

Beacon on the Hill, June 2016

From Our Minister's Desk

Rev. Greg Ward



Rev. Greg Ward

Dear Friends,

I heard a shoe company once sent two marketing scouts to a region of Africa to study the prospects for expanding their business. It's said one scout sent a telegram reporting:

“Situation hopeless STOP No one wears shoes STOP”

The other's telegram was different:

“Glorious business opportunity STOP They have no shoes STOP”

Africans have no shoes. Refugees have no place to go. Voters have no perfect candidates. Young people have no future. UUCB has no minister. People have no hope.

I know. It's true. Anxiety is high. Trust feels risky. Guns, graft and greed are rampant. Our social network is filled with holes. I know. But as I prepare to leave you, I know something else as well. Possibility abounds in you.

Years ago, when I was entering the ministry and unsure of what was ahead, I read a book called *The Art of Possibility* by Benjamin Zander (conductor of the Boston Philharmonic) and Roz Zander (psychotherapist). They told the truth and named the challenges. And the despair. And then, audaciously, they offered a new narrative.

They suggested that instead of giving humanity a failing grade, we could “give an A.” Just like Ben Zanders gave students in his musical classes an A. The A

he gave was not a platitude. But an opportunity. He said if students wanted to keep the A, all they had to do is to write, in detail, the A work they would be part of in the year ahead. The grade became not a judgment of what was, but a vision of what will be.

“Possibility,” the Zanders said, could be found by contributing to the betterment of what surrounds you. “Bring it alive,” he said, “and you will come alive.” And he reminded people, “You can lead from any chair. The conductor is not the only leader of the orchestra.”

They also invoked what they call “Rule # 6.” Simply said, Rule # 6 is “Stop taking yourself so #%&\$@! seriously.” Let love and creativity lead. Not fear or ego. Tell the “we” story. Not just the “me” story.

I know this is hard. I know real threats abound. And some hurt is unhealed. But I also know that within you is everything required to rise strong.

In her most recent book, *Rising Strong*, social researcher and author Brené Brown suggests a “Manifesto for the Brave and Brokenhearted.” I commend it to you in reflecting on this month’s theme of “possibility.” She states:

There is no greater threat to the critics and cynics and fear-mongers than those of us who are willing to fall because we have learned how to rise. With skinned knees and bruised hearts we choose owning our stories of struggle over hiding, over hustling, over pretending. When we deny our stories, they define us. When we run from struggle, we are never free. So we turn toward truth and look it in the eye. We will not be characters in our stories. Not villains, not victims, not even heroes. We are the authors of our lives. We write our own daring endings. We craft Love from heartbreak, Compassion from shame, Grace from disappointment, Courage from failure. Showing up is our power. Story is our way home. Truth is our song. We are the brave and brokenhearted. We are rising strong.

To the Glory of Life.

Sunday Worship in June

11 am only

Theme for Month: *Possibility*

June 5

A Shared Ministry, Rev. Greg Ward. Ministry is no longer an act provided only by those who are ordained and called to serve. Ministry happens wherever individuals embrace the belief that their good interests, ideas, cooperation and collaboration are also a way to bless and serve the congregation. How is it that UUCB will step boldly away from being “just a member” or “just a friend” to everyone being a collective part of the burgeoning beloved community?

June 12

Umbilical Cords and Apron Strings – the Transient and the Permanent of Religious Communities, Rev. Greg Ward and Zackrie Vinczen (on their last Sunday with us). Unitarian Minister Theodore Parker helped navigate Unitarianism through a theological questioning of Christian doctrine. He wrote a powerful and widely published sermon called “The Transient and Permanent of Christianity” which claimed that there are truths which are transient and fade with time, and there are truths which rest at the center of all life and are eternal. This could be said for each person and each religious community. This sermon will endeavor to name the transient and permanent of UUCB.

June 19

The Awesome Being You Were Born to Be, Worship Associates Moses Canales and David Roberts. Within each of us is an awesome being full of life and love – ready to give, receive and sustain a zest for life. A number of songs will be interspersed throughout the story.

June 26

Wave – Particle Duality, Worship Associates Mary Muehlbach and Ann Riley. It's a conundrum – is the particle a wave or is the wave a particle? As a member of the church – are we a wave or a particle? Are we a corporation or are we a collective of individuals ... are we a business or are we a spiritual gathering?

Summer Forum in June

A speaker series focused on social justice, Sunday mornings at 10 am in the Fireside Room.

