



Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 78 #8 August 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

When you receive this Beacon issue, dear congregants, we will be in the middle of our road trip vacation across the country. We're driving south first through Austin to visit Rev. Christian's family for a few days and to swim in Barton Springs and enjoy some real barbecue. From there we'll head through the southeastern states up to Virginia Beach, Colonial Williamsburg, and then on to Washington DC for a week to visit with Rev. Kristin's parents and enjoy all the Smithsonian has to offer. We'll then take the northern route home through Chicago where we will hopefully make it to a Cubs game.

Whether you are traveling long distances like we are this summer, staying local, or something in between, we look forward to welcoming everyone back for a new church year at the end of the month.

And what a great year we have planned! In accordance with the recommendations of the Family Ministry "Revise, Refresh, Renew" team and inspired by all of the gifts our new Acting Director of Family Ministry, Catherine Boyle, brings among us, we are trying out a new way to do and be church together as a whole community. As has been the norm here for some time, age-specific religious education classes will be offered two Sundays a month for children and youth after the Time for All Ages. Once a month we will offer a multi-generational Celebration Chapel, and the other Sunday of the month people of all ages will worship together in the Sanctuary. What a blessing it is to be part of a community of all ages and stages, and to have more frequent chances to worship, sing, laugh, pray, and just plain be together in time and space made holy by our shared presence.

The first of our all-ages worship services this year will be Sunday, August 25 for Water Ceremony and Backpack Blessing Sunday! Everyone is invited to bring a small amount of water with you to share in this annual ritual. Perhaps you will collect some while on a meaningful trip, get some from your garden hose, or you'll forget to bring any (like we often do) and pour from the pitchers we'll have available. We also invite everyone to bring their school backpacks or work briefcases to be blessed for the year of new growth and learning ahead. And after the service, there will be a reception so everyone can meet and welcome Tess O'Riva, our new Executive Director, and Catherine Boyle, Acting Director of Family Ministry.

See you in church!

Rev. Kristin and Rev. Christian

Worship Services in August

Sanctuary, 11 am on Sundays

Theme for August: **Elemental Truth**

August 4: It's Better Than You Think, Rev. Jane Ramsey, UUCB Community Minister, preaching; Andrea Brown, Worship Associate. We are bombarded by upsetting news every day. How can one cope with all this negativity? Presidential tweets aside, is there anything happening in this world that is positive? We are missing something. Come learn about the positive truth. It is real. *Rev. Dr. Jane Ramsey is a community minister affiliated with UUCB. She is a retired nurse and hospice chaplain who maintains a private practice in Spiritual Direction, facilitates the chaplain after Sunday service, and co-facilitates (along with Anne Greenwood) the "Aging With Grace" group for elders here at UUCB.*

August 11: From the Burning Bush to Burning Man, Jim Gasperini preaching; Jeanne Foster, Worship Associate. Our lighting a UU chalice is one of many types of fire ritual. Something about lighting a fire signifies "now we choose actions with serious intent." Fire can represent creation and destruction, comfort and cruelty, the eternal and the ephemeral, the brightness of Heaven and the torments of Hell. How can a single phenomenon represent so many concepts? What makes fire such a versatile engine of ritual? *Jim Gasperini is currently writing a cultural history of fire entitled "Fire in the Mind." A longtime member of UUCB, he has served as Worship Associate, Chalice Circle Facilitator, and Webmaster. He has authored educational computer games, books for children about history, and interactive multimedia works of art. A longtime "burner" (attendee of the Burning Man festival), he was a member of the High Council of the Burning Man Opera.*

August 18: Why Good Things Happen to Bad People: Universalism for Today Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt preaching; Karen Elliott, Worship Associate. This week in worship we will consider what our liberal faith's Universalist roots can teach us about justice and grace.

August 25: Water Is Life, Rev. Christian Schmidt preaching; Bob Adams, Worship Associate. Water connects us all in both beauty and challenge. We live in an area overflowing with the natural beauty of the Bay, yet our world's oceans and other waterways are increasingly overflowing with plastic and other pollution. Join us for our annual Water Ceremony as we give thanks for how water sustains us and recommit ourselves to caring for Mother Earth. Please bring a small container of water with you this Sunday, whether you collected it along exotic summer travels or from your kitchen faucet. Children and youth are also encouraged to bring their school backpacks to church for the Backpack Blessing!

Good Neighbor for August (sharing our offerings)

Planting Justice (plantingjustice.org) is a grassroots organization that works with ex-convicts to build organizational skills and establish gardens in poor neighborhoods where fresh food is not easily available. Our offerings to Planting Justice will help them in their work to democratize access to affordable, nutritious food by empowering disenfranchised urban residents with skills, resources, and inspiration to maximize food production, economic opportunities, and environmental beauty in our neighborhoods.

