

Beacon on the Hill May 2018

From the Ministers

Let's get creative!

For May, our theme in worship will be creativity, and it's something we think about a lot. As musicians and ministers, cooks and parents and a lot of other things, we create many things. While we may never create a Sistine Chapel or a renowned symphony, every day each of us creates new things and new ideas.



Our church is no different. A lot of things have changed in the 127 years this church has been plugging along, and the constant creativity of our members and friends is a big part of that.

Lately, we've been working hard to think creatively about how we do church and what we can do better or differently as we enter into a new era – and hint, we're always entering into a new era! The world keeps on changing, and we have to change with it.

The board's working groups on sustainability are a big part of this creative thinking. The working groups are tasked with gathering information about a number of different ways we can ensure the financial sustainability of this church into the future, and thinking creatively about solutions that might not seem obvious at first will be an important part of their work.

Our social justice council thinks each year about where it is being called and what it will focus on. The creativity and commitment of those who have worked this year to make us a sanctuary congregation and prepare to help immigrant families has been inspiring, as has the work of the Green Sanctuary team in engaging us around environmental issues.

The creativity of our music program, which each year leads us to new heights with all of their work in worship, in performances, and in rehearsal deserves all the praise it gets and more.

Our family ministry program has been working on how they can best balance a lot of competing needs and desires and is thinking creatively about what is best for our congregation, our children, and our staff. Even something as simple as moving our nursery for a few weeks so that we could revamp the nursery building took a creative mindset to make happen.

We've also done creative work in worship: to give one significant example, in Reverse RE (Religious Education) we thought creatively about how we do worship and opportunities for spiritual deepening by reversing our usual pattern. Instead of children leaving the sanctuary to go to their activities, they stayed in for worship and we invited the adults to leave for various opportunities.

It's tempting to stay in the same old comfortable patterns, but we can't. A new world requires our commitment, our love, and our creativity to come fully alive.

In faith,

Revs. Christian and Kristin

Sunday Worship Services in May

Sanctuary, 11 am

Theme for May: Creativity

May 6 – *Doctors of Durability*, Rev. Christian Schmidt. Each year this congregation bestows a special honor upon members who have turned 80. This week in worship we will welcome our newest “Doctors of Durability” and hear wisdom from some elders as we explore together how to grow in resilience.

May 13 – *Flower Communion*, Amanda Weatherspoon, with Melissa Rosales, Worship Associate. Please bring a flower of your choice to church and place it in one of the large vases at the front of the sanctuary before worship begins. Don't worry – if you forget to bring a flower we will have plenty of extra so that everyone can participate in this much-beloved Unitarian tradition. This is a service for all ages.

May 20 – *The Ends Are Just the Beginning*, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt, with Jeanne Foster, Worship Associate. Visa International founder Dee Hock said, “Make an empty space in any corner of your mind and creativity will instantly fill it.” This week in worship we will empty some space in our minds and hearts for creativity to fill us as we begin to think about the future of our congregation. The annual budget meeting will immediately follow worship, with childcare in the nursery.

May 27 – *Memories and Memorials*, Kathryn Jay, with David Roberts, Worship Associate. Memorial Day is more than the traditional start to summer. How do we remember about our past, especially the wars we have fought and the soldiers who lost their lives fighting for their country, in a way that promotes healing and spiritual growth?

May Good Neighbor (sharing our offerings): [Youth Spirit Artworks](#) places homeless and low-income youth and young adults in art-based jobs. This year, Youth Spirit Artworks is helping 158 youth and young adults build strong skills, experience, self-confidence, and income in which they can take great pride.

Personal Theology

Sundays, 9:30 am, Fireside Room

May 6 – Imam Wali Muhammed, spiritual leader of the Muslim Mission Center in Richmond, CA. *Al-Islam*.

May 13 – Lonnie Moseley (UUCB Membership Co-Chair) and **Cordell Sloan** (UUCB Board member and Stewardship Chair), *A Black Catholic/Christian Couple Wakes up One Morning as Unitarian Universalists*.

May 20 – Rev. Emese Bodor, Balazs Scholar at Starr King School for the Ministry, ordained Unitarian minister in Romania, and religious teacher and school chaplain at the János Zsigmond Unitarian High School. ***The Importance of Education in Transylvanian Unitarian Communities.***

May 27 – Planning and Evaluation. Please join us to help evaluate past speakers as well as to offer suggestions for future topics and/or speakers. Your input and ideas are important to keeping the Personal Theology program current and meaningful.

