



Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

The mission of our congregation is to create loving community, inspire spiritual growth, and encourage lives of integrity, joy, and service.

Beacon On The Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

February 2016 - Vol. 75, Issue 2

From Our Minister's Desk, February, 2016

Rev. Greg S. Ward

Dear Friends,

Zorba the Greek, the fictional character from Nikos Kazantzakis' book of the same name, was famous for living with passion. He was at home in the place between love and tragedy, ecstasy and lamentation. He famously referred to such a place as "the full catastrophe."

Theologians who recognize the last 24 hours of Jesus' life know this place. It was in these hours that Jesus pondered his ministry, reviewed his choices, reflected on his relationships with disciples, and discussed intentions with Pilate and the Sanhedrin. He considered the love and hope he had for his people. He accepted the misunderstanding and judgment that came back to him. And finally he was hung on a cross, next to criminals, in front of his mother. He died—just as he'd predicted (and some would say "intended"). Theologians refer to his last hours as the "passion."

Passion is the theme of the month for February. Chosen because Valentine's Day—with its emphasis on love and romance and "passion"—is the most prominent of celebrations during the month.

But it's important to remember that February also includes "President's Day"—a holiday recognizing the love, dedication, commitment, sacrifice and "passion" of two extraordinary statesmen of our country. George Washington, we remember, led determined and desperate colonists through a war against a much more powerful army toward independence and freedom. And Abraham Lincoln, holding the reigns of a country at war with itself, sought to retain unity amidst an internal splintering of ideologies. Although he was heroically successful, the union Lincoln preserved came at great cost: 620,000 lives, including his own.

February is also known as Black History Month in the US and Canada. And if we were to be honest and go back to the beginning of the history of Black people on this continent, we need to acknowledge their coming as captives, against their will, stolen from their native land and sold into the servitude of white oppressors. Their "passion" is an ongoing struggle toward a liberation still not fully realized.

All of this—the excitement, struggle, commitment, love, sacrifice, hope—all of it—is part of "the passion." Passion is a Latin word. It translates as "suffering." But I think Zorba knew it best. Life and love both come with an ecstasy and an agony that is compelling and instructive. Lived open-heartedly, such living requires a fierce commitment to love. The kind that constantly inches us ever closer to the "full catastrophe."

This community invites you to live that way. To hope. To dream. To seek the way beyond suffering. To find a way of "com-passion"—to "suffer with"—those beside you toward something great.

February is also the month we prepare for our Stewardship campaign. It is how we make the love we dream of possible. By naming it. By talking about it with people. By sharing it with the world.

When asked, have passion. Be a connector. Carry love forward.

To the full catastrophe. To the Glory of Life.

Personal Theology

Sunday mornings at 10 am in the Fireside Room

Feb. 7 **Rev. László Major**, current Balázs Scholar at Starr King School for the Ministry; studied in Transylvania; Parish Minister at Unitarian

Major's Simplicity is the Ultimate Sophistication

Congregation of Dakot.

Feb. 14 **Susan Moon**, writer, editor and lay teacher in the Soto Zen tradition; author of a number of books about Buddhism, including *The Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-Five Centuries of Awakened Women*. **What Does Death Have to Teach the Living?**

Feb. 21 **Nancy Abrams**, lawyer, author of several books, activist, scientist and philosopher, Fulbright Scholar; was interviewed by Deepak Chopra as part of his Deepak *Homebase* series and has lectured at NASA. **A God That Could Be Real in the Scientific Universe**

Feb. 28 **Nicoletta Karam**, Bay area educator with a PhD in Arab-American history; author of *The 9/11 Backlash and other writings*. **Kahlil Gibran's "Pen Bond": Feminism and Spirituality in Jazz-Age New York**

Personal Theology Program Committee: Barbara Rockhold, Gloria Merrill, Anne Wardell and Barbara Norrish



Sundays in February

Worship at 9 and 11am

Theme for Month: **Passion**

Feb. 7 **Love is Like Travelling to a Foreign Yak Farm**, Rev. Greg with Jeanne Foster

Falling in love can be amazing, wonderful, intoxicating and provide one of the great pathways to purpose and meaning. It can also be disorienting, confusing, mysterious and scary. It feels like we are asked to learn an entirely new language. And the truth is, we are.

