

Beacon on the Hill, May 2016

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley.

From Our Minister's Desk

Rev. Greg Ward



Dear Friends,

Following my sermon last month on “A Religion that Tells Us to ‘Go to Hell,’” where I talked about life sometimes feeling like a test, a member sent me this poem.

“In the evening we shall be examined....” by Thomas Centolella

“In the evening we shall be examined on love.”

-St. John of the Cross

And it won't be multiple choice,

though some of us would prefer it that way.

Neither will it be essay, which tempts us to run on

when we should be sticking to the point, if not together.

In the evening there shall be implications

our fear will change to complications. No cheating,

we'll be told, and we'll try to figure out the cost of being true

to ourselves. In the evening when the sky has turned

that certain blue, blue of exam books, blue of no more
daily evasions, we shall climb the hill as the light empties
and park our tired bodies on a bench above the city
and try to fill in the blanks. And we won't be tested
like defendants on trial, cross-examined
till one of us breaks down, guilty as charged. No,
in the evening, after the day has refused to testify,
we shall be examined on love like students
who don't even recall signing up for the course
and now must take their orals, forced to speak for once
from the heart and not off the top of their heads.
And when the evening is over and it's late,
the student body asleep, even the great teachers
retired for the night, we shall stay up
and run back over the questions, each in our own way:
what's true, what's false, what unknown quantity
will balance the equation, what it would mean years from now
to look back and know
we did not fail.

We look at so many things feeling like they are test results: whether or not we get a raise or that promotion at work... how our relationship ends up or how our children turn out. Even the outcome of a search process for a settled minister.

Those things aren't test results. We often think they are because, most of the time, we lose sight of the actual test.

Spiritual masters the world over since time began have been trying to remind us that it is rarely in the outcome that we find the meaning we've been looking for. It's in the process. It's in our ability to see and discern whether or not any adventure or challenge called from us our best attention. It is about whether we showed up fully. And kept showing up even after it became confusing or hard. It's about how we managed to rise above our fears. It's how and when and where and why we chose love over convenience and comfort and safety and power and privilege.

This month, our theme is 'awakening.' Which is what's left after we let go of outcomes or rigid agendas. It's what is left illuminated when love and our best attention are allowed to enter and sweep aside our fears. It's what, ultimately, opens our minds and hearts.

To the Glory of Life.

Sunday Worship in May

Worship at 9 and 11 am through May 15, 11 am only May 22 and 29

Theme for Month: **Awakening**

May 1 **Good Religion, Bad Religion**, Rev. David Usher with Rev. Jeanne Foster. Guest preacher David Usher, a native of Australia, has served as a Unitarian minister in England, New Hampshire, and for the last two years as

the interim minister of the Grass Valley UU Church.

May 8 (Mother's Day) **The Promise of a Protector**, Rev. Greg Ward with Moses Canales. Julia Ward Howe and Anna Jarvis were two figures who extolled the virtues of mothering and laid such examples of compassion, courage, hope and virtue upon the horrific context of war where brother fought against brother and tore the American family apart. In this service we will explore how we might take their model of motherhood and apply it to the rift in our human family.

May 15 **Somewhere on the Road to Damascus**, Zackrie Vinczen with Mary Muehlbach. Somewhere on the road to Damascus Saul became Paul. Somewhere under a Bodhi tree Siddhartha awoke as the Buddha. And somewhere today the next generation of spiritual leaders is waking up to the realities of this world. This service will explore what it means to awaken to a deeper calling, and the transformation that is brought about as a result.

May 22 **The Amazing Spider-Man and the Interdependent Web**, Rev. Greg Ward with Sidney Camara-Hurtado and other YoUUth. When Peter Parker became the Amazing Spider-Man, it came with a harrowing and painful loss. Losing something he loved forced him to lean into the grief and see the wisdom revealed. He discovered that “with great power comes great responsibility.” How is such an adage an appropriate religious mantra for us and our times?

