



April 2020 Volume 55 No 8 **Liberation**

Liberation in Times Like These

Dear Friends,

We have found ourselves in difficult and challenging times. Many of us remain at home in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Others among us work in essential positions that call upon them to be out (hopefully as protected as possible) in public. In this time, we are all called upon to do what we can to “flatten the curve” and minimize the spread of the novel Coronavirus as much as we can.

The stakes are as high as ever. The task at hand is monumental. Life as we know it has changed. It will never be the same again.



As overwhelming as the grief, sadness, anger, frustration, fear and confusion are given our current situation, there are also other things for us to hold onto in this space. There is a sense of community in that we are all in this together. There is gratitude for the little things we often forgot to notice before; a child’s laugh, a shared video screen, the witnessing of a flock of trumpeter swans melodically migrating north. Though we are physically confined there is a spirit of liberation present.

Without the traps and routines of our own daily needs and wants, we have become increasingly aware of the needs of others; the needs of the whole. Our theme this month is LIBERATION. The choices we are making now and living out are nothing short of acts of liberation, because we are doing them for the very sake of the lives of others and ourselves. We are becoming increasingly aware not of our freedom, but of the ways that our liberation is intrinsically tied to the liberation of others, in terms of being free from harm.

Of course, this isn’t a lesson in liberation; it goes far beyond that. Our literal well-being as individuals and as a collective community are at stake. We can not afford to merely set out our best intentions. We must set out our best practices and actions (or inactions as the case may be).

Our purpose has been laid out. Let us continue to love, support and care for one another in the best ways we can; with physical distance, with lots of hand-washing, by staying home, but also by staying connected via phone, text, email and social media. Be well and be safe.

See you online,  
Rev. Laura

ALL SERVICES FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL ARE CURRENTLY SCHEDULED TO HAPPEN ON ZOOM  
Connection information to join any SUNDAY Service:

Join Zoom Meeting **online**  
<https://zoom.us/j/3953901346>  
Meeting ID: 395 390 1346

**Or dial in by phone:** (312) 626-6799  
Meeting ID: 395 390 1346

### **April Sunday Services\***

April 5: Liberalism and Liberation: Rev. Laura

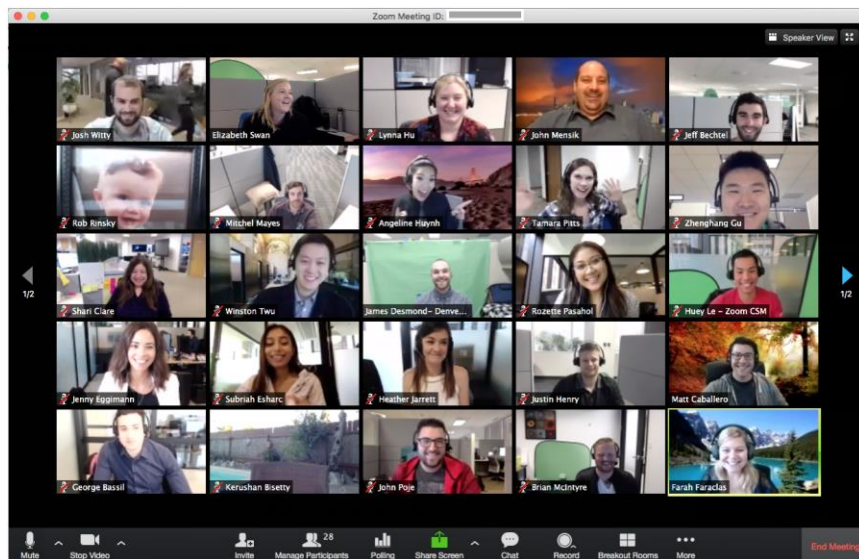
April 12: Easter Sunday: Rev. Andrea

April 19: Disability Seen & Unseen: Guest Speaker, Peighton Carter

April 26: Coming of Age Sunday: MVUUF Youth

\*All services are subject to change given our current global challenges.

\*Breakout “social/coffee” rooms will follow each service.



Instructions on how to use Zoom: [Zoom Instructions](#)

Video tutorial: [Video guide](#)

## Sunday Sharing in April:



The Ehlers-Danlos Society is a global community of individuals, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and supporters, dedicated to saving and improving the lives of those affected by the Ehlers-Danlos syndromes (EDS), hypermobility spectrum disorders (HSD), and related conditions.

