

Unitarian Universalist Church Urbana Champaign
Religious Exploration and Engagement
Fall 2021



Volume 5. Updated November 13th, 2021

*The list of offerings will grow as new ones are created.
Please continue to check the website at <https://uucuc.org/learning/> to see new additions to the 2021 programming.
Updates will also go out in the eNews and be posted on social media.*

Welcome to Religious Exploration & Engagement:

New name, new faces... same commitment!



Hello and welcome! Exploration and engagement across the lifespan remain a priority at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana Champaign, even as we continue to venture into unknown times together. We hope this year's theme of **Resilience & Reconnection** invites you to engage in the various programs being offered this year.

There are programs continuously being developed for children, youth, adults, families, and multi-generational communities. We are being guided by the values of inclusion, consent, covenant, and care as we look ahead to what will be offered for Fall 2021.

If you have any questions or wish to talk more about our program, you are welcome to email me at religious-exploration@uucuc.org to schedule a time to chat further!

Rose St. Clair, Coordinator for Religious Exploration and Engagement

Meet your new Religious Exploration and Engagement Staff!

Rose St. Clair, Coordinator of Religious Exploration and Engagement

religious-exploration@uucuc.org



Rose St. Clair (they/them) is thrilled to join the UUCUC staff as the Coordinator of Religious Exploration and Engagement. They have a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA, and a Master's of Social Work from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. They have lived in the Urbana-Champaign area for 8 years and love calling this area home!

Rose has over a decade of experience working with children, youth, and families, including as a preschool teacher, high school coach, youth camp instructor, and school social worker. They believe in the importance of play for all, and encourage everyone to find their inner child. They are passionate about building relationships through open and honest collaboration, and are looking forward to working with such a vibrant community of learners, explorers, movers, and shakers.

Adrienne Summerlot, Consulting Director of Religious Exploration and Engagement

consulting-dree@uucuc.org



Adrienne Summerlot (she/her) has been a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Bloomington, IN for 12 years and served as the Director of Religious Education for almost a decade. She is an Our Whole Lives-trained educator who believes we can bring a similar comprehensive, inclusive, and holistic framework to our anti-racism, anti-oppression, multi-cultural work in our congregations. She believes we are fortunate to be living in a time that is calling us to be curious, to develop our skills as both parents and educators to provide pathways to have honest and difficult conversations.

Adrienne is excited to bring her years of experience, strategic thinking, and creativity to UUCUC to build upon all the work this congregation has done to show they have a passion and commitment for religious education. She is eager to join this collaborative leadership team and congregation and encourage us to learn, grow, and play together as lifelong learners.

Avalon Ruby, Religious Exploration Assistant

re-assistant@uucuc.org



Avalon Ruby (she/her) is excited to join us as the new Religious Exploration Assistant! Avalon has several years of project management experience and will be bringing her talents to UUCUC as both the new RE Assistant and the A/V Tech.

Avalon has a bachelors in New Media from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and hopes someday to get a masters in New Media and Printmaking!

She has been telling stories and using various media to do it for over a decade. In her spare time, Avalon loves to bind books, hang out with her partner and their cat son, and play copious amounts of tabletop RPG's.

She can't wait to bring her artist eye to UUCUC and contribute to a supportive community.

We are in the process of hiring a new Youth Coordinator at this time, so stay tuned for more information!

We Do This 'Til We Free Us, Abolitionist Praxis Series



Sponsor: Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of Illinois
Facilitators: Rev. Allison Farnum and Megan Selby
Series: June 2021–February 2022
Days Soon: September 12 and 26
Time: 3:00–4:30pm on Zoom
Register: <http://www.uupmi.org/abolitionist-praxis-registration.html>

Join the UUPMI Education team two Sunday afternoons a month for community-building, facilitated reflection on Mariame Kaba's whip smart book, [*We Do This 'Till We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice*](#), and real-time actions we can take that bring us closer to a world of reimagined safety and a world without cages and police. Each gathering, we will work our way through the book, two chapters at a time. We will center inside voices with participating prison pen pals and those previously incarcerated.

Participants are not required to have attended previous classes.

We will send out reminders for our sessions.

Due to the extended nature of this praxis, we understand that committing to all sessions may not be accessible and that we will welcome new faces and voices at each session. At the same time, we hope to build relationships together that we can carry with us in our community spaces.



