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## Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

December 2020 – Vol. 79, Issue 12

Hello,

In an effort to be mindful of our resources, this will be the last printed Beacon on the Hill that you will receive. If you wish to continue to receive the printed version, please contact the church to notify us. You may also request to be added to the email distribution list.

Telephone: 510-525-0302

Email: [info@uucb.org](mailto:info@uucb.org)

Thank you.

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## Journeying Together

Dr. Rev. Michelle Collins

Welcome to the Covid-19 holiday season. In many senses, it may seem like everything has been changed and restricted about the holiday times. These are times that are usually filled with a greater degree of social gatherings, communal traditions, shared meals, and so forth. We can get stuck on what we've lost, and I bet virtually all of us will get stuck with at least one thing at least once. We are all only human, after all. But there are potentially some better ways to care for ourselves during this season.

One is to find ways to be grateful for the traditions that we can take part in. I remember talking to a friend of mine prior to Thanksgiving and I told her I was debating which set of food traditions I was going to have for my solo Thanksgiving holiday (there were three options). Her response: Why choose? Why not all of them? It felt freeing and like I actually got to multiply some traditions rather than being

selective about them. So what are some ways that you can revel in the traditions you can celebrate as well as multiply a few of them to get even more out of what you can.

There's also a sense of needing to be okay with things being different. I think we've all gotten plenty schooled in this one as this past year has progressed. But it does relate to my other mantra for the holiday season. "Greater happiness through lower expectations." Now I really do mean this mantra in a positive way. It's not about preparing yourself to be disappointed, but rather deciding in advance that you won't be disappointed because you won't get attached to tenuous or unattainable things. Greater happiness through lower expectations. Rather than getting bummed out that a gathering of family or friends can't happen the way it "usually" does this year, get excited about getting to see a certain folks on zoom that you might not regularly see, or might not regularly see together. Choose satisfaction and happiness in advance, and I promise that you'll be better off because of it.

Now even though we can't gather at UUCB in person, that also doesn't mean that we aren't celebrating in some way at the church. I hope that you can join us online for some of our holiday services this year.

Blessings, Rev. Michelle

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## Worship Services in December

### Theme for December: Silence

**December 6, 11am – *Experiencing Wonder*.** Moments of wonder and awe can be deeply impactful moments, catching our breath and lifting us out of place and time. What does wonder mean to you? How does it sustain you? [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube Live](#)

**December 13, 11am – *A Sanctuary in Our Hearts*.** With the noise and chaos going on in the world and sometimes in our own lives as well, our last place of quiet and refuge may be within us. How can we find peace within us? What does your own inner sanctuary look like? [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube Live](#)

**December 20, 11am – *Find a Stillness*.** Our world doesn't seem to be a very still or quiet place, with activity and demands seemingly all around us. Last week we talked about our inner sanctuaries. This week we'll explore how to carve some intentional stillness and calm into our homes and our lives. [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube Live](#)

**December 21, 7pm – Winter Solstice.** Today holds the longest night of the year and a rebirth of the sun. Join us for a multi-voice winter solstice service as we embrace the cool darkness of this time and call for the return of the light of the sun. This year is also unique in that it is also a “great conjunction” of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in our night sky tonight. [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube Live](#)

**December 23, 7pm – Blue Holidays Vespers Service.** So often holidays services and holidays parties are only about the joyful and happy things of the season. But we all know that the holidays are usually far more complex and complicated. Join us for a special Vespers service tonight, starting at 6pm, as we seek to hold the rest of the feelings of the holiday and make a space for the vulnerable parts of ourselves. [Click here to join us.](#) **Meeting ID: 332 046 821 Password: 810131**

**December 24 – A Holy Time.** O holy night, the stars are brightly shining... let us gather virtually as we celebrate the Christmas holiday. Please join us for a service filled with special music, carols, candles, and the many voices of Christmas. To help bring our UUCB holiday traditions into your home, you are invited to **stop by the church Dec 20 through Dec 23 (church atrium will be open from 9am to 5pm) to pick up a program for the service and candles for lighting at home,** the same ones that are used for our special UUCB tradition. [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube Live.](#)

Note: we'll be streaming the Christmas Eve service three times, but haven't settled on which times yet – there is much debate on the matter...

**December 27 – Deep Navigation.** Zoom. How do we navigate our lives? What kind of compass do we use; what do we rely on when it's dark? This has been a tumultuous and difficult year -- what gifts might we be carrying out of this challenging time? The current Worship Associates invite you to join them in exploring these questions as they conduct the last Sunday service of 2020 via Zoom. Service via Zoom, led by Worship Associates: Bob Adams, Cynthia Asprodites, Andrea Brown, Karen Elliott, Melissa Rosales, Deborah Schmidt, Sarah Ward.