In June, the **Summer Forum** series will start in the same time and place, Sundays at 9:30 in the Fireside Room (see below).

Humanist Connections

Sundays, 12:30 pm, Chrysalis Room

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

May 6: *Humanism of Steve Pinker and Harari*, Lee Lawrence

May 13: *We've Seen This Before: Six Transitions in Human Evolution*, Karen Voorhees

May 20: *Humanism of Simone de Beauvoir*, Ray Nelson

May 27: *Tapping into Society's Wisdom*, Kathy Rai

Special Events in May

Note: The First Thursday Potlucks and Evening Worship have been discontinued due to declining attendance.

Willkommen . . . Bienvenue . . .

Welcome

Life is a cabaret, old chum – come to the cabaret! Six performances, **May 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, and 13. *Cabaret***, the musical by John Kander, lyrics by Fred Ebb, and based on the book by Joe Masteroff, will be presented by Theatre of the Blue Moon as a fundraiser (and consciousness-raiser) for UUCB. 8 pm on Fridays & Saturdays; 3 pm on Sundays. Tickets \$20 adult, \$15 student/senior, available at the door or through brownpapertickets.com. No one turned away for lack of funds. Post-Show Talk-Back on Sunday, May 6, and Pre-Show Talk on Friday, May 11, at 7 pm with the Director. Invite your friends!

Sun. May 6, 12:30 pm: LFDC's 3rd Annual Guest Speaker: **Professor James Lance Taylor**, author of *Black Nationalism in the United States: From Malcolm X to Barack Obama*. (More information in Social Justice News below)

Sun. May 6, after Worship Service: Doctors of Durability luncheon in the Fireside Room. Contact Barbara Cullinane if you'd like to help out.

Sat. May 12, 9 am–noon: Lay Leaders' Orientation & Calendaring Summit

Sat. May 19, 2 pm: Service to Ordain Amanda Weatherspoon. In our tradition, it's not a bishop or special conference that ordains ministers – that power rests solely with congregations. Please join us for the honor and privilege of celebrating Amanda's ordination to the Unitarian Universalist ministry!

Sun. May 20, after worship service: **Annual Celebration and Planning Congregational Meeting**

Preview of Summer Forum: Towards a Just World

Sundays, 9:30–10:45 am in the Fireside Room

Sun. June 3 – *Gun Violence*. An open-ended discussion ... background checks, repeal of the second amendment, school safety. Led by Warren Zittel, Joann and Jeff Marshall, Charlie Hewitt, Lindsay Lam.

Sun. June 10 – *Occupella*. Original and familiar political songs led by Hali Hammer.

Sun. June 17 – *Toby Blome*. Active in Code Pink International Women's movement. Her special focus is drones and their growing development.

Sun. June 24 – *Human Trafficking*. Arlene Hipp works in a non-profit organization coordinated with the Alameda District Attorney.

Family Ministry

Merrin Clough, Director of Family Ministry

One of the greatest challenges our youth leaders recognize in building a vibrant youth program is communication. Sound familiar? Right now our activities for teens are, to be honest, poorly attended. After considering why participation is so low, the Youth Adult Team leaders have identified the first big barrier. Youth rarely know what's going on in youth group. Without information they simply can't make plans to show up when there is a special activity.

Though solving that challenge is complicated. Some teens prefer

communicating via text messages, while some don't even have phones. Some advisors only use email. Everyone, it seems, is busy and flooded with lots of information to digest. Rethinking communication norms is certainly a challenge of our times. After exploring our needs and doing some research we've decided to try out a new tool.

Flocknote is a service that lets you choose how you'd like to get announcements – via email or text message. It's created for churches and thoughtfully facilitates connections between people across the age and technology spectrum – giving each person the choice of how they'd like to get announcements. Best of all, it's designed intentionally to protect young users. All contact info is kept private. Both messages sent to a group and those sent privately are visible to Family Ministry staff, who regularly review activity. This ensures the transparency and documentation required by UUCB's safety policy.

