



Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

November 2020 – Vol. 79, Issue 11

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Journeying Together

Dr. Rev. Michelle Collins

So, how are we all feeling? Yeah, me too. I've seen online memes joking about what the 2020 season finale might be, but really, I'd rather just have this season cancelled and not go through with a finale. Because I'm afraid that, at least in our country as well as many localities, we're about to enter the multi-episode finale of the 2020 reality show.

“Okay, Rev, enough with the downers... where are the words of hope to help us get through this?” It's a fair point. There's plenty of bad news – it's filling our media feeds every day – and many folks have decided to take much needed breaks from news and media. We don't need reminding of the bad news because we're living that every day. But the thing is, we're also living the good news every day. It's also scattered throughout our news feeds. It's filling our conversations with those we care about. Don't believe me? Take a look. Or even better, seek out places that talk

about the happy and hopeful news. There's actually a news website that exclusively features happy news (www.happynews.com). Ask friends and family members and others in our church family about something that brings them joy or something they've laughed about recently. Or ask them about what's bringing them hope right now.

Be mindful of what your needs are in each moment. Do you need something specific to get involved within our local community to feel like you're doing something to make change happen? Do you need to check in with a friend you haven't talked to in a while? Or do you perhaps need some time watching funny animal videos and laughing until your sides hurt. Every moment may bring about new challenges as well as new needs, but the good news is that there is plenty of good news and hope out there, and you're not in this alone. Another piece of good news... I can assure you that the clock will indeed turn to midnight on December 31st and we will indeed make it out of the year 2020. Although I have to admit that I might never think of the phrase "hindsight is 2020" the same way again, and I'd rather not buy a 2021 planner until I have seen a trailer for what the new year might bring. But really, we will make it through this, and we'll make it through together, pausing when we need and taking the time when we need. Big steps or baby steps, or rolling ourselves, or dragging ourselves inch by inch. We will get there, together.

If you'd like some extra spiritual deepening materials this month, here are some spiritual resource and reflection packets from Soul Matters:

September: [Renewal](#)

October: [Deep Listening](#)

November: [Healing](#)

Now, please excuse me while I go back to staring at an endless live feed of an aquarium filled with jellyfish, complete with soothing music in the background.

Sunday Services in November

[Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube Live](#), 11 am on Sundays

Theme for November: Healing

November 1 – Getting Through. Rev. Michelle Collins, preaching. Melissa Rosales, Worship Associate. We each face many challenges and challenging times throughout our lives, both ones that we can see coming ahead of time as well as those that hit us unexpectedly. It's not about whether we'll face things. Instead it's about how we'll get through them. This morning we'll explore some of the aspects

of resilience and about finding what we need to make it through, even when things may seem overwhelming.

November 8 – What Next? Rev. Michelle Collins, preaching. Cynthia Asprodites, Worship Associate. Our country is facing a good deal of uncertainty and division at the moment, along with many other ongoing challenges. Having just had a presidential election, what does the future look like for us? What do we need in order to face the challenges ahead?

November 15 – Music Sunday. Bryan Baker. Deborah Schmidt, Worship Associate. How music can carry us through uncertain times, to find hope and healing and even joy.

November 22 – Healing From Our Histories. Rev. Michelle Collins, preaching. Karen Elliott, Worship Associate. Often it is said that we can't change the past, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't mind the past. There are many histories and legacies in various forms of our past, ones that may inspire us but also ones that may be less comfortable for us now but that we can learn from and may need to heal from. (multigenerational service)

November 29 – Softening the Hardened Heart. Rev. Jay Atkinson. Andrea Brown, Worship Associate. Whatever the result of this fall's election, some will feel wounded, fearful, and bitter, with hopes dashed, while others will feel reassured, joyous, energized, even tempted to hubris and gloating, and many on either side will find their hearts hardened against the "others." Immersed in such polarization, how do we, on whichever side, move toward right relationship, soften our hearts enough to empathize with another's political perspective, and dwell on the side of healing the soul of our nation?

Virtual Coffee Hour immediately following worship on Sundays

After worship we invite you to switch over to Zoom for a time to connect "face to face." The link to Virtual Coffee Hour is listed below, but we will also share it in the comments on the Facebook Live feed during worship.

Click [here](#) to join us:

Meeting ID: 332 046 821

Password: 810131

or

Dial

669 900 6833

Wednesdays 6:00pm Social Time, 6:20 pm Start Time

Zoom

Join us for our mid-week online vespers services. The 30-minute Wednesday evening service will provide a time for us to gather together to experience moments of reflection, prayer and song, grounded in our UU faith.

