

Beacon on the Hill September 2017

From the Ministers

Revs. Kristin and Christian Schmidt



In 1966, Robert F. Kennedy quoted what he said was a Chinese curse (it turns out that there's no good evidence that it actually is!): "May you live in interesting times."

Welcome, friends, to interesting times.

Our nation's government is making decisions and actions that are both troubling and often baffling. White supremacists, whether they are called neo-Nazis or white nationalists or the alt-right or alt-lite or a dozen other terms, are literally marching in our streets and wreaking violence and even death. We hear about violence around the world designed to promote hateful ideologies from many sources. Climate change is accelerating and causing problems across the globe.

But even in all of this, there is also optimism and signs of hope. The removal of Confederate monuments which present a skewed and nostalgic view of our nation's history is a painful, difficult, but necessary step towards healing. The counter-protests have generally been orders of magnitude larger than the hateful rallies they are opposing. Despite the U.S. pulling out of the Paris Climate Accords, the rest of the world is moving forward to make real steps toward slowing climate change.

So it is in the midst of this, the trouble and the hope, that we exist. It is more important than ever at this time for us to affirm who we are and where we are going as a congregation. That's what mission and vision (which you may have heard us talking about lately!) are really about: Who are we? What is core to

us? And what are we called to do about it? Who will we be in the future?

We can't, by ourselves, solve all the world's problems, and we shouldn't try. Rather, we must discern which of them we are called to engage – which of the infinite number of opportunities and challenges we are passionate about, that we can do something about, and that are true to who we are as the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, and then work as hard as we can to do good in the world!

Over the next few months (and starting with meetings Sept. 7 at 7:30 p.m. and Sept. 17 at 12:30 p.m.), we'll be holding sessions that explore our values, the context in which we exist, and what we should focus on for the future. We invite you to participate as much as you can as we form the future of UUCB, because it is only through engaging our entire church community in this work that we can be successful. It's more important than ever in this time!

In faith,

Revs. Christian and Kristin

Sunday Worship Services in September

Sanctuary, 11 am

Theme for Month: Welcome

September 3 – ***In the Fields***, Rev. Christian Schmidt, with Jeanne Foster, Worship Associate. Work done well is a wonderful thing, but no person should be judged solely by the work they do. Come for a service about labor, humanity, and respecting each and every person on this planet.

Sept. 10 – ***Breaking Boundaries***, Rev. Christian Schmidt, with Cordell Sloan, Worship Associate. Join us this Solano Stroll Sunday for a service about our congregation's connection with our wider communities and why

we're called to take our welcome outside our church walls.

Sept. 17 – ***The Fundamentals of Caring***, Amanda Weatherspoon, Intern Minister, with David Roberts, Worship Associate. What does it mean to be a “Welcoming Congregation” in these turbulent times? This week we will explore ways that we are called to care for one another, as well as the immense responsibility of caring for our wider community and global village. What are ways that we live up to this call within and outside of these walls, and how can we prepare ourselves to welcome the challenges that surely lay ahead?

Sept. 24 – ***It's Not About Us***, Rev. Kristin Schmidt. Welcoming strangers is championed in many traditions, but it can be tough to put into practice. This week in worship we will consider how we can welcome others more fully by moving past our class and cultural assumptions and putting the needs of others first.

Plus: Sept. 24, 12:30 pm – ***Blessing of the Animals***, Rev. Christian Schmidt. Calling all pets for a blessing of the animals service out on the Terrace. Animals of all kinds are welcome in carriers, on leashes, or you can even bring a picture of your pet to be blessed.

September Good Neighbor (sharing our offerings):
Read-Aloud Volunteer Program is a relationship-based program that fosters in children the joy and love of learning through reading and story-telling. The Read-Aloud Volunteer Program is a non-profit organization that recruits and places adult volunteers to read one-on-one with children in Richmond and San Pablo Elementary schools.

Personal Theology

Sundays, 9:30 am, Fireside Room

Sept. 3: **John Maes** will talk about ***Evidence Based Spirituality***. John is a *UUCB member since 1998, former conscientious objector* during the U.S. war in Southeast Asia, a lifelong spiritual seeker, and a perennial attendee of Personal Theology presentations.

Sept. 10: **Reverend Christian Schmidt** will discuss ***The Problem of Hell: Universalism, Evil, and Our World***. Rev. Schmidt is the UUCB's Senior Co-Minister, a mystical humanist, and a father.

Sept. 17: **Dr. Stephen Herrmann**, Jungian psychotherapist specializing in dream works and vocational development, will speak on *The Future of Transpersonal Psychology*. He is an author of several books, a poet, teacher, a scholar, and a scholar candidate at C. G. Jung Institute in San Francisco.