May 29 **Doctors of Durability**, Zackrie Vinczen with Ann Riley. Join the UUCB community as we celebrate our Doctors of Durability (people over 80 years old) and acknowledge the many gifts these people bring into the life of the church.

Personal Theology in May

Sunday mornings at 10 am in the Fireside Room

May 1: **Ameena Jandali**, founding member of Islamic Networks Group; instructor at San Francisco City College; editor of ING's training handbooks for institutions. *"Getting to Know American Muslims and their Faith"*.

May 8: **Alex Pappas**, author; retired teacher of World Religions at College of Alameda; avid student of the ancient traditions and Theosophy. *"Turkish Politics & Islam: Ataturk, Sharia, Sects (Sunni, Alevi and Sufi), Shia Iran and Alawite Syria."*

May 15: **Alex Pappas**, (see bio above). *"Sufism: historical development, great teachers, modern sects."*

May 22: **Sara Lefkowitz**, RN, BSN, MPA, Nurse Educator; facilitator in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction; active in SF Area Tara Mandala Sangha. *"In Search of the Enlightened Feminine: My Journey through Paganism to Tibetan Buddhism and other Important Spiritual Adventures."*

May 29: **Sister Carmel (Marguerite Crimmings)**, Carmelite Monastery in Kensington, CA; worked in education and prison ministry and has done restorative justice work in San Quentin. *"Called to Compassion and Mercy."*

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

Sunday Schedule Changes

The Program Council (PC), Coordinating Team (CT), and staff have worked out some changes in the Sunday schedule for next fall. From 9:30 to 10:30 am we will have, simultaneously, an intimate worship service (with seating up on the chancel) and Personal Theology in the Fireside Room. Then there will be 45 minutes for coffee and snacks, socializing, continued informal discussion of the Personal Theology topic, rearranging of furniture in the chancel, and choir practice. The second service will be from 11:15 to 12:15.

But first, please note that we will do our usual switch to a summer schedule of one service only, at 11 am, starting May 22. The Personal Theology series will continue at 10 am through May 29, and then Summer Forum, featuring speakers related to social justice, will be in the same 10 am time slot through August 28.

Wonderful Wednesdays

Gather at 5:30 pm – Dinner at 6 pm –
Vespers at 7 pm (last Vespers May 18)

Please join us for Richie Dawkins's
wonderful catered suppers at church
on Wednesdays.

May Menus

May 4 Mexican: Smoked Paprika

Chicken Tacos; Smoked Paprika Pork

Tacos; Chipotle Seitan Tacos; Spanish

Rice with Cilantro; Black Bean and Corn Salad; Latin Savoy Cabbage Salad;

Salsa Verde; Caramel Pudding

May 11 Indian: Tikka Masala, Lemon Basmati Rice, Saag Paneer, Channa

Masala, Curried Cauliflower and Sweet Potatoes, House Salad, Mango Sorbet,

Pistachio Cookies

May 18 American: Honey Dijon BBQ Pork Loin, Honey Dijon BBQ Tofu with

Mushrooms, Deviled Egg Potato Salad, Vinaigrette Cole Slaw, House Salad,

Apple or Pear Pies

May 25: Middle Eastern: Mediterranean Roasted Herb Chicken, Crispy

Falafels, Turkish Rice Pilaf, Garlicky Hummus, Babaganoush, House Salad

with Kale, Brownies and Blondies

The first Wednesday of each month is especially geared to families, with Merrin Clough leading Vespers, but childcare is available every Wednesday by reservation (childcare@uucb.org).

Reservations: Email suppers@uucb.org or sign the sheet outside the office. Deadline is 4 pm Monday.

Adults: \$15 (includes wine, light snacks, and dessert). Family (two adults + two children, ages 12-18): \$35; children under 12 eat for free. Limited availability for drop-ins.

Vespers is an intimate half-hour worship service in the Fireside Room with meditative music, a reading, singing, and a story or homily. Come check it out!

