

Beacon on the Hill October 2016

From the Ministers

Rev. Christian Schmidt

As we enter October, ghosts are on our minds. That's our monthly worship theme—and Day of the Dead, Samhain, and Halloween all fall at the end of this month—and if you haven't seen the recent *Ghostbusters* movie, we recommend it! But even if none of that resonates with you, it's worth keeping those ghosts in mind, anyway.



A historic congregation has a lot of ghosts, though perhaps not of the spooky, floating apparition type. Ghosts here might mean those habits, thoughts, and ideas that have come down to us from those who were here before. Many of these are friendly ghosts—think “Casper”—that are still providing helpful information, grounding, and guidance for us as we move into the future. Others might have been great ideas of their time that it is now time to let go of as we move forward.

In our own lives, we carry similar ghosts at times. Opportunities missed, people who are no longer with us, or choices that didn't work out (or even the ones that did but meant another possibility was lost!). For many, this is a time of year to ponder these and consider how we might move forward, with or without them.

And as we barrel on towards Election Day in November, let's remember that our country has a lot of ghosts, too, those specters of the past that continue to haunt us: racism, sexism, poverty, economic inequality. As the great writer William Faulkner once put it, “The past is never dead. It's not even past.” We live with both the gifts and challenges of the past, and it's up to each of us to reckon with these. Recently, San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin

Kaepernick has made headlines for not standing during the national anthem at his team's games. Many have criticized him and called him unpatriotic. Others have praised him for highlighting the U.S.A.'s deeply troubled relationship with people of color, and a national anthem written by a slaveholder that recalls capturing slaves who have sought freedom. Whatever one might think of Kaepernick's decision, I'm grateful to him for pushing us to consider deeply and critically something many of us take for granted.

As we move through October, I hope you will take time to consider our ghosts, that we might learn, love, and come together in community.

In faith,

Rev. Christian

Fall Schedule

Don't forget, Sunday services now begin at 9:30 and 11:15. The early service is an intimate gathering on the chancel (stage) of the sanctuary. Please try to arrive at church a few minutes before either service. **Personal Theology also begins at 9:30.**

Thursday Night Suppers and Vespers will start October 6. Social time at 5:30, catered supper at 6, Vespers service at 7.

Sunday Worship in October

Worship at 9:30 and 11:15 am

Theme for Month: **Ghosts and Ancestors**

October 2 **Friendly Ghosts**, Rev. Christian Schmidt with Jim Gasperini. Making peace with the past, embracing our ghosts, and today's America:

What we can learn from the “ghosts” we bring with us.

October 9 **Ghosts and Visions**, Rev. Kristin Schmidt with David Roberts. The past can root us in heritage and accumulated wisdom, but it can also haunt us with memories, fears, or habits we’d rather be rid of. This week in worship we will reflect on how our vision for the future can be a helpful lens to give meaning to the past.

October 16 **On the Shoulders of Giants**, Revs. Kristin and Christian Schmidt with Ann Riley. Join us this Sunday as we remember our congregation’s ancestors and consider how our heritage could help us shape a vibrant future ministry together.

October 23 **UU Saints and Sinners**, Rev. Jay Atkinson with Kathryn Jay. We are all too eager to claim illustrious people as heroes from our liberal religious past, but what about those whom we now look back on with disdain and embarrassment? Some reflections on what we can learn from even the skeletons in our UU closet.

October 30, **Remembrance Sunday, All Ages Worship**, Revs. Kristin and Christian Schmidt with Carol Carlisle. This Sunday we honor and remember those we have loved and lost. Everyone is invited to bring a picture or other small item that represents someone you wish to remember for the Day of the Dead altar.

Personal Theology in October

Sunday mornings at 9:30 in the Fireside Room

Oct. 2: Beverly Allen and Frank Ferrante will discuss “**Forgiveness.**” Frank Ferrante is the award-winning author of *May I Be Frank? How I*

Changed My Ways, Lost 100 Pounds, and Found Love Again. Beverly Allen, Ph.D., is an author, former journalist, screenwriter, lecturer and teacher in the humanities and spiritual traditions, currently focusing on the sacred feminine. She has taught at UC Santa Cruz, Stanford, OLLI, Cornell, the University of Zagreb, and Syracuse University where she is a Professor Emerita.