[Click here to join](#)

Meeting ID: 384 464 1385

Passcode: chalice

### **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

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## Vespers in December

**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

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## Good Neighbor

**Please join us at the next Social Justice Council meeting on Wednesday, December 9 from 7pm - 8:30pm.** At the zoom meeting, we will be hearing from all of the local non profits who were nominated to become next year's Good Neighbors. There are 18 groups who will be speaking, but we can only choose 12 (one for each month)! We will need votes from church members like you to select the final organizations.

If you would like to learn more about each of the nominated non profits, you can find out their locations, their missions, and who nominated them [on this spreadsheet](#) . There are also links provided, so that you can click into the website of each organization.

To find out which non profits we have supported in the past [check out this document](#).

If you come to the meeting on the 9th of December, you can hear representatives speak about what it is that they do. After hearing the speakers, attendees will be given the chance to vote for their favorites.

If you are not able to be at the meeting, but you would still like to vote for our Good Neighbors for 2021, please contact Natalie Campbell at [nataliehcampbell@yahoo.com](mailto:nataliehcampbell@yahoo.com).

We hope to see you there. Zoom Links will go out closer to the date. Thank you!

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## Good Neighbor for December:

[Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity](#) We defend the humanity of the immigrant and fight for the rights of the incarcerated. Working at the intersection of spirituality and social movements, we mobilize congregations to take a stand on issues of

social justice like immigration and mass incarceration, and we engage people of faith to develop their own leadership so they can stand up against racism, discrimination, and the political challenges of the day. We bring a faith voice to social movement coalitions, providing a compassionate religious perspective amidst the clamor of angry political actions.

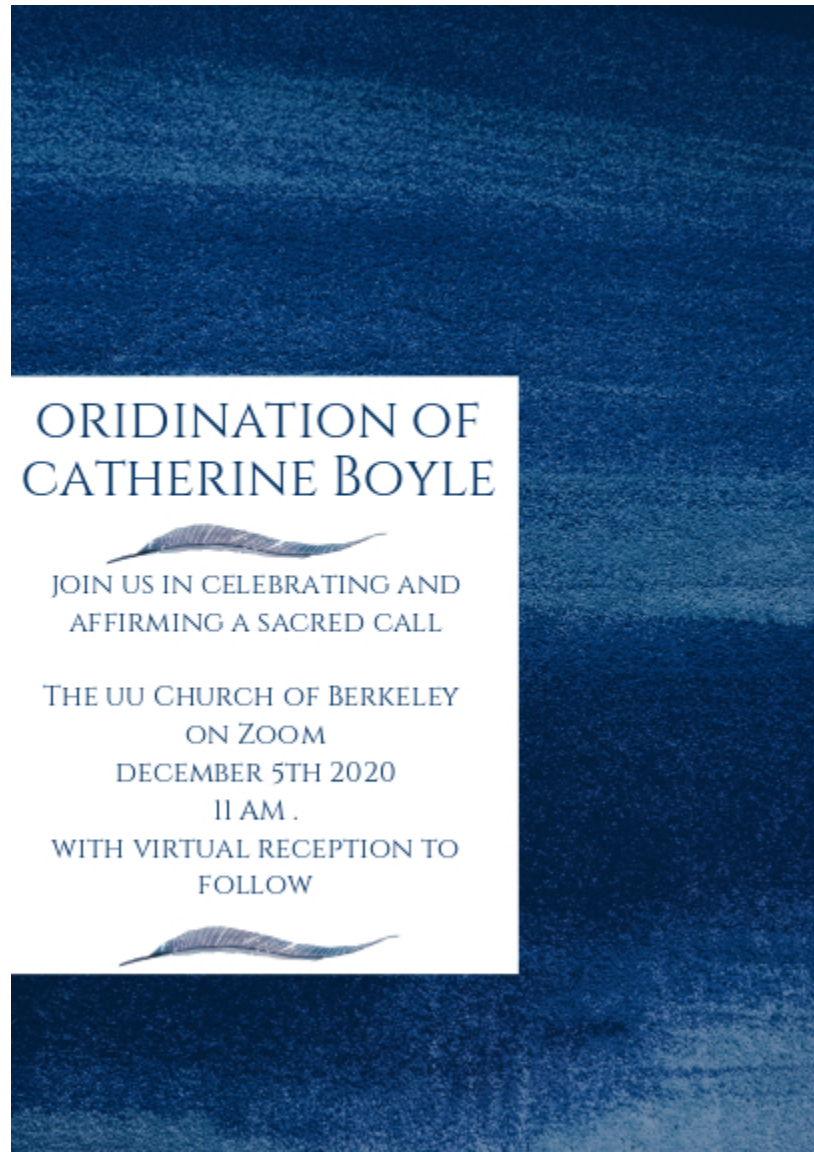
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## Special Events and Announcements