All-Church Spring Gala

Ann Harlow

On Saturday, May 7th, it's time to GET HAPPY! Come to the Gala that evening, dance "like no one is watching"—or just enjoy the music of Moses Canales and Soul Rising.

Suggested donation for this fundraiser is \$20 (\$25 at the door because we'd really like you to sign up in advance), but you can pay whatever is comfortable for you.

Barbara Hilbourn will provide fabulous desserts. Luke Gottlieb and his helpers will serve you champagne or other festive drinks. Children and youth are welcome, free of charge (reserve childcare in advance if desired). We'll have our biggest, best silent auction of the year, plus the second annual Chez Panisse raffle. At 7 pm Roger Dillahunty will teach anyone who's interested a

line dance to Pharrell Williams' song *Happy*, which will be the grand finale of the evening. The band will start at 7:30. Don't miss this party unless you really have to! Make your reservation at the Gala table this Sunday or go to [Brown Paper Tickets](#). Questions? Email fundraising@uucb.org.

President's Corner

Deborah Schmidt

Dear Fellow Congregants,

After consulting with our Search Team to determine the wisest course for the search process, the board has chosen the first option that the Search Team outlined earlier: an immediate, fairly brief second round of the ministerial search, concurrent with an application for a one-year interim minister. The UUA transitions office assures us that we can do these two things simultaneously. The Search Team will conduct the second round, and a board task force will complete the interim application and interviews.

We are extremely fortunate that our Search Team members are willing to see this through. They are an amazing group of people who are highly invested in a good outcome for our community. If the second round is unsuccessful, they are also willing to engage in another year-long search cycle. That is the scenario that would require another interim minister.

I know that this can feel very unsettled and unsettling. But the silver linings are multiple. We are holding out for the best possible settled ministry. Another interim year, if necessary, would support our progress toward clarity of policy and structure. And all of this throws us back upon ourselves in the best possible way. Barbara and Bill, in their last sermon, reassured us that their departure would not subtract anything essential, that *we* were UUCB. Reverend Greg encourages us to take "ownership of your future," to "trust yourselves. Trust each other. Trust your vision and your collective call to

serve the people of this area.” In response, Linda Laskowski wrote, “Greg’s letter reminded me that I am not part of this church because of the minister. I am here because of all of you, and what we can do/have done collectively.” So take a moment to look around our church and be proud of what you see. *We are UUCB.*

There will be a Congregational Celebration and Planning Meeting on Sunday, May 15, following the 11:00 service. Relevant materials, including the budget, will be posted to the website and mailed to all members in advance.

Program Council

Joanne Wile, Convener

The Program Council has been working on policies and procedures for recognition of interest groups and committees. This year, instead of individual groups submitting reports for the church’s Annual Report, each Program Council representative has been asked to provide a brief summary of their program area’s doings and plans.

We have also continued to consult with the Coordinating Team about ways to improve the Sunday morning schedule of offerings.

All lay leaders and prospective leaders are encouraged to attend the Calendaring Summit on Saturday morning, May 14, in the Fireside Room. Bring anything you want to get on the calendar for 2016-17 and your thoughts about how we can make it a great year with excellent communication and collaboration. We will have coffee and snacks at 9:30 and provide color-coded post-its for the giant calendar, then convene the meeting at 10 and adjourn by noon.

Freestone: The Marketing Myth

As most of you know, Freestone is our retreat property located on a beautiful

hilltop near Sebastopol, California. There are many misconceptions regarding Freestone. One is that Freestone is poorly marketed. If only Freestone were better marketed, goes the myth, we would not be facing the current shortfall. This myth is not true. In fact, the Freestone Committee has done a fine job marketing Freestone. The fact is that they are limited to marketing the facility by our conditional use permit and our insurance, which limits usage to outside groups.

