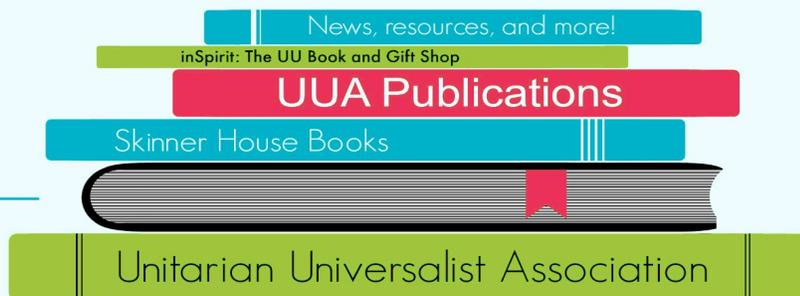


June Publications Update



[Unlocking the Power of Covenant](#)

We are living in immensely difficult times. Deep societal issues including racism, economic inequality, and environmental injustice mar our current lives and threaten to harm the lives of future generations. There are no easy remedies to these community ills, but returning to the practice of covenant may offer a path forward. Living in covenant creates and develops community. It also furthers both the mission and the health of our faith movement.

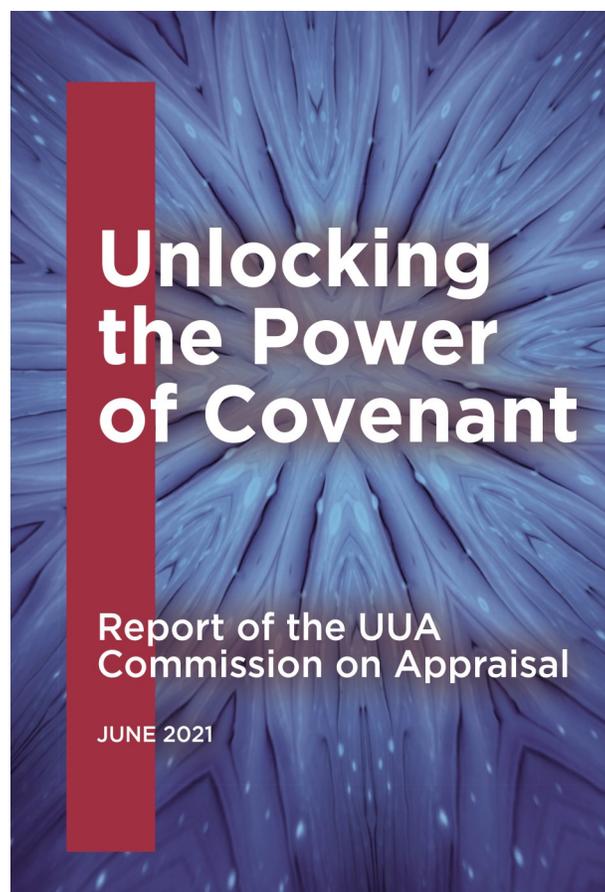
The 2021 Commission on Appraisal report, *Unlocking the Power of Covenant*, examines the nature, substance, and structure of covenants within Unitarian Universalism. Through reading, focus groups, interviews, and surveys, the Commission describes and interprets the role that covenants do, can, and should play in the individual lives of Unitarian Universalists, as well as in our relationships with other congregations, other faith traditions, and the Unitarian Universalist Association. With its resources and recommendations, *Unlocking the Power of Covenant* is a powerful must-read for all looking to tap into a richer, fuller utilization of covenant.