- **December 2, 7pm - 9:30pm Board of Trustees Meeting.** [Click here to join on Zoom.](#)
- **December 20-23.** To help bring our UUCB holiday traditions into your home, you are invited to stop by the church Dec 20 through Dec 23 (church atrium will be open from 9am to 5pm) **to pick up a program for the service and candles for lighting at home**, the same ones that are used for our special UUCB tradition.
- So much will be changed this year because of the pandemic, but thanks to all your submissions, we can still enjoy **UUCB's Cornbread Celebration!** We asked for your cornbread recipes you did not disappoint! Check out the UUCB cornbread recipe book and let's bring the tradition into all of our homes. [Click here for yummy yummy recipes.](#)
- We are approaching the time of many holidays, but won't let this pandemic keep us from enjoying the nourishing and delicious foods we love! Just like we did with the UUCB Cornbread Celebration, we now ask that you **type up and share your favorite holiday recipe(s), desserts, and others.** Type them up and send to us by December 7 to [UUCBrecipes@gmail.com](mailto:UUCBrecipes@gmail.com). Yummy!
- **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](mailto: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.

- **Ordination of Catherine Boyle**

UUCB is ordaining Catherine Boyle, Director of Family Ministry, on December 5 at 11 AM on [Zoom](#). Celebrate as Catherine takes the next step in her sacred call as a minister. A virtual reception follows on Zoom afterwards.



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## 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.)*

**December 6** – How can we optimize our immunity? Kris Homme.

**December 13** – Discussing short topics raised at the meeting and selecting topics for January.



**December 20** – Winter solstice roots of holiday season. Diane Rusnak

**December 27** – Is there a God? Dennis Monthei and Ray Westergard.

For additional information and to receive Zoom link at start of meeting contact Marcia Bates, [mjbates@ucla.edu](mailto:mjbates@ucla.edu). Group managers: Susan Singh, Ray Westergard, Al Kueffner, Lee Lawrence, Kris Homme, Anne Fitzmaurice.

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## Personal Theology

Sundays 9:20-10:30am, Zoom

As the chaotic and unusual year of 2020 draws to a close, I hope that you will be able to join us for 2 Personal Theology sessions in December. All sessions start at 9:30am however, you will be able to sign into the Zoom meeting starting at 9:20am.

Please see The Week Ahead or the UUCB Discuss Group announcements that come out just prior to the seminars with the Zoom link in it. Also, please note that the Personal Theology program has its very own email: [adulted@uucb.org](mailto:adulted@uucb.org).

We welcome all suggestions and comments. If you would like to serve on the Personal Theology Committee, please let Lonnie Moseley or myself know that as well. We are always looking for new and interesting speakers to share their spiritual journeys.

Happy and Safe Holidays to all of you.

Anne Wardell

### **December 13 – Destiny Muhammad, H O O D: Honoring Our Own Divinity**



An Unapologetic Acknowledgement and Honoring of the Divinity of Culture, Creativity, & Resilience Manifest as The Black Aesthetic, Experience, Art & Worship.

Destiny Muhammad is a recording/performing artist/band leader/composer and producer. Among her many awards are: ASCAP Songwriter Awardee and California Entertainers Music Awards Female Jazz Artist of the Year. She uses her harp and storytelling to round out the sonic experience that she creates. She has a CD entitled, 'Inner Oasis-Guided Meditation for Healing and Renewal'.

## December 20 – Rabbi Harry Manhoff, PhD, ‘Studying the Talmud One Page Every Day’

We welcome back one of our favorite speakers, Rabbi Manhoff. He is Rabbi Emeritus at Temple Beth Sholom in San Leandro, and teaches part-time at St. Mary’s College. If you haven’t heard Rabbi Manhoff before, you are in for a treat. His droll sense of humor is apparent in his biography where he states, ‘He is an avid New York sports fan, for any team that does not rhyme with 'bets' because betting is immoral.’

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## Re-Opening Task Force

Thank you. Thanks to all who have responded to date to the congregational poll to share your concerns, wants, and preferences in planning for reopening UUCB, our spiritual home. Responses have been most helpful. As we want to hear from as many of you as possible, the poll is still open for those who have not yet responded. [Access the poll here](#). If you prefer a printed copy, contact the office at 510-525-0302 to get one.

Responses to date are informing us on the best protocols and timelines for a safe, phased reopening of UUCB. The Task Force has identified six reopening phases:

1. Closed to all but essential staff, schools, small group rentals, and outdoor activity
2. Open to small church meetings and gatherings
3. Reopening Sunday services only
4. Reopen remaining Sunday programming
5. Post vaccine
6. New Normal

These phases will track the California’s color coded risk levels of Widespread, Substantial, Moderate and Minimal and the risk levels and tolerance of our congregation.

