begin together and then be put into small "break-out rooms" for discussion. Bring your coffee and click to join! [See web page](#) for link to join and for email reminders about Fellowship.

Interested in a Women's Retreat?

It's the time of year when, traditionally, we are preparing for the annual UUCS Women's Retreat. In 2020 we cancelled the event as the health of our members was most important. Although we will not be able to gather this year either, we WILL return to our annual get-away. There have been numerous suggestions that the Women of UUCS get together more often than once a year and that we form a Women's Group which would meet regularly throughout the year. This would be much like the existing Men's Group and would not replace, supplant or in any way interfere with the Women's Alliance. The group would be open to all who identify as women. If you would be interested or would just like to get more information, contact Janet Stevens at stevens.janet.kay@gmail.com.

Behind the Chalice

Well, here we are, starting the month of March, and with it the one-year anniversary of starting recording Sunday Services. (By the way, the traditional 1st anniversary gift is paper.) You should have seen us, behind the chalice, a year ago. We didn't know what we were doing, but we kept moving forward and learned along the way! Not only did we learn about technology and different methods of recording, but we collected others along the way who were reaching out to help—until now we have what we call our Sunday Services Cast and Crew. And you know what? The process is still growing and evolving as more people bring their talents, time and tenacity. A very exciting time.

Coincidentally, the *modern* 1st anniversary gift is a clock. The weekend that encompassed Lincoln's Birthday, Lunar New Year, Valentine's Day, Oregon's Birthday and President's Day was certainly an exciting time, wasn't it!

I hope you all are recovering better than the poor cherry trees at the State Capitol. For the first time since we started this whole social distancing pandemic, we had to cancel presenting a service, not even at a later date within the week as we have had to do before.

So, Covid didn't stop us; learning three different methods of presenting services didn't stop us; needing to obtain the correct equipment didn't stop us; learning new skills didn't stop us; even side effects of vaccines didn't stop us. What stopped us? Some epic ice that downed trees, blocked roads, took electricity and some internet service out. Apparently, we are more 21st Century than we may want to admit. But never fear, Rev. Rick presented his February 14 sermon on February 28 and will move others forward along the way, so we will at least hear what he has to say. In the meantime, thanks for hanging in here with us, happy anniversary, and paper clocks are welcomed. We remain yours in service - From Behind the Chalice ~Submitted by Sara Pickett

News of the Community

We have just been through our ice storm, and everyone has a story from that stressful time.

Susan Farris-Gosser and her husband Skip live in the country out near Turner. They were without power for seven days. Since they have a well, they had no fresh water either. They did get a big container of water in town to help them get through the week. I would expect them to be better prepared than the average dork, and they were. They had a generator that kept their fridge and freezer and a few other things functioning. They have a wood stove. They had candles. They had equipment to clear roads and driveways of downed trees and limbs – at least the smaller stuff.

Deborah Enemy lives not too far from the Farris-Gossers; she was without power for eight days. And as I write this on February 25, there are still people without power.

Ann and David Hanus live way out in South Salem in a heavily wooded area. They were without power for five days and are grateful that downed trees and limbs caused no substantial damage to their house. They too have a pump so were without water, but they too had a generator for some things. They did a lot of reading!

Elsa and I were fortunate. We were without power for two days and phone and internet for four. But we had running water. I think this was somewhat typical for us town dwellers. But Sunday morning Herman Scales knocked on our front door, asking "Do you need anything?" He helped us open our garage door so we could get an Olive Garden take-out Sunday evening just before the power returned. And now I get some exercise almost every day using my little bucksaw to make firewood – more than we need! – of the neighbors' downed limbs.

Several people have remarked how people came to the aid of others. The experience brought us closer together!

More of us are grateful to be getting our Covid vaccinations. New infections are decreasing, and we can look forward to a loosening of Covid restrictions soon. "Back to normal" will not be a flick of a switch, but a series of small steps. All improvements will be welcome, but each of us must assess what steps we are willing to take.

With the closing of Wilson House, **Kay Young** has moved to Bonaventure on Boone Road. Daughter **Jane Manning** was able to visit every day during the first two weeks despite Covid restrictions and continues to visit about every other day. Kay is settling in nicely and getting to know the folks who work there, which is a little difficult with everyone wearing a mask. Kay did suffer a broken arm which is mending slowly but surely and is receiving both occupational and physical therapy in her apartment. Bonaventure has a generator, so electricity and heat remained on during the ice storm. Jane also purchased a van that is wheelchair accessible, dubbed the "Granny Van," and she was able to take Kay to her house for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners and they continue to go on joy rides into the countryside, and the occasional drive-by to see her grandson's family. With Covid restrictions easing, Kay is looking forward to going out for pie and coffee.

Before the storm hit, **Jessica Wilson** wrote "Paul and I are very grateful to be healthy and active. If it's not pouring rain, we can often be found outside. With nearly two acres, there is always something that needs doing. I've ordered lots of seeds and look forward to growing some things I've never tried before in the spring. I've been taking occasional Zoom tours and sometimes Paul joins me. The most recent was a tour of Roman remnants in London. Before that, I attended a Zoom webinar on creating interest in the winter garden. We both continue to read daily. We also spend time working out. We miss our friends and family and look forward to actually spending time with them."