Summer Forum: Toward a Just World

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

- August 4:** **Dr. Consuelo Lara**, member of West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education. Dr Lara is a retired teacher who will share her dedication to education and report on how our schools are faring.
- August 11:** **Dr. Liliane Koziol**, UC Berkeley International House program director. Cross-Cultural Communication.
- August 18:** **Veta, Brenda and Lydia** will speak about serving in the Peace Corps in their 80s.
- August 25:** **Rev. Rodney Lemery**, Chaplain of Solano County Jails. Restorative Justice, how it works and why.

Humanist Connections

Sundays, 12:30 pm, Safir Room

- August 4:** How will it all end? Our culture, our country, our species, our planet, our solar system, our universe? – Harold Ogren
- August 11:** Short discussion topics written down by attendees and selected randomly
- August 18:** Wealth inequality – Dennis Monthei
- August 25:** How can we help the homeless? – Ray Nelson

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!

Special Events in August

- Sat. Aug. 17:** **Buildings and Grounds Work Party**, 8:30 am–12 noon. All hands welcome; special focus on weeding and trimming outdoors. Advance signups in the Atrium preferred.
- Sat. Aug. 24:** **Roy Zimmerman Concert**, 8 pm. Roy Zimmerman's signature blend of heart and hilarity has never been more necessary. *RiZe Up* is ninety minutes of Roy's original songs, a funny and forceful affirmation of Peace and Social Justice. It's laughter and encouragement for progressive-minded people who need a lot of both. Roy's songs have been heard on HBO and Showtime, and his videos have garnered tens of millions of views. He has recorded for Warner/Reprise Records. He's shared stages with Bill Maher, Ellen DeGeneres, Holly Near, Robin Williams, Arlo Guthrie, John Oliver, Kate Clinton and George Carlin, and tours the country constantly with his wife and co-writer Melanie Harby.
- Sun. Aug. 25:** **Fall Kickoff Sunday** with Water Ceremony, Blessing of Backpacks, and reception after the service to welcome Catherine Boyle and Tess O'Riva.

From the Board of Trustees

Beth Pollard

I attended my first General Assembly (“GA”) this June in Spokane, as I was curious about what went on at this annual gathering of our faith. Being a new Board member, I was especially interested in having all my senses engaged in experiencing the bigger picture of Unitarian Universalism, as well as getting practical UU governance tips.

Surrounded by close to 3,000 UU’s, including about a dozen UUCB-ers, I was amazed by the depth of commitment to UU principles, the dedication to both accepting and improving who we are and what we can do, and the strong aspirations to bring about a better world. One workshop encouraged us to make a “zine” (minus the “Maga”- for obvious reasons) summarizing takeaways; mine contains symbols of ideas like asking questions, listening, willingness to be uncomfortable and flexible, and collaboration.

The Board of Trustees utilized some of these takeaways at its July meeting in an action about UUA and Pacific Central District dues. In struggling to make UUCB’s budget balance, even after stretching ourselves with cuts and new revenues, we had to limit our budgeted dues contribution at \$7,000 of the full \$33,000; this was with the caveat that the first priority for expenditure of excess revenues over expenses realized at year end would be to pay up to the full dues.

“What about those of us who want to pay our fair share?” was asked at the Congregational Meeting in May. Respecting the desire to work together as a community towards revenue goals, our individual values and generosity, and minimizing burdens on accounting folks, the Board has decided that it will:

- Encourage ourselves/everyone to grow our revenue to make dues payments possible
- Towards the end of the fiscal year, evaluate our revenue success and what the church can pay in dues
- If unable to pay the full amount, open up to the congregation a focused time period to supply funds for their own share of the \$89/member dues, or less/more

I believe the Board’s action demonstrates good faith intertwining of the “Power of We” – GA’s theme – with respect for individuality, as also shown in full force by UU’s in Spokane.

Coordinating Team Notes

Tess Snook O’Riva, Executive Director

I have been gratified and amazed by all the hard work that the staff and volunteers do here at UUCB. First and foremost, let us recognize the efforts of the weed-whacking volunteers: Bob Adams, Jim Gasperini, Richard Hanway, Don Klose, Floyd Sam, Joanne Wile, Brian O’Riva, and Don Wollwage. They have been instrumental in helping us be safer by meeting the defensible space standards for fire abatement. Thank you!

One of the big discussions of late has been the AV system. Staff have done a preliminary inventory of our equipment, and a dedicated team of volunteers will convene to document best practices for all major equipment, ensure all four rooms (Sanctuary, Social Hall, Fireside, and Safir rooms) all have the equipment they need, and create an action plan for staff to obtain, label, and securely store equipment and supplies. We also welcome our new backup Event Host, Amina Kirby, who has studied AV and will have invaluable input on our current setup.