Youth, parents, and advisors can sign up now. It's easy. Text *uuchalice* to 84576 from your phone. Or visit our church at: flocknote.com/uucb. Want more info? See our [FAQ page](#). Or visit www.flocknote.com.

Our youth leaders know that improving the communication challenges is just one step to better engaging their peers. Later this month we are having a Youth Visioning Overnight to get input from the youth community. I've been encouraging youth and advisors to think of our dwindling participation as an opportunity to rethink youth ministry. Dropping attendance is certainly a clear sign that what we're doing has gone stale. My hope is we can take a fresh look at what would be most meaningful and fun for our middle and high school youth.

The Youth Visioning Overnight begins Saturday, May 5, at 10 am. It ends Sunday at noon. Logan Stump-Vernon is planning games and yummy meals we'll cook together. Merrin Clough is pulling together the visioning workshops and working with youth to lead a late-night worship. Middle school and high school youth and advisors are invited for all or part of the

event – especially the Sunday morning session at 11 am. Join us! Have questions? Email merrin@uucb.org.

President's Column

Jack Duggan

On April 21, the Board of Trustees had a retreat in which we worked on the Ends (goals) for our congregation. It amazed me how easy it was. The work had already been done by the congregation in our Mission and Visioning meetings. The results were nothing unexpected. We know who we are and what we want.

We want financial sustainability, a strong unified congregation and to make an impact for the good in our community beyond our church and congregation.

What strikes me now is how open this process has been. This isn't the work of a focus group or a key committee, but the work of the whole congregation in open meetings. Simple to state but not so easy to live. Change isn't easy. There's nothing new about these ends, it's who we are. What has changed is the world around us.

We will be who we want to be as a congregation if we work together openly and with trust.

This is an open process. There are no secret agendas. We are family working together. The broader, the deeper, and the better the participation, the better will be our outcomes.

I would add that all Board of Trustees meetings are open and everyone is welcome. We meet the first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm.

[Editor's note: There is also generally a table in the Atrium on Sundays where a board member (often Maryann Simpson) will be happy to answer questions and listen to your ideas.]

Thoughts from Community Ministry

Rev. Sue Magidson

“Take time to look.” These words of Georgia O’Keeffe hang on my refrigerator. It’s such a wise and simple spiritual practice – taking the time to deeply engage one of our senses – and it’s so easy to forget.

It’s spring and I’m looking at the wonder unfolding around me. As I walk through my neighborhood, I delight in catching bare twigs just starting to sprout – a flower here or leaf there. How does a seemingly dead wisteria vine suddenly burst forth with flowers? And what about the baby oak leaves – barely a half inch long at first. It’s hard to believe that they’ll increase tenfold before they’re full size.

Spring is a particular pleasure, but trees are my salvation, with or without leaves. After a difficult hospital visit, I go outside and look at a tree, watching each tree dance to its own rhythm as the breeze wafts through its branches. I look, and look, and am restored.

What helps restore *you*? Is it looking intently with your eyes? Running your fingers through your pet’s fur – not absent-mindedly, but with your full attention? Burying your nose in jasmine or freesia? Truly savoring a single bite of food? Listening to music – without doing anything else?

Take time to look, dear ones. Take time to look and sniff and taste and feel and listen. Wonder is all around us.

Coordinating Team Notes

Deborah Schmidt, Coordinating Team Convener

My first exposure to the UUCB budget was as a very naïve congregant. Several years of board experience have improved my understanding of its construction, but this has been my first experience of drafting the document as a CT member. Now I truly appreciate the challenge of balancing a large and complex budget that has so many moving parts, not the least of which is pledge income.

We had hoped for a 20% increase in pledging this year. Many of you have risen to that challenge generously, and for that we are so very grateful. Nevertheless, our current projection is for pledge revenues to remain about the same as last year. We intend to be very realistic about pledging, rental and fundraising income. At the same time, some expenses have risen unavoidably. And we are determined to balance this budget.

As a result, this budget is very trim, responsible and intentional. In order to balance it, we have already made some very difficult choices, such as not having an intern minister next year, along with cuts in facilities staffing, in family ministry, and in music. The budget we will present for your vote on May 21 is balanced by a Faith, Hope and Charity line for additional pledge income of over \$60,000. If we divide that amount among all of us equally, it comes to \$165 per person. Some of us may not be able to add to our current pledges, but not all pledges have come in yet, and perhaps some of us can do more. Daniel and I are planning to increase our pledge.