Click [this link](#) to join us
Meeting ID: 830 5378 2422
Passcode: chalice

Good Neighbor for November:

[Operation Dignity](#) serves homeless and at risk veterans, their families, and the communities they live in. They meet 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.

Special Events and Announcements

- **Election Week Events and Resources**
 - **Sunday November 1, 11am** UUCB Worship Service [Getting Through](#)
 - **Tuesday November 3, 7am to 8pm** ELECTION DAY – if you haven't already, get out and VOTE!
 - **Tuesday November 3, 7am-7pm PST** Spiritual Grounding for Election Day, led by UU ministers from around the country. Join at any time [on Zoom](#). Meeting ID: 995 5323 1971. Passcode: 954636. Find your local number [here](#). [More info](#).
 - **Wednesday November 4, 10am and 3pm** Drop-In Discussions with Rev. Michelle via Zoom. Use [this link](#).
 - **Wednesday November 4, 6pm** In person vespers at UUCB, and on [Facebook Live](#).
 - **Thursday November 5, 10am and 3pm** Drop-In Discussions with Rev. Michelle via Zoom. Use [this link](#).
 - **Thursday November 5: [UUA Post-Election Vigil & Community Gathering](#)** 5pm - 6:15pm PST
 - **Sunday November 8, 9:30am** – *Personal Resilience in Stressful Times*. Interim Minister Dr. Rev. Michelle Collins.
 - **Sunday November 8, 11am** UUCB Worship Service [What Next?](#)
 - Mental Health Care Resources: [Assessing the Effects of a Critical Incident](#), [Methods to Maintain Resilience](#)

- **Calling for Cornbread & Holiday Recipes**

We are approaching the time of many holidays, and it seems like so much will be changed this year because of the pandemic. But that doesn't mean we can't still celebrate parts of the holidays that we enjoy, and it sure doesn't mean that we won't be eating! This year, let's take UUCB's cornbread celebration in November and bring it into all of our homes. Please send in your favorite cornbread recipe, and then we'll share all of them come later November so that we can all enjoy cornbread, with a different version of together. I'll be sharing my Dad's award-winning recipe (okay, it won an award at a local chili cook-off, but it is FANTASTIC cornbread). And also, with the December holidays closing in on us, what's better than holiday food! Please send in a favorite holiday recipe or recipes, desserts and others, and they'll be shared in December. Send cornbread recipes by November 16 and holiday recipes by December 7 to UUCBrecipes@gmail.com. Yummy!

- **Winter Warmth for GRIP Clothing Drive**

As in the past, UUCB is having our annual Winter Warmth for GRIP clothing drive in December. Please go through your closets, or buy new items, to help clothe the GRIP (Greater Richmond Interfaith Program) residents for the cold and wet winter months, and bring your items to church 9:00 am-5:00 pm Monday-Friday starting Dec. 1. All sorts of clothing, including new packaged underwear, are acceptable, as well as sheets, blankets and towels. A large purple basket to collect your items will be located next to the front doors in the atrium. If you are uncomfortable coming into the church, just leave your items in the entryway and church staff will bring them in at night. Thank you. - Ray Westergard.

- If you would like to support our fall Village Education Fund remittance to Homoródújfalu (our partner church), send money for St. Nicholas Day goodies for the children and a small amount to defray the minister's internet connection costs **you can do so at PayPal.com and enter give@uucb.org as the recipient and put "Partner Church" or "Village Education Fund" in the comment section. Contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net to understand more about how your financial contributions and support matter.**

- **History of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley**

Dorothy Herzberg would like to write, with help from the congregation, a booklet on the History of UUCB as a fundraiser. The booklet will showcase

how wisdom, humor, resilience, compassion and commitment have held UUCB together for more than 130 years. If you have any anecdotes, history of programs, events, etc. that have held together this remarkable congregation, please send them to dorothyherzberg@gmail.com or mail them to: Dorothy Herzberg, 1006 Richmond St. El Cerrito, CA 9530. Dorothy's recent book, *Through the Writer's Eye*, includes 10 UUCBers among its 17 authors, and it is available on Amazon.