Our conditional use permit does not allow us to rent Freestone to outside groups. Therefore the marketing could only be aimed at church members. Marketing to church members has been robust. Recently though, revenues have fallen. In fiscal year 2014–2015, Freestone generated \$3449. Some say it is the new pricing structure, and some say it is the condition of the building. If you have stopped renting Freestone please tell me what we can do to get you to come back!

Due to health and safety concerns rentals of Freestone have ceased temporarily. A detailed inspection with recommendations for repair must be commissioned by the church, and all health and safety issues that are identified must be addressed before rentals resume.

Thank you,

Richard Hanway

Board of Trustees – Freestone Task Force chairperson

richhanway@gmail.com

From the Intern Minister

Zackrie Vinczen

This is my penultimate Beacon Article for you all. It's hard to believe that in six weeks, I'll be leaving UUCB. People keep asking me what I am going to do next year, and the short answer is—finishing seminary at Starr King. The long answer contains a lot of moving parts and some uncertainty, but essentially involves me continuing on the path towards preliminary fellowship. Whatever the final outcome will hold, I'm certain that the lessons I've learned here at UUCB will continue to inform my ministry for years to come.

During the month of May, I hope you will join me on the 15th and 29th as I lead our Sunday worship, as well as on May 18th as we celebrate our last vespers service of the year.

Workshop: Writing From the Universe Within

Saturday, May 14, 1–4:30 pm, Fireside Room

Led by Rhonda Servin

Suggested Donation: \$20

To register: Lonnie Moseley (510) 655-1444 or email lonniemoseley@hotmail.com.

This workshop focuses on using your imagination and honoring its connection to the Universe Within. There are so many stories within us and with a little prompting, they begin to pour out and through us. During our time together,^{Rhonda Servin} I will present you with a prop, a poem, a person, or a prompt and together we will let our imaginations play freely with the Universe Within.

It is my hope that at the end of this experience, you will have a deeper connection to that still small voice or to that very large and flamboyant voice that you find in your writings. When we share our stories during the workshop, I'm sure we will have a much better appreciation for all of our differences and clearly see we are all one with the Universe.

Rhonda Servin, a member of UUCB, is an artist, writer and storyteller. She is author of the upcoming book *The Universe Chronicles*. Rhonda's passion for an authentic connection to the universe is evident in her extensive art portfolio and wondrous stories she tells and helps other to find within themselves.

Coordinating Team

Lisa Maynard, Convener

During April the Coordinating Team collaborated with Treasurer Mary Muehlbach to present to the Board of Trustees an operating budget for next fiscal year, July, 2016, through June, 2017. We look forward to congregational approval of the 2016-17 operating budget in mid-May.

Other CT activities during April ranged from revising our draft gift acceptance policy in collaboration with other groups working on policies for Endowment gift acceptance and for the use of restricted gift funds, to accepting the gift of an upright piano which will replace the instrument in the Safir Room. (The new piano was donated by Sondra Soderlund, and we follow Music Director Bryan Baker's recommendation in accepting it).

The CT was restructured almost a year ago, and during the summer of 2015, began operating with a smaller group and specific responsibilities for each member. The four spots on the Coordinating Team are filled by the Senior Minister/Chief of Staff, the Director of Administration, the Program Council Convener, and the Coordinating Team Convener. We were fortunate this year

to be joined in a non-voting (but wonderfully contributing!) capacity by our Intern Minister. So, during May, one of our concerns will be to prepare for the June departures of Rev. Greg Ward and Intern Minister Zackrie Vinczen.

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.