Feb. 14 **"Heart Communion" – Intergenerational Service (Valentine's Day / President's Day Weekend)**

Somewhere, far, far away—in a community, ironically, much like ours—there lived people in the midst of great transition. And they were looking for their next leader. And that search asked them to consider some very profound questions—not only about who they were looking for, but who they were themselves and what was truly in their heart. This is a timely intergenerational story.

Feb. 21 **A Stroke of Insight**, Rev. Greg and Zackrie Vinczen

Jill Bolte Taylor was a neuro-anatomist who had the rare, fascinating and frightening experience of being able to recognize what was happening to her—in real time—as a sudden stroke began disabling her neuro-anatomical functioning. This is her story of survival and the lessons she has to pass on to those she interacted with in her time of great need.

Feb. 28 **Sharing our Passion**, Zackrie Vinczen with Kathryn Jay

Each of us has a source of motivation that burns deep within our being—a spark that calls us into engagement with the world. This sermon will explore how we identify that source of passion within us and the importance of sharing this spark with people in our lives.

Congregational Conversation on Growth

Co-Sponsored by the Transition Team and Growth Strategy Team

February 21, 12:15-2:30 pm

What will this hilltop church be like in ten years? A sustainable church in the 21st century requires more than just showing up—it also requires forging new ways to engage members and newcomers. Come meet the Growth Strategy Team, hear their ideas about our future, and have a congregational conversation about what growth means to you. Childcare and low cost lunch provided.

Family Ministry, February 2016

Kathryn Hack, Family Ministry Asst.

How we plan what we do: an overview of Family Ministry

A new year means new goals which turn into the programming in Family Ministry. As part of our annual planning cycle, we invite folks to propose ideas for the upcoming calendar year. Do you have a program idea you'd like to submit that upholds our church's mission to *create loving community, inspire spiritual growth, and encourage lives of integrity, joy and service*? You can submit that inspired idea here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hG1oqAUQOHRzwUoyOtdpjaTbRkWspKR1MxMXQo_N8g/viewform.



We will be accepting submissions until Feb 15, at which point our Family Ministry Committee will review and vote on what we can realistically add to the calendar. We work hard to create a culture in Family Ministry of Intentional Planning, and eagerly welcome your input in our shared ministry.

Our larger body supplies input for our Family Ministry Committee to forge into plans. Once we have the plan, we do our best to effectively communicate it to our families and congregation. Then the fun really begins as we recruit the volunteers needed to actualize these impeccable programming plans. Our teams are established and we prepare for success.

An important additional tool in prepping for success includes the rollout of our new UUCB website! Live in February, Family Ministry will have more helpful content for parents and volunteers. You will be just a click or two away from knowing what curriculum is being taught this Sunday (and six Sundays from now for that matter). All current events and information you will need will be easily accessible, as well as inspiring content to enrich our days, weeks ... our lives.

Thank you for your care and support of our Families and continued investment in our children and youth.

Social Justice, February 2016

The Confronting Racism: Literature, Film & Drama Contingent (LFDC) – At the January 3 meeting, plans were finalized for the January 17 service. A very spirited discussion of *Disgraced* followed. To give us all a chance to finish the book and give it the attention it deserves we held off discussing *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, by Michelle Alexander, until February 7—Music Room, 12:15 pm. Questions? [Camille Parker](#).