Oct. 9: Ronald Nakasone, Ph.D., will speak on “**Spiritual Genealogy.**” Dr. Nakasone is Senior Lecturer in Buddhist Art and Culture and member of the Core Doctoral Faculty at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley. He is also on the faculty of the Stanford University Geriatric Education Center. He has published more than 100 academic books and articles on aging and spirituality; Buddhist doctrine, ethics, and aesthetics; and Okinawan studies. He is also an expert in the art of sho (Japanese calligraphy).

Oct. 16: Come and hear **Elizabeth Fisher** give a talk on “**Gifts Goddesses Offer.**” She is the author of the UU Women’s Federation course Rise Up and Call Her Name: A Woman-honoring Journey into Global Earth-based Spiritualities and a variety of other publications. She received the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans’ Margaret Fuller–Henry David Thoreau Award for furthering understanding of earth-centered philosophy and is included on a list of the Thirteen Most Influential People in Women’s Spirituality.

Oct. 23: Hear world-renowned psychologist **Charles T. Tart**, Ph.D., give a seminar on **“In Search of Enlightenment and Knowledge: Highlights from the Life Journey of a Transpersonal Para(Neuro)Psychologist: Part I: From Lutheranism to the Rosicrucians.”** Dr. Tart is internationally known for his psychological work on the nature of consciousness (particularly, altered states of consciousness), as one of the founders of the field of transpersonal psychology, and for his research in parapsychology. He is a part-time executive faculty member at Sofia University and Professor Emeritus of Psychology at UC Davis.

Oct 30: Shahara Godfrey, Ph.D., will speak on **“Social Responsibility and Spirituality: A Buddhist Perspective.”** Dr. Godfrey, Buddhist teacher and mindfulness coach, humanitarian and mixed-media artist, is a graduate of the Spirit Rock Community Dharma Leadership Program and the Path of Engagement programs. She received her Ph.D. in Humanities with a focus on Transformative Learning and Change from the California Institute of Integral Studies. In addition, she is a core teacher at the East Bay Meditation Center in Oakland. A self-taught mixed-media artist, she has exhibited in the Bay Area, Oregon, Washington, Atlanta and Los Angeles.

Halloween Potluck and Dance Party!

On **Sunday, October 30**, come back at 6 pm for a potluck supper, followed by a “Thriller” zombie dance lesson with Roger Dillahunty (7:00) and dancing to Moses Channels’ SOUL Rising band, featuring ‘60s-‘70s rock and roll (7:30-9:30). Costumes and “spooky” food

encouraged. \$15/adult for the dance party to cover costs, \$10 with food contribution; no one turned away for lack of funds. Children welcome!

Family Ministry

Hello from Amanda Weatherspoon, your newish Family Ministry Assistant.

Growing up in church and now dedicating myself to the path of ministry, there's one truth to which I can testify. A commitment that I've witnessed my whole life: the dedication of the volunteers that transform a building into a church and a church into a community. Delving into the volunteer community here at UUCB I witness the same principle at play in these walls.

While working with the Family Ministry team I find myself often reminiscing on my days as a kid in church; children's choir, Sunday school, Christmas plays, campfires; and I think of all the adults who made these events and programs possible. The teachers, the chaperones, the organizers who collected permission slips, the folks who coordinated the music, who supervised us on trips. I realize how much of an impact children's programming had and still has on my life. The message that "you are not alone in this journey" is an important one—one that I carry with me all these years later.

This year's Family Ministry volunteer training held on September 18th provided me a glimpse into the UUCB Family community. Folks of all ages coming together to ensure that the children and youth of this community are supported in their spiritual and social journeys, that they know that they are not alone in this is a testament to the important work that these volunteers do all year. UUCB's Family Ministry program hosts a wide range of activities, classes, and growth opportunities for the youngest and smallest of children up to the graduating high school senior. The prep work, the recurring commitments, the trainings are all in service of supporting children and

families as they grow in this community. And the volunteers are the heart and soul of this ministry. Thank you all.

