



THE DRUUMM BEAT

DIVERSE & REVOLUTIONARY UU MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES

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Our Religious Journeys: Fall Caucus Recap

In This Issue

Sabbatical
Reflection:

*We Are All
Connected*

-
Ministers'
Discussion

Watercolors

Notations

On October 1st, we connected with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Unitarian Universalism and explored, listened, and integrated new understandings of our individual and collective spiritual and religious journeys. We caucused on the question “Tell me about you and your god, gods, or not g*d” and in small groups organized as much as possible by particular religious identities. Why are you UU? What is the culture and place of your personal faith journey?

We opened with a discussion between our four ministers of color: Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, Rev. Christina Shu, Rev. Tania Marquez, and Rev. Darrick Jackson. They shared their spiritual journeys and how their relationships with the divine, their ancestors, and practices at home engage meet UU space. Some described a feeling of incompleteness with regard to Unitarian Universalism due to both being a minority and longing for more spiritual expression. Practices of replenishment included chanting, prayer, music, and communing with nature. You can watch this opening conversation on our official YouTube channel youtube.com/@druumm.

Following the opening discussion, 70 participants caucused in small groups and filled out a Jamboard to share transformational experiences and their alignment with Unitarian Universalism and spiritual practice. The themes of community and relationship were prominent, as well as appreciation for a space where questions are welcomed. Some also expressed desire to embrace the language of reverence and wondered about a shared spiritual language among Unitarian Universalists.

The next DRUUMM caucusing opportunity will be in Spring 2023.

"So often when we gather as BIPOC UUs, we spend our time on (much-needed) debriefing about difficult experiences. What an absolute delight to spend time instead on the spiritual experiences that give us life! I was so grateful to the panelists who shared their sacred stories with us."

- Rev. Lindsasusan Ulrich, Connecticut

"I came away with gratitude and thanks for all the DRUUMM members and leaders who created this space, and to everyone for sharing their spiritual/religious journeys. My spirit and heart were blessed and renewed by the compassionate sharing among UUs of open hearts :heart:. Let's do this regularly!"

- Marianne Jew, Pennsylvania

"DRUUMM is all I hoped Unitarian Universalism could feel like: warm and welcoming, soulful and thoughtful. It's a model for pluralism in community and in worship."

- Nina Lytton, Massachusetts

Check out our YT page at youtube.com/@druumm



Hello, DRUUMM family,

I want to share two stories from my recent sabbatical. I hope my words provide you with good thoughts and feelings.

My sabbatical started and ended with a bang! On April 4th, I went to Memphis for five days to visit the place where we lost our King. I stayed at the Lorraine Motel, now an incredible museum that captures the entire Civil Rights Movement in such detail. I was able to see where King died - my reason for going was to put closure on the journey. I've been to many historic places that impacted the movement - DC, Montgomery, Selma, Atlanta, but never to Memphis.

The highlight of this trip came on my last day, April 5th. I decided to go by Mason Temple Church where Dr. King gave his last speech, "I've been to the Mountaintop." This is a sermon I'd given as a young man in MLK contests in high school and college. It was my dream to be in the same space where Rev. King said so many prophetic words.

Side story: I rented a car for the drive but only a white cargo van was available. I must tell you, I felt silly driving around in a van that looked like the UPS. I pulled up in Mason Temple but unfortunately, the building was closed. I decided to ring the bell anyway.



Rev. John Crestwell

As I was about to leave, a young black janitor answered the door. I said, "Hey man, sorry to bother you, I am from Maryland, and would really like to see the space where Dr. King last preached. I know you're closed but brother, you'd make my life if I could come in and take some pictures. He said, "We have security all around here - I'm not supposed to let anyone in... Wait, is that your white truck?"



*Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivering “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop”
at the Mason Temple in Memphis.*

I said yes. Sheepishly, he replied, “You look like you’re delivering something, so I think I can let you in without any trouble.”. A MIRACLE!

There I was inside this massive, amazing, black church, which now serves as the headquarters of the Church of God in Christ. I took pictures and marveled at the sacred space, walked up and down the aisles and then up the steps to the pulpit. I stood in that hallowed space, looked out, and saw with my own eyes what King saw. I cried with joy and sadness. Divine intervention came. A miracle in Memphis happened because of that van.

On my last week of sabbatical, my wife and I went to NYC to watch a play. While seated, I noticed something peculiar. A few rows in front of us seemed to be the same family we saw at breakfast at our hotel in Manhattan. We were not yet completely sure because we were looking at their backs. And with a population of over 1.6 million, this seemed like a strange coincidence. After the show and when we arrived back at our hotel, we met this family again on the elevator.