- **Bryan Baker & Friends**

November 21, 4:00 pm – Please join us for a virtual concert of Beethoven, Schuman, Liszt, and Gershwin. **This will be the church's first significant fundraising effort during the pandemic. All the proceeds will go to the UUCB's general fund. Look for the registration in the next week.**

Bryan Baker & Friends
Please Join Us For A Virtual Concert
of Beethoven, Schuman, Liszt, and Gershwin

STRING PLAYERS AND SINGERS
INCLUDING

GAYLE TSERN STRENG
SUE SOONG
MARTA TOBEY
BETSY SADEWHITE
MARCELLE DRONKERS
MICHÈLE VOILLEQUE
BARRY ZUCKERMAN
ALEX TAITE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2020
4:00 PM
UUCB.ORG
\$15 DONATION TO UUCB'S GENERAL FUND

Humanist Connections

Sundays, 1:00 pm, Zoom

A discussion group to explore our humanity, values, ideas. *"A free and responsible search for truth and meaning."* (Fourth principle of Unitarian Universalism.)

November 1 – *What will our society be like post-Trump – or at least post-election?* Lee Lawrence.

November 8 – *Discuss short topics presented at meeting, and pick topics for December.* Ray Westergard.

November 15 – *Issues in drug addiction and treatment.* Rosalind Gordon.

November 22 – *Does your humanism include a God?* Dennis Monthei.

November 29 – *Dreams.* Diane Rusnak.

For additional information, contact Marcia Bates, mjbates@ucla.edu. *Group managers: Susan Singh, Ray Westergard, Al Kueffner, Lee Lawrence, Kris Homme, Anne Fitzmaurice.*

Personal Theology

Sundays 9:20-10:30am, Zoom

Attendees may sign on as early as 9:20am. We end no later than 10:45 am as the church service begins at 11:00 am. The November theme at UUCB is 'Healing'. As we take a deep breath after 11/3, these two sessions may be of interest to you. Dr. Rev. Michelle Collins will speak on 11/8. We have been working for some time to engage students at Starr King School for the Ministry in doing a program for Personal Theology. Our first student guest is Jacob King on 11/15. See information below.

I have received many wonderful suggestions for speakers and ideas for future Personal Theology presentations. Thank you for those! And I am still looking for more presenters, contact info, and topics. Feel free to send them to me at any time. If you are interested in doing a session, don't be shy –it is beneficial and informative to all of us to get to know you better. After all, we are all connected!

November 8 – *Personal Resilience in Stressful Times.* Interim Minister Dr. Rev. Michelle Collins.

November 15 – *The Seven Principles: A Soldier's Perspective.* Jacob King. Jacob is currently a first-year seminary student at Starr King School for the Ministry. He is a veteran, currently pursuing military chaplaincy with the Oregon National Guard. He is married, and has three cats and a dog.

Anne Wardell, Personal Theology Chair

Re-Opening Task Force

Now is the time...but not just yet. There is time for you to tell us how you are coping in this challenging time and to share your concerns, wants, and preferences for a phased reopening of UUCB, our spiritual home.

This congregational poll is your opportunity to inform church leadership and staff on how best and in what phases UUCB should reopen. Click [here](#) to access the poll. If you prefer to respond on a printed copy of the poll, request one from the church office by calling 510-525-0302.

Your responses will help guide the Opening Task Force (OTF) plans. In addition to poll responses, feel free to share any additional thoughts with the Task Force at planning@uucb.org.

Thank you for your earliest possible response to the poll. We want to have responses no later than November 16.

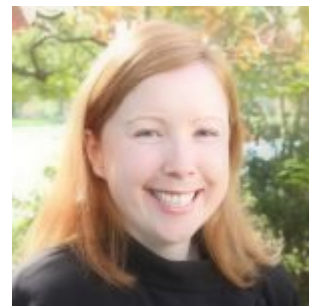
Opening Task Force

Patrick Cullinane (Chair), Sheldon Jones, Greg Lemieux, Catherine Boyle, Tess O'Riva, and Rev. Michelle Collins.

Family Ministry

Catherine Boyle, Director of Family Ministry

The leaves are falling. The air is cooler. Normally this time of year, I'm debating between making a pumpkin pie or a sweet potato pie but not this year. In 2020, what is even normal? As the holiday season begins in this strange year, the usual treks to Grandma's house are most likely restricted and the traditional focus on gratitude is difficult in a year of so much loss. The pandemic is a challenge for us humans to think creatively about this time of the year and connecting to our loved ones even over thousands of miles.



Here are three activity suggestions for this very unusual November:

Mindfulness

Since RE began in the fall, each lesson contains a mindfulness meditation component to help build resilience and hope. Mindfulness is a tool that all family

members can use this season.