Coming up in Family Ministry...

Games on the Field

This month we will begin to have activities on the field for elementary children after religious education classes until 1 pm. It'll be a time for kids to explore our UU values through *play*—the way they best learn and grow. Through interactive games, creative projects, and free play we'll build community and practice putting our principles into action. In the beginning activities will be adult led, but over time kids will be involved in planning and leading activities as well. Practically, this new supervised playtime will give parents time to mingle after church without the pressure to pick up their children immediately. In the coming months I encourage you to linger around the atrium and field, say hello to folks, make friends.

New Safety Policy

Over the next year we will be rolling out the new Safety Policy. This fall we begin with new sign-out procedures for children. Youth in sixth grade and above will continue to be able to self-release if a parent/guardian has signed this permission on the Connection Card. Parents/guardians of children in fifth grade and under are now expected to sign their children out when they pick them up from any Family Ministry activity. Please help us be intentional about how we care for the children. Sign your child out each time you pick them up from a religious education class, event, or childcare (even if they are leaving just briefly to attend the beginning of service). Thank you.

Community Ministry

Rev. Theresa Hardy

The spirituality of parenting is hard to recognize when you are in the midst of school drop offs and parent teacher conferences!

Let me assure you, even if you are failing miserably in some areas you are not alone. You are good enough.

Parenting in this particular time is challenging. I am not referring to endless nights of interrupted sleep and countless viruses that plague our family of five!

I am referring to the judgment and criticism that parents deal with at the park/store/school/ or on Facebook. In this age, many of us live far from familial support and struggle to do this alone. I would hope parents would band together and find more spaces to congratulate each other on being good enough! Yet, sadly I notice the opposite.

Our anxiety and fear, stress and exhaustion lead us into judging other parents. When I notice this within myself, I ask myself some questions. What am I afraid of others seeing? How do I forgive myself for failing in some areas? How can I model being good enough, for my kids and others? I'll start —without Netflix and hot dogs our family life would be miserable!

I invite parents to recognize the often stormy weather of parenting and reflect on how we can, as Gandhi wrote, “be the change we want to see in the world.” Let us be honest about what parenting looks like! Let us be holy fools and remind ourselves and others about the deep spirituality of parenting.

President's Corner

Deborah Schmidt

One of the joys of discovering and reclaiming my Jewish heritage has been learning about Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the High Holy Days. This year Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown October 2nd and ends the evening of October 4th. Although it is often called the Jewish New Year, it doesn't bear much resemblance to our drunken holiday, except for the sober resolutions of the day after.

In a beautiful piece called "[ReNewing at Rosh Hashanah](#)," writer Anita Silvert muses that this is a time to return, re-turn, turn again—to come back once again to the beginning. It is a time to renew, re-energize, re-engage. It is a time to remember, to be re-minded, to open ourselves anew, on the anniversary of creation, to the beauty of this world. It is a time of possibility, a chance to re-solve, reconnect, rebuild.

This year, Rosh Hashanah coincides with a new chapter in the story of this historic and vibrant church. Let's carry the spirit of the holy days into our partnership with our wonderful new ministers.

Please hold October 15th for our Start-Up Workshop, which will be led by our UUA Congregational Life staff member, Jonipher Kwong. Tailored to UUCB, with elements both for leaders and for anyone in the congregation who wishes to participate, it will provide guidance in: "examining the myths and values at work in the congregation, recognizing the stories that are still influencing the congregation, clarifying roles and expectations, and setting some initial goals."

As Jack Duggan, our vice-president, wrote recently: "in this time of new beginnings, it's not just the ministers who can be new. We can as individuals renew ourselves, our own spiritual growth and the way we participate in the community."

With wishes for a good and sweet year together – Shana tova u'metukah!

Music Matters

Bryan Baker, Music Director

Hello Dear People,

There is a great deal of excitement at the church right now, and it feels very promising: our wonderful new co-ministers, and the church's strong presence at the Solano Stroll. UUCB had 50 people in the parade, the largest contingent. Both Luminescence and the Youth and Children's Choir "marched" and then sang from a "stage." SOUL Rising and Gamelan also offered music to the crowds of strolling people.