The mission of the Opening Task Force (OTF) is to assist UUCB staff and leadership in planning and implementing the phased reopening of UUCB by engaging scientific and expert input and member concerns, wants and preferences. The Task Force is guided in its effort by the following principles:

1. The common good and the health and welfare of our congregants is foremost in our deliberations.
2. We commit to listen deeply to congregants.
3. We will collaborate with existing church committees by sharing plans and procedures for review and feedback.
4. Reopening will be consistent with risk levels and tolerance of the congregation and be based on science based health indicators set by the



County, the state of California and WHO.

5. The congregation will be kept informed of reopening efforts and have the opportunity to share concerns and suggestions.

*OTF Members: Patrick Cullinane (Chair), Sheldon Jones, Greg Lemieux, Lisa Maynard, Catherine Boyle, Tess O'Riva, and Rev. Michelle Collins. All Task Force members welcome your communications to [planning@uucb.org](mailto:planning@uucb.org).*

Opening Task Force

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## Family Ministry

Catherine Boyle, Director of Family Ministry



Midnight and the sky is an inkwell

The air hangs heavy, making each of our snow-trodden steps a

Slow drag

You look over your shoulder and I

See your face shine briefly as your phone's

Light illuminates our path forward

Your arms have always trembled but have never failed the lantern lesson

"Just wait until dawn," You say,

The chronology of the cosmos only knows the reason

Why in December

The Moon hangs high and for a moment,

There is

stillness

Before the Wheel of Life creaks and carries itself

Forward adding another chariot

To pull you and I

Ever forward

"Just you wait until dawn,"

This chapter never ceases

This year was heavier than the sky and air and coldness

And our hearts

Each month added another stone to them

Weighing us down

So heavy

And the abyss

Opened and welcome our

Inevitable descent

“Wait until dawn,”

And then it happens one morning

Where I least expect it

In the kitchen next to you

Boiling fruit

For jam, for summers, for picnics another horizon away

And I lean forward, breaking in the quiet of

The day, among the miraculous and mundane

And cry

And you put your hand on my back,

“Let’s go to the mountain,” You say,

“And see the world touched by light, to herald a better day than yesterday,

And patience

To keep

Going

Forward and now side by side, I take your hand

In my own and see the sun arise, illuminating the world

Stretching out over the sky, the rays extend

And embrace you and I

It is all of us who are the dawn

Beloveds, this holiday season please be safe. Stay connected and stay healthy. I will see you in 2021.

### **Ordination of Catherine Boyle**

UUCB is ordaining Catherine Boyle, Director of Family Ministry on December 5 at 11 AM on [Zoom](#). Celebrate as Catherine takes the next step in her sacred call as a minister. A virtual reception follows on Zoom afterwards.

### **Spiritual Practice Partner Families Sign-Up Open Until January 3rd 2021.**

In October, UUCB put out a call for Spiritual Practice Partners Families which aims to connect church members of the congregation of every generation by connecting households with folks following a program which explores and develops spiritual practices through weekly Zoom meetings. As Winter is coming and the pandemic stretches onwards, we are opening it up again. This is a good option to connect to people outside of your social cluster and you can cheer each other on in developing a daily spiritual practice habit. [Click here for more information](#). Please fill out this [sheet](#) to sign up. Email Catherine at [family.ministry@uucb.org](mailto:family.ministry@uucb.org) with any questions. **January 3 2021 is the last day to apply.**

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## **From the Board of Trustees**

Cordell Sloan

We are still riding out our nation's periodic electoral power surge. And the tragic atrocity of our national leadership failure with the pandemic defies comprehension. My old buddy William Penn said "True silence is the rest of the mind; it is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment."

We are a community with a well stated mission and for brevity's sake for now I will pack all of it into the single word "justice". In these trying times our powerful voices are required. Yet we must accept the need for life-sustaining silence between the drumbeats of activism. We can rest assured that in this current unprecedented flexing of democratic muscle, more than 160 million votes cast in the presidential election, that our UU history of breaking silence with our UU principles contributed to that. Though our theme this month is silence our voices are still needed both loud and clear. However while we must continue this unending expansion of justice we must remind each other to take time to restore the strength to walk our talk.

We can give each other our silence in striving to listen to each other more deeply and in that silence understand each other better. Knowing that that silence also demonstrates the recognition of the inherent and worth and dignity of whomever one is speaking with. So at this time let us decide to deliberately as a community find ways to create and share moments of respite and relief. Break the silence with our music. Let it fill us with a bit of joy and then contain and savor it in silence for a

time. Embrace various forms of meditation practices. Share a practice with someone, teach someone a practice.

