



Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 78 #7 July 2019
The mission of this church is to create loving community; inspire spiritual growth; and encourage lives of integrity, joy, and service.

From the Ministers

Dear UUCB,

In a news world dominated by Twitter and Instagram, it's always a bit strange writing pieces that won't be read until two weeks later. So much can happen between the middle of one month and the beginning of the next, and there are so many important things happening in the concentric circles of community that surround us.

But by the time you read this it will be July! And whether you'll get to enjoy the privilege of a fancy vacation, you'll be working all season, or you'll be doing something in between, we invite you to join us in curating a summer reading list so that you can go new places in your minds and hearts. Below are the books each of us are planning to read this summer, and a couple we are reading with our kids.

Rev. Christian:

- *The Inheritance Trilogy* by N. K. Jemisin
- *His Dark Materials* by Phillip Pullman
- *The Traffic Patterns of Pompeii* by Eric E. Poehler

Rev. Kristin:

- *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer
- *The Lathe of Heaven* by Ursula K. Le Guin

With our kids:

- *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis
- The Harry Potter series (the audiobooks while we drive across the country) by J. K. Rowling

We'll be taking a cross-country road trip from mid-July to mid-August, but before and after that we'd love to hear about your reading lists, or if you've read any of the ones we've listed above.

Happy summer reading!

Reverends Kristin and Christian Schmidt, Senior Co-Ministers

Editor's Note: Two new staff members have been hired for the new position of Executive Director and the role of Acting Director of Family Ministry—see pages 3–4.

Worship Services in July

Sanctuary, 11 am on Sundays

Theme for July: **Wonder**

July 7: Wondrous Love, Rev. Christian Schmidt preaching; Melissa Rosales, Worship Associate. Exploring the wonders of love, from partners to family to neighbors. Wonder leads us to appreciation, to exploration, to love, to relationship. Wonder is the key to open and honest engagement with the world and with ourselves.

July 14: United in Wonder, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt; Andrea Brown, Worship Associate. Inspired by the writings of Humanist UU minister Rev. Kendyl Gibbons, in this service we will consider how our church, whose members hold diverse beliefs, are united in the human experience of wonder and reverence.

July 21: From Retribution to Restoration, Guest Preacher Rev. Rodney Lemery; Lee Maranto, Worship Associate. As Unitarian Universalists, we hold a belief that there is a spark of star dust, a holy divinity within all people. Please join us in this service to think about the spark within those among us that violate the norms and laws of society. Where is the spark in those who do great harm? Where is our spark as we choose to engage or not? *Rev. Dr. Rodney Lemery currently serves as the Interim Minister of Prison Ministry at the Church of the Larger Fellowship as well as a volunteer chaplain at the Solano County Jail. He lives in Hercules, CA with his husband, a human-resources professional, and their fur-baby Basil. Rodney and his husband are members of the Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church in Walnut Creek. Like lawyer and activist Bryan Stevenson, Rodney believes that "Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done." His relational theology requires him to serve those in the margins of society.*

July 28: The Rebirth of Wonder, Rev. Dr. Jeanne Foster preaching; Deborah Schmidt, Worship Associate. The San Francisco "beat" poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti wrote: "I am waiting for a rebirth of wonder." Have we as a people lost the ability to experience wonder? Will it be reborn in us if we simply wait long enough? *The Rev. Dr. Jeanne Foster is professor emerita, Saint Mary's College of California, and former minister of the UU congregation in Modesto. She is also a poet, non-fiction writer, translator, and ballroom dancer. Her books include A Music of Grace: The Sacred in Contemporary American Poetry; Appetite: Food as Metaphor; A Blessing of Safe Travel; Goodbye, Silver Sister; The Living Theatre.*

Good Neighbor for July (sharing our offerings):

Organization: **Operation Dignity** (operationdignity.org)

Mission: to serve homeless and at-risk veterans, their families, and the communities they live in. To meet their immediate and long-term needs by providing emergency, transitional, and permanent housing; comprehensive outreach and support services; and a strong peer community, inclusive of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.

Summer Forum: Toward a Just World

9:30–10:45 am Sundays from June 2 through August 25

July 7: Judith Offer, Oakland poet and playwright, will read and discuss poems from her brand-new book, *The Grating of America: Poems for a Democracy Ground Down*. The poems are her reflections on the current political climate of our country.

July 14: Dr. Frederick Shaw, UUCB member and founder of Developing Indigenous Resources (DIR), will speak about his 50-year career in international development in 11 countries.