The Commission on Appraisal was inaugurated by the bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1961. The Commission is charged to review, study, and report on any function or activity of the Association that would benefit from an independent review

The current members of this Commission are:

Rev. Dr. Carol Thomas Cissel, Interim Chair
Virginia M. Abraham, Secretary
Victor Ashear, Phd
Rev. Madelyn Campbell
Kathleen Henry, Chaplin
David Friedman, Treasurer
Rev. Dr. Rodney Lemery

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New from Skinner House

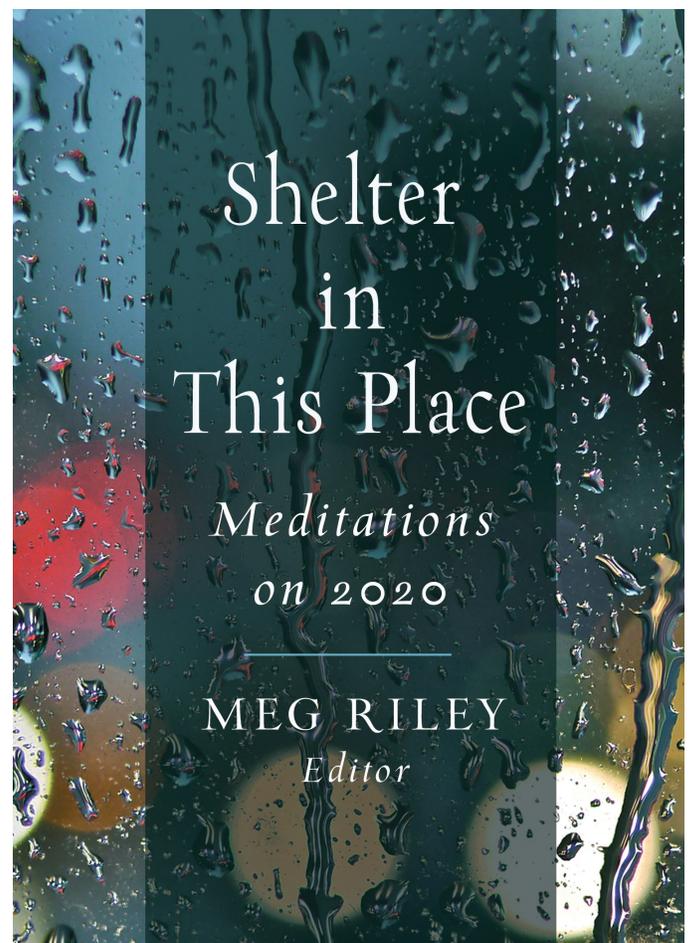
[Shelter in This Place: Meditations on 2020](#)

2020 was a year unlike any other. A year of masks and marches. A tale of two pandemics, COVID-19 and the deep-rooted pandemic of white supremacy and structural racism. *Shelter in This Place*, the 2021 volume of the inSpirit Series, is an anthology of poems, prayers, and reflections from Unitarian Universalists about their experiences of 2020—offered as a testament to our collective grit and grief, rage and resistance, love and loneliness.

With readings written throughout the long year from a variety of perspectives, identities, and geographies, *Shelter in This Place* captures the complex reality of 2020. Editor Meg Riley writes in her introduction, “My deep hope is that this collection of writings allows each one of us to know that, even in the separateness of our masked and socially distanced grief, we are not mourning alone.” And yet despite the grief and loss collected in these pages, the writers describe resilience and joy too. They take solace in the birth of ducklings and the unfurling of new leaves. They persevere. May this book contain words that heal, comfort, and inspire you in the days ahead.

Rev. Meg Riley, a lifelong Unitarian Universalist, was raised in congregations in Charleston, West Virginia, and Akron, Ohio. After serving for 38 years as a religious professional in a variety of capacities, Rev. Riley retired in the summer of 2020. She now serves, with Charles DuMond, as co-moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association. She lives in Minneapolis, nestled in with her family, animals, gardens, deep friendships, and a vibrant activist community. She is also the editor of [Testimony: The Transformative Power of Unitarian Universalism](#).