All this makes me think of a line from the show "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown"—

Sometimes I wake up early to watch the sunrise, and I think how beautiful it is ... And I get a very positive feeling about things. Like today for instance. The sky is so clear and the sun so bright; how could anything possibly go wrong on a day like this? Of course, in the play, things do go wrong and still everything works out very happily by the end. Along the way, there is a great deal to be learned about life, and it turns out to be a lot of fun. I hope you can come see this Theatre of the Blue Moon production, directed by Donna Davis at UUCB's Social Hall. It is a short, heart-warming play, full of humor, with charming songs. A fundraiser for UUCB's general fund, it is mostly about fun. And you'll want to find out who it is in our vibrant community that has the "Face of Failure"; who dances at "Supper time"; who conducts a survey on Crabbiness; who has a Blanket they won't be parted from; and who loves Beethoven. October 16, 21, 22, and 23.

Yours in harmony,

Bryan

Membership Signing

Lonnie Moseley, Membership Co-Chair

Sunday, October 9, 2016, 12:30 p.m. Minister's Office. If you feel that UUCB is a place that supports your values and your desire for a loving community, Revs. Kristin and Christian invite you to become members of UUCB on Sunday, October 9, 2016, at 12:30 p.m. The Membership Signing time with the ministers is a special time of connection. We share our stories of coming to Unitarian Universalism and find out what our church can do to support your spiritual and humanist vision and goals. Please know that you can attend the Membership Signing even if you are not sure if membership in UUCB is something you want at this point. RSVP to membership@uucb.org and let me know if you are coming. Lunch will be served. So, let me know so I can plan for your lunch and participation.

Online Directory

Michael DeWitt for the Fellowship One Team

Thank you for completing your profile in the new church directory. If you still haven't had a chance to complete your online profile, please go to uucb.org and follow the links on the home page to create or update your profile. If you wish assistance, please send an email to support@uucb.org.

Coordinating Team Report

Lisa Maynard, Convener

In September, Co-Ministers Revs. Kristin and Christian Schmidt and Program Council Convener Ann Harlow joined the two ongoing Coordinating Team members, Director of Administration Mary Ellen Morgan and CT Convener Lisa Maynard, to form the current Coordinating Team. The CT thanks Joanne Wile for her contributions of time, energy, and spirit during her term as Program Council Convener.

The CT is working on an implementation schedule for our new UUCB Safety Policy. We plan a phased implementation as work on different sections of the policy is completed. Expect to hear more about this in the coming months!

As we reported last month, this summer's renovation work in the Safir Room uncovered mold that had been hidden by ceiling tiles. Director of Administration Mary Ellen Morgan consulted an Industrial Hygienist, who did air sampling in the Safir Room, the Chrysalis Room, and the upstairs conference room, and reported airborne mold in all three rooms. These three rooms will not be available for use for the time being. After appropriate remediation and repairs, the upstairs rooms will be made available again, and the Safir Room renovations will be completed. Scheduling Coordinator Lissa Roos Parker has rearranged fall room use to accommodate all users in the rooms currently available. Please check the church calendar (online at uucb.org) if you aren't sure where your group is meeting. We appreciate everyone's patience as we move ahead with these repairs.

The Coordinating Team meets twice monthly, on the first and third Wednesdays from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. If you're interested in attending, please contact me (lbmaynard3@me.com) to verify our schedule and meeting place. Questions for the CT? Email CT@uucb.org.

Program Council Report

Ann Harlow, Convener

The Program Council had two meetings in September because it had not had a regular meeting in July or August. We took care of a little cleanup of the language of our charter document and the Program Council Member position description; both revisions will be submitted to the Coordinating Team for their approval.

One of the Program Council's responsibilities is to keep track of groups within the church as they occasionally come and go or, more frequently, change leadership. We approved the re-creation of the World Peace Committee with a revised mission statement and Read Heath designated as the contact person. Please notify me if your group has a change of contact person or mission, or wants to affiliate with a different program area within the Program Council structure. We hope to refine the annual reporting process over the next several months.