We are proudly working to provide global learning conferences, collaborative research and education initiatives, awareness campaigns, advocacy, community-building, and care for the EDS and HSD population: Giving HOPE to all those whose lives are affected by EDS and HSD.

More information can be found at: <https://www.ehlers-danlos.com/>

This offering was nominated by the Lewellyns who purchased the choice of a Sunday Sharing Partner at last year's auction. Both the Lewellyns and Kate Stomberg have EDS in their families.

## Social Action Committee:



Families Moving Forward rotating shelter has been canceled, due to Covid-19. MVUUF is still being asked to cover the costs of food for the week of April 5-12, which would have been our shelter spot. Please make monetary donations to the church on our website under "Families Moving Forward" or send in a check with that in the memo. Thank you for your generosity.

The best Social Action we can all take right now is to practice physical distancing, hand washing and staying home as much as possible. When you engage best practices this way you are working toward the health and well-being of all!

## Musical Notes:



We Need Your Feedback!

Have you seen our online services? What did you think about the music? Specifically, the amount of music played; recorded music vs. live; the quality of sound; What are your favorite hymns; do you like to sing along or would you prefer to do something else? Your opinions will help shape the tone of these online services. Please email Nicole at [Music@Mnvalleyuu.org](mailto:Music@Mnvalleyuu.org) and let her know your thoughts.

If there are any musicians feeling the call of playing during our online services and have the capabilities with technology, email Nicole.

While I miss you all, especially singing together, I think of you often and hope you're all managing to stay well. Until we are together again!

## **From the Minister of Congregational Programs:**

I don't know about you but I am having trouble acclimating to the new 'normal.' Things are shifting and changing all the time and that feels disorienting. Wise spiritual teachers remind us during times like these to slow down, to ground in, to breathe. Or to find other spiritual practices that can help us go inward, connect with our deepest selves and remember what we want to create with our hearts. At times like these, for me it's always about patience. Trying not to get frustrated and irritated by the little things - like the kids leaving their stuff everywhere or being loud while I'm trying to work! What I really want to create at home is connection, love and some joy and fun. So for now, my family is cooking together and many nights after dinner - playing card games or watching movies together. I'm doing my best to not simply grit my teeth and "bear" this time but to be open to the gifts that will surely come too.

I also know that this pandemic will test who we want to be, as individuals and as a people. Author and activist, Valerie Kaur, asks: "will we succumb to fear and self-interest? Or will we double-down on love? Will we let physical distancing isolate us? Or will we find new ways to reach out, deepen our connections, step up community care, and tend to the most vulnerable in our communities?"

Is this the darkness of the tomb — or the darkness of the womb?

I agree with Kaur, who says that this is a time to love without limit. This is a time to see no stranger. In doing so, we gather information for the kind of world we want, where no one is uninsured or disposable, where our policies and public institutions protect all of us. In Universalist language, we are called to create a world where everyone is worthy, wanted and whole and no one is outside the circle of love.

So friends, let's come together to care for one another, our families and communities during this challenging time.

May you be blessed and be a blessing during this time.

Rev, Andrea.

## **April Religious Education Calendar**

Pre-K- 6th grade. We will be sending families our monthly theme-based Soulful Home packets - which are designed to provide ways for families to engage in thinking about the theme at home together. April's theme is liberation. I'd encourage you to take pictures of your family engaging in the theme activities and post them on our Facebook page! Let's have fun together and share ideas during this time together at home. We are holding Zoom RE Classes on Sundays at 3pm (for the PreK-3rd graders) and 4pm (for the 4th-6th graders). We'll send you the link via email.

### **OWL**

Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education curriculum is a priority religious education program that we deliver to 7th-9th Graders at MVUUF. There are just 4 remaining topics left but the team felt that these are vitally important for our youth to receive. OWL coordinator and facilitator, Carla Ries, along with her team, will deliver the remaining lessons via zoom technology on the following dates: Sunday mornings 10:30 - noon on April 5th, April 19th, May 3rd and May 17th. You should have received an email from Andrea with Carla's zoom link and instructions.

## **COA**

Thankfully our in-person COA workshops finished up in late February and our youth are to be working with their mentors on their statements of faith. We will still hold the COA service on April 24th via zoom and each youth will read their statement at that time. I will be checking in with youth and mentors next week to see how things are going.