This link will take you to the latest version of our [budget](#). The CT will willingly answer your questions about any of this. I hope this understanding inspires some serious talk among ourselves and that we will meet in May prepared to make our vision for this loving community a reality. I think we can do this!!!

The Coordinating Team meets on first and third Thursdays from 10 am to 12

noon. If you're interested in attending, please contact the CT Convener to verify meeting time and place. Questions for the CT? Email CT@uucb.org.

Program Council News

Gail Simpson, Program Council Convener

I missed the April Program Council meeting because I was rehearsing my part in UUCB's upcoming production of the Kander and Ebb musical *Cabaret*.^{*} Our own Donna Davis stars as Fraulein Schneider.

Cabaret is a bold choice for UUCB. Set in Berlin during the rise of the Nazis, the musical features catchy tunes, raunchy dance numbers, and an underlying political commentary that's tailor-made for 2018. Theatergoers will kick off the evening by toasting New Year's Eve 1930 at the Kit Kat Club, and the narrative will then plunge them into the increasingly disturbing reality of a decadent and dangerous pre-World War II Germany.

"Gritty, raw and entertaining, *Cabaret* is potent political theater and a timely commentary on the divisive forces at work in our country today," says renowned Bay Area director Erin Merritt. "After the First World War, Germans were desperate to make their country great again. And one of the show's central themes is the danger of doing nothing in the face of extremism."

"As an organization that resists oppression in all its forms, UUCB is proud to host this production," says Rev. Christian. "Cabaret is yet another way for us to promote UUCB's values of tolerance, inclusion, and the importance of taking a stand."

So come help us show visitors how UUCB can help them take a stand. The Social Justice Table will be featured in our lobby. Contact your Program

Council Rep about how you can help. Tickets are available in the Atrium on Sundays or on Brown Paper Tickets.

* **WARNING:** Production may not be suitable for people under 18.

Social Justice Council News

Sheldon Jones, Reporter

The LFDC shared MAUBs and our lives at a very special meeting on April 1. We also worked out our book/event list for the remainder of the year:

May 6:	Guest speaker Professor James L. Taylor. Held in the sanctuary (more info below)
June 3:	Book discussion: <i>The Color of Water</i> , by James McBride.
June 23:	Special Event: Screening of <i>Healing Justice</i> , by Shakti Butler (discussion facilitated by Ami Gaston).
July 1:	Book discussion: <i>Citizen</i> , by Claudia Rankine.
August 5:	Guest speaker Shahrnush Parsipur will discuss her work.
Sept. 2:	Book discussion: <i>White Rage</i> , by Carol Anderson.
Oct. 7:	Fishbowl Exercise, facilitated by Julie Rogers.
Nov. 4:	Book discussion: <i>Sign My Name to Freedom</i> , by Betty Reid Soskin.
Dec. 2:	Book discussion: <i>Blink</i> , by Malcolm Gladwell.

Sunday, May 6, LFDC, Annual Guest Speaker Event (postponed from March 4). **Professor James Lance Taylor** is the author of *Black Nationalism in the United States: From Malcolm X to Barack Obama*, which earned a 2012 “Outstanding Academic Title” from *Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*. He is a former president of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists, served as chair of the Department of Politics at the University of San Francisco 2012–15, as faculty coordinator of the African American Studies Program 2015–17, and chair of the Committee on the Status of Blacks in Political Science for the American Political Science

Association, 2016–17.

Recently, the Social Justice Council voted to support a proposal addressing the issue of **trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation**. The Bay Area is a major hub of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). Approximately 80% of these victims are people of color and female. What can we do as a community of faith and love to help protect our most important asset, our children? The Social Justice Council hopes to shine a spotlight on this issue using education and advocacy as tools of discovery and action over the course of the next two years. This proposal will be presented at the May congregational meeting for approval by the members of UUCB.

On June 9th UUCB will host the monthly vigil held at the West County Detention Facility. We invite you to join us and make this an ALL-CHURCH, intergenerational event! These vigils are held to call attention to the fact that the sheriff of Contra Costa County has a contract with ICE to detain undocumented people at WCDF. The vigils started in 2011 and have been held each month since then. We will carpool to WCDF from UUCB. We, as UUCBers, will all be hosts to the other folks at the vigil, greeting them and handing out programs. We will provide light refreshments. AND, we are looking for people who like to sing!

