

SHINE ON, BEAUTIFUL & RESILIENT PEOPLE!



REV. KATIE ROMANO GRIFFIN

Over 300 members and friends have registered for our signature 2023 Public Worship entitled “Shine On, Beautiful & Resilient People!”, our celebration of Black and Brown joy and resilience through original works of music and preaching. With groundwork laid over the last half year, DRUUMM is honored to offer this special virtual service for the wider Unitarian Universalist community featuring our guest preacher, the Rev. Katie Romano Griffin of All Souls Indianapolis, story for all ages by Abby L’Bert, and a range of music including our first ever DRUUMM choir led by our musical troubadour Amanda Thomas.

This 75 minute virtual worship service will be held in a private zoom space for those who register at druumm.org/events and streamed online via our Facebook.com/DRUUMM and YouTube.com/@DRUUMM pages. Special thanks to the dozens of congregations and groups who have sponsored this event and made an investment in our ministry and programs with Black, Indigenous and People of Color. This is a substantial part of our annual budget that allows us to nurture connections across North America and beyond, provide pastoral care, and sustain our organization.

DRUUMM PUBLIC WORSHIP

Thursday, May 11th, 2023

5:00 PM Pacific/8:00 PM Eastern

REGISTER AT [DRUUMM.ORG/EVENTS](https://druumm.org/events)



Our artwork was created by Kyla Chen Murray (she/her), a homeschooled youth from Cambridge, MA. In addition to the visual arts, her interests include chorus, theater, and computer programming. She will be attending Maryland Institute College of Art in the fall to study illustration.

Officiants Below L-R:
Cassandra
Montenegro, Abby
L'Bert, Nasreen Khan.



A Pastoral Note: “The Unacceptable Revolving Door for BIPOC Religious Professionals and Congregants”

by the Reverend Manish Mishra-Marzetti

Dear members of DRUUMM’s extended family,

I hope this spring season finds each of you well. As DRUUMM’s Lead Chaplain, I’ve been holding some sadness related to the ongoing pattern of BIPOC professionals and congregants leaving our UU congregations, and at times Unitarian Universalism altogether. The specifics in each individual case may be different, and the specifics matter, but at the end of the day we are left with a pattern that is recognizable and familiar: those who began congregational journeys with joy and earnestness are left feeling disillusioned, frustrated, and without community. I wish that I could tell you that this pattern is new or recent. It is not. This pattern is so familiar that on some conscious or subconscious level it has become anticipated at the systemic level; the pattern is not a surprise, even though this pattern is awful. I, for one, have personally witnessed and/or experienced first-hand this pattern within Unitarian Universalism for at least a quarter of a century, and it breaks my heart. I have wept at the loss from our movement of dear friends and colleagues more times than I can even recount.

Those of us who identify as BIPOC enter our UU communities often aware that there are potential risks and the potential for personal harm, and yet - with commitment, courage, and heart - we choose to do so anyway. Given that, how do we then honor those individuals who choose to take a break from active UU engagement, for one’s own health and well-being? There is an honoring and a holding that may be needed; a pastoral expression of our collective love and appreciation. What might that look like? How might we live into that? Your ideas are welcome, and we in DRUUMM can help one another live into this critical need to honor one another’s humanity, courage, and vulnerability.

And, we must collectively do better. Simply honoring and recognizing those who need to move aside for a spell, or longer, is not enough. Recently, I have been studying the U.S. civil rights movement, and have noticed the way that this movement was continuously learning and adjusting its strategies in accordance with that learning. I wonder how we BIPOC UUs might do the same.

"The Unacceptable Revolving Door" continued

This is not as straightforward a possibility as it might seem on the surface. Unitarian Universalism can, at times, undermine the learning loop that can fuel our ability to strategize collectively. As any newer BIPOC Unitarian Universalist can testify, we encounter the 'new, shiny penny syndrome' through which the systems around us convince us (BIPOC lay leader and professional alike) that we are extraordinary; that we are the most exciting, invigorating, and special thing that Unitarian Universalism has **ever** encountered, and as such there is no way that the decades-long pattern of eventual reactivity, resistance, and rejection will ever happen to us. Until it does. And, by then, it's often too late, and/or we are stuck with feelings of embarrassment and/or disillusionment: the 'thing' that was never supposed to happen to us - since the system convinced us how special and unique we are - is somehow happening to us. Now what? To whom can we confide that things are rough and we're not sure what to do about it? This pattern, and the psychological underpinnings of it, are heartbreakingly all too familiar to me; I have lived it.

