

Starr King Does GA

Thursday, June 30, 2016



The 2016 UUA GA is Done!

We had an eventful week in Columbus during the UUA General Assembly. It was a week packed with workshops, meetings, conversations and celebrations. Couldn't make it to Ohio this year? Scroll down to see some of the highlights from our week at GA.

Meet the President Luncheons

Prospective students had an opportunity to sit down with the president of Starr King, The Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, and our Admissions and Recruitment Director, The Rev. Jeremiah Kalendae, to learn about Starr King and discuss where they are in their discernment process on Thursday and Saturday. Both gatherings also included graduates and current students who had an opportunity to share their experiences at Starr King and their own paths towards religious leadership.

To learn more about how Starr King prepares students for religious leadership, click here.



UU Polity Intensive



This General Assembly, The Rev. Dr. Meg Richardson taught a UU Polity Intensive to teach students about Unitarian Universalist congregational and organizational polity in the setting of this annual meeting. Some of the highlights from the class included opportunities to speak with The Rev. David Pettee, from the UUA Ministerial Credentialing Office, and The Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, President of Starr King.

It was a week of not only intensive study, but also of thoughtful conversations and larger lessons of religious leadership that will last far beyond GA and into these students' future ministries.

[For details about the UU Polity Intensive course, click here.](#)



Faith-Rooted Organizing for Social Change

On Thursday Starr King hosted an interactive workshop featuring Starr King graduate and Visiting Assistant Professor of Transformative Leadership, Betty Jeanne Rueters-Ward, called "Faith-Rooted Organizing for Social Change." The workshop explored what it means to do faith-rooted organizing from a multi-faith perspective. It provided the audience with an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences in organizing and equipped them with tools and practices to do this work in the world. Panelists included Starr King President, The Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt; Starr King graduates Amanda Weatherspoon, The Rev. Darcy Baxter, and The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom; faith-rooted organizer, The Rev. Chris Crass; and seminarian and UUA trustee, Julian Sharp.

"We need to be both humble and bold," said Betty-Jeanne, "What I mean by humble is that we need to be empathetic, vulnerable, willing to lay down our egos, and build mutually supporting coalitions across both religious and secular lines. But at the same time, we have to be prophetically bold."



"It's an honor for me to serve a school that created the first Master of Arts for Social Change degree in the world," said Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt.

"When I am working in reproductive health and

rights communities, helping them to try to claim moral language, to understand the sacredness of their work, that comes from a lived experience and a profound trust in UU congregations," said The Rev. Darcy Baxter.

[Watch clips from this workshop here.](#)

President's Lecture: The Transient and The Permanent in Theological Education

The Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, President of Starr King School for the Ministry, delivered the annual Starr King President's Lecture on Friday afternoon. Drawing upon The Rev. Theodore Parker's historic sermon "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity," Rev. McNatt explored what she believes is transient and permanent in Unitarian Universalism.



"I believe that our commitment to social justice is what is transient in our faith," said Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt. "What seems permanent is our resistance to liberation."

As Rev. McNatt examined Unitarian Universalism's inconsistent history with addressing social justice issues, she explored the Unitarians' responses to the anti-slavery and the anti-lynching movement. Rev. McNatt

proceeded to identify that training religious leaders through a counter-oppressive, multi-religious theological education is how we can move our faith towards truly living what we preach. She discussed the ways, over the past twenty years, the school has made an intentional effort to model the beloved community we want to see in the world within the walls of our school. Thanks particularly to the work of our Provost, Dr. Ibrahim Farajaje (1952 - 2016), and our Dean of Faculty, Dr. Gabriella Lettini, Starr King has made significant strides in creating a theological education that trains religious leaders to create sacred social change. "We wanted to create within the school what Ibrahim Baba called organic multireligiosity," said Rev. McNatt.

She closed her lecture with a message of hope: "[Starr King's] work of training religious leaders through a counter-oppressive, multi-religious education has only just begun."

[Click here to watch clips of Rev. McNatt's President's Lecture.](#)

Starr King Grad Association Meeting and Iftar Celebration

On Friday night, the Starr King Grad Association and Starr King co-hosted the Grad Association's business meeting and an Iftar celebration. The business meeting was an opportunity for graduates to reconnect with one another and reaffirm their commitment to the school.

Following the business meeting, Starr King faculty, staff, students, graduates, and others from the assembly came together for an Iftar celebration, the breaking of the fast during the Muslim celebration of Ramadan. The event included a welcome from The Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt. "It matters to us that we offer witness and make space for the world's great faiths and for those that are less well-known but just as important to

those who practice," said Rev. McNatt. "We believe that the future of faith is multi-religious, and we believe that Starr King is the very best place to learn and to grow in those traditions."

The Rev. Jeremiah Kalendae, Starr King's Admissions and Recruitment Director, also spoke to explain the celebration and the significance of Ramadan. "It is a time for deep intimacy with Allah," said Rev. Kalendae. "And it is a time to honor the commitments of this community and of this school to counter oppressive, multi-religious life and to our commitments to progressive and queer Islam."