Celebrate your holidays in safety. Make sure your mute is on more than it's off when "zooming". At this time of so much tumult, in our communities (UUCB) human relations I appreciate that with our many complex differences and differences of opinion that we have become more skillful at calling truces and avoiding skirmishes. We are learning how to win peace. A peace that silence can exist within.

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## Benchmarking Task Force

David Roberts

Who loves benchmarking?

The Board has authorized the creation of a limited duration Benchmarking Task Force to assist the Board in evaluating the health, vitality, and sustainability of UUCB in fulfilling its mission. The Task Force is charged with recommending benchmarks, feasible means for collecting the data and information and the analytical framework by which to apply the benchmarks.

We are looking for a few energetic members to join this Task Force that will help create an analytical framework that allows us to better understand the metrics of where we've been, where we are, and what we have to do in the future.

Join the Task Force Convener Dave Roberts and members of the Widening the Circle Task Force for what will be about 3 months' work. We are looking for folks who enjoy working on a team, like collecting, evaluating and analyzing data.

The Board memorandum on the Task Force is [available here](#).

**Charge:** To assist the Board of Trustees in evaluating the health, vitality, and sustainability of UUCB in fulfilling its mission by recommending benchmarks, feasible means for collecting the data and information and the analytical framework by which to apply the benchmarks.

**Composition:** It is suggested that the task force consist of at least one Board member, and also a member of the Widening the Circle of Concern Task Force. The Board would invite members who are interested to contact the two initial designated members and discuss their interests and skills. At least two would be selected to join the Task Force. Rev. Michelle would be involved in an advisory capacity.

**Background:** The Board of Trustees wishes to establish an ongoing process to help evaluate how the church is doing in fulfilling its mission. It has chosen to use the "health, vitality, sustainability, and 'widening the circle'"<sup>1</sup> of the church as touchstones for measuring areas of success and areas of concern. Benchmarks selected by the Board are specifically intended to help identify trends,

improvements and declines, aspects warranting celebration of success, or issues warranting change in resources, policy, direction, or mission-related decisions.

**Expectations:** Benchmarks are expected to include:

- Metrics that rely on historical, current and future quantitative data that can be tracked, compared and analyzed over a period of time. Attendance, number of members and pledge amounts are examples of typical church metrics.
- Qualitative measurements that reveal or expand upon metrics in areas/depth of interest, passion, commitment, values, concerns and other “human” elements that warrant amplification beyond data points. Examples include focus group interviews, and open-ended questions via surveys and pre/post event evaluations.

In developing the recommendations, the Task Force is asked to:

- Research best practices for church/faith community measurements
- Indicate the purpose behind benchmarks selected for measurement, to avoid unnecessary and unutilized data and information collection.
- Look at data and information previously and currently collected.
- Before recommending collecting new data or information, identify how it will be collected and by whom. Additional collection that involves staff must be reviewed with the Minister for feasibility and time burden on staff, and any to be collected by volunteers needs a feasible means of acquisition. Not every detail needs to be spelled out about how measurements will be obtained, but a feasible framework is desired.
- Indicating how the Board would utilize the benchmarks is welcome
- The Benchmarking Task Force is not responsible for performing any benchmarking evaluation, although an illustrative sample may be useful.

**Timing:** This is a limited term task force. The Board asks that the task force aim to present its recommendations to the Board at January or February 2021 meeting (written materials submitted at least one week prior).

**Next Steps:** Once the task force has completed its work, it is anticipated that the Board of Trustees will establish a team to be responsible for implementing the recommendations and report to the Board.

To learn more, contact David Roberts at [davidbobs1@gmail.com](mailto:davidbobs1@gmail.com) and (510) 444-1173.

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<sup>1</sup>See *Doing the Math of Mission: Fruits, Faithfulness, and Metrics*, by Gil Rendle, and *Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change* for background and grounding of these benchmark areas. Other resources include Loren Mead’s *Doing the Math of Missions*, and also the organization called The Unstuck Group.

# From the Treasurer

Larry Nagel

The UUCB Finance team, consisting of Tess O’Riva, Diana Steinbach, Monte Meyer of Shin-ing Star Consulting, and me, continues to work on closing the books for Fiscal Year 2019-20 and to prepare for a financial review of the books for FY 2020-21 and an eventual full financial audit of the books for FY 2021-22. The last audit was done for FY 2015-16, so we are way overdue.



This article describes results for the first quarter of FY 2020-21 which ended on September 30. Year to Date Total Revenue was \$187,742 which is \$57,740 less than budgeted. This shortfall is due largely to pledge income which was \$46,762 less than budgeted. Year to Date Expenses were \$191,800, which is \$ 36,841 less than budgeted.