## **Parent Times to Connect**

Come check in with Andrea and Maria and fellow MVUUF Parents via zoom at 8:30 on Thursday evenings. We'll be sharing parenting tips and survival strategies during this time of physical distancing. <https://zoom.us/j/5110889422>

## **Other Tips and Resources for helping your kids through this time:**

Here is a link to talking to your kids about Covid 19.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/10-tips-for-talking-about-covid-19-with-your-kids>

Kids love routines so where possible involve your kids in developing a routine and schedule for planning their day. Try to include the following:

- Physical activity is beneficial for both body and mind. Are you able to incorporate into your daily schedule time outdoors and large muscle activities?
- Opportunities to practice independence and responsibility. For example, having responsibilities around the house builds skills, helps relieve anxiety and allows the child to feel needed. How can you involve your children in daily chores? How are children involved in planning and decision making in the family?
- Children - especially grade school and above thrive on time with each other. How can you provide safe opportunities for your child to connect with peers for both collaboration and socializing? Try using the phone, facetime, google hangouts or Facebook video calls. Keep in mind that children's use of digital communication should be monitored to support their continued practice of digital citizenship.

Remember that unexpected change, loss of routine and structure, and increased stress in the world may be triggers for anxiety. Keep expectations appropriate, and give grace to yourself and your children.

## **Racial Justice**

Before the Covid-19 crisis, marginalized communities have faced economic and social oppression, keeping them from their basic needs and safety. The struggle continues. I invite you to visit the following website <https://www.blackmncovidresponse.com/> for the Black response to this outbreak. Their website states: "Our struggle for Black liberation-- uprooting racial capitalism, patriarchy and climate decay-- continues during the pandemic and beyond. In order to curb the outbreak of COVID-19, Minnesota State officials, and the Walz Administration, must provide solutions so all Minnesotans to have access to free healthcare, nutrition, housing, transportation; the decarceration of prisons and detention centers; end ICE raids, the over policing of Black, Indigenous, and people of color neighborhoods; full unemployment benefits and guaranteed paid-sick leave; a freeze on rent/mortgages, all credit card and debt payments, and more."

You can also visit the SURJMN Facebook page for more ways to support and show solidarity with communities of color in the Twin Cities. <https://www.facebook.com/showingupforracialjusticemn/>

If you feel so moved to keep learning about racial justice during this time, here is a list of books, podcasts and movies:

- <https://www.sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/> Podcast
- How to be an Anti-racist by Ibram Kendi - Book
- Black Panther, Get Out, The Hate You Give

We are offering gentle yoga classes 3X per week via Skype, 5:00-5:50 p.m.

M-W-F. Will offer this through pandemic . Please look for Fran Bohlke via Zoom. There is no fee, but please donate to Beacon Interfaith Housing, if you possibly can.

No previous yoga experience necessary. Tune in and do as much as you can. Questions ? Email

Fran [bryawnte@msn.com](mailto:bryawnte@msn.com) or call 612.401.4653

### **BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH SHARED MINISTRY**

Because we all want to do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19, in-person caucuses have been discontinued for the time being. Our Stewardship Team is grateful to those who stepped up to host caucus groups, and to those whose note-taking is helping us track trends in our congregation.

We invite you to continue sharing your thoughts about the following:

- *What do you value about the MVUUF Community?*
- *What do you like or not like about the changes implemented this year?*
- *What can MVUUF do to build and sustain community?*
- *What is your vision for the future?*

A few strong trends we have observed include: You have said you like coming together in small affinity groups – caucuses - to discuss these stewardship questions. You also like our sense of community at MVUUF, as well as our open-minded people, like-minded people, and music. Also, many of you have a vision of making MVUUF more visible in the wider community.

Please send your emails to Kelley Hughes, [uukelley@hotmail.com](mailto:uukelley@hotmail.com), or Tom Walkington, [tawalking@gmail.com](mailto:tawalking@gmail.com). Thank you!

Your Stewardship Team, 2019-2020



### MVUUF SUMMER GOLF

Fore! We will be golfing, hopefully, June 7, 8am at Birnamwood Golf Course in Burnsville this year. We had a grand time last year, with three new golfers! The course is currently not open due to Covid-19. I will keep everyone posted as to the course availability. Please contact Darrell or Kathy Eager if you are interested in joining us this year.

[kathy@darrelleager.com](mailto:kathy@darrelleager.com).