We are hoping that the Craft Avenue Cottage will be remodeled and ready to rent by the end of September, bringing much needed revenue to UUCB. Thank you Dave Roberts and Jane Lundin for heading this important project.

One thing that has been very helpful in my new role here is just getting to know the space. If you are around on Fridays, you will see me on the stage or in the coat closet trying to make room for all our amazing resources. If you have an interest in organization or space planning, I’d love the help! Just email me at ED@uucb.org.

Music Matters

Dr. Bryan Baker, Director of Music

Music Matters – Reaching Out

The music program is reaching out to the wider community with two major projects this coming church year. In September, singers from UUCB will join with students from the College of San Mateo in the musical revue *Side by Side by Sondheim*.

For a decade, I taught voice and directed the choir at the College of San Mateo; now Marcelle Dronkers, our wonderful soprano section leader and soloist, has that position. So, despite the geographical distance, the connection is strong. Because of that distance, we have not come together for a major collaboration until now.

The production of the delightful, often profound, and funny musical review of songs by Sondheim, the brilliant and wise master of the American musical theater, comes to UUCB the last weekend of September.

The choir of Dominican College will join us in April, when we present stirring music for chorus and orchestra with the Kensington Symphony Orchestra. Three choirs – UUCB, UUSF, and Dominican – will bring the power and beauty of two English masterpieces with strong social justice messages.

The rise of fascism in Europe before the second world war – Mussolini, Hitler, Franco – was the impetus for Ralph Vaughan Williams to compose *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Grant Us Peace). The work begins with the searing cry of anguish and danger, and goes on to hope, reconciliation and peace. It incorporates three poems by Walt Whitman.

Kristallnacht was the event that inspired Michael Tippett to compose his greatest work, *A Child of Our Time*. He expanded his initial vision to reach out to all oppressed people and incorporated five spirituals to carry the message of equality and justice.

Both composers and both works stand as musical monuments to peace and freedom.

Yours in harmony,

Bryan

Community Ministry

Rev. Dr. Jane Ramsey

Shameless Self Promotion!

On August 4th you will have the rare opportunity to see me give a sermon! Lucky you! I know it's summer and you may have a vacation or some way to better use your time, but wait! This opportunity comes but once, possibly twice a year! Besides that, you will want to hear my message: It's Not As Bad As You Think!

You may very well believe that the world is going to hell in a handbasket ... but ... could it be true, could it be a fact, that there has been drastic improvement globally in many areas? Yes, Virginia, it can! Come learn the facts, come get some hope, it's really not that bad.

Spiritual Direction - As long as I am on the subject of promoting my services, let me tell you a little bit about spiritual direction. This is a service, a ministry if you will, in which I will be with you as you explore your own spirituality, no matter what form that may take. In the context of a safe one-on-one, confidential relationship you will meet with me for one hour, as often as you wish, to reflect on your spiritual journey. Benefits: gentle, non-judgmental guidance, growth in faith, hope, love and prayer/meditation in relation to feelings, family work, choices, loss, forgiveness, illness and all life's spiritual struggles. Greater meaning and purpose in your life! Give me a call or email me: jane.rms@gmail.com

And don't forget to come to church Sunday, August 4th!

Social Justice Council

Beth Jerde

LFDC: Per our discussion of *Don't Label Me* by Irshad Manji, we started off with listing words that we have heard, read, or seen, that *others* have used to identify us. We then listed words *we* use to identify ourselves. Partnering with someone we did not know, we exchanged our lists with our partners, and had a conversation for about 8–10 minutes referencing our lists. We then shared points of intrigue. We then had sheets of paper with one talk point per sheet, culled from the book, newspaper interviews with Manji, podcasts, etc.:

Labels:

- * Starting point not finish line
- * Backstory
- * Tribalism
- * Otherize
- * To be heard, hear
- * POOP
- * Unless we transform trauma, we'll transmit it (R Rohr)
- * Respect-Time-Trust-Humility-Degrade (line thru this)
- * Honest Diversity
- * Plurals
- * Win-Win//Win-Lose
- * Offend yourself
- * Ego brain
- * CCRAP
- * Labels eclipse truth

We read these out loud around the “circle” and kept them visible; people could comment, question, critique, any that struck them. So our discussion came from these. Some had to be explained (POOP, CCRAP, Rohr quote) while others were more familiar and could be addressed.