Islamophobia – In December, the SJC members spoke together about the rhetoric threatening people of the Muslim faith and listed a few actions individuals could take. SJC Chair (Nancy) “Kelly” sent our support to the Islamic Cultural Center. Several SJC members attended a forum on Islamophobia at the Graduate Theological Union. In January, Beth Jerde shared from her weeklong GTU class on Islamophobia, including two recommended books: *The Muslim Next Door* and *Growing Up Islam*. Karen Paull has taken the lead to explore the possibility of hosting an event co-sponsored by Muslim and Jewish congregations.

Upcoming Social Justice Events

Sunday, Feb. 7, 12:30 to 1:30 pm – **“Black Lives Matter” meeting**. The Social Justice Council requested and the Coordinating Team agreed to have a Black Lives Matter banner hung in our church, providing certain conditions are met. One of those conditions is that the SJC hold a meeting with interested members of the congregation to discuss this issue, with an opportunity to express concerns and ask questions. This meeting will be held in the Fireside Room. Everyone is welcome. For more info, contact [Ray Westergard](#).

Sunday, Feb. 14, 6 pm – **Monthly Social Justice Council potluck/meeting**. All are welcome.

Saturday, Feb. 20, 9:30 am–2 pm – So many of us have asked how we can further support our Richmond neighbors. What can we do in addition to supporting the community in the Ceasefire Walk and GRIP? Well, we are able to provide a beautiful space for Richmond community groups to gather, discuss and share their specific missions in the community. On Feb. 20, UUCB will host the **Contra Costa County Racial Justice Coalition Summit**, where various organizations from Richmond will discuss their vision for a Richmond that better serves the needs of its residents in a variety of areas of concern. UUCB will need volunteers to welcome, serve lunch, and attend various discussions. If you are interested in helping out, even for an hour, please email Lonnie Moseley ([Lonnie Moseley](#)).

Ceasefire Walks: Friday nights in Richmond at 7 pm; contact [Jane Eisenstark](#).

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 at [Ray Westergard](#). Thanks to everyone for the “Winter Warmth” donations.

Read-Aloud: Volunteers needed to read aloud at local elementary schools in Richmond and San Pablo. Contact [Judy Sam](#).

Good Neighbor for February: Winter Nights Shelter – <http://cccwinternights.org>

The Winter Nights Program in Contra Costa County provides a clean, safe, and warm facility at night and a daytime services center during winter for homeless families with children, serving up to 30 persons at any given time. Congregations throughout central and east Contra Costa provide space, meals, and volunteers on a two-week rotating basis.

If you want to be added to the **Social Justice email list** contact [Ray Westergard](#).

Love Songs and Chocolate

A Lovable, Annual Musical Event at UUCB

Please join us on February 7 at 1 pm or February 13 at 7:30 pm for **Love Songs and Chocolate**, a celebration of tuneful romance and delectable desserts. In a relaxed, cabaret-like setting, many singers from our community share songs from the classics to Broadway to jazz. We'll have a special focus on the wonderful songs of Cole Porter, like “Night and Day,” and “Let's Do It” and “I Get a Kick Out of You.” Let your ears be delighted and your taste buds beguiled by amazing, delicious treats. Tickets for this annual fundraiser (\$20 regular/\$15 students and seniors/\$5 children) will be available at the door; no one turned away for lack of funds.



Wonderful Wednesdays!

Gather at 5:30pm – Dinner at 6pm – Vespers at 7pm

Enjoy dinner with your friends at church, catered by Richie Dawkins. Vesper service is at 7pm, followed by many activities.

Reservations: [suppers \(at\) uucb.org](#) or sign the sheet outside the office. Deadline is Monday.

Adults: \$15 (includes wine, light snacks, and dessert)

Family (two adults + two children, ages 12-18): \$35; children under 12 eat for free.

From the Intern Minister, February 2016

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One of the great things about being a dreamer with a dream and the passion to pursue it is that the world really can be changed as a result. However, it is simply not enough for an individual to have a dream, other people need to be included in the vision. We do not live as individuals in isolation, but rather as intimately connected beings. Our destinies are tied together in a way that is impossible to fully understand, and that is why it is so important for us to gather together in communities like this.