What if instead of allowing this crushing pattern to continue - somehow 'surprising' successive waves of BIPOC leaders - we did what our forebears from the 1940s-1960s did? What if we create strategy-focused training/support programs and strategy-focused networking opportunities led by experienced BIPOC UU leaders to support the energized and needed leadership of those who are newer? How might we strategize, learn, and grow together, supporting one another while advancing the work?



Finding Our Way Home 2023
Save the Date for Puerto Rico April 7-11, 2024

"The Unacceptable Revolving Door" continued

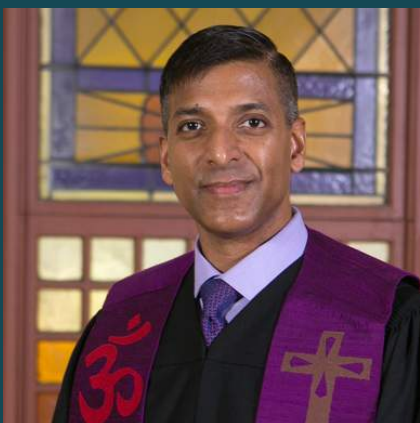
This is not an unreachable dream; this is highly doable. But, such possibilities require a sense of togetherness - that we are all, each and every one of us, in this struggle for greater equality and equity together. It would invite those who are newer among us to recognize the insidious systemic pattern of treating newer BIPOC congregants and religious professionals like coveted shiny pennies. It requires mutual respect and trust between long-timers who may be a bit exhausted by patterns and newer BIPOC leaders who, because of the shiny penny syndrome, don't always know what mentoring and/or guidance they might need.

This is where structures that support ongoing relationship, across experience levels - for both BIPOC professionals and lay leaders - could support our community well. Finding Our Way Home (FOWH) is an excellent example of such a structure for BIPOC religious professionals, and we need similar structures and support for our BIPOC lay leaders. Within such structures, how might we deepen our work together around collective strategy, intentionally strategizing about how to work with the most frequently encountered challenges and how we might also collectively further systemic change that reduces harm? What are our collective asks? What are the next concrete steps that our community needs to see happen? This type of collective strategizing is doable, and we should want this.

We may still need to grieve BIPOC beloveds who decide to move on from our local communities or from Unitarian Universalism altogether, but I hope and pray that we might collectively live into a commitment to break these insidious, decades-old patterns with the strength of our commitment and the very best strategic thinking that we can muster.

With much love for each and every member of our DRUUMM extended family,

Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti chaplain@druumm.org



Rev. Manish is a Past President and current Lead Chaplain of DRUUMM, who serves as senior minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, Michigan. He is the co-editor of *Conversations with the Sacred: A Collection of Prayers* (2020) and the 2018-2019 UU Common Read, *Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and the Environment*.

May 23 Spring Caucus: UUA Presidential Election

The Unitarian Universalist Association is holding their elections for the Presidency in June 2023 coinciding with the multiplatform General Assembly held in Pittsburgh. This is the second election under the new democratic system established in 2016 where delegates elect an individual to serve one 6-year term, with a new nominating committee recommending candidate(s).

DRUUMM is dedicating our Spring Member Caucus to engaging in this election process. We will be meeting with the Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt who is the sole candidate for UUA President. Rev. Sofia is a longtime DRUUMM member. No other candidates qualified for nomination; however, we believe it is important that we engage meaningfully. Join us for this sacred work that makes brave and safe space for the spirit and shapes our UU faith. After a forum with Rev. Sofia, members will have an opportunity to articulate if, why and how DRUUMM should be engaged in the election.

DRUUMM Spring Caucus

Tuesday, May 23rd, 2023
4:30 PM Pacific / 7:30 PM Eastern

Registration:

druumm.org/events

This is a member-only event and will be held virtually via Zoom. Please register by May 21st, 2023. There is no cost.

From the UUA:

The President of the Unitarian Universalist Association is the primary public and spiritual leader of Unitarian Universalism, as well as the UUA's Chief Executive Officer. They are tasked with helping to lead our Association on a path to Beloved Community, in which people of diverse backgrounds, identities and theological beliefs can thrive.

Voting will open in early June. Public forums for the presidential candidate will be hosted in 2023. Dates and times are available below. Registration information will be announced when it becomes available.





REV. DR. SOFIA BETANCOURT
CANDIDATE FOR UUA PRESIDENT

The Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt is a minister, educator, scholar, vocalist, poet, fiber artist, and change-maker. Her work in the world and her practice of Unitarian Universalism are informed by the belief that building mutual, accountable relationships with one another allows us to live our values more fully every day. Raised in New York City as the child of immigrants from Panamá and

Chile, and the grandchild of a seventh-generation Unitarian, she knows the strength that comes from building lasting community at the meeting point of difference. She is an unabashed Universalist. The teachings of unearned grace, an all-embracing love, relational accountability, and dignity that surpasses all violent forms of oppression lie at the core of her understanding of life, living, and service in faithful community.

The Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt has served Unitarian Universalism for more than twenty years as a religious educator, minister, scholar, member of the UUA national staff and many volunteer committees at regional and denominational levels, and as interim co-president of the UUA in the spring of 2017. She holds a Ph.D. in Religious Ethics and African American Studies from Yale University as well as an M.Div. from Starr King School for the Ministry.

To learn more about the Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt and her campaign priorities of communal care, collaborative leadership, and facing the unknown together visit her website at sofiabetancourt.com.

Meet Our New Administrator: Jolanda!



Welcome to Jolanda Walter, our new administrative consultant who will be working part-time with DRUUMM. Jolanda will be supporting our membership development and events with a focus on our May 11th Public Worship and General Assembly in Pittsburgh June 21-25th.

our growth and sustainability. Dawn continues full-time with the UUA. Thank you, Dawn! Thank you also to our members, ally donors, and the UUA, who have helped raise funds for more consistent and, for the first time in our history, maintaining a small professional staff to serve our community.

Check out druumm.org/news/welcome-jolanda/ to read her self-introduction, and extend your own welcome to her at jolanda@druumm.org.

Local Gatherings

Over 250 BIPOC UUs gathered in Los Angeles, Chicago, Austin, Oakland, Atlanta and Seattle-Port Townsend thanks to local DRUUMM organizers and volunteers. These precious moments are key waypoints on our faith journey, sharing stories, exchanging ideas, building community. If you're interested in hosting a local DRUUMM gathering or retreat, please reach out to us at info@druumm.org. We would love to support you!



DRUUMM EXEC MEMBERS



BLESSINGS AT FINDING OUR WAY HOME



OAKLAND BAY GATHERING



LOS ANGELES AFTER PARTY



TEXAS LEADERS



CHICAGO ORGANIZERS

DRUUMM STEERING COMMITTEE 2022-2023

The DRUUMM Steering Committee is made up of members elected to three year terms at our annual meeting. For more information you can reach them at info@druumm.org.

- President **Esperanza Garza-Danweber**, Texas
- Acting 1st Vice President, **Tomi Fatunde**, Texas
- Acting 2nd Vice President **Rev. Sangye Hawke**, California
- Acting Secretary **Michelle Venegas-Matula**, Texas
- Treasurer **Kate Goka**, California
- Communications Coordinator **Karin Lin**, Massachusetts

- GA Coordinator **Verdis Robinson**, Vermont
 - Outreach Coordinator **Noel Burke**, Missouri
 - UUA Liaison **Rev. Michael J Crumpler**, New York
- ex-officio*
- Consulting Minister **Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons**, Oregon
 - Lead Chaplain **Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti**, Michigan

Notations

- Members are invited to join our DRUUMM Slackspace. If you didn't get the email invitation, reach out to us at info@druumm.org. Slack, our private group called The Gathering Place on Facebook, and Email are our primary communication channels.
- We will be saying farewell this June to Noel Burke, Outreach Coordinator who has completed two full terms and Rev. Sangye Hawke, 2nd Vice President who has completed her term on the DRUUMM Steering Committee.
- We welcome Olga Pabon of Maryland and Linda Russell of California to the DRUUMM Organizing Advisory Committee.
- Rev. Cathy Chang will be joining the DRUUMM Chaplain Team. She is a previous member of the APIC and DRUUMM Steering Committees.
- DRUUMM will be working with the Illinois UU State Action Network advising a new organizer this Fall focused on engaging BIPOC UUs.
- Thanks to Ayanna Kafi and Noel Burke for co-facilitating our member orientations this year. We had over 30 people participate.
- Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti, our Lead Chaplain, will be the featured Sunday Worship preacher at General Assembly in Pittsburgh, his hometown.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 11 **Public Worship**
May 23 **Spring Caucus: UUA Presidential Forum**
June 21-25 **DRUUMM Village @ General Assembly**

Learn more and register at

druumm.org/events



DIVERSE &
REVOLUTIONARY
UU MULTICULTURAL
MINISTRIES

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Editor Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons

Editorial Board: Karin Lin

For inquiries, please email editor@druumm.org

The DRUUMM Beat is published under the direction of the DRUUMM Steering Committee and the Communications Portfolio. Join in the conversation with DRUUMM on Twitter and follow us on Facebook for the latest news.

Read online at www.druumm.org