Braiding Sweetgrass



Facilitators: Andy Townsend and Jenny Hunt
Series: July 8–December 9
Day: 2nd and 4th Thursdays (see schedule below)
Time: 7:00–8:30pm on Zoom
Registration: <https://uucuc.breezechms.com/form/ddc5fa8781>

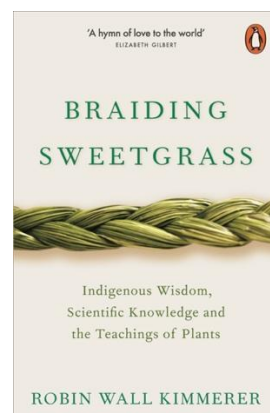
This is suitable for high school–adults.

Participants are not required to have attended previous classes. This one is rich just as it is!

Jenny Hunt and Andy Townsend invite you to the third episode of UUCUC’s trilogy of Native American studies.

Our study will give insight into Native American ways and will offer an alternative way of thought and living that embraces the interconnection of all life on Planet Earth. It will show that the Indigenous people have survived and that much of their culture continues to serve them. It offers us an opportunity to view our relationship to all of Earth’s inhabitants in a more respectful and sustainable way.

We are reading Robin Wall Kimmerer’s [*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*](#) (2013, 384 pages). About the book: [*Braiding Sweetgrass*](#). The book is widely available.



The author is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation who holds a PHD degree in Botany. She weaves her scientific and Native American knowledge and wisdom with her observations and intuitions into a beautiful poetic story of hope and sustainability.

Our study will give insight into Native American ways and will offer an alternative way of thought and living that embraces the interconnection of all life on Planet Earth. It will show that the Indigenous people have survived and that much of their culture continues to serve them. It offers us an opportunity to view our relationship to all of Earth’s inhabitants in a more respectful and sustainable way.

Date	Chapters	Pages
Sept. 9, 2021	Picking Sweetgrass: 1–3	121–155
Sept. 23, 2021	Picking Sweetgrass: 4–6	156–201
Oct. 14, 2021	Braiding Sweetgrass: 1–4	205–253
Oct. 28, 2021	Braiding Sweetgrass: 5–8	254–300
Nov. 11, 2021	Burning Sweetgrass: 1–3	303–347
Dec. 9, 2021 (7-9p)	Burning Sweetgrass: 4–6	348–384

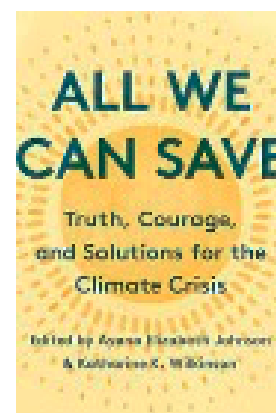
All We Can Save Circle



Facilitator: Theresa Benson
Day: Sundays (see schedule below)
Time: 1:30-3:00pm on Zoom
Start Date: September 12, 2021
End Date: December 5, 2021
Registration: <https://uucuc.breezechms.com/form/d2e567>

This is suitable for high school–adults.

Theresa Benson invites you to join her in exploring the current climate movement and discuss possible actions. *All We Can Save* is a book of essays by women at the forefront of the climate movement. As part of the “All We Can Save Project,” a framework was provided for individuals to meet in community to engage in a deeper dialogue about climate change and discuss solutions. This *All We Can Save Circle* will be based on the book of the same title and structured like the circles from the All We Can Save Project. We will meet for 5 Sunday afternoon sessions in the fall and 5 Sunday afternoon sessions in the spring.



As a covenant for this circle, we will agree to create and maintain a safe discussion space by:

- Honoring confidentiality
- Listening with an open, non-judgmental mindset
- Centering responses on personal experience without judgment of others and their experiences
- Asking open and honest questions of each other
- Engaging in the reading in advance to focus discussion on shared content

Date	Chapter	Pages
Sept. 12, 2021	Introduction	xxii–xxiv
Sept. 26, 2021	Root	
Oct. 17, 2021	Advocate	
Nov. 7, 2021	Reframe	
Dec. 12, 2021	Reshape	

About the book: [All We Can Save](#) and the [All We Can Save Project](#)

The Religious Education office will order a couple of copies for the UUCUC library in case anyone wishes to borrow a copy.

Antiracism Reading Group



Facilitators: Millie Davis and Priscilla Kron
Day: 1st and 3rd Mondays (see schedule below)
Time: 6:30-8:00pm on Zoom
Start Date: September 20, 2021
End Date: December 6, 2021
Registration: <https://uucuc.breezechms.com/form/d2e56742>

This is suitable for high school–adults.