The bottom line is that, as of September 30, we are running a deficit of \$4,058, while the budget called for a \$16,841 surplus.

**As of September 30, the Mechanics Checking account was \$596,945 and the Mechanics Savings account was \$402,737. These accounts include the \$250,000 Bequest from the Ann Lane estate and the \$382,572 Cope Ministerial Housing Fund. Hence, our cash re-serves at the end of September were \$367,110. The UUA Board Designated Endowment ended the quarter at \$825,869.**

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

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## Endowment Committee

Meet the Newest Members

**Dick Sherman**



Joined UUCB in 2016. Dick practiced law, together with his now deceased wife, for close to 40 years, doing what is known as “civil appellate law” as a small firm known as DeGoff and Sherman. Dick specialized in marital dissolution cases. Other lawyers would retain Dick to handle cases in all courts of appeal throughout the state, several times in the California Supreme Court and once in the United States Supreme Court. Dick served as president of the California Academy of Appellate Lawyers....an invitation-only organization of



about 100 of the most prominent lawyers in the state. He has been active within UUCB, early on agreeing to be on the Chalice Leadership team. He has shown himself to be a keen thinker, a team player, and an excellent problem solver. I, personally, have worked with Dick for almost three years. Dick is kind, insightful, and is now ready to take one more responsibility and work within the church. He will be a wonderful contributor to the Endowment Committee!

### **Anita Mermel**



Joined the committee January 1, 2020. “Anita served on the UU Church of Studio City’s Endowment Committee 5-6 years, then an additional two years “ex officio” in her role as president of that church. Professionally, as part of her work at UCLA as Assistant Dean of the Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, and later as Assistant Dean for External Relations of the new graduate school of Public Policy (now called the Luskin School of Public Affairs), her duties frequently brought her into direct contact with major donors and prospects, central campus development officers, and UCLA Foundation administrators (where UCLA’s endowments reside if not with the UC Regents). Anita became quite familiar with UCLA Endowment Policies, and helped write endowment agreements for several large academic and research programs as well as for student fellowships. In addition to bringing in these types of major gifts, she was also involved in their stewardship, and monitored their growth, annual allowable earnings disbursement, and appropriate use by faculty or academic administrators.”

### **Jason Russell**



Has just joined the committee as of November, 2020. “Jason has 30 years of a diverse professional life in Europe and further abroad. He has founded several successful small companies of his own. He has owned and operated bars and restaurants in Prague, a franchise chain of English language schools for children in Italy; an agency which developed distribution for Italian exports in such markets as India, Israel, Nigeria and Australia; and a real estate investment company in Florida. Each chapter of his professional life presented its own challenges and opportunities and contributed in profound ways to his ability to assess situations, listen with great care, identify pain points and provide real, tailored solutions. As an Edward Jones financial advisor, he has found his calling.”

In addition to this new group of excellent stewards for Future Endowment Endeavors, we are still blessed to have Ira Nelken, long-time member of UUCB who has served on myriad UUCB committees, and Susan Singh, who brings her

experience from being both a past President of the UU of Berkeley Fellowship Board and her work on Endowment Committees with both her UU Congregation in Los Angeles and most recently with the UU Fellowship in Berkeley. Larry Nagel, our UUCB Treasurer, is our Board Liaison, Tess O'Riva Executive Director frequents our meetings, and Anne Greenwood and Linda Laskowski, former Endowment Committee Chairs and both highly competent in all things numbers, continue to help by being willing consultants.

Last, Grace Ulp. While Grace Ulp has "timed out" of the committee, I think we all agree that she has been at the heart of helping us reformulate the purview of the Endowment Committee and in supplying us with structure and tools with which to get our job done!

We are ready to go in 2021!

Lenore Ralston,

Chair, Endowment Committee

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## Endowment Project Oversight Committee

**Dave Roberts (Board), Lenore Ralston (Endowment Committee), Larry Nagel (Buildings & Grounds), Jason Russell and Tom Tripp (Congregants)**

In January of 2018, the congregation authorized the withdrawal of \$758,000 from the Endowment fund, for a specific list of facility improvement projects, with oversight from a committee of church members, the Endowment Project Oversight Committee (EPOC). After completion of the Safir room, the adjacent skylights, and the mold investigation (Phase 1), the Board put the project on "hold" due to overall church financial concerns, and the EPOC became dormant.

In October of 2019, the congregation voted to proceed with the Endowment project, but to modify the scope of the program to complete cottage upgrades, sanctuary furnace replacement, gas line repair (Phase 2), and other work authorized by the board. Phase 2 work has now also been completed.

The total expenditure for phase 1 and phase 2, including construction and soft costs totals \$392,887, which would have been much more, but for a very generous contribution from the Roberts family, which funded the majority of the work on the cottage.