If you have been in our congregation for several years, you remember with pleasure **Lise Adams-Sherry**, who was our director of Religious Education. Lise went through Meadville Theological Seminary and became minister of a colonial era UU church near Boston. Last fall she became the minister of the Anchorage (Alaska) UU Fellowship.

When she discovered that a stamp collection had been bequeathed to the Fellowship, Lise remembered that I am a serious stamp collector who, two or three times, had accepted her invitation to tell our RE kids about stamp collecting. So, in October Lise wrote to me for advice on what to do with "a bunch of stamps."

We established that the collection had some value. But the collection was in Anchorage and I was here; what could I do? Besides Lise, I know two other people in Anchorage; one of them is Eric Knapp, another serious collector! I connected the Fellowship with Eric, who spent hours organizing the collection to send to a stamp auction house. The Fellowship sent *90 pounds* of stuff to an auction house in New York. The auction netted the Fellowship over \$21,000. They are thrilled! Amazing what can happen when we have the right connections!

I invite you all to tell me about things in your life that could be of interest to other congregation members. Also, tell me about things you know about others who might not think to tell me themselves. News about newcomers as well as of "old timers" is welcome. I'm usually one of the last to know of developments, so I need your help!

~Submitted by George Struble

Habitat and Hope Village Report

"Thank you" to all who attended, discussed and voted during the February 7, 2021 Congregational meeting. The Habitat and Hope Village, Inc. resolution was amended and passed. As discussed in the Splinters from the Board column of this newsletter, the UUCS Board of Trustees and HHV will negotiate an agreement for allowing HHV land to construct a transitional housing facility on UUCS land. The agreement will be presented for congregational approval during the 2021 UUCS Annual Meeting.

In anticipation of another positive outcome, HHV has set up committees to manage fundraising, construction, program operation, organizational administration, and public relations. Active volunteer positions are being defined for each of the committees and we will share information as the process unfolds. You can email us at habitatandhopevillage@gmail.com

~Submitted by Paul Wilson

Help Needed and Appreciated!

Facilities Team Seeking Visionaries

Your Facilities Team is looking for a few additional volunteers to help the team peer into the future. The Board has asked us to explore how to serve the congregation better.

We have a furnace and air conditioner that need to be replaced now. The remaining furnaces are over 20 years old and will need to be replaced in the near future as well as the floor in the kitchen. We are also considering LED lighting in the parking lot, lights inside that have a dimming feature and the possible installation of solar panels. An additional project for the future will be replacing the carpet in at least the sanctuary and foyer.

We are recruiting other congregants who would like to help us explore options, gather cost estimates from companies and prepare a plan to present to the Board. We hope to have a progress report for the annual meeting this spring.

If you are interested in being a part of this endeavor, contact the Facilities team at facilities@uusalem.org or call UUCS and a member of the team will contact you.

Nominating Committee Needs Your Help

The Nominating Committee needs help! There are positions to be filled. We need a Board Vice Chair, who can eventually step up to Chair. And we have two Board positions to fill, as well as a position on the Nominating Committee. If you are interested in any of these, contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee: Steve Rosen, Brenna Norval, and Barbara Stebbins-Boaz at nominatingcommittee@uusalem.org.

Land Use Agreement Review Board Needs Members



At its February meeting, the board agreed to create a "review board" to exercise oversight of the land use agreement between UUCS and Habitat and Hope Village. The agreement itself will be negotiated between UUCS board members, a land use attorney and representatives from HHV. However, the board would like some members of the congregation to review the proposed agreement before the congregation is asked to vote on it at the Annual Meeting. The "review board" will consist of no more than five people. Contact Christine Ertl, Board Chair at boardchair@uusalem.org by March 5 if you are interested in serving on this board.

Social Justice News

There are many social injustices that can be addressed; so, their number alone can be overwhelming. Should we focus on easily identifiable injustices such as discrimination? Maybe we can address local injustices in Salem, possibly homelessness or poverty. We mustn't forget systemic injustices such as white supremacy. Then there is economic inequality, which some say exacerbates social injustices and others say is a social injustice. How does/should UUCS as a whole choose which social injustices to address?

We all have our ideas and preferences for which social injustices UUCS should address. UUA has found that congregations with effective social justice programs address issues selected by the congregation and implemented by the social justice team. At our meetings we will discuss how to select social justice issues as well as specific social justice issues.

Our team co-chairs' preferences are anti-racism, white supremacy and economic inequality. Other UUCS members are interested in addressing immigrant justice, homelessness, violence against women, poverty, police reform, healthcare for all, and eliminating the death penalty. Another consideration when selecting social injustices to address is whether we can combine forces with other UU congregations. Fortunately, Oregon has [Oregon UU Voices for Justice](#) (OUUVfJ), a coalition of Oregon UU congregations, for working together on selected issues. OUUVfJ's campaigns include [deepening democracy](#), [environmental justice](#), [human rights](#) and [economic justice](#).