July 21: "Gates of Jerusalem"—fascinating video!

July 28: Natalie Campbell (UUCB member). Working as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) with at-risk children and youth who have been abused or neglected.

Humanist Connections

Sundays, 12:30 pm, Safir Room

Format: A 10- to 15-minute presentation followed by moderated, timed discussion and a potluck at 2 pm (bring a dish to share or donate \$5). All are welcome! See The Week Ahead for topics.

Coordinating Team Notes: New Staff

Deborah Schmidt, Coordinating Team Convener

Like gardens and marriages, church communities are never finished, but phew!! After the heavy lifting of the last years, transitioning between ministries and redefining our place in this changing world, many things are starting to settle, resolve, and come into focus.

It is with joy and gratitude that we introduce to you two very important new staff members.

Our Staffing Working Group (Cynthia Asproditas, Jean Gleason, Beth Pollard, and Rev. Christian) defined the Executive Director (ED) position as crucial to our direction and stability. Our search team (Suzette Anderson-Duggan, Beth Pollard, Dave Roberts, and Rev. Kristin Schmidt) chose the best of many exciting applicants, who accepted our offer! Tess O'Riva has a stellar background in organizational development, strategic planning, quality improvement and change management. Among her many gifts are a collaborative working style and a talent for educating lay leaders. She will start at UUCB on July 1.

As we move toward a more intergenerational church, we decided to hire an acting Director of Family Ministry (ADFM). The ADFM search team was Alice Lemieux, Logan Stump-Vernon, Rev. Christian, and myself. Like the other team, we were blessed with a very strong field of candidates. We were delighted to offer the position to Catherine Boyle, who comes to us from Silver Spring, Maryland, where she served as Director of Religious Education. Recently fellowshiped as a UU minister, she will be ordained this fall. She brings us incredible warmth, creativity, and sparkle. Catherine will start July 29 after she moves to the Bay Area.

Tess and Catherine are introducing themselves to you in this issue of the Beacon and will join us for the Water Ceremony August 25, followed by a reception. We hope you will join us in giving them a warm welcome and celebrating their presence among us!

Meet our New Executive Director, Tess O'Riva

Hello! I'd like to take this opportunity to share a little about myself with UUCB. First of all, I am enormously grateful and excited to be joining UUCB. It feels like a culmination of so many of my interests, passions, and career choices. I have been a spiritual seeker for most of my life and I felt called to apply after hearing about the opening during a UUCB service. I see this position as a chance to support the place I now consider to be my spiritual home.

I have degrees in Spanish and Public Administration/Organizational Development and certifications in Kaizen leadership and various training and enrichment programs. My employment and volunteer history includes public service, nonprofit administration, and government health care, and most recently I started a consulting company helping organizations to put purpose before profit and their employees to find joy in their work.

On a personal note, I love to travel, dance, read, and watch and make movies. My preferred pronouns are she/her. I have a wonderful family with two children and a large community of loving individuals who are dedicated to living intentional lives. The support I've received throughout my journey is one of my greatest blessings. My first year, I will work with the administrative and ministerial teams to increase revenue to the church and streamline reporting for improved transparency. I look forward to putting my experience, skills, and passion into my service at UUCB, and I can't wait to meet every one of you!

Meet Our New Acting Director of Family Ministry, Catherine Boyle

I was born in Canada but grew up in Louisiana. A graduate of Meadville Lombard Theological School, I formerly served as Director of Religious Education at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring and as Intern Minister at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond, VA. I like hiking and Studio Ghibli movies.

I am excited to join you all on this next exploratory chapter of Family Ministry at UUCB. With creativity, compassion and courage, we create something beautiful together.

From the Board of Trustees

Linda Zittel

Dear Beloved Church Community,

The time has come to say good-bye. Of all the leavings we take as we move to Oregon, leaving you is the hardest.

It has been 26 years since I walked into the church with one-year-old Adam. Within a month I had signed the membership book. Five years later, Warren joined. As we leave you, I will remember:

Gail's amazing Christmas pageants with the strings of Christmas lights

Frances Hanna's graceful dancing

Martha Helming's sage wisdom

Bryan Baker's spirit and leadership

Our 30th anniversary party in the social hall

Donna Davis's amazing plays

Christmas Eve candlelight services

Feeling held when we were sick and hurt
Dancing and singing together
Watching Warren become part of this community, and flourish
Watching our son grow up to be a strong UU and a good person

I thank you for welcoming our whole family into your midst. For giving and receiving love and care.