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New from Skinner House

[*The Darkness Divine: A Loving Challenge to My Faith*](#)

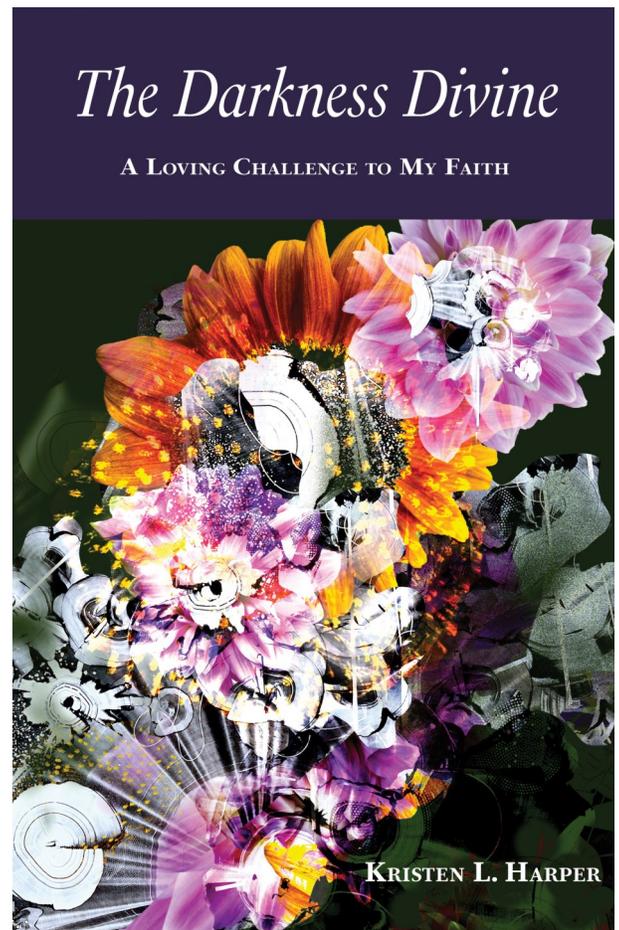
Too often in U.S. culture—and notably in faith communities—a culture of white supremacy is reinforced in damaging but unexamined ways. In *The Darkness Divine*, minister and poet Kristen L. Harper confronts and unpacks the language, imagery, buzzwords, and cultural touchstones that demean and dehumanize Black people but are so commonplace they can easily escape notice.

More importantly, in a brilliant arrangement of essays and poems in the vein of Claudia Rankine, Harper lifts up the strength, beauty, and resilience of Black people and outlines a path forward. She invites readers to explore what they have learned and assimilated so they might de-center whiteness and stretch their understanding and imagination to radically transform perceptions of blackness.

While directed at her own Unitarian Universalist tradition, *The Darkness Divine* is a powerful and loving challenge to all those committed to the work of dismantling white supremacy.

Rev. Dr. Kristen L. Harper is the minister of the Unitarian Church of Barnstable, Massachusetts, where she has served for 18 years. Rev. Harper previously served in Ormond Beach, Florida. She received her D.Min from Meadville Lombard Theological School in 1999, and was only the second Black woman to be called to a Unitarian Universalist Congregation as sole minister. She has contributed to [*Voices from the Margins: An Anthology of Meditations*](#) and [*Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry*](#).

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New from Skinner House

[The Through Line: 200 Years of the Berry Street Essay](#)