The Social Justice Team will meet at 7 pm on the second Wednesday and 4th Thursday of the month via Zoom at [this meeting link](#).. An email meeting reminder will be sent.

~John Prohovsky and Jack Tally, Social Justice Team co-chairs

Splinters from the Board

Sharon Pierson, board Treasurer, presented information on the upcoming budget decisions that will need to be finalized for vote at the Annual Meeting. She has been communicating with Team leaders to ascertain their budget needs and will include these in the budget proposal. The board usually sets annual budget goals in preparation for the Pledge campaign. However, it was decided that because this is such an uncertain period, goal-setting for anything other than a baseline budget would not be appropriate. The Finance Team will work up the budget to submit to the board for their recommendation in April. These recommendations will then be submitted to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting.

Joel Martin presented information from the Facilities Team related to current needs and expenses. The air conditioner and furnace for 4 offices need to be replaced. The lowest bid for this was approximately \$10,000. The Facilities Team suggest this be done before the summer. Long-term maintenance and replacement plans and the short-term needs were also discussed, especially for effective air filtration systems once the facility is reopened. Joel estimates the combined cost for the long term and short-term maintenance will be around \$200,000. He will get some rough figures to the board for further exploration at the upcoming Board Retreat.

A Congregational Survey was discussed, including the background of this annual effort, and how it enables members to express their issues and concerns. The current church year is unusual because of the Covid-19 virus so there is a question about how to make such a survey useful this year. This issue will be discussed at the February Board retreat.

The board reviewed the Special Congregational Meeting held February 7 to vote on the Resolution to enter into a land use agreement with Habitat and Hope Village. This was a well-attended meeting with over 100 participants. A majority voted to approve the Resolution as amended to have the agreement presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting. The following steps were identified: Christine Ertl, Robin LaMonte and Steve Ovens will work with the land use attorney that the board has engaged, to create a land use agreement. The agreement will be discussed with HHV and changes negotiated with this small group. The final draft will be reviewed and approved by the Board and then presented at the Annual Meeting for congregational vote. The cost of the attorney is yet unknown, but it was recommended that up to \$1,000 be paid out of contingency funds.

The board decided to create a "Review Board" of interested congregants to contribute to the discussion and plans for the land use agreement. See the announcement about participating on this board in this newsletter.

~Submitted by Christine Ertl, Board Chair

FY 2021-22 Estimate of Giving Forms Due March 15

Send inquiries about pledging to treasurer@uusalem.org

Complete the Estimate of Giving Form



Here are a few of the images from the tribute to George and Elsa Struble.

[Watch the video](#)

Worship Services and Religious Education

Family Service

(via Zoom)

9:45 am

Sunday Service

(Live-streamed)

10:30 am

Fellowship Time

(via Zoom)

Noon

March Share the Plate Recipient: [LUS Latinos Unidos Siempre](#)

Sunday, March 7

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

"The Road to Success"

Celebrant: Gloria Holland

Music: Kit Abrahamson and Laura Christian

"What is Success? To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded!"

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Sunday, March 14

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

"What About Anger?"

Celebrant: Sara Pickett

Music: Kit Abrahamson and Laura Christian

Do you get angry sometimes? Does it help? Hurt? What role, if any, might it play in our spiritual lives?

Sunday, March 21

Paul Wilson

"The Patch-Thompson Scholarship Fund"

Celebrant: Brenna Norval

Music: Kit Abrahamson and Laura Christian

Sunday, March 28

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

"A Terrific, Terrifying Journey"

Celebrant: Janet Steven

Music: Kit Abrahamson and Laura Christian

Sunday, April 4

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

Easter Service

Celebrant: Barbara Stebbins-Boaz

Music: Kit Abrahamson and Laura Christian

Unitarian Universalist Congregation Of Salem

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Minister: The Rev. Richard R. Davis

rdavis@uuma.org

Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration:

Lily Walker dlre@uusalem.org

DLRE Assistant: Open

Music Director: Laura Christian

music@uusalem.org

Pianist: Kit Abrahamson

Board Chair: Christine Ertl

boardchair@uusalem.org

Congregational Administrator: Emma Kreger

Office Administrator: Jo Sweeney

Office open Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Phone: 503-364-0932

E-mail: office@uusalem.org

UUCS Internet Links to:

Website: www.uusalem.org

Facebook: facebook.com/UUSalem

Newsletter Editors: editors@uusalem.org

This issue was edited by Bob Muir with help from Sharon Pierson, Vicki Cunningham, and Elsa Struble. Final formatting completed by S. Pierson.

EVENT SCHEDULING: use the [Event Scheduling Request](#) form on the UUCS website to add your event to the UUCS calendar and/or reserve a UUCS space.

PUBLICITY and ANNOUNCEMENTS: Fill out the [Publication Request](#) form on the UUCS website for any announcement, event or news item. This form is a one-stop place to put a notice in the monthly newsletter, the UUCS website, the *This Week* email and/or Facebook.

DEADLINES:

Newsletter: The deadline for the next newsletter is 8:00 pm on Friday, **April 2, 2021.**

This Week submissions are due by **Wed.** noon.