### NEW MVUUF ONLINE SCHEDULE

The following meetings will all be conducted on Zoom. Be sure to read the previous **Friday Email** for more details about programming. **Instructions for using Zoom can be found here:** [Zoom Instructions](#) or [Video Tutorial](#). **PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE DIFFERENT LINKS FOR SOME OF OUR GATHERINGS DEPENDING ON WHICH STAFF PERSON IS LEADING THEM PLEASE BE SURE YOU HAVE THE CORRECT LINK.**

#### SUNDAY

- **10:30am: Weekly Sunday Service;** services will include brief breakout sessions for folks to check-in in small groups.
  - <https://zoom.us/j/3953901346>
  - or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 395 390 1346
- **10:30am: OWL:** contact Rev. Andrea or Carla Ries to connect
- **3pm: Religious Education: preK-3rd grade:** story-time reflection, joys and sorrows, show and tell. **No class on Easter.**
  - <https://zoom.us/j/375665760>
  - Meeting ID: 375 665 760
- **4pm: Religious Education: 4th-6th grade:** reflective activity or story, joys and sorrows, sharing time. **No class on Easter.**
  - <https://zoom.us/j/378378846>
  - Meeting ID: 378 378 846

#### MONDAY

- **5:00pm:** Gentle yoga with Fran <https://zoom.us/j/3953901346> or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 395 390 1346



## TUESDAY

- **9am: Wake-up with Rev. Laura:** grab your morning beverage of choice and check-in with friends and share your thoughts on the big issues of the day.

<https://zoom.us/j/3953901346> or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 395 390 1346

## WEDNESDAY

- **11:30am: Lunch Bunch:** Make some lunch and log on! Join Rev. Laura and other staff on Zoom to chat over a shared meal every week
  - <https://zoom.us/j/3953901346>
  - or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 395 390 1346
- **5:00pm:** Gentle yoga with Fran <https://zoom.us/j/3953901346> or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 395 390 1346
- **7:00pm: Jr. High:** every other Wed. Night (grades 7-9) come together to share favorite music, poetry, art, and reflections on the theme of the week.
- **8:30pm: Teen Spiritual Practice** (grades 10-12) come together to share favorite music, poetry, art, and reflections on the theme of the week.
  - <https://zoom.us/j/5110889422>
  - or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 511 088 9422

## THURSDAY

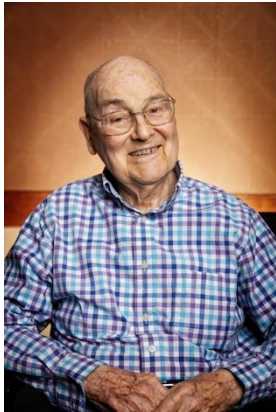
- **7:30pm: Centering:** a short contemplative service
  - <https://zoom.us/j/3953901346>
  - or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 395 390 1346
- **8:30pm: Parent's Group:** Check-ins, joys and sorrows, resource sharing and support
  - <https://zoom.us/j/5110889422>
  - or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 511 088 9422
- **8:30pm: Caring Corner:** These are challenging times. Feeling afraid, sad, angry, confused or overwhelmed? Drop in and share your feelings; no judgement, no shame.
  - <https://zoom.us/j/3953901346>
  - or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 395 390 1346

## FRIDAY

- **10:30am: Creative Corner:** Casual gathering to share art, poetry, music, crafts, recipes and other creative endeavors. Creators of all ages welcome!
  - <https://zoom.us/j/3953901346>
  - or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 395 390 1346
- **5pm:** Gentle Yoga with Fran <https://zoom.us/j/3953901346> or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 395 390 1346
- **7pm: Happy Hour with Rev. Laura:** BYOB and join in to check-in with friends and share your thoughts on the big issues of the day.
  - <https://zoom.us/j/3953901346>
  - or call 312-626-6799; Meeting ID: 395 390 1346



**Betty and Jack are turning 100! Let's celebrate them by sending cards!**



Jack Telfer turns 100 years old on 4/27/20

Send cards to:  
8104 Highwood Drive #108  
Bloomington, MN 55438-3046



Betty Gutman (MVUUF Founding Member) turns 100 years old on 4/28/20

Send cards to:  
8104 Highwood Drive #47  
Bloomington, MN 55438-3046

**All of us at Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship wish them both a**

**Very Happy Birthday!**