Partner Church Committee News

Stephanie Ann Blythe, Reporter

Several rounds of thanks are in order. First to Ann Harlow, Lisa Maynard, and Gerry Keenan who put on a baked potato bar following the April 8 service. Our planned goulash lunch had to be cancelled when too many of our lunch makers were under the weather ... (and thanks to those who put a donation in the basket – \$55 to our Village Education Fund!). Next, thanks go to Lynne Cahoon for hosting a dinner with Balázs Scholar Emese Bodor.

Finally, let's thank Anne Greenwood who hosted a dinner when Emese's brother and his wife visited the Bay Area recently. Meanwhile, our next events are still going ahead:

Sunday, May 20, 9:30 am in the Fireside Room, Balázs Scholar Rev. Emese Bodor will be the Personal Theology speaker. She will speak on "The Importance of Education in Transylvanian Unitarian Communities." This topic relates to our ongoing Village Education Fund in our Partner Village of Homoródújfalú.

Saturday, June 2, 7 pm in the Fireside Room, join us for a dessert social with conversation and presentations on Transylvania and Unitarians. We will wish Rev. Emese Bodor a fond farewell to UUCB. Our past intern minister, Zackrie Vinczen, will talk about his experience as the 2017 Balázs Exchange Scholar.

Can't wait? Want to get involved? Contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net for all the details.

The UUCB Freestone Retreat – Its Past and Future

Don Klose, Freestone Committee

The future of our church's Freestone Retreat has become a topic of discussion, and the congregation may be asked to decide its fate in the coming months. But many members are not yet familiar with where and what it is, its long history, how it has contributed to the life of the church over the years, and what it has to offer in the future.

Perched on a rustic knoll overlooking Barnett Valley in rural Sonoma County, not far from its namesake, the little town of Freestone, the Retreat is a geodesic dome, set in a 12-acre parcel, 40 feet in diameter, wrapped on the west side by a spacious redwood deck with a breathtaking view. It offers a sacred space for community building, fellowship, solitude and spiritual reconnection with the natural world away from the urban hustle. Never drawing on the church's general fund, the Retreat came into being in fits and starts, by many church members' countless gifts of volunteer labor, materials, donations, loans and bequests; it stands now as a testament to their vision, devotion, and tenacity. Thus, the Retreat is truly one of our church's endowments. While declared "officially" completed in 2005, it always has been and still is a work in progress.

The Freestone Retreat has fallen out of use during the last few years because of deferred maintenance, thus interrupting its long history of playing an active role in the life of the church. It has served as a sacred space for weddings, Board retreats, committee meetings, workshops, such as writing groups, gatherings of friends and families for reunion, fun excursions for youth, and meditative and prayerful getaways for peace and quiet.

The Freestone Retreat is available and useable for daytime gatherings. After further maintenance is completed, the three adjoining bedrooms will be ready for overnight use. Inside the dome, comfortable sofas surrounding the freestanding fireplace invite discussion, and the conference-size tables can host meetings and/or meals prepared in the fully functioning kitchen. The deck outside provides ample space for meetings, places for intimate conversations, or time alone with a book, while providing an unobstructed view of the starry night sky.

The Freestone Committee encourages church members to visit the Retreat and become acquainted, or reacquainted, with Freestone. You will then be in a good position to assess its present value and its potential for the future life of our church. Members of our committee are ready and happy to facilitate

your visit – arrival to departure. And please drop by our information table in the Social Hall to chat with us with your questions and concerns. If you are ready to schedule a visit, please contact one of our members, including Bob Moore (510-913-1009), Terry Stokes (510-725-7850), or Don Klose (510-697-5307).

Poetry

THANK YOU

by Dorothy Crews Herzberg

I hope it really is a fact

That I have been able to give back!

I tried to bring social justice to you

Creating programs, trying something new.

I could not have done it alone, it's true

I could not have done it without you.

It's important not just to talk

To walk the walk, walk the talk.

It's been exciting and rewarding, too

I hope it's been the same for you.

Caring and working for causes humanitarian

That's what it means to be Unitarian!

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.

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

Social Justice email list: Email sejones1950@gmail.com