Ranwa Hammamy, a friend of Starr King, then led the gathering through a Sohbet, or spiritual discourse, bringing a moment of spiritual grounding to the celebration. "Through hardship there is peace," said Hammamy. "There are sources of peace whether we call them God, the beloved, or community."

The Rev. Summer Albayati-Krikeche, another friend of Starr King, gave the call to prayer and those practicing were invited to pray before breaking the fast. Together we shared delicious food and conversation as we created space for Muslims and UU Muslims to practice their faith in a safe, multi-religious space.

[Click here to watch video clips of the Iftar celebration.](#)

Creative Fundraising for Today's Ministries

Starr King's Vice President of Advancement, Jessica Cloud, shared creative strategies for funding theological education as a part of the "Creative Fundraising for Today's Ministries" workshop. Citing various success stories from her 15 years of experience as a Certified Fundraising Executive, Jessica explained how to put the "fun" back in fundraising, and how the process can be viewed as a noble endeavor if one truly believes in the worthiness of the institution. Jessica has played a key role in growing and sustaining our strong donor base, including through the [Starr King Sustainers](#) program and [Legacy Giving](#).

[Learn more about the ways you can support Starr King's innovative approach to theological education here.](#)

Arliss Ungar Receives the Louis C. Cornish "Living the Mission" Award



Our beloved Arliss Ungar received the Louis C. Cornish "Living the Mission" Award from the UU Partner Church Council on Saturday. The certificate states:

"Arliss Ungar is the heart and soul of a program

that has had tremendous impact on Unitarianism in Transylvania, Unitarian Universalism in North America, and the partner church movement. It is hard to imagine the Balazs Scholars program surviving let alone thriving as it has for more than twenty years without Arliss's extraordinary skills, gifts, and tireless passion."

Arliss Ungar's impact on the school is incalculable. She has served in many roles including as Chair of Starr King's Balazs Scholars Committee, former Chair of the Board of Trustees, and author of *With Vision and Courage: Starr King School for the Ministry: The History of its First Hundred Years*.

[Click here to learn more about the Balazs Scholars Program at Starr King.](#)

The 2016 Starr King Gala



On Saturday evening, Starr King celebrated this extraordinary General Assembly and our beloved community at the 2016 Starr King Gala. After a busy week of workshops and a year filled with joyous highs and devastating losses, our gala was an opportunity to celebrate together as a community all that we love about Starr King School for the Ministry.

It was an evening filled with delicious food, lively conversation, and lots and lots of dancing.

GA Reaffirms Commitment to Racial Justice



During the final plenary session, the assembly passed a responsive resolution titled "Reaffirmation of the Commitment to Racial Justice." This resolution called for strong and definitive action from the Unitarian Universalist Association and called on congregations to walk the talk of racial justice in their own communities.

In a moment of devoted witness, the Youth Caucus presented this responsive resolution on the floor and on the stage of General Assembly with leaders of Unitarian Universalism standing with them, including The Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt and several Starr King graduates.



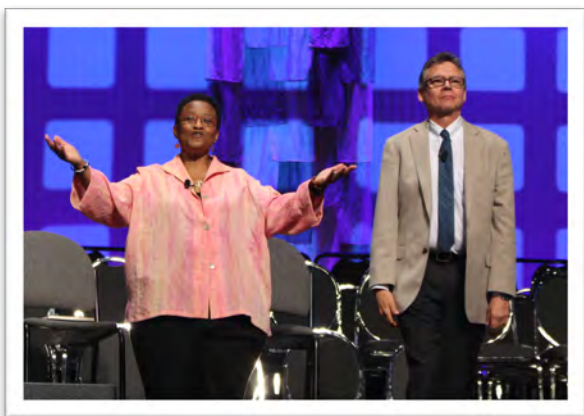
.@RevRoseSKSM stands with Youth Caucus in support of responsive resolution "Reaffirmation of the Commitment to Racial Justice" at #uuaga

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Starr King, as a counter-oppressive multi-religious theological school, is deeply committed to the work of sacred social change, including racial justice.

[Click here to learn more about Starr King's commitment to Educating to Counter Oppressions.](#)

Closing Prayer & Reflection



At the close of the final plenary session of the 2016 General Assembly, The Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, President of Starr King, and The Rev. Dr. Lee Barker, President of Meadville Lombard Theological School, took the stage to offer reflections and a closing affirmation. The pair reflected on the progress that was made at General Assembly, but acknowledged that the real work begins when we leave General Assembly and return home.

"The hard work is still ahead of us," said Rev. McNatt, "so I put my hand in yours so that we might do together what we cannot do alone."

There is hard work still ahead of us at Starr King as we prepare students to do the work of religious leadership. With your support, we can continue to do this important work for Unitarian Universalism, progressive religion and our world.

[Click here to support Starr King School for the Ministry.](#)

Other Highlights from GA