Sept. 25: **Dr. Beverly Allen**, Professor Emerita at Syracuse University and Visiting Professor at Stanford, will present a discussion of **Courtly Love and the Great Heresy: Medieval Ciphers and the Turning of the Church**.

Humanist Connections

Sundays, 12:30 pm, followed by a potluck at 2 pm. Check kiosk in Atrium for location.

Format: A 10- to 15-minute presentation followed by moderated, timed discussion. All are welcome!

Sept. 3: ***The Alternate Realities of Philip K. Dick***, Ray Nelson

Sept. 10: ***How to Win in 2018/2020***, Sherry Fuzesy

Sept. 17: ***What One Thing Are You Most Proud of in Your Life?***
Diane Rusnak

Sept. 24: ***Eliminating Poverty in California***, Lee Lawrence

Special Events

Fri. Sept. 1, 10–11:30 am – **Ministers’ Community Office Hours.** Drop by for a chat with one of the ministers. Inn Kensington, 293 Arlington Ave.

Thurs. Sept. 7, 5:30 pm – **Potluck supper and Vespers service, followed by a conversation on “Mission and Vision: Celebrating Our Roots”**

Sat. Sept. 10, 9:30 am – Assemble for **Solano Stroll** parade

Sunday, Sept. 17, 12:30 pm – Light lunch and congregational conversation on **“Mission and Vision: Celebrating Our Roots”**

Friday, September 22, 6–8 pm – **Church on Tap** with the ministers. Albany Taproom, 745 San Pablo Ave.

Re-engaging Our Mission and Vision

In the first phase of our process to reengage with our shared mission and vision, we will explore the best of our church’s heritage, paving the way for future conversations about who we are as a congregation and what is possible for our future. **Please join the ministers, members of the Board, and members of the Committee on Ministry on Thursday, September 7 at 7:30 pm or Sunday, September 17 after the service** for a joyful conversation about what you have loved and valued most about the UU Church of Berkeley since you became part of our community!

All three phases of this process will be guided by the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process. AI encourages organizations to discover their focus on where their successes, energies, and passions are, rather than getting stuck in problem-solving mode. As David L. Cooperrider and Diana Whitney write in their book A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry, “In AI the arduous task of intervention gives way to the speed of imagination and

innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiraling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, and design.” To learn more about AI, please visit <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm>.

Family Ministry

Oh September, bring me back to sweet routine!

September is a whirlwind of the old and new blending together to pioneer a fresh beginning. It is both settling back into pre-summer schedules and starting off anew with small treasures like backpacks and lunch boxes and significant stretches like a new grade, new teachers, a new school, and new friends.

Here in Family Ministry, we’re also relaxing into the routine of Sunday classes and the return of long-running favorite programs like the Parent Discussion Circle, OWL, and Parent’s Night Out that encourage self-awareness, engagement, and relationships. We’re off to a strong start and can’t wait to tell you about two exciting projects – Children’s Chapel and Legacy Links!

- **Children’s Chapel** – Our core values and sense of place in the world are shaped from an early age. This program fosters faith formation and connection with UU principles for elementary-age youth. It is an opportunity for students ages 5–12 to participate in their own, unique multi-age service with one of our ministers. Youth will speak in their own voice, engage with the Sunday’s topic at their level, and learn about our congregation’s rituals in a deeper way. Children’s Chapel is in place of RE classes on the Sundays it is occurring. Here is a snapshot of how it will work.

– 11 am – youth attend service with parent/guardian(s)

– 11:15 am – youth dismissed to Fireside Room for the remainder of the

service

– 12 pm – Minister takes youth to the field and parents will pick their child(ren) up there

Parents and siblings are always welcome, but the service will be geared towards ages 5-12. Depending on the feedback we receive, we will consider offering a chapel service for our middle-school youth next year.

Our first Children's Chapel, led by Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt, is on September 3. We hope you and your child(ren) will check it out.

- **Legacy Links** – Our UUCB youth and elders form a “legacy linkage.” This project encourages and provides opportunities for youth and elders to meaningfully connect through shared experiences and perspectives. As we lose older church friends, we not only miss their presence, we also lose their memories of our history. In these uncertain political times, the experience of our elders in past challenges can help bring our UU values to life. Elders have lived through and learned from Pearl Harbor, the Japanese Internment, World War II, the McCarthy Era, and the Civil Rights, Peace, and Feminist movements. Our youth offer us fresh points of view and hope for the future. Elders and youth will have discussions during RE classes. These meetings will occur Sundays during youth group on October 22 and December 3. For more information contact [Winnie Sayre](#) or [Karl Rimbach](#).