June 5

Dr. Liliane Koziol, Director of Programs at International House, UC Berkeley; Vice Chair of UC Berkeley International and Area Studies; Deputy Honorary Consul for Madagascar. *“Cross Cultural Communication.”*

June 12

Mac Lingo, UUCB member. *“My Chaplaincy at Kaiser Richmond and San Quentin.”*

June 19

Tony Thurmond, California Assembly incumbent, and **Claire Chiara**, candidate. *“What Is Happening in the Assembly?”*

June 26

Khafre Jay, “Hip Hop for Change,” with moderator Beth Jerde.

June: A Month of Celebrations

No Field Day this time, but please join us if you can for:

Sunday, June 5, 12:30 pm **Thank-You Cake for Zackrie Vinczen**, Intern Minister (see call for gifts, next page)

Sunday, June 5, 4 pm **Celebration of Life for John Cahoon**

Sunday, June 12, 12:30 pm **Farewell and Appreciation Party for Rev. Greg Ward**, Interim Minister – potluck lunch on our new Terrace, weather permitting, and in the Social Hall. Please sign up at tinyurl.com/uucbjune12 or at the information table outside the office.

Sunday, June 19, 7 pm Celebrate the **Summer Solstice** with the Mist Tree Moon Circle.

Farewell Gift for Zackrie

Interim Minister Zackrie Vinczen will be leaving us in June. It is the custom at UUCB to provide a monetary gift to our Intern at the conclusion of their year with us. With special appreciation of Zackrie's service on our behalf, this transitional year has allowed us to expand our circle of support, our efforts and financial commitments. Zackrie has been in the center of all these activities. For your gift to be tax deductible, please write a check to UUCB, memo line Ministerial Intern Gift. Otherwise, make your check payable to "Zackrie Vinczen." All gifts for Zackrie (clearly marked) may be added to the collection plate or the Business office mail slot, or given to a member of Zackrie's Ministerial Intern Committee: Walter Gorski, Lynne Cahoon, Ladie Malek, David Roberts or Hilary Lorraine.

If you have any questions, contact David Roberts, Ministerial Intern Committee, Chair at davidbobs1@gmail.com

President's Corner

Deborah Schmidt

Your board is responsible for reporting to you annually on governance manual and policy revisions, task forces, et cetera: in brief, all of our nuts-and-bolts accomplishments. You will find all of this in the recently published UUCB Annual Report for 2015-2016. But perhaps it is even more

Deborah Schmidt

important to address the state of our hearts, of our collective heart. So how are we really? Despite—perhaps even as a result of—our recent “unsettled” situation, our heart is big, warm, and pumping vigorously.

In May’s congregational meeting we celebrated a wealth of achievements and the remarkable people behind them. We celebrated bringing home district awards for Best Website, Culture of Generosity, and Youth Programming. We celebrated the completion of two major capital campaign projects. We celebrated last year’s pledge drive and the fact that current pledges continue in this generous spirit.

We unanimously approved a budget that includes salaries more commensurate with the gifts of our dedicated staff and, for the first time, a significant allotment to our Building Reserve Fund. We also voted unanimously to continue to support the Confronting Racism Project, to support the Black Lives Matter movement, and to use our BLM banner in public marches and demonstrations.

Yes, we have work to do: building on the organizational changes we have made, especially in support of our new and vital Program Council; continuing to put good policies in place; sustaining the growth of lay leadership; clarifying our vision and goals, and amplifying trust. For all of us, this time of transition has been intense, challenging, sometimes even exhausting. Even a couple of months ago I would have said that the reward was readiness for our new settled minister. Now I realize that our reward is who we are and who we have come to be.

Program Council

Joanne Wile, Convener

At the Calendaring Summit on May 14, led by Ann Harlow, lay leaders submitted calendar requests for the next 12 months for everything from

major fundraising events to monthly and weekly group meetings. Linda Laskowski reported on plans for a pilot program for a social justice-oriented, cross-congregation Chalice Circle. Ann gave a synopsis of the Program Council's first year. There was discussion of midweek suppers and programs for next year, the new Sunday schedule that will start in the fall (services at 9:30 and 11:15, Personal Theology at 9:30), and how the new schedule will be phased in considering that the Growth Strategy Team is making plans for a major UUCB presence at the Solano Stroll on September 11.

Joanne Wile, Program
Council Convener

We thank the following outgoing Program Council members: Jim Gasperini (Communications), Kathryn Jay (Worship), and Barbara Rockhold (Adult Education). Jim will be succeeded by David Lingenfelter and Barbara by Lonnie Moseley. The Council is working on succession planning in general and has proposed a candidate to the Coordinating Team for a two-year term as Program Council Convener beginning in September. We are looking forward to a half-day retreat in August.