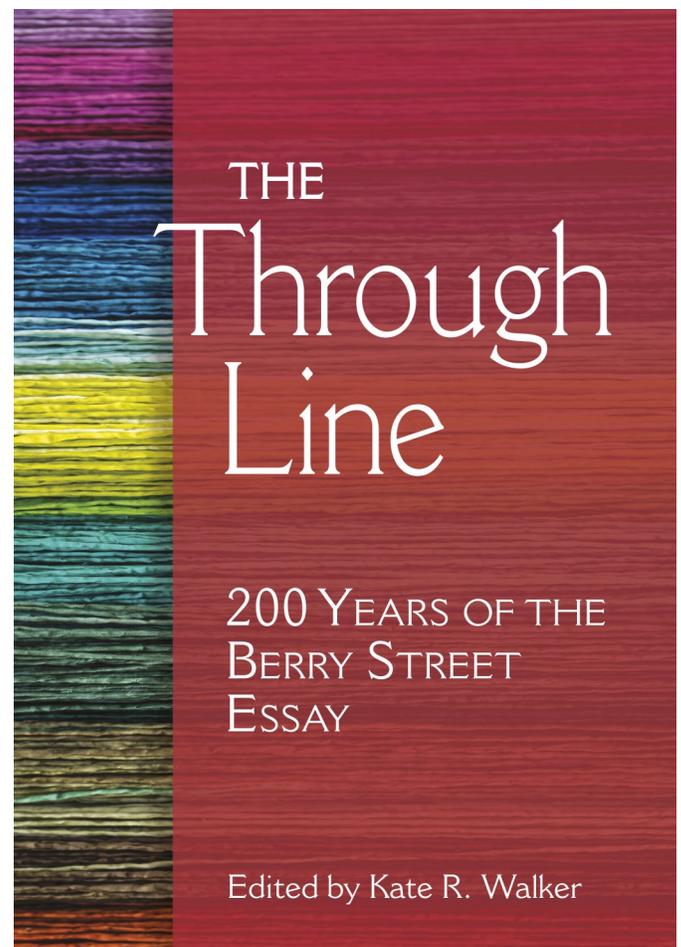
For more than two hundred years, Unitarian and then Unitarian Universalist ministers have gathered to hear one of their own deliver an essay of reflection and critique on their profession. The Ministerial Conference at Berry Street, or as it's more commonly known, the Berry Street lecture, was started in 1820 by famed Unitarian minister William Ellery Channing. It is believed this essay series is the longest running of its kind in the United States.

In this powerful collection, Berry Street scribe and editor Kate R. Walker and contributors look back over the essays on record and offer analysis on what was said and the historical context surrounding them; selected essays have also been included in this volume. The voices and ministry of thundering preachers, inspiring activists, and dedicated academics point toward a compelling future. When examined as a whole, their threads weave a rich and complex pattern.

And yet Walker and contributors also look at what was not said and who was not invited to speak. As Unitarian Universalism enters a new era of ministry in our congregations and outreach to the wider world, our commitment to being a radically inclusive faith demands these teachings. Our survival as a liberal religious faith depends on learning from our failures so we don't repeat them.

Rev. Dr. Kate R. Walker serves as the minister at Mount Vernon Unitarian Church in Alexandria, Virginia. She also currently serves as the Scribe of the Ministerial Conference at Berry Street. She previously served the Meadville Unitarian Universalist Church in Pennsylvania. And in addition to several volunteer positions with the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, she served as President of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Heritage Society and the Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society.

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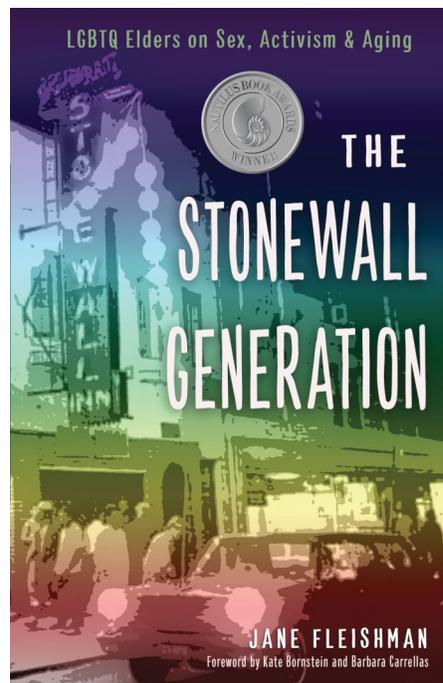
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Announcements and Resources

The Stonewall Generation Wins a Nautilus Award!

We are thrilled to announce that [*The Stonewall Generation: LGBTQ Elders on Sex, Activism, and Aging*](#) by Jane Fleishman has won a Nautilus Book Award in the Social Change & Social Justice category. A major literary award, the Nautilus Award's core mission is to celebrate and honor books that support conscious living and green values, high-level wellness, positive social change and social justice, and spiritual growth.

The award seeks to recognize books that make a difference and inspire and has been conferred to many prominent writers such as the Dalai Lama, Deepak Chopra, Barbara Kingsolver, Thich Nhat Hanh, Frances Moore Lappé, Desmond Tutu, and others. Our immense congratulations to Jane! In *The Stonewall Generation*, she shares the stories of fearless elders in the LGBTQ community who came of age around the time of the Stonewall Riots of 1969.