We love you and will miss you so much.

Best,

Linda

Music Matters

Bryan Baker

Greetings Dear People,

I want to share with you all two exciting new ventures in music. The first is our production of the musical revue ***Side by Side by Sondheim*** in September. This is full of great songs by one of the greatest writers for the musical stage of our time. From touching and tender, to brilliantly witty, to effervescent, Stephen Sondheim captures the heart of the human experience in songs like “Send in the clowns,” “Everyone says don’t,” “A weekend in the country,” and “Anyone can whistle.”

The performances are the last week of September, Friday through Sunday, and it will be a fundraiser for the UUCB general fund. I hope you will come and enjoy and support this important fundraising event.

I Feel Like Singing is a new adventure, a sort of drop-in choir, on the third Thursday of each month, starting in September, from 7 to 8 o’clock in the sanctuary. This is for the joy of singing and community, and the many benefits that singing with a group brings. You do not need to read music, you do not need to make beautiful sounds, but I hope that you will come with a good spirit.

Yours in harmony,

Bryan

Community Ministry

Rev. Cathleen Cox

What is ministry? I have long believed that ministry is a way of being in the world that witnesses to the transforming power of love. Ministry joins together love and truth in order to serve justice, healing, creative expression, and to deepen our connection to one another, the planet and Being itself.

Whatever your personal theology, you know what it is to feel fully connected to the best in yourself and to all of Life. You know what it is to share the best of yourself with others, lifting up possibilities, challenging what you believe to be untrue, with love and strength, and from a place of connection to a larger hope for all. You have had such moments.

You are not able to give from the best that is within you there all the time, and neither am I – nor is any minister. We are all human. But if you pause to reflect, you know what I am talking about.

As a member of a Unitarian Universalist congregation, you have committed yourself to living into the ideals of our principles and purposes. In the moments when you are actively striving to do so, you are part of the shared ministry of our faith.

It is for this reason that the Unitarian Universalist Society for Community Ministries recognizes lay ministry. And for the last four years, the Unitarian Universalist Association has officially recognized it as well. What strength, meaning and support might it add to the service you offer the world – at UUCB and beyond – to identify as a lay minister? You can learn more about lay ministry at uuscm.org. I am the current President of UUSCM, and I would welcome your questions: revcat@revcat.net. I will be on summer sabbatical in July and August, but please feel free to reach out to our membership director, Rev. Nikki Hunt, nikkijhunt42@gmail.com, who would also be delighted to hear from you.

Your lay ministry is needed in our faith and our world. Join us.

With You on the Path,

Rev. Cat

Social Justice Council

Norie Clarke

The Social Justice Committee had a full month in June. Anne Wardell held a forum on “Human Trafficking” with two knowledgeable presenters, each revealing details that might surprise us, e.g. that most human trafficking is perpetrated on and by Americans and that California has the most incidents of any state, with the Bay Area an epicenter. Anne will continue to offer us opportunities to discover what we might do about this horrific problem. So keep an eye out for what’s next.

Jim Acock and Jane Eisenstark had a “Tiny House” brought to our parking lot to show what Youth Spirit Artworks is planning for their homeless youth. With the help of Habitat for Humanity, they expect to build twelve tiny houses to form a compound in which multiple services are offered to youth. The first build is the weekend of August 24–25, so ask one of them how to sign up to help.

I attended the UUA General Assembly and heard Lindi Ramsden give a hair-raising sermon about the Global Climate Crisis reaching the tipping point in 11 years. As she said, “There is nothing like the deadline (of a Sunday sermon) for sharpening the mind.” Join us at the Wednesday, July 10, Social Justice potluck to hear a fuller report.

LFDC JUNE 2nd MEETING RECAP by Camille Parker

Our discussion with Berkeley author Elizabeth Rosner about her book, *Survivor Café: The Legacy of Trauma and the Labyrinth of Memory*, included the hierarchy of trauma and who gets/chooses to call themselves “survivors.” For example, many Jews who managed to hide out during the Holocaust feel “less than” those who were worked and starved in the camps, not to mention those immediately put to death. She also talked about new research in the field of epigenetics – the process which some researchers believe shows that trauma, for example, is inherited by subsequent generations. As with Jews, the maltreatment experienced by Native Americans, slaves, interned Japanese Americans, and today’s refugees at our borders are and will be carried by the children.