This church affirms a belief in the possibility of a more just and equal world. A world where every individual is recognized for their inherent worth. This dream is given more momentum by the fact that it is shared among so many people here. People who have committed themselves to working to see this dream become a reality.

But the truth is, this work will never be done. There will always be a need for communities like UUCB, and in acknowledging this we must ensure that this community does more than survive. We need to be a community that thrives and pulses with vitality in a way that calls us into a deeper and more enduring commitment. However, in order for this to happen, we need more people to take up the shared ministry that is church life.

This time of year represents an opportunity for each of us to do just that. It's a chance for us to say yes and reaffirm our commitment of time, talent, and treasure to this community.

The work of the Church is a difficult undertaking, but an important one nonetheless. We need your help in doing the work necessary to build our future.

The View from Personal Theology

Barbara Rockhold, Chair

February begins a new semester of Personal Theology. If you don't have a spring schedule already, please pick one up in the racks in the Atrium near the office door. We have an exciting line-up of speakers this spring, so you won't want to miss a speaker or a topic you're especially interested in.



We start out on February 7 with Rev. László Major, the current Balázs Scholar at Starr King School for the Ministry. His topic is "Simplicity Is the Ultimate Sophistication." Wow...I can't wait to hear about that! February 14 (Valentine's Day!) is Susan Moon, who spoke a couple years ago about Twenty-Five Centuries of Awakened Women, talking this time about "What Does Death Have to Teach the Living?" February 21 is a new speaker I'm very excited about, who was suggested to us by Stan Klein (thanks Stan!). It's Nancy Abrams, author of several books, scientist and philosopher, and Fulbright Scholar. She'll be speaking about her latest book, "A God That Could Be Real in the Scientific Universe." Hopefully, she'll draw a lot of the Humanists in our congregation! On February 28 we have Nicoletta Karam scheduled to speak about "Kahlil Gibran's 'Pen Bond': Feminism and Spirituality in Jazz-Age New York." An intriguing topic!

Later in the semester, we'll have our popular speaker Bill Garrett, followed by Matthew Fox, and Beverly Allen in conversation with Frank Ferrante, among other wonderful speakers.

Our committee works hard to offer you a well-rounded series of speakers on a variety of spiritual topics. We hope you'll join us on Sunday mornings at 10 in the Fireside Room.

Personal Theology Program Committee: Barbara Rockhold, Gloria Merrill, Anne Wardell, and Barbara Norrish.

Play Readers Anonymous

Wednesday, Feb. 24, from 7:30 to 9 pm: Have you wished you could indulge your dramatic gifts in an enthusiastically supportive atmosphere? A new theater group, meeting on the 4th Wednesday of every month, invites you to come and read aloud with us, both scenes and plays. We encourage you to come to the **church supper at 5:30 pm** on Feb. 24 and look for the Play Readers Anonymous table. You can check us out, ask questions, and decide if you are interested. Lynn Hammond will facilitate the February gathering. You can email [Lynn Hammond](#) to find out more.

This group is an outgrowth of Blended Voices, which met under Donna Davis's able direction for more than 11 years. Donna has retired from leadership but will still be part of the group.

Ministerial Search Committee

The Ministerial Search Committee hit the ground running on January 2. The names of seventeen prospective ministers were presented to us for consideration. Two more ministers chimed in shortly thereafter, and we had to decide which ones we would ask to exchange information packets with us. We read their ministerial records, which gave some insight into the experiences and ideas they bring to their ministry. For each record we asked ourselves: "Are we drawn to learn more about them towards discerning whether they could be our next minister?" As this report is being written we are reviewing the "packets" (websites) of the twelve ministers with whom we decided to move forward. From that dozen we will choose those whom we want to interview and get to know in depth. By the time you read this report we should have decided on the three or four pre-candidates that we think really can be our next minister.