We also invite you to bring up to me (annharlow@pacbell.net) or to your program area representative any suggestions you may have about how the church could function more optimally, especially regarding actions that touch on more than one program area or that will make the church more appealing to prospective members—so that we can have a transformative effect on more lives and a deeper impact on the world around us.

From the Treasurer

Mary Muehlbach, Treasurer

FY15-16 the dust is still settling. At June 30, our unrestricted deficit ended at \$67,682.

Reading the tea leaves on Financial Statements is challenging, even for professionals. I was in a meeting

where a CPA took a quick glance at their year-end audit, impressed by a robust balance sheet. Not wanting to call him out about what I saw as not so robust indicators: the huge dollar value of total assets as a result of six figure receivables and payables that each offset the other. But that bottom number: total assets, was six figures!

It's a balancing act, the etiquette of what to say and when, and how much deep background must be laid out for a layperson before driving the point home.

When I want to know how well an organization is doing, I first zero in on NET ASSETS, a non-profit world term which means EQUITY. This is the thing my CPA board member was not paying attention to when he suggested that their organization had a robust year. Of course he knew better. But on first glance, sometimes the most important numbers fall into the background—so much noise on a page filled with numbers.

After we ended our fiscal year with a \$68k deficit, I took a closer look at our net assets.

The formula is simple: total assets, less liabilities, equals net assets. What you own, less what you owe. What remains is our equity.

I have been watching our cash position, and prepared a draft analysis this month which illustrates how we need to focus on this to remain operationally sound. With co-mingled funds for some of our temporarily restricted funds, we need to take better care of our cash available for operations. I will make a copy of this report available in the kiosk in the atrium.

In the meantime, as we move forward, we opened the fiscal year in July with an operating surplus.

Namaste,

Mary

From the Stewardship Team

This past summer we declared VICTORY for meeting our pledge target for the second year in a row. Now we are getting ready to plan our three-peat! Come be a part of the Stewardship Team. We share ideas and inspiration, plan Stewardship events, and have fun in the process.

Interested in learning more? Join us for an overview, on Sunday afternoon, October 9, at 12:30 pm on the Chancel. At the end of our meeting, we'll have desserts to go (outside the Sanctuary).

Volunteer with GRIP

Two opportunities available each month! Help prepare and serve lunch to hungry and homeless people at the GRIP Souper Center in Richmond on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Or serve the dinner on the fourth Saturday of every month. Contact [Ray Westergard](mailto:raywest2@sbcglobal.net) (raywest2@sbcglobal.net) for Tuesday lunch or [Ariel Smith-Iyer](mailto:arielwest@yahoo.com) (arielwest@yahoo.com) for Saturday dinner.

Partner Church Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

You people are AMAZING!! Your Good Neighbor contributions in August to the Transylvanian Partner Church Committee totaled \$3246.50. Most of that amount will go to our Village Education Fund to aid the students in Homoródújfalú who are continuing their education at the secondary and college levels.

There are changes afoot in the village. Reverend Arpad Ilkei, who has been serving the congregation for twenty-four years, may be leaving. The opportunity for him to return to his hometown is a possibility. We're waiting to hear what happens. Those of us who visited the village in July enjoyed our brief visit. There is a new firehouse, complete with shiny new fire engine, and the church is finally free of the "weeping mushroom" fungus which had infested its wooden structures. Our former interim minister Greg Ward made his first pilgrimage to Transylvania. He said that it would not be his last trip.

Now that summer's over and our new ministers are here, it's time to get busy. We're planning a snack table lunch and/or other after-church activity on Sunday, November 13. Your ideas and help can make for a fantastic event. Contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net to find out more. We meet on the fourth Thursday of each month at 3:30 pm in the Safir (or Fireside) Room. All are welcome.