Family Ministry Events for September

9/3 – Children's Chapel, 11 am

9/7 – Youth Adult Team Meeting, 6:45 – 8 pm

9/8 – Youth Adult Team Movie Night, 6 – 9 pm. Contact Youth Adult Team (YouthAdult@uucb.org) for more information.

9/9 – Parents’ Night Out, free childcare in Skytown, 4:30 – 8 pm: Parents connect briefly in RE Bldg. Room 6 before stepping out.

9/10 – Solano Stroll, Albany, 9 am – 5 pm

Regular RE classes will be held for those who want to attend.

Parade begins at 9:30. UUCB Children’s Choir performs at 10:45. Volunteers needed for UUCB Booth. Email Paul Hudson (paultrekker@yahoo.com) for more info.

9/15 – Social Justice Movie with Youth, 6 – 9 pm: *McFarland USA*

Contact Shannon Roberts (roberts_s@sbcglobal.net) or Helen Tinsley-Jones (htinsleyjones@yahoo.com) for more information.

9/17 – OWL Orientation for Parents, Fireside Room, 12:30 pm

Adolescents between 7th and 9th grade are invited to attend the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program beginning this September. OWL is a sexuality education program rooted in Unitarian Universalist values. This class equips teens with accurate, age-appropriate information to help them make informed decisions about their sexual health and behavior. You don’t have to be part of UUCB to participate. If you have any questions or concerns, email Stephanie Kroner at owl@uucb.org.

9/24 – OWL begins (grades 7-9), 1 – 3:30 pm

Parent Discussion Circle, RE Bldg. Rooms 3 & 4, 9:30 -10:45 am

9/30 – OWL Mini Retreat, UUCB, 9 am – 4 pm

Pot of Gold, First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 8:45 am – 4 pm

The Keynote Speaker is Rev. Dr. Mark-Morrison Reed. The keynote address is entitled “The Ignored, the Naive, and the Innocent,” which will address

different ways racism and white supremacy impact all of our children.

Register at [PCD LREDA](#). Breakfast (light) and lunch will be served. Childcare is available for a fee.

Last thoughts

It's never too late to volunteer! Contact [Colleen Farrell](#) or [Megan Hailey-Dunsheath](#) to explore how your interests, skills, and experience can meaningfully shape the spiritual formation of our youth.

Intern Minister's Column

Amanda Weatherspoon

Hello UUCB!

What an exciting time to be stepping into the role of Intern Minister for this wonderful congregation! I intentionally use the word “exciting” because in all the sadness and chaos in this moment, the world is ripe with possibility and opportunity. We are being called into community and out of comfort; we are being asked to examine and witness and love—radically and transformatively. I believe in the power of community; in these troubled times I find joy and comfort in the community that is present here at UUCB.

The role of an intern is, first and foremost, to learn. However, this learning is not passive, this kind of education is experienced by doing. I will wear many hats throughout the next year at UUCB. Some of you may see me in meetings or at potlucks or officiating ceremonies; you also might encounter me in the community attending meetings or marches or planting a community garden. I look forward to many opportunities for learning and growing with this faith community.

I trust that you all will be a part of my formation as a minister over this next year. I trust that love will guide us as we share our mission and vision of love

within and outside of these walls. I trust that in this community I will be supported as I continue to discover what it means to minister in our world given the rampant hate and fear that so many possess.

I look forward to serving this congregation and breathing in the sacred teachings that this community has to offer.

In Love,

Amanda Weatherspoon, MDiv

Coordinating Team Notes

Lisa Maynard, Coordinating Team Convener

The Coordinating Team is very happy to announce that Deborah Schmidt will take on the role of CT Convener, effective September 1. The Board of Trustees approved the appointment in August (and will pursue filling the vacated Board position).

I don't need to say goodbye, because although I'm finishing my term on the CT, I'm not going anywhere! It has been my privilege to serve on the CT with dedicated and thoughtful people throughout my two years—many thanks to Rev. Greg Ward, Director of Administration Mary Ellen Morgan, (former) Intern Minister Zackrie Vinczen, Rev. Kristin Schmidt, Rev. Christian Schmidt, and lay leaders Joanne Wile, Ann Harlow, and Jean Gleason.

Other CT news: our church year is starting with a plethora of activities, many of which seem to involve food!