In American culture, toxic positivity and magical thinking are two traits sold to us as ways to cope with difficult times by denying the reality of life; the truth that life is oftentimes hard and the sole power of sheer belief to change it when it is. Having no illusions about these facts reminds one of Buddha and his teachings that life is suffering and ever changing.

In this time of 2020, you and your loved ones may be grieving, angry or a combination of both as we get into this traditional season of being together. When these emotions arise in you or your loved ones, don't give into the temptation to ignore or sink into them completely but recognize it and sit with it until it passes. With focus of your breath, listen to the story these emotions are telling you and acknowledge them. For folks with children, facilitate the process and sit with them through the experience. Talking together through the process will help the child learn that these feelings are normal to feel at such a time.

Make a Hand Turkey Card for Someone

The hand turkey is a stalwart for this time of year but this one has a twist. Gather brown, red and yellow finger paint for a traditional turkey or any color for a turkey out of this world. Place the hand in the brown paint and make a handprint on the paper. Use the other paint to add detail.

As it dries, write the name of the person this turkey is for and on the fingers, write one trait, aspect or memory of the person you are grateful for. It could be Aunt Sally's humor, Uncle Kofi's delicious bread or the time you and Cousin Miyu built a bonfire together.

After you finish, mail your hand turkey to the person you made it about. A hand turkey does not replace tofurkey with your loved one, but it is a sweet reminder you are thinking of them.

Nature Scavenger Hunt

Get out of the house and into socially distant nature to recharge your spirits. Go into the woods with this list and see if you can find them. Adding etching or drawings to the list when you find the item helps children learn and remember. Green space is also beneficial for our well-being (we are after all just highly intelligent primates) and seeing new things helps our spirits. Can you find all the things?

Acorn

Big leaf

Small round stone

Squirrel

Something red

Something brown

Something old

Something new

Spiderweb

Oval shaped leaf

Animals tracks

A stick taller than you

A place where a forest gnome in a fairytale would live

Bark

I hope in this season you and your loved ones do find joy, connection, and peace in this strange year. If you are not and feeling overwhelmed, stressed, sad, angry, or more, reach out to me at family.ministry@uucb.org for help. We're traveling through this together.

From my heart,

Catherine

From the Board of Trustees

Logan Stump-Vernon

During my time in YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists, which in our district is now known as YRUUP or Young Religious Unitarian Universalists of the Pacific), an odd thing would often occur with the hymns we sang most often. Due to our style of participatory circle worship, hymns that could be sung in parts or rounds were used most consistently. There were a handful of hymns that we seemed to sing at every event, sometimes even multiple times during the same event. Whether it was because they were popular, or they always seemed to fit a theme the worship coordinators were going through, these hymns popped up time and time again. They became indelibly stuck in our minds, often replaying over and over again, so much so that at times the only way to comprehend their constant presence was to create a joke of sorts out of them. Sometimes this manifested in parodies –ranging from the innocent and light-hearted to the downright inappropriate (What? We were teenagers! What did you expect?!). Other times simply saying the words to the hymn led to others laughing or rolling their eyes. Yet others we simply had to put on hiatus because they were sung TOO often. “Come, Come Whoever You Are” was one of these notorious hymns that enjoyed a short time on hiatus, because despite it being consistently thematically appropriate and a wonderful hymn to sing in the round, we all just needed a break.

One of these hymns I sang in my youth has been stuck in my head for months now, replaying over and over again, just as it often did when I was younger. It's one of those aforementioned hymns that could inspire a visceral reaction simply by saying one word from it. Lock eyes with anyone in my YRUU cohort, and sing the word "Mystery" in the proper cadence, and to this day you'll probably get a response –at the very least, the words "mystery, life is a riddle and a mystery" will be called out in return. "Where Do We Come From?" has been rolling around in my brain throughout quarantine. It asks, "Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?" It then offers a refrain, something to chew on while pondering these questions, "mystery, mystery, life is a riddle and a mystery."

Recently, I've been mulling over these same questions again and again to myself. I sat down to write this article and I found myself simply staring at a blank page for what felt like eternity. As I did so, this hymn, which never fails to make me chuckle despite it having no intentional humor in its original form, entered my head once again. I thought, everyone asks themselves these questions, and not just about their own life. We are all asking these questions about everything, especially right now. I think it is highly probable we've collectively spent a whole lot of time thinking about these questions and how they apply to our congregation. Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going? Everyone has different answers to these questions, even when we're all talking about the same place, even when we're talking about the same church. Additionally most will have one question among these that matters more to them than the others, one that is the focus on which they build their understanding of our community. These questions are both intrinsically tied and also, importantly, very separate. While answers to one can inform answers to another they also all stand on their own. Where we come from need not be erased by where we are going. But likewise, where we are from need not solely dictate where we are going. Who we are now need not be who we were then or who we will be in the future.

