

Minister's Notes  
April 1-15, 2020

We had a rocky start with our first virtual worship service on March 22 but have improved each week by rehearsing the technical aspects of each element of the service, taking Zoom workshops, and by meeting as a committee once a week to evaluate and brainstorm together. I am the only person in the church on Sunday mornings, Betsy handles the technical details using the church computer from her home, and Amanda and Pam assist with greeting people as they sign on. This week we implemented the waiting room feature as a safety measure to avoid Zoom bombing.

The Sunday Services Committee co-chairs suggested that we cancel worship this summer while I'm on vacation, and I recommended that we wait and see what unfolds with the stay at home orders. I think we will need to continue to offer services and other ways to connect if we are still forced to isolate.

I am offering virtual office hours twice a week, a weekly Vespers service on Friday evening, and have attended a variety of committee meetings in addition to the weekly Sunday Services meetings. Since our last board meeting on April 1, I've attended Healthy Congregations, Transition Team, Stewardship Committee, and I hosted a support Zoom meeting.

Mary Van Valin and I are offering a Small Group Experience on Thursday to see if there is interest in creating new groups. The announcement is pasted below.

I am taking advantage of opportunities to connect with colleagues in workshops and support sessions offered by the UUMA, and I am connecting weekly with my fellow facilitators from the Institute for the Healing of Memories. This afternoon, I attended a "Leaning into Ritual" session with 8 UUMA colleagues that I thought was going to be a workshop and found it was a time for healing and restoring ourselves. It felt good to be ministered to, and it affirmed just how important it is to offer these kinds of sessions for our congregations.

It reminded me that it is important to acknowledge what we are grateful for. I'm grateful for the promise of warmer weather and sunshine, I am grateful for the strong leadership shown by the Board, the Transition Team, the Stewardship team, the Finance Committee, the Sunday Services Committee, Leadership Development, Congregational Care team, and everyone who supports UUCGT with their hearts, their talents, their time, and their pocketbooks. I'm grateful for my sweet dog, Zoey, my sister who has uprooted her life to go care for my 97-year old mother, my sons, my husband, and for my cozy safe apartment. I am grateful to live in such a beautiful place, and I'm grateful that no one I know and love has died from Covid-19.

I hope Arundhati Roy is right; this pandemic may be a portal to a better world. May it be so.

In faith and love,  
Cathy

***Try a Small Group Experience  
All are welcome! Just Show Up!  
Thursday, April 16 - 3:00 PM***

The small groups that we hoped to launch last month have been over-shadowed by this crazy pandemic. We realized that in this time of intense isolation, the small group concept might be a perfect way for us to connect at a deeper level. Rev. Cathy and Mary Van Valin will offer some "practice" small group opportunities, and we welcome your participation.

The person who leads the "Soul Matters" small group project, Rev. Scott Tayler, says what he hopes the small groups accomplish is "healing disconnection." A few of us have been trying his model, and find it a really good way to dig into ourselves and heal the sense of isolation. It's all about deep listening, allowing each person to "hear, discover and listen to their own voice", quoting Parker Palmer.

For our first few sessions, we will just come together and use some of Rev. Tayler's materials to dig into life during a pandemic. Eventually, the groups will receive a monthly packet to use during the month, and then at the small group meeting, we will hear each other on that monthly topic. But for now, we will just do some practice sessions, and see if there is interest in forming ongoing small groups.

**Thursday, April 16 @ 3:00 PM**

**Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/801476418>**