The Building and Grounds Committee has now recommended that the rafter tail repair (phase 3), should start immediately, and they have secured a contractor and designer for the work. This scope of work was in the original endowment program plan, and has been considered urgent for over 10 years. The Oversight Committee has reviewed the Buildings and Grounds committee proposal, and has

recommended this approach to the board, which has approved the award of contracts for this work. Work started in November.

Based on the actual final cost of phases 1 & 2, and the current forecast for the cost of phase 3, and based on required preservation of the endowment funds, there will be a balance of \$258,469 available in the endowment fund, approved by the congregation for future projects.

The Building & Grounds Committee is currently considering other critical, high priority, facility improvement projects, which are appropriate for funding from the Endowment fund. Their future recommendations will be reviewed by the EPOC, and presented to the board for action.

The EPOC will continue to report to the congregation on the status of the use of Endowment funds for building projects.

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## Partner Church Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

So what is UUCB's oldest social justice activity? It might be our partnership with the people and church of Homoródújfalu!

We raised money in the 1920s to replace the church bells taken in World War II. We held a piano concert with Andre Watts in the 1990s to raise money for a tractor. Now, it is the

Village Education Fund which is our primary fundraising and social justice activity.

The Transylvanian Partner Church Committee is one of the applicants to be a Good Neighbor recipient for 2021. In fact, **we are asking for your support when the Social Justice Council meets online December 9 when the Good Neighbor organizations are selected.**



I don't like to bring politics into this space, but it should be noted that Romania's president has congratulated president-elect Joe Biden at the same time that Rudy Giuliani is trying to find Romanian dirt on Hunter Biden. Hungary's prime minister did congratulate Biden, but he staunchly supported the re-election of Trump. This bit of geopolitical maneuvering shows that our partnership with Homoródújfalu is always going to be played out on a corner of a larger international stage. The need for our social justice activity on that stage is always important.

Be sure to set your shoes out on the hearth on the eve of St. Nicholas Day. If you have been good, you will find a golden twig in your shoes (along with little gifts). Haven't been so good this year? You might awaken on the morning of December 6 and find a lump of coal instead! That's why we ask for your donations so that the children in the village get more golden twigs and less coal.

Contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at [steph62850@yahoo.com](mailto:steph62850@yahoo.com) or Anne Greenwood at [annegt1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:annegt1@sbcglobal.net) to understand more about how your financial

contributions and support matter.

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## Social Justice Council

### Literature Film & Drama Contingent POW-WOW Celebrates Native American History Month

**Opening Words**, by Sean Neil-Barron

We gather together as a community of seekers,  
to honour the interdependence of life,  
to respect the dignity of all,  
and to honour the land we walk humbly upon.

Friends, let us acknowledge that we walk upon the traditional territories of the Huchiun (hoo-chen) Chochenyo (cho-chen-yo) Ohlone (o-lon-ee), federally recognized as the Muwekma (moo-wek-m[shwa]) peoples, and their ancestors. It is upon their land that we in the Berkley area reside, and they who continue to cry out for justice and self-determination.

We are blessed with a space and opportunity to strive to live out our common principles: to bring justice, equity and compassion into our daily lives, to resist all that threatens the earth and her people, and to live out our dream of a world community of peace, liberty and justice for all.

Let these thoughts carry us forth as we journey and worship together.

Blessed Be. --**Rev. Michelle Collins**

**The Youth and Children's Choir:** We were delighted to participate in this important all-church event. We sang *Friendship Song* from *All Spirits Sing*, a Native American musical story by Joanne Shenandoah of the Oneida Nation, and from *Singing the Journey*, hymn #1073, *The Earth Is Our Mother*. We talked about what UU values share with the values in this song.

--**Katie Lipka, YCC Director**

**Religious Education Presentation:** We learned that the true, unjust, and unkind history of the indigenous peoples of this country must be taught – not just to adults but to all generations. Knowing history, and particularly the denial of this history, helps allies to teach it to people young and old who do not know it. The presentation featured writing from two indigenous people, Métis writer Louise Bernice Halfe and 17-year-old climate-activist Xiye Bastida, to show different indigenous generational experience. The struggle for indigenous peoples' rights, sovereignty and political agency is interwoven in the fight against climate change,

clean air, water and the environment. In our fight for justice, we must link arms with our indigenous siblings around the world, because knowing their knowledge, connections and practices regarding the environment helps non-indigenous people to understand, visualize and actualize another way of being and doing. If human life on Earth is to exist in the next seven generations, it is up to us to listen to and follow our indigenous siblings.