- If you are interested in the Thursday night suppers (scheduled for the first Thursday of each month), please attend the kickoff potluck on Thursday, September 7. Bring a dish or beverage to share, and participate in a facilitated discussion to plan future first Thursdays.
- Refreshments after Sunday services are part of our community

celebration. If your church group is interested in hosting refreshments one Sunday this fall/winter, please contact me at lbmaynard3@me.com—I will be coordinating the schedule (my first post-CT job!). (Our budget includes funding for reimbursement—you can be a host without incurring the costs yourself.)

- We're considering acquiring some high chairs to make it easier for families with very young children to participate in sit-down activities in the Social Hall. More on that later—first we have to work out storage space!

The Coordinating Team currently meets twice monthly, at a time chosen by its members (currently on the first and third Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., but this may change with new CT members). 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.

Thoughts from Community Ministry

Rev. Theresa Hardy

This summer was one of the most difficult this country has experienced in quite some time. During the midst of this, the kids were let out for summer vacation.

Vacation seemed a quaint notion in a year filled with violence/racism/sexism/classism continuing to be highlighted and praised from the supposed leaders of our country. And as a person of color I was torn. Feeling that vacation should be put on hold to continue working for justice, and that vacation should be relished and devoured because who knows what lies ahead?

The desire to stay and fight and the desire to escape stem from that basic instinct when faced with stress, fight or flight.

What best protects ourselves and our families from the threat at hand?

We decided to go and reconnect with family and old friends. Spend lazy/hot days with nana and papa. Enjoying the kids' first "real" summer, 100-degree days, bug bites, fireflies and lots of ice cream! They were shielded from the tone of this country getting more hostile to people of color. As a parent I wonder how much to share?

But my kids have the rest of their lives to be young black men afraid for the myriad of reasons living in white supremacist culture keeps you afraid. For this brief time I let the kids and myself play hard and take big bites out of life to rest up for the hard work ahead.

Partner Church

Stephanie Ann Blythe, Reporter

We hope that you had a chance to meet this year's Balázs Scholar, Rev. Lidia-Emese Bodor, when she was introduced to the congregation on August 27. Here is her arrival at SFO:

The scholar maintains a busy schedule from September to June, so look for our announcements for when she will be here during the year.

The Partner Church Committee is getting acquainted with the new minister in Homoródújfalú, Rev. Gyerö Attila. His congregation has done quite a bit of work to renovate the parsonage where he and his family reside. Here is the new roof going up”

We are collecting donations to help the village offset the renovation costs or to help finance additional work. Checks made out to UUCB with Partner Church parsonage on the memo line will be greatly appreciated.

In this country we are seeing increasing tensions regarding religious freedom and tolerance. The Edict of Torda in 1568 guaranteed freedom of religious

expression for the first time anywhere in the world. Although it only effectively existed during the very short reign of the Transylvanian king, John Sigismund, Unitarians world-wide will be celebrating the 450th anniversary next year. Find out how you can participate here or in Transylvania at <http://Torda450.org>. You can also ask [Stephanie Ann Blythe](#) or [Anne Greenwood](#) for more information.

Social Justice News

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming **Social Justice Council meetings**, which begin with a potluck dinner at 6 pm, followed by meeting from 6:35 to 8; always in the Fireside Room:

- Sunday, September 10
- Wednesday, October 11
- Sunday, November 12
- Sunday, December 10. ALL are welcome!`

The **Good Neighbor Program** is a long-standing legacy of UUCB's social justice work. Each month a designated non-profit receives financial support thanks to the sharing of the Sunday collection plate. Nominations for the 2018 Good Neighbor recipient come from anyone in the UUCB community, and are received through the month of September. Submission deadline is **Saturday, September 30**. Nominees will be presented to the Social Justice Council at the October 11th meeting, and members will have until the next month to study and review them. They are voted on at the November 12th meeting.

Criteria for Good Neighbor recipients: a 501 (c) 3 organization in Alameda or Contra Costa County that promotes social, economic, racial, and/or environmental justice or peace, without mainstream support; or national, regional or state UU social justice initiatives or organizations.

Nomination forms are available electronically or in hard copy at the Social Justice Council table on Sundays. Please contact Dorothy Herzberg for forms, information and submissions: dorothyherzberg@gmail.com; 510-524-0649.

The **Literature, Film & Drama Contingent** of the Social Justice Council's first-ever "August Melange" lived up to its name! In the mix were Lonnie Moseley and Susan Lankford performing Lonnie's play, *The World Is A Ghetto: Fix It!*, which garnered a thoughtful discussion about the America we're living in under the current administration in Washington, D.C. Three newcomers —both to UUCB and to the LFDC—fit right in, shared their lives with us, and broadened our perspective of issues related to race, prejudice, and culture.