Meanwhile, the ministers are reviewing our ministerial search packet website. We crammed the site with all the facts, figures, profiles, survey results, pictures, and videos that best present UUCB to them. Very soon the link to this website will be posted on the public website that you can visit by clicking the link below. Watch for our weekly announcements in The Week Ahead email and the pink sheet for alerts to new items on the website.

Come visit us at <https://UUCBMinSearch.wordpress.com>. Email us at searchcommittee@uucb.org.

Stewardship Campaign for 2016-17



MOVING FORWARD... BUILDING OUR FUTURE

MOVING FORWARD...BUILDING OUR FUTURE! Now is the time to say **YES** and join the wonderful group of **CONNECTORS**. We are assembling a group of 60, who will meet with members and friends in small groups or individually to explore our love of UUCB and our commitment to its future.

Can you help? Yes, you can!!

1. Sign up to talk with others about this church we love – attend a training:

Starting Sun., Jan. 24, after 11 am service,

Mon., Jan. 25, 7 to 9 pm,

Thurs., Jan. 28, 9:30 to 11:30, or 3 to 5 pm,

Wed., Feb. 10, 2 to 4 pm, or 7:30 to 9:30 pm

Sat., Feb. 27, optional, if needed, 9am to noon.

2. Volunteer to help with the All Church Luncheon: shop, cook, decorate, set-up, serve, and clean up! New faces and willing hands of all ages welcome to join the fun.

Important Dates:

February 28th – Come to the **All Church luncheon** provided by the Stewardship team and enjoy music and a new church video featuring stars of all ages!

March 6th– **Kickoff Sunday**, when we begin our pledge drive. Plan your giving level for FY 2016–2017 now and get the details when you join with a Connector or attend a small group gathering.

Coordinating Team, February 2016

Lisa Maynard, Convener

As we receive our winter rainfall with gratitude and an element of caution (hoping the rain will ease our drought with minimal destruction), I find myself thinking about flow. Water flows down our hillside, gravity compelling it to the bay below. The gutters and storm drains work only if their direction works with the force of gravity.

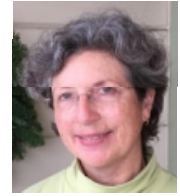
And what does that have to do with the CT? Well, recently we drafted an organizational chart. Our first draft depicts a hierarchical-seeming structure of groups at UUCB, which is useful if you want to know where a group came from, or to whom the group reports. But what if you want to know how to start an activity, or how to get something done, or just whom to ask a question? We realized we need to work on a visual representation of our relationships beyond reporting lines; we also hope to create a flow chart that shows some of our processes.

What force governs this flow of our activities at UUCB? I think it's something more ethereal than gravity. In fact, passion sounds like a good name for it. We gather together because we share a passion for love, truth and justice, for community, beauty, and action. And just as the gutters and storm drains help guide the water that gravity compels to the bay, we have covenants, structure and policies to guide the activities driven by our passion. I am beginning to think of the CT as a maintenance crew, inspecting, mapping and sometimes patching up the storm water systems engineered by our congregation, past and present. Sometimes we have to check the water quality, too.

In case this flight of fancy has you wondering what the CT actually does, here are some recent topics of discussion:

- facilities/building issues: school rental, caretaker's cottage, staffing, building security, repairs
- financial management: revision of 2015-16 operating budget, annual audit, Lawrence Lecture Series funding, restricted gifts
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The Coordinating Team meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 3:00 to 5:00 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 [email me](#) to verify our schedule and meeting place. Questions for the CT? Email [CT @ uucb.org](mailto:CT@uucb.org)



Community Ministry, February 2016

Rev. Dr. Jane Ramsey

A Single Tear

Reflections on a visit to a hospice patient in a nursing home

A single tear rolled down her cheek,
as white hair framed her pink and white complexion.
She lay in bed,
her frail body mildly contorted while lying on a bed pan.