Tip for Charitable Donations to UUCB

To All UUCB 70-1/2 year olds: I met with my financial advisor last week to figure out how to use my IRA distributions for a charitable donation to UUCB. I was able to make this contribution and avoid an increase in my Medicare Part B premium and a tax on my Social Security benefits. Please see your financial advisor to have a careful analysis of your own situation. –
Joanne Wile, age 70-1/2

UUCB at SF Pride Parade

#UU: Where #LGBTQPride and #BlackLivesMatter Meet

UUCB will join with other Bay Area UU Congregations as we march in this year's **SF Pride Parade on June 26**. The theme of this year's parade is Racial and Economic Justice, and the Grand Marshal of the parade is Black Lives Matter! UU Congregations will be marching with our congregational #BlackLivesMatter banners.

On June 12, after the worship service, **we will be making rainbow #BlackLivesMatter signs** to bring to the Parade. Please join us! Contact Jean Hyams from UUCB at jean@levyvinick.com for more information and to let us know that you'll be marching. We are also seeking volunteers to attend the safety monitor training for the parade – ask Jean about scheduled training.

From Your Stewardship Team

Our church fiscal year is coming to an end! Please complete your 2015-2016 pledge by June 30 and make our Board and Treasurer happy!

We passed a deficit budget for next year on May 15th, but it is based on more pledges than have currently been turned in! PLEASE make your pledge today, either by email to Stewardship@uucb.org or sending check or a note to Stewardship, UUCB, 1 Lawson Road, Kensington CA 94707. You may also phone it in to the office at 510-525-0302, x306 Alisa. Thanks to all who have contributed so far... including our matching pool, we have \$505,883. Let's do the final push and get to \$527,000! Your generosity of time, talent and treasure is what makes it all happen!

Anne Greenwood

With gratitude from your outgoing Stewardship convener,

Anne Greenwood

MOVING FORWARD... BUILDING OUR FUTURE

Ministerial Search Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

This is one of those tricky reports from your Ministerial Search Committee. It's not tricky because we are trying to trick you; it's tricky because this writer cannot predict the future. At this writing we are preparing for a pre-candidating with the one minister that we decided to move forward with. We started the second round of search with nine who were interested in UUCB. After exchanging information packet websites with most of the nine we went ahead with video interviews for two of them. One emerged from the interviews to move to pre-candidating.

Stephanie Ann Blythe,
Publicity Secretary

We may have made a decision about that one by the time you are reading this. We can't say exactly when and how we will announce the outcome. The timeframes for everything in the second round are much tighter but also less constrained. We will speak when it is the right time. In the meantime, the Interim Search Committee will be pacing nervously. There's not a whole lot we can do about that.

And to repeat what we have said before: nothing is promised, nothing is guaranteed. Whatever high standard a minister must pass to be a pre-candidate, our standard for whom we might present to you as the candidate is yet even higher. You would expect nothing less. As always, your questions or comments may be sent to searchcommittee@uucb.org.

Coordinating Team

Lisa Maynard, Coordinating Team Convener

During May the Coordinating Team discussed summer activities, and reviewed some of our progress since August 2015. We were gratified by the unanimous approval of the proposed 2016-17 operating budget at the May congregational meeting, and look forward to the ambitious plans for the coming fiscal year. Those plans include setting aside \$40,000 for our building reserve funds—exciting progress indeed!

Lisa Maynard, Convener

Other topics for May included:

- approving expenses to improve our wifi and hearing assistance systems;
- facilities maintenance and upgrades, both indoors and out (kitchen improvements, heating system maintenance, Safir Room refurbishment, removal of dangerous trees);
- using our Fellowship One software for operational tracking and planning.

June will be a transition month for the Coordinating Team and our congregation, as we bid good-bye to Interim Minister Greg Ward and Intern Minister Zackrie Vinczen. We will miss them, and we will carry on!

The Coordinating Team meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 3 to 5 pm. Our meetings are open to the congregation, but we occasionally change meeting date and place to accommodate member obligations and church operations, so 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.

Building Project Management Team

Larry Nagel and David Rockhold

The building inspector from Contra Costa County inspected the Terrace construction project on Friday, May 13 and signed off on the Final Inspection. This concludes the Terrace Project.

Five dead Monterey pines that were in the El Cerrito portion of the UUCB campus have been removed. Contra Costa County also has granted us permission to remove 14 Monterey pines that have been declared “more than 85% dead” by our arborist. Two of those pines constituted an imminent danger because of their proximity to the playground and were removed immediately. The remaining twelve pines are being bid competitively as required by UUCB bylaws.

On a very sad note, this is the first Beacon article that does not bear the name of our senior member, John Cahoon, who passed away on May 5. His participation, guidance, knowledge, and encouragement made the UUCB Building Projects possible, and his presence will be sorely missed.