For the meeting on September 3rd, we will return to our regular format: The book is ***Kindred***, a work of science fiction by Octavia Butler. All are welcome to attend! Contact: Camille Parker, camilleparker@comcast.net.

Read-Aloud will be present again this year at five Title I schools (ones with low-income, at-risk children), creating new caring friendships and showing them the wonders that can be found in a book. The Read-Aloud Volunteer Program (RAVP) is now 22 years old, and so is its collaboration with and sponsorship by UUCB, whose members were instrumental in starting the pilot at an elementary school in San Pablo. Read-Aloud matches volunteers with two children (from kindergarten to 2nd grade) for a half hour one-on-one to read together once weekly for part of the school year. Volunteers are modeling reading for enjoyment, for answering curiosity about something, perhaps for letting a student hear more spoken English or easing their extreme shyness at school or helping them overcome something difficult or tragic in their environment. Contact: Judy Sam, jssam47@yahoo.com.

Other Social Justice Opportunities and Information

Ceasefire Walks: Friday nights in Richmond at 7, contact

maw.jane@gmail.com.

GRIP: UUCB volunteers prepare and serve lunch to hungry and homeless people at the GRIP Souper Center in Richmond on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Want to volunteer? [Contact Ray Westergard](#). To help with supper at GRIP on fourth Saturdays, contact [Ariel Smith-Iyer](#).

Chalice Circles

Lenore Ralston, Markate Daly, Dick Sherman, and Joanne Wile are pleased to be coordinating Chalice Circles for 2017-2018!

Come and join a circle!

Chalice Circles provide UUCB members and friends with the opportunity to engage in small group ministry—a spiritual practice in which the group, led by the facilitator, creates a sacred space where we can tell the stories of our lives, be heard, and listen deeply to the stories of our companions.

In Unitarian Universalism we recognize that each person has learned some share of truth and each has gained some hard-won wisdom. Sharing this in a life story is a form of ministry. And giving your full attention to another's life experience is also a form of ministry. We bear witness to each other's worth and dignity.

Chalice Circles typically meet twice a month for 1½ to 2 hours from September/October through May.

Look for Chalice enrollment tables in the Atrium throughout September (or you may contact [Lenore Ralston](#)).

New Yoga Classes

Phyllis Whiteman

It has been proven that the practice of yoga can help you feel younger and keep healthier. Yoga can reduce stress, promote better sleep, stretch muscles that you do not use ordinarily, help breathing and help brain activity. Because I believe that yoga is the way to a happier life, in September I will begin to teach an afternoon class on Tuesday and continue an evening class on Wednesday from 6 to 7:30 pm. Please call me if interested, (510) 647-8537, and let me know which session you would like.

Tree of Life

UUCB member Cordell Sloan, along with friend of UUCB David Lehrer, sing at the Lakeside Park assisted living facility that focuses on Dementia and Memory. David has played guitar in a number of our services and then went on to the Oakland church to provide music. But David found his calling and ministry on Sunday mornings at the Lakeside Park facility. He lost a good friend from Alzheimer's and found that he wanted to give music to victims of this disease. David invites Cordell to join him once a month at Lakeside, and although we miss Cordell on that Sunday, we know that the ministry of love and music is being carried to others—part of UUCB's mission.

The "Tree of Life" celebrates and marks events in the life journey of our members. If you have items to share, please submit them to membership@uucb.org.

Poetry Corner

THOUGHTS ON A RAINY DAY

“A poet without a pen”
my friend wrote
Who? I asked
fills this bill
The painter whose palette
refreshes the soul
The writer whose words
color thought
The surgeon suturing
a broken heart
or
The bird
spilling its song
to the wind

© Gerry Keenan

AN OCTOBER EVENING

A praying mantis
ivory colored, molting,
chooses our doorway
for a rare appearance.
At first we thought
the creature
torn gardenia petals
blown slowly forward.
Kneeling in dim light
we spot the head,
odd-shaped wings,
forelegs that enable
the grasshoppers' cousin
to take spindly strides

and to pray.

Next morning he was gone.

© Claire J. Baker

CONNOISSEUR

Fine literature, like some costly liqueur,

You must savor, you never should swill.

Fine books? I start many, but don't finish any,

And it's possible I never will.

© Ray Nelson

Want your poems included in the future, as space allows? Email them to beacon@uucb.org (UUCB members only).

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.

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: <http://groups.google.com/group/uu-families/about>

Deadline for submissions to the Beacon is the 15th of each month. Submit items to beacon@uucb.org.