As you think about these questions in the future ask yourself:

Which one am I thinking about most when I think of our church? What about this question is important to me? Why am I asking one question and not the others? What about these questions might be important to others in a given situation? How can I better incorporate the other two into my thinking?

And if you find yourself stuck or with too few or too many answers, remember: life is a riddle and a mystery.

Widening the Circle of Concern

Task Force of the UUCB Board of Trustees

In a three month period –from March through June of 2017– a cascade of events thundered through the Unitarian Universalist Association, shaking up the leadership

structure, galvanizing UU congregants, religious educators, and ministers. At issue were concerns regarding a pattern of hiring white people over people of color for leadership positions and a history of racist and white supremacist incidents.

Various groups within UUA, including the Liberal Religious Educators Association, Black Lives of UU, Diverse and Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries, along with white UUs including Allies for Racial Equity, joined together in solidarity to call for change.

In the words of the great John Lewis, good and necessary trouble had once again come to Unitarian Universalism.

UUA subsequently formed the Commission on Institutional Change in June 2017. Its charge was to investigate white supremacy in UU spaces and to establish a truth and reconciliation process. After three years of interviews, surveys, focus groups, and submitted testimony with over 1000 UU participants, the Commission compiled the data into the document, *Widening the Circle of Concern*, which was highlighted at the 2020 General Assembly. (The link to the report¹ is footnoted below, along with a video² from the General Assembly.)

While the majority of recommendations and action items listed in the document pertain to the national organization, the report contains many ideas and items which are applicable to individual congregations. UUA has urged all congregations to read, process, and consider implementation of the report's suggested actions.

This work is crucial for our congregation to do, and UUCB has decided to enter into this work.

This summer, the UUCB Board of Trustees approved the formation of The Widening the Circle of Concern Task Force (WTCOC), the goals of which are:

- to read and analyze *Widening the Circle of Concern*
- and, based on our analyses, to make specific recommendations to the Board and congregation that align with the Commission's charge to support "long-term cultural and institutional change that redeems the essential promise and ideals of Unitarian Universalism"³
- and, as we keep ourselves accountable to the Commission's urging that anti-oppression work is a theological mandate, it is also our duty to keep our Unitarian Universalist Association accountable. We are in a reciprocal relationship.

The Task Force, whose members represent a variety of UUCB programs, is composed of Rev. Michelle Collins, Suzette Anderson-Duggan, Susan Blair, Victoria Bowen (co-facilitator), Lynne Henderson, Albert Kueffner, Elaine Miller, Lonnie Moseley, Melissa Rosales, Cordell Sloan, and Helen Tinsley-Jones (co-facilitator).

We meet at two to three week intervals and, to date, have met six times. Our process is to read through the report, chapter by chapter, followed by in depth discussions. We are compiling a list of overarching principles and specific

recommendations which will be presented in their entirety to the Board and congregation on completion of our work.

Because we are contracted to be a covenantal group and maintain confidentiality as we develop trust and go deeply into this challenging work, we are not open to new members. The Task Force, however, welcomes and encourages comments and questions from the congregation. Please contact:

- Victoria Bowen, victoriabowen903@gmail.com or 510-525-7773, and/or
- Helen Tinsley-Jones, htinsleyjones@yahoo.com or 510-334-1633.

“Acknowledgment of anti-oppression work as a theological mandate is essential.”

“Congregations that choose to engage to increase equity, inclusion, and diversity are leading the way into the future.”

¹<https://www.uua.org/book/export/html/43821>

²<https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2020/business/general-session-3>

and <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening/trends>

³York, J., McDonald, C., Johnson J. M., “Commission on Institutional Change’s final report is a critical waypoint, not the end of the journey.” UU World, Fall, 2020, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3, p. 55.

From the Treasurer

Larry Nagel

This is the second report for Fiscal Year 2020-21. The Finance team, consisting of Tess O’Riva, Diana Steinbach, Monte Meyer of Shining Star Consulting, and me, are still working on closing the books for Fiscal Year 2019-20.

This article describes results for the month of August 2020.

So far, this Fiscal Year is off to a very good start. Year to Date Total Revenue was \$169,054, which is \$38,554 more than budgeted, and Year to Date Expenses were \$100,281, which is \$46,324 less than budgeted.