Chalice Circles Starting This Month

Chalice Circles are "small group ministries" of 6 to 12 people who meet twice a month and center on deep and appreciative listening. Speak from your own heart, without fear of interruption or commentary, on a variety of topics the

group chooses. Come experience self-revelation and renewal of spirit through this unique practice. A registration table is set up in the Social Hall on Sundays, or contact Lenore Ralston (Ralston@berkeley.edu), 510-527-0696. The Chalice Team: Markate Daly, Lenore Ralston, Dick Sherman, and Joanne Wile

Tree of Life

Dorothy Herzberg

I have offered to re-establish a column in the Beacon called “Tree of Life,” which included news items from the congregation. Please submit them to dorothyherzberg@gmail.com or (510) 524-0649. They will only appear in the printed and emailed Beacons, not on the church website. Joys and sorrows welcome!

Thanksgiving Camp in the Sierras

NCUUCC (Northern California Unitarian Universalist Camps & Conferences) hosts Thanks Camp from Thursday, November 24 to Sunday, November 27 at historical Camp Sylvester in beautiful Pinecrest.

Feast Day is Friday to accommodate those who have “regular” holiday obligations.

See <http://www.ncuuc.org/calendar/thanksgiving/> for details. Ask Katherine Hanway about her experience with NCUUCC camps and the friendships formed with other UUs from the Bay Area and beyond.

Social Justice

Social Justice Council (SJC) – In mid-September a few of us registered several people living in a shelter in Richmond. Tuesday, September 27th is

National Voter Registration Day and we plan to have some UUCB folks there with the League of Women Voters to register Cal students.

Craig Scott and Jane Eisenstark will facilitate a Social Justice Chalice Circle starting in October. Norie Clark will work with Family Ministry on the “Bring Your Weight in Food” event in November. Plans are being made for two early 2017 Confronting Racism events coordinated by members of the LFDC, Helen Tinsley-Jones and Julie Rogers.

Please note that the Co-Chairs of the SJC are (Nancy) “Kelly” Kelly (npkelly@att.net) and Norie Clarke (norieclarke@gmail.com).

All are welcome at the next monthly meeting of the Social Justice Council – Sunday, October 9. Potluck dinner is at 6:00; meeting usually starts at 6:35. Meeting will include consideration of organizations to receive Good Neighbor contributions in the coming year.

Literature, Film & Drama Contingent (LFDC) of the Confronting Racism Project – On September 4th, folks enjoyed a robust discussion of takeaways from Colson Whitehead’s creative envisioning of *The Underground Railroad*. October 2nd book is *Defying the Nazis: The Sharps’ War*—discussion will include Ken Burns’ PBS documentary. Book for November 6th is Susan Crandall’s *Whistling Past the Graveyard*. First Sundays, 12:30 pm, Fireside Room. All welcome.

Read-Aloud: Volunteers needed to read aloud at elementary schools in Richmond and San Pablo. Contact Judy Sam at jssam47@yahoo.com.

Ceasefire Walks: Friday nights in Richmond at 7 – maw.jane@gmail.com

Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP) Annual Harmony Walk: All members and friends of UUCB are invited to participate in this

year's GRIP Harmony Walk on Saturday, October 29. The 5K run starts at 10:30 am, with the walk starting at 10:45 from Nicholl Park, MacDonald Ave and 31st Street. This Walk gives us the opportunity to build community while raising money for GRIP, which does wonderful work providing shelter and resources for homeless families, plus three meals a day for hungry and disenfranchised people in and around Richmond. For more information, stop by the Social Justice Table before or after the 11:15 am service or contact: marion_m_anderson@comcast.net, jane.rms@gmail.com, ladie.malek@gmail.com

Vigil for Incarcerated Immigrants: First Saturdays, 11–noon. Advocate and stand in solidarity with those at the West County Detention Facility in Richmond at 5555 Giant Highway.

September Good Neighbor: Read-Aloud Volunteer Program, <http://read-aloud.org/>. Adults read to elementary school children in Richmond and San Pablo. Selections for each child are taken home.

Good Neighbors Open to Suggestions: If you have a favorite deserving non-profit in Alameda or Contra Costa County that you would like to receive a portion of our offerings during a month of Sunday Services, contact Beth Jerde at bjerde55@hotmail.com and request an application that will be considered if received by October 5.

Social Justice email list? Contact maw.jane@gmail.com.