Stonewall Generation Virtual Events

June is Pride Month and the author Dr. Jane Fleishman and many of the elders featured in [*The Stonewall Generation: LGBTQ Elders on Sex, Activism, and Aging*](#) will be participating in two virtual events held by independent bookstores:

- On June 3rd at 7PM ET, Porter Square Books in Cambridge, MA, will host an event with Dr. Fleishman in conversation with David Velasco Bermudez and Bob Isadore. This event is free but registration is required. [Register here.](#)
- And on June 15th at 6PM ET, Flyleaf Books in Chapel Hill, NC, will host a second event. Dr. Fleishman will be in conversation with Mandy Carter. This event is free but registration is required. [Register here.](#)



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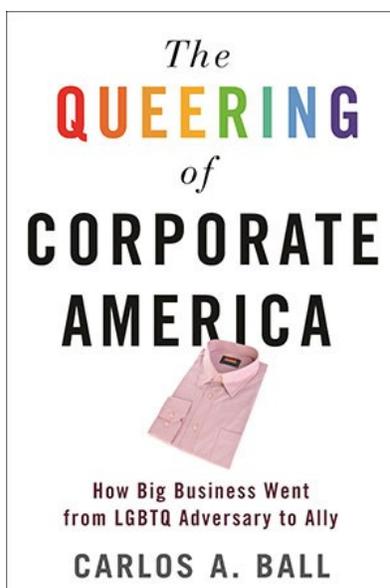
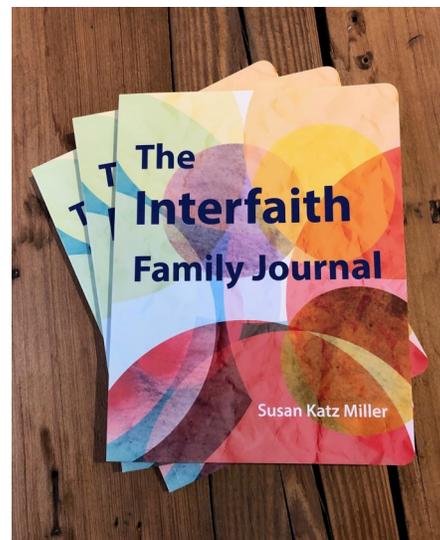
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Announcements and Resources

Skinner House Events at GA 2021

Check out these great workshops related to titles from Skinner House books at this year's virtual [General Assembly](#):

- *Beyond Welcome: Building Communities of Love*, edited by Linnea Nelson—workshop: Beyond Belonging: Transforming Community
- [Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry](#), edited by Mitra Rahnama—workshop: Centering Revisited
- [The Interfaith Family Journal](#) by Susan Katz Miller—workshop: Supporting Interfaith Families in Our Communities
- [The Stonewall Generation: LGBTQ Elders on Sex, Activism, and Aging](#) by Jane Fleishman—workshop: Let's Get Down: Sex, Activism, Aging & Faith
- *Faith on Trial: Religion and the Law in America* by Mark Caggiano—workshop: Liberals, Progressives, and the Fight for Religious Freedom
- [This Day in Recovery: 365 Meditations](#), edited by Lane Campbell and Katie Kandarian-Morris—workshop: This Day in Recovery: Addiction and Healing



June's Goodreads [Book Club](#) Pick

June's group read is [The Queering of Corporate America: How Big Business Went from LGBTQ Adversary to Ally](#) by Carlos A. Ball (Beacon Press). Legal scholar Carlos A. Ball tells the overlooked story of how LGBTQ activism aimed at corporations since the Stonewall Riots helped turn them from enterprises either indifferent to or openly hostile toward sexual minorities and transgender individuals into reliable and powerful allies of the movement for queer equality. He outlines the LGBTQ activism starting in the 1970s, which changed big business's understanding and treatment of the queer community, and complicates the narrative of corporate conservatism and provides insights into the future legal, political, and cultural implications of this unexpected relationship.



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