Millie Davis and Priscilla Kron invite you to join us in exploring the impact of racial stereotypes and lies on ethnic minorities, specifically Asian Americans. This discussion continues last year’s Antiracism Reading Group’s discussions and our work to live into the 8th Principle adopted by UUCUC in June 2021 and becoming a Beloved Community. Discussions will be guided by a Covenant. Participants are not required to have attended previous classes.

We’ll be reading Cathy Park Hong’s [*Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*](#) (2020, 203 pages). The book is widely available.

“Hong dissects her experiences as an Asian American to create an intricate meditation on racial awareness in the U.S. . . . Hong, a poet, lays bare the shame and confusion she felt in her youth as the daughter of Korean immigrants, and the way those feelings morphed as she grew older . . . Hong underscores essential themes of identity and otherness.” — *TIME*



Date	Chapters	Pages
Sept. 20, 2021	Intro and United	3–35
Oct. 4, 2021	Stand Up	36–65
Oct. 18, 2021	The End of White Innocence, Bad English	66–109
Nov. 1, 2021	An Education	110–150
Nov. 15, 2021	Portrait of an Artist	151–180
Dec. 6, 2021	The Indebted and Wrap-up	181–203

About the book: [*Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*](#)

Mindfulness Class: *Finding Peace in a Frantic World*

Mindfulness

AN EIGHT-WEEK PLAN FOR
Finding Peace
IN A
Frantic World



Mark Williams and
Danny Penman
FOREWORD BY JON KABAT-ZINN

Facilitators:

Dave Sharpe & Allyson Blackburn

Day:

Wednesdays (*no class on Wednesday, November 24*)

Time:

9:00-10:15am on Zoom

Start Date:

October 20, 2021

End Date:

December 22, 2021

Registration:

<https://uucuc.breezechms.com/form/4e9f79512888>

There is a class size limit of 10 participants, so register today to save your spot!

This 9-week class is an adaptation of the University of Illinois Psychology Department's [Mindfulness Training \(MT\) curriculum](#). While the class is largely experiential in nature (guided mindfulness exercises, breakout room discussions), it is also very important to read assigned chapters weekly from Mark Williams's book, *Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World* to support learning.

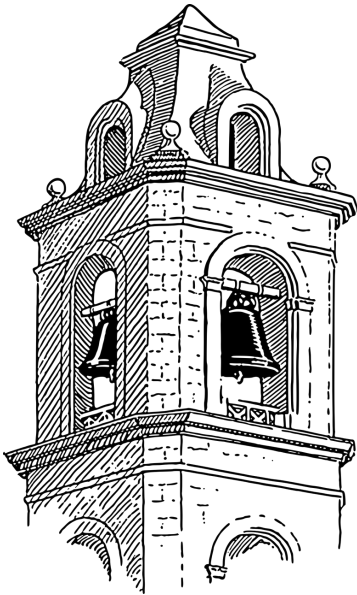
In addition to the Finding Peace in a Frantic World meditations, the class will include partner meditations based on the work of [Gregory Kramer](#).

Participants may purchase books or there are a limited number of copies from the UUCUC library. Participants are also provided with guided mindfulness [MP3 audios](#) to use daily between weekly classes to build their mindfulness skills.

Questions are welcome! Email questions to Christopher Menard: Cmenard@illinois.edu



Bats in the Belfry



Facilitator: Jocelyn Karsk
Day: October 24th, 2021
Time: 2:00-3:00pm on Zoom

Learn about the bats of Illinois, dispel common myths, and learn the benefits of these amazing creatures with area bat biologist, Jocelyn Karsk!