Social Justice

Quote from UUCB Board President Deborah Schmidt “I love this aspect of who we are becoming—a gathering place for the community, a curator and host for important and inspiring events.... “

Ghost Town to Havana – Although the film has been described as a “heart-wrenching and hopeful documentary – a poetic love letter to inner-city mentors who give so much of themselves to help others,” the reality is that there are not enough coaches for inner city kids and being on a well supervised ball team can change their lives! Roscoe Bryant, devoted coach of the Oakland Royals baseball team, and Gene Corr, director, were featured at our April 8 event along with Rontral, a former Royals player. Three hundred people of all ages and backgrounds attended. Beth Jerde had worked tirelessly to spread the word to a multi-targeted, prospective audience. The Oakland A's heard about the event and came, gifting us with two sets of tickets, hats and autographed balls that were auctioned off. Fito Reinose & Los Clasicos played phenomenal Cuban tunes; people danced. A guest gave a donation for the Royals when he checked in. At the Q&A following the movie, Bob Adams ignited a spontaneous collection among the audience; \$1,072 was collected. New uniforms for the team!

<http://www.berkeleyside.com/2016/04/04/with-ghost-town-to-havana-berkeley-filmmaker-eugene-corr-raises-important-questions/>

Social Justice Council Meeting – At the April meeting, SJC small groups reported what they had learned from the last three months of events. Comments included: We can organize events, bring in people from outside and have people who'll volunteer to help. SJC member impact included CCISCO Ceasefire walks, Berkeley Global Campus Working Group, and participation in the Contra Costa County Racial Justice Coalition. They want to involve and hear from youth; get involved when racism appears close to home; share more with the congregation; co-sponsor events with those beyond UUCB. Maybe include a film series? Raise funds for baseball coaches in Richmond/Oakland? Focus on the high recidivism rate in Richmond? There was one SJC Sponsored Project Application received. It was for continuing the Confronting Racism Project and was approved by acclamation. This proposed project goes before the congregation in May for final approval.

The Confronting Racism: Literature, Film & Drama Contingent (LFDC) – After the lighting of the chalice at the April 3rd meeting, Beth Jerde was acknowledged and thanked for her outstanding leadership in bringing the film *Ghost Town to Havana* to the church. We then viewed the excellent film *Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity*, with discussion during and following the video. Participants shared personal insights and, because of the depth and stirring content of the film, a follow-up at next month's meeting will take place. Many thanks to Lynne Henderson and Helen Tinsley-Jones for leading the meeting, and to Lotez Franklin and Austin Henderson for their technical support! The book we are reading for our May meeting is *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. camilleparker@comcast.net

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.

Good Neighbor for May: Impact Fund (www.impactfund.org). The Impact Fund provides strategic leadership and support for litigation to achieve economic and social justice. They provide funds for impact litigation in the areas of civil rights, environmental justice, and poverty law. They offer innovative technical support, training, and expertise on issues that arise in large-scale impact litigation.

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

Treasurer's Report

Mary Muehlbach

sometimes

I go about

in pity for myself

and all the while

a great wind

is bearing me across the sky

~Ojibwa saying

Working with numbers would be an isolating experience if it were not for the purpose of putting numbers together. The aim of these numbers is bringing a

community together.

We are very blessed. With each other. With our fantastic stewardship team. With the legacy of our grounds and facilities. With our world-class organ. With our sweeping San Francisco Bay view. With a very special team of people who support our worship: from custodians to musicians, from religious education staff and volunteers to program council. If you have not opened the pdf already, I encourage you to peruse the first 7 pages of our latest electronic UUCB Directory.

We are blessed with having Unitarian Universalism as our religious safe harbor.

We are blessed with our challenge of moving forward.

We will soon bid farewell to our interim minister, Greg. I have been blessed to work as worship associate and witness close up his genius, wit, shortfalls, and perseverance.

The Coordinating Team made it through the final round of the draft FY16-17 budget, submitted to the Board of Trustees for a final final round before sending out to our community for approval. By the time the Beacon is published, the details will already be known.

Up until a December storm two years ago, I had two trees in my back yard. One, I carefully selected, planted and nurtured. The other came in on the wind – an apple tree, planted from where I know not. I gave it no nurture, no great care except that I allowed it the freedom to grow.

The carefully nurtured tree lost its leader in heavy winds and was irretrievably lost.