To be sure, I asked them if they were at the show and with shock in their eyes, said they were! The wife in the family was astonished as we were. Norman Cousins said, “You are a single cell in the body of over 7 billion cells. The body is humankind.

You are a single cell. Your needs are individual, but they are not unique. You are interlocked with other human beings in the consequences of your actions, thoughts, and feelings. You will work for human unity and human peace; for a moral order in harmony with the order of the universe.

Together you share the quest for a society of the whole equal to your needs, a society in which you need not live beneath your moral capacity, and in which justice has a life of its own. You are single cells in a body of over 7-billion cells. The body is humankind.”

When life gets hard and I don't feel I can move forward, something always happens that brings me back to my best self. These, as Carl Jung called them, synchronicities, are not mere chance. They come as heavenly reminders that we are not alone nor forgotten. There is something in us and in the cosmos—an energy—a spirit that is still alive and active in this world. And when we remember this, it comes alive again and again to restore and nourish us in ways seen and unseen.

Your DRUUMM Chaplains are here for you in this strange and challenging world. Reach out to us at druumm.org if you need a reminder that you are remembered, loved, and interconnected to greatness. May it be so.

- *Rev. John Crestwell*

Watercolors



KATE GOKA



I live in the SF Bay Area with my wife and three kids. I grew up with a white Unitarian Universalist mom and a Japanese Buddhist dad and remember learning about Harriet Tubman at our UU fellowship Sunday school as well as bowing at the Buddhist altar in my grandmother's house in Japan.

As an adult, I've practiced meditation in various settings and recently committed to jukai or formal practice to take the Zen Buddhist precepts. I had a long break from Unitarian Universalism but found my way back when I worked as a religious educator at a UU congregation near my house. I've been on the steering committee of the Asian/ Pacific Islander Caucus of DRUUMM for the last three years and have co-created a curriculum for Beloved Conversations for families.



DRUUMM STEERING COMMITTEE 2022-2023

The DRUUMM Steering Committee is made up of members elected to three year terms at our annual meeting.

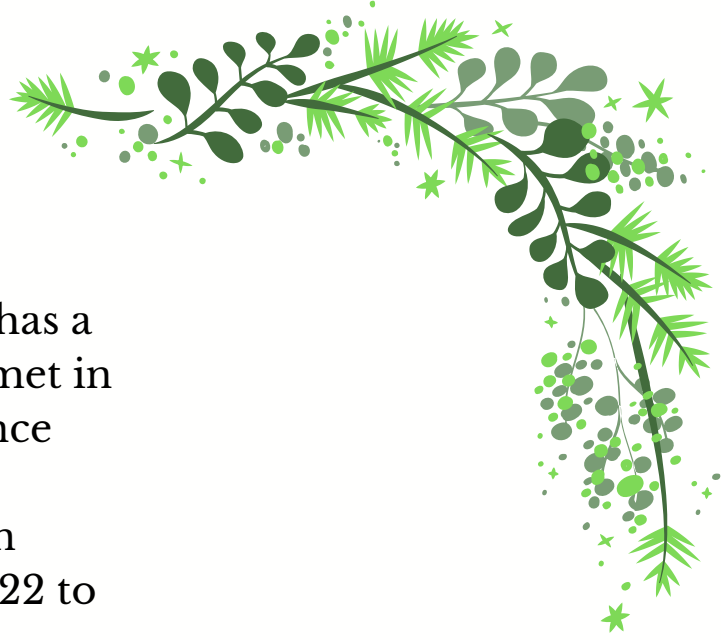
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ex-officio

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- The DRUUMM Steering Committee has a full complement of members. They met in Atlanta for the first time in person since 2019.
- The Steering Committee approved an annual budget of \$140,000 (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023).
- The Chaplain Team says farewell to Rev. Christina Shu, who completed her term. We are actively seeking a new member.
- Verdis Robinson, our GA Coordinator is seeking volunteers to help with our program in Pittsburgh PA in June 2023 and online.
- 50 members signed up to participate in the two-part Intro to Theology course offered by Rev. Xolani Kacela this fall.
- Current members are invited to join our DRUUMM Slackspace as a place to network and build community more intentionally. Check your email for the link.
- We are preparing to refresh our website. Have suggestions? Drop us a note at info@druumm.org.
- We have an accounting team for the first time in our history. Welcome to Awilda and Libby of Simple Office Solutions.



Atlanta SC Retreat

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