FOR JULY 7: A lighter but lovely and important book, *Don’t Label Me: An Incredible Conversation for Divided Times*, by Irshad Manji. Beth Jerde will lead the discussion.

Partner Church Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

Things don't slow down a whole lot for Partner Church as June swings into July. First, of course, is our mourning the passing of John Tucker. John went on some of our early pilgrimages to Homoródújfalú. He remained a supporter even when allergy issues kept him from traveling through the Transylvanian countryside. All of us at UUCB and from the Partner Church movement from all around the country offer our sympathies to Anne Greenwood and her family.

Anne was supposed to give the "state of the partnership" report at the Partner Church Council's annual meeting at General Assembly in Spokane. Yours truly represented UUCB at the meeting. Anne has also in the past made sure that the departing Balázs Scholar and family are ready for their journey back to Transylvania. That and the annual report will be ably handled by others.

What else goes on at General Assembly around the international reach of Unitarian Universalism? There's "The International 'We': Connecting Youth Beyond Borders." That's all about the 2020 youth camp in Transylvania. Wouldn't that be something to send some of our youth to! "The Power of 'We' in Global Unitarian/Universalism" explores the opportunities and perils of international partnership. A key part of that program will consider that the "power of we" begins with decolonizing our western imperial experiences and understandings. Our former intern, Rev. Alicia Forde, is now the director of the UUA's International Office, so she will be in the forefront at these events.

Meanwhile, we are trying to establish the second Sunday of the month for the Transylvanian Partner Church Committee meetings. Yeah, it's hard to stand out when there is so much else happening at 12:15 pm following the worship service, but that's what we're doing. Nailing down a permanent room assignment has been challenging. The Music Room is where we'll be. See you there? Anne and I are also available at steph62850@yahoo.com or annegt1@sbcglobal.net.

Buildings & Grounds

Larry Nagel

Our Facilities Coordinator, Alisa Gould Sudgen, left on medical leave on June 4 and I am happy to report that she is doing fine and anxious to get back to work. If it seems like facilities problems are not getting as much attention as usual, it is because Alisa is out but will return in July.

We have contracted with a landscape architect to develop a plan for replacing the Monterey pines that will be removed in compliance with our tree permit. The work required to begin the tree removal is much more than anticipated, and Contra Costa County is requiring that we not remove any trees until after nesting season is over on September 1.

We have contracted with FARD Engineering to have their HVAC engineer, Max Saiidnia, examine carefully the options for replacing the Sanctuary furnace. I expect we will reach a decision in July and have the new furnace ready by October.

If any of these projects fits your interests and your skills, we would love to have you on our team. Please contact Larry Nagel at (510) 558-0842 or lwn@att.net. Or, just drop in at the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting, which is generally on the first Thursday of every month at 4 pm in the Safir Room. The first Thursday in July is Independence Day, so we will meet on July 11.



Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Covenant of Right Relations

- We covenant to build a religious community guided by love and sustained by respectful relationships.
- Believing that building healthy relationships is a spiritual practice, we aim to listen appreciatively, speak with care, express gratitude, honor our differences, and assume good intentions.
- We endeavor to communicate directly, honestly, and compassionately, particularly when we are in conflict.
- When we hurt one another, we will try to forgive, make amends, and reconnect in a spirit of love.
- In celebration of the common purpose that unites us, we will do our best to abide by this covenant.

MEMBERSHIP in this Unitarian Universalist congregation is open to all who see this church as their religious home and the principles for which the church stands as their own. People who wish to join participate in an “introduction to membership” session, sign the membership book, and commit to supporting this church through participation and financially. To become a member, please contact our Membership Co-Chairs, Lonnie Moseley or Paul Hudson (membership@uucb.org), or speak with one of the co-ministers.

NEWSLETTER ITEM SUBMISSIONS: Submit announcements and articles by email to beacon@uucb.org. Due to limited space, we do not publish announcements for events occurring outside the church community. The Beacon is compiled by Kathleen Baumgardner and edited by Ann Harlow. **The deadline for submissions** is the 15th of the month. **Questions?** Please email beacon@uucb.org.

WEB SITE: <http://uucb.org>

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS:

To subscribe to the email version of this newsletter or “The Week Ahead at UUCB,” email administrator@uucb.org. You can also find both newsletters at the uucb.org website under “News.”

UUCB general discussion list:

http://groups.google.com/group/uucb_discuss/about

Email list for families: Email family.ministry@uucb.org

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