The bottom line is that, as of August 31, we are running a Surplus is \$68,773, which is \$84,878 better than budgeted.

As of August 31, 2020, the Mechanics Checking account was \$609,062 and the Mechanics Savings account was \$402,688, which includes the \$250,000 Bequest from the Ann Lane estate. Hence, our cash reserves at the end of July were a whopping \$761,750. The UUA Board Designated Endowment is now at \$837,704.

If you have any questions, please contact me at lwn@att.net or call me at (510) 558-0842.

Partner Church Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

We have a centennial to celebrate in 2021! It's 100 years of partnership between the former First Unitarian Church of Berkeley and the Unitarian church in Homoródújfalú. The American Unitarian Association solicited its congregations to raise money to replace Transylvanian church bells that were confiscated to make munitions in World War I. In whatever way our two congregations were paired up, we have continued our partnership even if we Berkeleyans forgot about it for decades. Since 1990 when our partnership was reinvigorated, we have relied upon pilgrimages to Romania and cash donations as the main vehicle of this relationship. Those are very important, but we can do a lot more in building a broad-based level of interest and support in the congregation for Partner Church. It's been said, "The most radical thing we can do is to introduce people to one another." Let's explore how we do this even if we can't make those introductions face to face.



This is also the time of year when Partner Church empties its coffers. Our congregational dues to the Partner Church Council need to be paid, and this year we are increasing our support level to sustaining large congregation. This stepping up is long overdue. Meanwhile, we are making our fall Village Education Fund remittance to Homoródújfalú. If we can, we also send money for St. Nicholas Day goodies for the children and a small amount to defray the minister's internet connection costs. **We usually send a fundraising letter in one of the monthly mailings from UUCB, but this Beacon article might be your only invitation this year to donate! It's easy: go to PayPal.com and enter give@uucb.org as the recipient and put "Partner Church" or "Village Education Fund" in the comment section. Set up an automatic recurring contribution and make things better for all of us! Contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net to understand more about how your financial contributions and support matter.**

Social Justice Council

November 1 – the Literature, Film & Drama Contingent of the Social Justice Council will celebrate Native American Heritage Month on November 1 from 12:30

to 3:00 with a *Fall Melange*! The Children's Chorus will sing; the middle-schoolers will discuss their reactions to the young people's adaptation of the UUA's Common Read for 2020, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz; the adults will discuss this extraordinary book; the Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group will share their project and Evelie Delfino Sales Posch will sing! Click [here](#) to join us on Zoom. -Camille Parker

Winter Warmth for GRIP Clothing Drive

As in the past, UUCB is having our annual Winter Warmth for GRIP clothing drive in December. Please go through your closets, or buy new items, to help clothe the GRIP (Greater Richmond Interfaith Program) residents for the cold and wet winter months, and bring your items to church 9-5 M-F starting Dec. 1. All sorts of clothing, including new packaged underwear, are acceptable, as well as sheets, blankets and towels. A large purple basket to collect your items will be located next to the front doors in the atrium. If you are uncomfortable coming into the church, just leave your items in the entryway and church staff will bring them in at night. Thank you. -Ray Westergard

Annual Food Drive will again be sponsored by the Social Justice Council and Family Ministry. Food and funds go to the Richmond Emergency Food Pantry. Lists of preferred items and color door hangers to encourage neighbors and friends to contribute are available at the UUCB church entrance. Donated items (not \$) can be left there as well or donate your food or check on November 22 between 9:00 am-1:00 pm to volunteers. For more information or to help contact socialjustice@uucb.org or family.ministry@uucb.org.

For decades, UUCB's **Good Neighbor Program** has been donating funds to local non profits in need. In 2020 we hosted several new organizations, and received appreciative thank you letters from them in return. The **Women's Cancer Research Center** whom we collected \$1,502 for in April, wrote "Thank you for your community's remarkable generosity and extraordinary support!" In May, we welcomed **Crisis Support Services of Alameda County**, and were able to donate \$1,767 to their non profit. Their executive director wrote to us say "We are so grateful to the UUCB community for their donation to support suicide prevention. This gift enabled us to purchase much needed PPE and to provide some community care to our counselors"

The **Masks of Color** fundraiser has reached \$4000.00, having completed 230 masks! We have given funds to East Bay residents impacted by COVID-19; refugees and volunteers in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, post-derecho storm; and an animal sanctuary that had to re-locate because of the wild fires north of us. This project continues as masks have become the "necessary accessory." - Beth Jerde