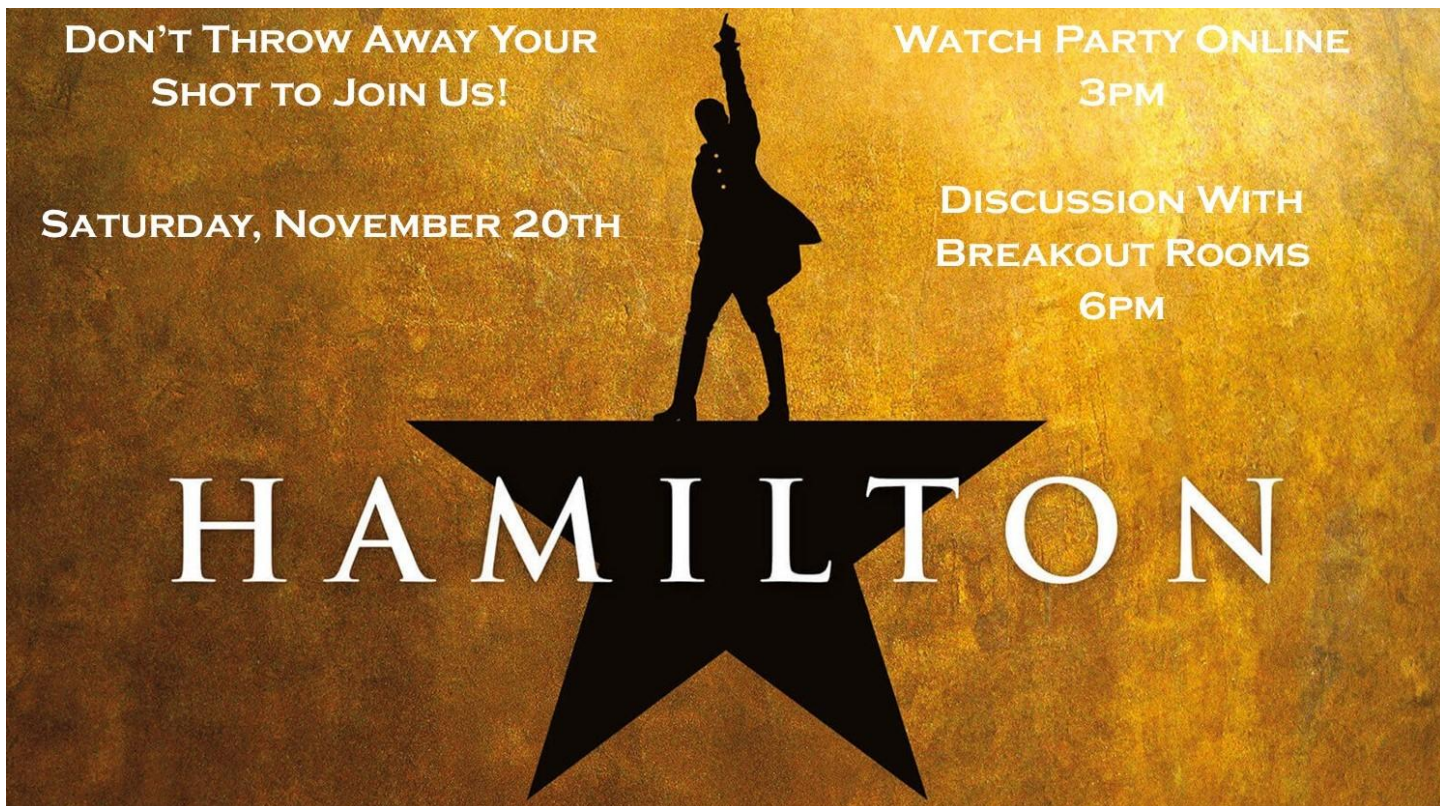
This event is open for all ages! Please look on our eNews and social media for more details coming soon.



UU Trivia: Jeopardy Night!

Facilitator: Adrienne Summerlot
Day: Saturday, Nov. 13
Time: 7pm via [Zoom](#)

Join us on Zoom for fun and fellowship as we test our knowledge about Unitarian Universalist history.



Hamilton Watch Party & Discussion

Facilitator: Rose St. Clair and many others

Day: Saturday, Nov. 20

Time: Watch Party from 3-6, Discussion begins at 6pm, both via [Zoom](#) using the same link

Join us for a casual viewing followed by a lively discussion about the hit Broadway musical Hamilton. You don't want to throw away your shot to discuss History, Favorite Characters, Music, and More! You are welcome to join for just the Watch Party, just the Discussion, or both! Hamilton is available to stream on Disney Plus (if you need access, please email Rose St. Clair at religious-exploration@uucuc.org).

Cosponsored by the Racial Justice Project and the Religious Exploration and Engagement Program of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign

Telling the Truth:

Constructive ways to teach about racism and our racial history

A panel discussion moderated by Dr. Don Owen, former Superintendent of Urbana School District 116 and current CEO of Lead for Equity and Engagement, LLC.