Treasurer's Report

Mary Muehlbach

“...by the time we understand the pattern we are in, the definition we are making for ourselves, it’s too late to break out of the box. We can only live in terms of the definition.... Yet the definition we have made of ourselves is ourselves. To break out of it, we must make a new self. But how can the self make a new self when the selfness which it is, is the only substance from which the new self can be made?”

Mary Muehlbach,
Treasurer

~ Robert Penn Warren, *All the King’s Men*

Working through the coming year’s budget was a meditation: responsibly managing a dream of what might be with the practicalities of what can be.

I thank you all for being brave enough to dream. And practical enough to ask difficult questions. And trusting enough to continue the journey together to an unknown land.

Namaste,

Mary

Partner Church Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

Hey, Reverend Greg, you just finished a two-year interim at UUCB. Where are you going next? “I’m going to Transylvania!” That’s right, Greg Ward is finally making a pilgrimage to Transylvania. Anne Greenwood and Stephanie Ann Blythe are going, too. Rev. David Keyes is organizing a trip to Hungary and Romania to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of his first visit, so he’s invited a few friends to go along with him. Greg, Anne, and Stephanie Ann were lucky enough to snag invitations. We leave in late July and, of course, we will visit our partners in Homoródújfalú. There are also plans for

constructing a labyrinth as a gift to Transylvanian Unitarians.

Congratulations to Stephanie Ann Blythe who is one of the 2016 Stewards in Partnership award winners from the Partner Church Council. She thanks all of you for your support of our partnership. Without your financial contributions, whether as direct gifts to the Village Education Fund or as bowls of goulash purchased at the snack table, all this would not be possible.

Want to get in on the action? Contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net to find out more. We are changing our meeting time. It is now on the fourth Thursday of each month at 3:30 p.m. in the Safir Room. All are welcome!

Social Justice

On May 15, 2016 the UUCB Congregation voted YES!! (1) To renew our support for the Confronting Racism Project; (2) To officially support the Black Lives Matter Movement; (3) To approve displaying our Black Lives Matter banner in public marches and demonstrations.

Social Justice Council Meeting & Family Ministry At the SJC May meeting, Merrin Clough (Director of UUCB Family Ministry Program) explained that they are building capacity in the youth/adult team, and the teenagers are interested in working with the congregation and want to do SJ work. Merrin sees Family Ministry/ Religious Education working together with SJC to implement opportunities.

Social Justice Chalice Circle Summer Pilot. Linda Laskowski – Coming out of Congregational Conversations on the path to engagement, small group ministry would engage newcomers and “feed the souls” of those who have been doing the work for some time. UUCB Chalice Circle overseers Barbara Norrish and Lenore Ralston are assisting. Linda and Jane Eisenstark will facilitate. Several SJC members are interested, as are the Berkeley Fellowship and Oakland and Walnut Creek UU Churches. Lonnie Moseley and Paul

Hudson (of Membership) will refer new people interested.

CCISCO Rapid Response Barbara Weisman spoke of this Team.

Comprised of two (or more) volunteers who visit families that have lost someone to gun violence, they provide emotional support, meals, help with funeral arrangements, expenses and connect the family to social and psychological programs, as needed. This service is part of the Ceasefire Initiative and is in need of financial support. The Social Justice Council voted to donate \$250.00. Barbara will ensure that a fund is set up for this purpose.

Literature, Film & Drama Contingent (LFDC) of the Confronting Racism Project The LFDC enjoyed a lively discussion of Bryan Stevenson's powerfully engaging book, *Just Mercy*, which chronicles his grit and dedication and the development of the Equal Justice Initiative – to fight poverty and challenge racial discrimination in the criminal justice system. We also talked about his interview on KQED. We will end our first year on June 5 at 12:15 in the Fireside Room, when we'll discuss our first selection of fiction, *God Help the Child*, by Toni Morrison, and our intentions for 2016-17. Join us! CamilleParker@comcast.net.

Another Success Story, for GRIP April's Undie Sunday was a success! UUCB seems to always come through when it comes to helping disadvantaged people, as was the case with our collection of underwear and other clothing for the residents of the GRIP Family Shelter. Much appreciation to everyone who contributed – we collected the equivalent of five of those large black plastic bags of clothes – and also to Marion Anderson, Barbara Daniell, and Camille Parker for helping with this project.
— Ray Westergard

Miscellaneous 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? raywest2@sbcglobal.net.

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

June Good Neighbor: YEAH – Youth Engagement, Advocacy and Housing (www.yeah-berkeley.org) YEAH!'s mission is to support young people ages 18-25 who are currently homeless. With the partnership of concerned community members, YEAH! provides shelter, case management and support services. Programs co-create community with young people to help them achieve the stability, wellness, and personal goals they desire for their lives.

If you want to be added to the **Social Justice email list** contact maw.jane@gmail.com.