SPONSORED PROJECTS

Confronting Racism

Literature, Film, and Drama Contingent in October

Fifty-plus people who attended the **Fishbowl on "Race"** in October were treated to open, honest and vulnerable talk about racism, its effects and anti-racism action. The Fish discussed such topics as personal experiences of racism, what white people need to know, why it's important for white people to work on racism with other white people and ways our congregation can address racism better. Many thanks to all the Fish for their courage and trust. Thanks to Julia Rogers for her excellent moderation of this our fifth Fishbowl, Christina Creveling for quoting James Baldwin when lighting and extinguishing the chalice, and to Zoom-tech extraordinaire Lonnie Moseley. Much appreciation to everyone who attended, listened deeply and offered questions. Finally, thanks to Rev. Michelle Collins for mentioning the Fishbowl in her sermon. Together, we can create Beloved Community! -Camille Parker

People of Color Caucus will meet on Saturday, December 5. Contact Socialjustice@uucb.org for time and Zoom link.

Whites Opposing White Supremacy (WOWS) For the past three months, WOWS meetings have focused on speaking up about actions that put people down because of their race or other group membership (microaggressions) and on responding (receiving the feedback) when we are told that our actions have offended someone. WOWS meets the fourth Sunday of each month, 12:30pm-2:00pm, and will meet 11/22. For more info: Julia Rogers, jlundyr@gmail.com.

Anti-Racist Task Force

Increasing Diversity in Literature continues to organize a book drive for Richmond elementary schools. UUCB members have already purchased 70 books on diversity, authored by people of color and purchased locally, to be donated to the libraries of Richmond schools needing support. Fifty books are being donated to Verde Elementary, after which we will move to Highland Elementary in Richmond. A letter and new book list will be sent to the congregation soon. Please address any questions to Helen Toy, Helen_toy@yahoo.com or Judy Sam, jssam47@yahoo.com..

Periwinkle Project has narrowed its proposed sites for a floral display and plaque to remember enslaved people buried in unmarked graves over the 250 years of legal chattel slavery in the United States.

Defending Our Democracy (2020 Election)

After mailing 4000 postcards, we have ended our postcard writing, as voting has started. We are also discussing how we can support allies between Nov. 3 and Jan 20, depending on the result of the election. -Norie Clarke

Tiny Houses

We are pleased to announce that youth will begin to move into the tiny houses on the last weekend of November. They each will be supported by a small group of older folks. Contact Jim Acock to join the move-in effort jim.acock@gmail.com.

Restoring Our Earth For All

With millions of others, many of us working on the sponsored environmental project, have been focused on election-related work to bring about leadership at the national level that is committed to environmental justice and addressing climate change. In the meantime, Berkeley and Albany have put Measure HH and Measure DD on the ballot. Both these measures generate funds for local climate action and resiliency through small increases in the utility tax that exempt low-income residents. We hope they pass!

Looking past the election, we've been identifying films and speakers we might bring to UUCB to educate all of us and inspire action. Ideas include the films *The Eagle and the Condor* made by the UU Ministry for Earth, David Attenborough's new film, *A Life on Our Planet*, and the Australian film *2040*. We'll also explore working on projects with UU Ministry for Earth.

Please contact Sheila Tarbet (through socialjustice@uucb.org) if you have ideas for actions large and small to promote environmental justice, address climate change, and restore our Earth for all people and all life.

Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group

An Introduction to UUCB's Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group of the Social Justice Council Anti-Racism Task Force

Who has owned the land on which UUCB is built? We do have some of that information, of course. Archival documents tell us, for example, that, in 1905, Annie White Maybeck purchased the property from Frank and Olive Naylor for \$10.

Thousands of years prior to ownership by white colonial settlers, however, Ohlone tribes held stewardship of the land on which UUCB sits, as well as stewardship of significant portions of what is now California. To be specific, the church is situated on the unceded territory of the Lisjan Ohlone, members of The Confederated Villages of Lisjan of the Ohlone of the East Bay.

UUCB's Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group, under the auspices of the Social Justice Council's Anti-Racism Task Force, was formed to engage our congregation in:

- education and deep learning of Indigenous peoples' history, acknowledging the harms, including genocide and land theft, done by settler colonialism
- connecting and actively partnering with Ohlone people in the community
- assuming accountability as we engage in ongoing and enduring acts of respect, including, but not limited to, acknowledgements of land at church

services and meetings, dedication of a plaque, and making regular financial contributions to Indigenous peoples' organizations.

Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group members are Mimi Bull, Carol Carlisle, Rev. Michelle Collins, Don Klose, Ann Harlow, Anne Wardell, Julie Winkelstein, and Helen Tinsley-Jones.

Questions? Interested in joining the Group? Please contact Helen at htinsleyjones@yahoo.com.

For more information, we recommend you check out these sites—

Lisjan (Ohlone) History & Territory

<https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/lisjan-history-and-territory/>

<https://native-land.ca>

From the Executive Director

Tess Snook O'Riva, Executive Director



I see now that I had seriously taken for granted the ease of in-person communication. People not at my meetings don't always know what's going on, resulting in an unintentional separation between those "in the know" and those "out of the loop". So I'll give direct updates today and invite people to email or talk to me about any of the happenings at our spiritual home.

Finances: In preparing for our upcoming Financial Review (aka pre-audit) it was necessary to go back to the last official audit...of 2016. There were some recommendations in that audit that were never implemented. All of that is now cleaned up and work is moving faster to bring us current. The 2018 Financial Crisis has subsided, and the ramifications are being dealt with. We are not gilding the chancel in gold, but we can pay our bills.

Budget: The Fiscal Year 2019-20 budget is in the system. In December, the Board will discuss if the congregation-approved budget needs to be revisited based on current information.

Facilities: Working closely with the Buildings & Grounds Committee, Facilities has been dealing with some issues that had been postponed for a while, like office moves and storage needs. The Social Hall is pretty much a construction zone, but improvements have been made everywhere! A lot of attention has been paid to our leased preschool space and renters, as well.

The next Big Project will be the repair and painting of the Purlin Tails (aka Rafter Tails) on the exterior of the building. This project is outside the budget and will be

paid for by the Endowment draw-down authorized by the congregation around 2016. If enough is left over after that project is done, we are looking at upgrading the windows in the Sanctuary to include operable windows to increase ventilation.

Office Moves: The Director of Family Ministry, Catherine Boyle, has joined us on Administration Row and is now set up in the back office. Antonio Toro, Facilities Manager, and the Facilities team has moved into Cat's former office. The closet that used to house Facilities will be storage of some kind, still to be ironed out.

Rentals: We have had many inquiries about using our space as everyone figures out what's safe. We are currently open to groups of 25 or less indoors and up to 30 on the Terrace, with social distancing. Current negotiations include two schools who would like to use the grounds, the Terrace, and the Fireside Room for Winter Break. Already contracted is Baskit Produce, using the North Parking Lot on Saturdays.

Future Planning: The Opening Task Force is reviewing what improvements are needed in the next 4-6 months to ensure everyone's safety. We will also be reviewing contract language to include indemnification and safety requirements for renters. All current users are required to have a COVID mitigation plan, including contact tracing, in place.

I'm sure I'm forgetting something, so please reach out with any questions. Be safe!

Feel free to reach out to me directly (ed@uucb.org) or join us on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 10 am for the CT meeting (see uucb.org for details)!

Music Matters

Bryan Baker, Director of Music

Dear People,

Music is alive and kicking at UUCB. You have seen some of what we've been doing in Sunday services; the hymns and solos songs, instrumental ensembles, and the occasional choir videos. I've also been enjoying some live, in person music making –very carefully planned, keeping significant distance and wearing masks. Playing chamber music, piano quartet and quintets with string players, has been an extra special joy. Needing to all wear masks and sit much further apart than we normally would creates unusual challenges for being exactly together, but it's well worth the extra effort involved.

Soon you will have a chance to see us in a concert in a webinar format. The propulsive energy and elegant phrasing of Beethoven's Piano Quartet Op 16, contrasting the richly romantic surges of melody and harmonic color of Schumann's Piano Quintet in E-flat major.

Many singers will join me in the virtual concert for a wide variety of songs. You will recognize many of the wonderful singers, and you may also remember Alex Taite, the tenor who sang spirituals for us a couple of years ago. He will be back for some poignant, beautiful, and ultimately uplifting spirituals.

It requires even more caution in planning so that the singer can be unmasked for recording. We've tried being in different rooms, in one room but 20 feet apart, even with me playing by a door while the singer is outside. Again, the crazy challenges in pandemic rehearsing and recording mean working harder, but the music making remains thrilling.

Please come support the church's first significant fundraising effort during the pandemic. All the proceeds will go to the UUCB's general fund. The date is November 21, a Saturday, at 4 o'clock. Look for the registration in the next week.

Yours in harmony,

Bryan



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