Panelists include: Keyarah Johnson, honor student at Urbana High School; Brandy Smith, Program Coordinator for YWCA and parent of two students in the Spanish Dual Language program in USD116; Elizabeth Sotiropoulos, Parliamentarian and school board member of Champaign Unit 4; and Nate Wahl, Restorative Practices Coach at Urbana Middle School.

Visit the official event page for additional information, including the Zoom link, at uucuc.org/telling-the-truth or our Facebook page at facebook.com/uucuc. We hope to see you there!

**November 17, 2021
7–8:30 pm (on Zoom)**

Children's RE&E Programming Monthly Events



Facilitator: RE&E Teachers and Volunteers
Day: 1st and 2nd Sundays (see schedule below)
Time: 1:00-2:30pm Church grounds (South Lawn and Playground)
Start Date: October 3, 2021
End Date: December 12, 2021
Registration: <https://uucuc.breezechms.com/form/fbaea23868>

The Children's Team invites children and families to this fall's series of children's events. These events will carry forward many of the popular components of the summer Family Fun Play Days including a space for children to gather with peers, a space for parents and caregivers to gather with each other, and various activities for the children to engage in such as stories, art, play, dance, and more! Children will also engage in rituals including chalice lighting, expressing joys and sorrows, and more. These events will be based around a monthly Soul Matters theme and separated into smaller age groups (see below).



Preschool (ages 3-5)	School-aged (K-5th)	Soul Matters Theme
Oct. 3, 2021	Oct. 10, 2021	Cultivating Relationship
Nov. 7, 2021	Nov. 14, 2021	Holding History
Dec. 5, 2021	Dec. 12, 2021	Opening to Joy



Note: Families with multiple age children are welcome to bring all children to any event, however the activities will be prepared for the specific age group that week.

These events are only possible with volunteer assistance! Parents and caregivers are invited to stay and gather in community with each other, and may be asked to volunteer throughout the semester as needed. If you would like to volunteer to assist the teachers and staff with these events, please complete this form:

<https://uucuc.breezechms.com/form/REEvolunteer>

Outdoor Creative Play Dates



Facilitator: Tania Madrigal and Amber Schultz
Day: 3rd Sundays (see schedule below)
Time: 1:00-2:30pm
Start Date: September 19, 2021
End Date: December 19, 2021
Registration: <https://uucuc.breezechms.com/form/fbaea23868>

Families are invited to join Tania Madrigal, Amber Schultz and the Navigators for this fall's series of outdoor Creative Play Dates. Children and youth can freely explore the beauty and intrigue of nature while parents and caregivers can visit with each other. These events aim to spark creativity, fun, laughter, and provide an opportunity to explore.

Dates:

- September 19, 2021
- October 17, 2021
- November 21, 2021
- December 19, 2021



All events begin at 1pm with location TBD! All families who have registered their children via the link above will receive additional information for each month's event, and events will also be posted in eNews and on the UUCUC website. If you have any questions, email Tania Madrigal at madrigat@yahoo.com or Rose St. Clair at religious-exploration@uucuc.org

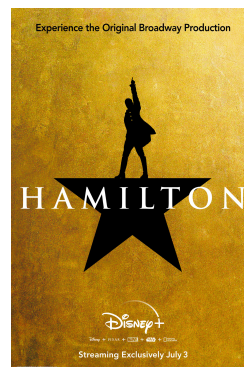


Popcorn Theology is Back!

Join us for our first outdoor movie showing on Friday, October 22 at 6pm on the South Lawn at UUCUC. We will be watching the movie [Onward](#). Bring a chair/blanket for you and your family and join your fellow UUs to watch and reflect together.

We are planning the following movie showings:

- October: Onward
- November: Hamilton
- December: Jingle Jangle



To receive more information about each showing, please sign up for the Fall 2021 Popcorn Theology email list here: <https://uucuc.breezechms.com/form/Popcorn>

We are currently looking for volunteers who are interested in hosting Popcorn Theology events throughout the fall. These popular movie night events are enjoyable for all ages and provide a chance for us to engage safely in community, rain or shine! If you are interested in hosting, please complete this form:

<https://uucuc.breezechms.com/form/REEvoluteer>

Stay tuned for more information on additional upcoming Religious Exploration & Engagement opportunities including...

YRUU & Youth Programming including social justice events

Our Whole Lives for the following grades: K/1 and 8/9

Postal Pals, a multigenerational pen pal program