--**Rev. Catherine Boyle, Religious Education Director**

**Adult Discussion of: *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz:**

1. **Doctrine of Discovery:** The 15<sup>th</sup> century awarded to Christian explorers the right to claim lands they “discovered” and lay claim to those lands for their Christian Monarchs. Any land not inhabited by Christians was available to be discovered, claimed and exploited. If the “pagan” inhabitants could be converted, they might be spared. If not, they could be enslaved or killed. The doctrine was Chief Justice John Marshall’s explanation of the way in which colonial powers laid claim to newly discovered lands during the Age of Discovery. **Manifest Destiny:** The 19<sup>th</sup> century doctrine or belief that the expansion of the US throughout the American continents was both justified and inevitable; that White Americans were divinely ordained to settle the entire continent of North America. **–Mimi Bull**
2. **The White Supremacy Complex:** We are often asked why white males are dominating and controlling in our society. Why are we not aware of these privileges? Why do we not want to acknowledge that it damages our relationships and leadership roles? The answer to these questions is that we are afraid to give up the privileges and advantages given to us at birth. However, we have made solemn vows to do our best to reverse these traits and bring equality and equity to our society. **–David Danby and Smiley Nelson**
3. **Reflections:** I grew up on a small farm outside of Omaha, Nebraska. I attended a small rural school and one of my classmates was a Sioux native. One of her brothers, John Trudell, became active in Indigenous Peoples’ rights and was one of those who took over Alcatraz in the 1960’s. I also had a childhood friend that I did not know was a member of the Santee Sioux nation. I found out a few years ago that she was taken from her mother and adopted out to a white family in Omaha. She is now a nationally recognized artist with some of her works displayed in museums. My father was a history buff and once said to me, “The white man has nothing to be proud of in the way he treated the Indian.” **–Anne Wardell**
4. I spoke about having Choctaw ancestors who were forced to migrate from Mississippi to what was then Indian Territory but later became the state of Oklahoma. I said I was encouraged to be proud of that ancestry by my

Oklahoma-raised parents and that in the last couple of years I'd been getting more in touch with my Indigenous roots in various ways, so it was natural for me to join the Honoring Indigenous Peoples group. --**Ann Harlow**

**The Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group (HIP):** We acknowledge that UUCB occupies the unceded land of the Muwekma Ohlone; the painful history of genocide and land theft, and that this history and present-day policies and acts continue to harm indigenous peoples. We pledge to understand and work to mitigate acts of harm by actively supporting, honoring and partnering with Ohlone members in the community with ongoing and enduring actions. We have created a list of action items and have begun implementation, and we welcome new members! --**Helen Tinsley-Jones**

**Evelie Delfino Sales Posch** gifted us in her inimitable way with two poems by Starhawk, which she arranged and set to music: *Elixir* and *Hymn of Forgiveness*, for which we were truly grateful!

**Closing words**, by Jean M. Rickard Rowe:  
We have a calling in this world:  
We are called to honor diversity,  
To respect differences with dignity,  
And to challenge those who would forbid it.  
We are people of a wide path.  
Let us be wide in affection and go our way in peace.  
--**Rev. Michelle Collins**

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## From the Executive Director

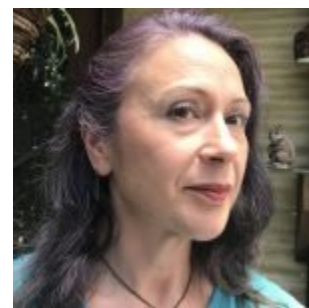
Tess Snook O'Riva, Executive Director

I find stillness to be an ironic theme this month. I feel like I've been stuck in the mud for months!

This is the first week I've felt some hope. There's still a lot of bad news out there, but hope propels us forward. I tell people during check-ins that I finally feel like my nose is above the water level. Sure beats having to struggle to breathe, a recurring theme in 2020.

It also seems like I'm not the only one. Interest in volunteering and doing projects has increased, even though California is tightening its pandemic restrictions again. We all seem to be more comfortable with the interventions we can control and staying away from dangerous situations, which is heartening.

There is progress in construction projects, documentation efforts, storage, landscaping, and building upgrade discussions for health & safety. We are actively





moving towards livestreaming, building on the successes of our online presence during this unstable time.

So as the holiday season moves into high gear, I am hopeful that although different, the ways we celebrate will be meaningful and create stories for future generations. I will get to see UUCB decorated for the holidays through the dedication of Family Ministry volunteers. I will get to hear music lead by Bryan Baker. I will light candles and think of my UUCB family, totally new to me just a year ago.

So no, I am not known for moving slowly. But this is a time to pause, look around, be thankful and gracious for all those around and before us, and honor how far we have come. In the dark time of the year is when we can go deep into our hearts, honor how hard this all is, and be still.

You are not alone.

*Feel free to reach out to me directly ([ed@uucb.org](mailto: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](http://uucb.org) for details)!*



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