Post-discussion add-on: The essence of the book is that we should attempt to have difficult discussions with people who do not share our views. My cousin was on the first plane that hit the World Trade Towers on 9-11. He was forty; had a four-year-old son and 6-month-old baby. His wife Debbie could not settle down and feel safe staying in one place after 9-11. Could I really sit down and try to talk with – those Al-Qaeda members obviously are gone – members of *this* generation of Al-Qaeda? I have tried to read to learn more about our different global view perspectives. But could I really try to talk with them?

Next month on August 4th, Lee Olivier and Jonathan Hofeld will lead the discussion of *We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. It consists of eight essays Coates published in *The Atlantic*, with commentary; it's remarkable.

YOUTH SPIRIT ARTWORKS: How You Can Support the Tiny House Build Project

An interfaith effort, and a Sponsored Project of the UUCB Social Justice Council

- (1) Donate to crowd-funding campaign to support cost of building materials and tools by going to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/ysa-tiny-house-village-support-homeless-youth>
 - (2) Donate to UUCB's contribution for lunch and snacks on build days—look for donation jar at Social Justice Table.
 - (3) Sign up to volunteer on one or more build days: Saturdays and Sundays, August 17, 18, 24, 25; September 7, 8.. Go to youthtinyhousevillage.org and select “Click here to volunteer . . .” Tasks will include: help with registration, safety talks, hydration, help with the build itself, serve lunches.
 - (4) If you'd like to mail a donation, YSA is at 1740 Alcatraz Ave. Berkeley, CA 94703.
- UUCB contacts: Jim Acock, 510-684-6565, and Jane Eisenstark, 617-759-4320

Partner Church Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

At long last, Anne Greenwood and I held a face-to-face Partner Church Committee meeting. So where were all the other attendees? (I'll get to that later in this report). We have several paths forward, particularly with travel opportunities happening in 2020.

It's been about twenty years since we brought the Rev. Ilkei Arpad and his wife Judit to Berkeley. We could invite Homoródújfalu's current minister, Rev. Gyero Attila, to Berkeley next year. He has a fiancée. Would we invite just him or both, or when they do get married? There is travel grant money available. We would have to apply by October, and we would still have to raise most of the money for his travel.

There is an International Youth Pilgrimage and Camp next year in Transylvania. Do we have high school age youth at UUCB who would want to go? It would be a life-changing experience for anyone who goes. It just takes the commitment of that young person as well as those of us who would raise the money for the journey. Check out the website to learn more. <https://uupcc.org/july-2020-international-youth-pilgrimage-and-camp>

Our friend, Mark Sumner, the choir director at the San Francisco church, is planning a choir trip next year. You could be a singer or a roadie on this trip. Any UUCBers would split off from the main group to visit our partner church and spend quality time with our brethren.

The UUA's Partner Church Council is sponsoring a Roots Pilgrimage next year. And we could just organize our own pilgrimage using our own resources and those of the PCC's travel coordinator.

A lot has to happen to make any of these opportunities a reality. There's outreach to the many donors to our Village Education Fund as well as those who've expressed interest in Partner Church. Anne and I will be conferring with the PCC's executive director on how we can "refresh" UUCB's Partner Church program. Now we need YOU more than ever!

Oh yeah, we meet on the second Sunday of each month in the Music Room. We start at 12:15 (or after you've had a chance to visit the snack table). We'd love to see you there on August 11. In the meantime, contact me or Anne at steph62850@yahoo.com or annegt1@sbcglobal.net.

Buildings & Grounds

Larry Nagel

We have had two very successful work parties this year, and are planning another work party on Saturday, August 17 to spruce up the grounds. The party runs from 9 am until noon, but if you show up at 8:30 am you'll be treated to breakfast prepared by our own Lynne Cahoon. Hopefully, the sun will be shining and we can attend to overdue gardening activities.

Because of cuts in facilities staff, as well as an exceptionally long rainy season, we were not able to get the brush cleared from our campus by the July 10 deadline and were officially put on notice by the El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department to have the brush cleared by August 11. Our volunteer weed-whacking crew, headed up by Don Klose, has done a wonderful job but they need your help. Contact Don at (510) 525-7115 or (510) 697-5307 if you can spare some time.

The HVAC task force has been working hard on determining the best choice for a replacement for the main Sanctuary furnace, which failed a couple of months ago. We are striving to have heat back in the Sanctuary by November when the weather gets chilly.

On July 18, PG&E inspected our natural gas lines and found the main feeder line to the building was corroded and had a sizeable hole in it. They shut off gas to the building immediately. We have had an initial visit by Albert Nahman and are soliciting bids to repair the line.

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 the first Thursday of every month at 4 pm in the Safir Room.



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 a “pathways 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 deadline for submissions** is the 15th of the month. **Questions?** Please email beacon@uucb.org. (Beacon editor is Ann Harlow.)

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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Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt

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Larry Nagel (Buildings and Grounds)

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