The other is thriving, bursting with bountiful apple blossoms this spring, a joy to behold.

The April Treasurer's report is available on our website. The draft FY16-17 Budget is also now available. If you have any questions, seek out any member of the CT or BOT or our Financial Advisory Council, or myself.

Trust in the wind which has brought us here.

Namaste,

Mary

Seminar on Taxes and Giving

Under the auspices of the Endowment Committee, a seminar on helping people understand how they can reduce their taxes and give the difference to UUCB was held on March 19, 2016 in the Safir Room. The speakers—Laurel Randell, UUA (Legacy Gifts Manager) and Eugene Demmler, LPL (Registered Investment Advisor)—were great, and we recommend them to others! A few key learnings: 1) For those who want to use the Required Minimum Distribution from IRA accounts to donate to the church, there are tax advantages to have the IRA pay the church directly. 2) If you are giving away highly appreciated stock while you are alive, better to give it to charity. (If you give it to your heirs during your lifetime, they get your cost basis, and pay the gain from that point. If they inherit it, the basis “resets” to whatever it was when received by the heirs. If you donate it to charity in your lifetime, you get the full market value as your deduction.) 3) The UUA provides lots of services; check their website (<http://www.uua.org/giving/planned>). One of these is Umbrella Giving where, once set up with UUA, can be changed merely by mail. 4) In addition to leaving a legacy gift to the general endowment, you can designate your gift for a specific purpose, including a Building Fund and endowments for ministerial interns. (Learn more: <http://uucb.org/endowment-seminar-2016-03-19/>)

Ministerial Search Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

While it was disappointing to announce on April 10 that we had no candidate to bring to the congregation, your Ministerial Search Committee was also resolute in being ready to embark on a second round of search for a settled minister. The Board of Trustees voted on April 17 to have the Search Committee go ahead with that search. This search process runs from April 22 to early June. They also voted to begin the search for an interim minister to replace Rev. Greg next year, but we are hoping that search will not need to be carried to fruition.

Stephanie Ann Blythe,
Publicity Secretary

By the time you read this, the Search Committee will be reviewing the records for a new batch of ministers interested in UUCB. We have been reassured that they are out there! If the accelerated search process is successful, we could be presenting a candidate in late May or early June. Nothing is guaranteed, of course. Again, our goal is to find the person who is the best fit for UUCB. We will not “settle.” If the accelerated process doesn’t result in a match, the search will begin again during the next year of interim. The support and appreciation you have given us so far fuels our desire to continue.

Our April 10 announcement along with a letter from Rev. Greg were emailed to UUCB members and friends. We subsequently published some Frequently Asked Questions regarding the outcome of the initial search. If you haven’t seen them, all three documents are on the Search Committee website at uucbminsearch.wordpress.com.

Your questions or comments are always welcome at searchcommittee@uucb.org.

Partner Church Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

This is a time for the Transylvanian Partner Church Committee to shout out thanks to all who volunteered for another successful snack table. On April 3 we served up gulyas (goulash), cooked up by Marion Anderson and Lynn Sullivan. Lynn also contributed deviled eggs. Anne Greenwood did the cucumber salad, while Mary Pugh made croissant sandwiches and cookies. Special thanks go to Susan Toth for the beautiful cakes that were a hit. If the “Ghouls for Goulash” sign brought you to the snack table, that artwork was furnished by Marion. We also thank YOU! Over \$300 was taken in and all of that will support the students of Homoródújfalu.

We are MOVING FORWARD....many blessings. Of course, there is more to Partner Church than goulash. Do you know what kaláka is? It's something real good, but you can't eat it. Contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net to find out more. We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 4:30 p.m. All are welcome!

NEWSLETTER ITEM SUBMISSIONS: Submit announcements and articles by email to beacon@uucb.org. Due to limited space, we do not publish announcements for events occurring outside the church community. **The deadline for submissions** is the 15th of the month. **Questions?** Please email beacon@uucb.org.