It was the song that brought the
tear to her eye
"....and he walks with me
and he talks with me
and he tells me I am his own..."
That's when the tear came "*he tells me I am his own*"

Her daughter, a woman smartly and elegantly dressed for business
cries as she is leaving
"I love you, Mommy"

The staff get her off the bed pan
and we do one more chorus of
"He walks with me and he talks with me
and he tells me I am his own
and the joy we share,
as we tarry there
none other has ever known....."

What's not to love about this new job of mine?

Rev. Dr. Jane Ramsey is a Spiritual Care Provider with Napa Valley Hospice and Community Minister Affiliated with UUCB



Treasurer @ UUCB, February 2016

Mary Muehlbach, Treasurer

El Niño brings gifts and challenges, wrapped in the same package.

Our November year to date unrestricted deficit gave me pause. A \$20,000 deficit is where I expect we will end this year, as in the budget approved this past December (thank you all for your careful consideration). Our front end surplus this year was weighted with several pledges generously paid at the beginning of the year which greatly helped our financial picture.

Having reviewed the details, I am more or less cautiously optimistic our (\$20,631) year to date deficit in November will stabilize with December rental income. On the expense side, our year to date spending includes \$4,000 for a new sound system along with \$7,000 prepaid insurance.

We live in interesting times. Our Interim Minister will be gone in five months. Our new settled Minister(s) not yet in sight. We are challenged to keep each other warm as we look to the future.

Namaste.



Membership Ministry Committee, Feb. 2016

Paul Hudson and Lonnie Moseley

Ways That YOU Can Reach Out for UUCB: Making UUCB's presence known in the wider community is something that can only happen if we work together. Here are some ideas for extending our reach that everyone can do!

1. Bring someone on a Sunday to Personal Theology and/or worship. Bring a friend's child or your children's friends to a religious education class.
2. Let friends know about our wonderful religious education programs for both children and adults.
3. Become a Purple Mugs Person and warmly welcome both newcomers and people-new-to-you.
4. Wear your name tag at every Sunday service (with your Purple Mugs sticker attached!)
5. Pick up a recycled copy of UU World in the Atrium, and give to friends or distribute in the community.
6. Tell return newcomers that you're glad they came back.
7. Intentionally sit beside a newcomer at a Sunday service.
8. Put a UU decal on your car or home window.
9. Wear UU jewelry and clothing.
10. Use a UU coffee mug at work.
11. Practice your response to the question, "What is Unitarian Universalism?"
12. Host a party to which you invite both members and nonmembers.
13. Like our Facebook page www.facebook.com/uuberkeley/ and like and share postings.
14. Visit our YouTube page www.youtube.com/user/uucb and send links to friends of sermons and music.
15. Participate in UUCB Social Justice events and wear your yellow Standing on the Side of Love T-Shirt.



With Thanks and Gratitude

The UUCB staff wants to thank the congregation for the holiday gifts gathered from the congregation in December and given to the staff just before the holidays. Thank you, thank you!

Freestone Survey

Force will be conducting a survey. This survey will focus on church members' knowledge about the Books Appointed for Freestone in Sonoma county. One hundred randomly chosen members will be invited to participate. This methodology will ensure that representative and reliable data is collected. If you are invited to participate, please help out and take the survey in a timely manner. Your taking and completing the survey should only require about 15 minutes.

Safely Handling Cash @ UUCB

If you are responsible for handling cash for any of the programs at UUCB, please note that there is a newly distributed "Procedure for Handling Cash" in the office. There are deposit envelopes and safety instructions to the left of the Office Administrator's door, so that cash never needs to be taken away from the church. If you have questions, please contact Alisa at 510-525-0302, ext. 306, or by [email](mailto:).

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley's 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.



September through May: Sunday Worship Services at 9 and 11 am, Wednesday Vespers at 7 pm.
May through August (Summer Schedule): One Sunday Service at 11 am. More at uucb.org or calendar.uucb.org! You can also join the [UUCB Google Discussion group](#) to engage in energetic discussions and learn about what's happening in the lives of our congregation.



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