



Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

June 2021 – Vol. 80, Issue 6

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Journeying Together

Rev. Dr. Michelle Collins

What a wild and tumultuous year this has been! We've been doing virtual church for well over a year now as we've been working on keeping up with so many changes and challenges whirling around us in our community, our country, and in the world. And finally (FINALLY) we are getting to move towards what it means to be gathering in person again, and what sorts of things we have to consider as we re-gather. One of my favorite phrases is "it's complicated," and that truly is the case as we consider all of the elements in play.

Overall, I'd like to lift up some values and principles to help guide our way. It's not as easy as just assuming that everyone is vaccinated and thus comfortable with immediately going back to the way things were before. (And isn't "before" an interesting concept, too!). Instead, I'd like to remind us of one of our foundational values, that of welcoming and of inclusion. We as Unitarian Universalists don't believe in putting up barriers and belief tests at the doors of our congregation. We believe in welcoming everyone, no matter their beliefs, no matter where they are on life's journey. And that includes no matter their health history and health realities. Practicing inclusion means not assuming that everyone has the same vaccinations and the same health history. And even amongst fully vaccinated folks, there are still many concerns that may be relevant for folks, including other health conditions and risks, the strength of their immune system, and concern about virus variants among other things. Practicing inclusion and welcoming means not questioning or shaming or excluding folks based on their own realities.

We are committed to living out our covenant of respecting each other and living our values of welcoming and inclusion. So that means that we may look a little more cautious than some other settings. That's part of our taking care of each other and protecting each other. So when you come onto our church campus, either outdoors or indoors, please be prepared to have your mask on while you're here and maintain social distancing and other safe practices. We care about each other and we are protecting each other. That takes all of us equally taking part in this important work. As we begin to re-gather in various ways, let's not only relish getting to see one another again but let's also remember to care for one another in these many ways.

Worship Services in June

Sundays at 11 am on [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube Live](#)

Theme for June: Play

June 6 – Flower Communion. Revs. Michelle Collins and Catherine Boyle preaching. Worship Associate Deborah Schmidt. **PLEASE NOTE: This morning we will have services both in person outdoors in the church parking lot and also online. The services will be similar but the online one will not be a livestream of the in-person one.** This morning will feature our annual flower communion service, along with a dedication of our new periwinkle garden. You are welcome to bring a flower which will be included in our communal flower altar, and we will be sharing flower seeds to help share and spread beauty in our world.

June 13 – Sacred Play. Rev. Michelle Collins, preaching. Worship Associate Lee Maranto. Plato once said, “You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.” Play is powerful, transformational, freeing, and FUN. There are ways in which play opens us up and connects us in ways that are extraordinary. Today we'll delve into the joyous world of play in our service.

June 20 – Theology and the Legend of Zelda. Rev. Michelle Collins, preaching. Worship Associate Dayana Claghorn. Fantasy and gaming have epic battles of good versus evil, but they also have more than that. Purgatory and the afterlife? Gods and goddesses and saviors? Creation stories and redemption, all with a little magic mixed in? Theology abounds in these surprisingly complex stories. Today we'll explore theology and more found in the epic Legend of Zelda series.

June 27, 9:00 am PDT/12:00 pm EDT – General Assembly Sunday. Today you're invited to join in the biggest Unitarian Universalist worship service of the year, which takes place at our annual General Assembly. For more about General Assembly events and programs, check out <https://www.uua.org/ga>. **PLEASE NOTE: there will not be a UUCB worship service on this day.**

Virtual Coffee Hour immediately following worship on Sundays

After worship we invite you to switch over to Zoom for a time to connect “face to face.” The link to Virtual Coffee Hour is listed below, but we will also share it in the comments on the Facebook Live feed during worship.

Click [here](#) to join us:

Meeting ID: 332 046 821

Password: 810131

Vespers in June

Wednesdays 6 pm Social Time, 6:20 pm Start Time

Zoom

Join us for our mid-week online vespers services. The 30-minute Wednesday evening service will provide a time for us to gather together to experience moments of reflection, prayer and song, grounded in our UU faith. **The June 16 vespers service will be offered by Worship Associates Deborah Schmidt and Melissa Rosales.**

Click [this link](#) to join us

Meeting ID: 830 5378 2422

Passcode: chalice

Special Events and Announcements

- **Good Neighbor for June: [Ya-NEEMA](#).** To provide comfort and strength to families impacted by gun violence in Richmond and the surrounding areas. And to facilitate a pathway to wellness by providing comfort, navigation of services for victims of violence, and often funds for the burial.
- **June 6** – Dedication of the periwinkle garden, planted in memory of the many unmarked graves of Africans held in slavery in this country. Time TBA.
- **June 27, 3:30 pm** – Our steadfast Office Administrator, Alisa Gould Sugden, is retiring at the end of June after 21 years of service to our congregation. On June 27 we will hold a farewell party to thank her for her dedication.
- **Alisa's Memory Book** – Please send submissions to Ariel Smith-Iyer of anything that evokes your time with and memories of Alisa that will fit on an 8 ½ x 11 space – words, pictures, drawings, poems, etc. We will also have a collection box, if you are attending the outdoor June 6 service.

- **Celebrating Our Newest Doctors of Durability**

Each year this congregation sets apart an entire Sunday service to celebrate our elders and the gifts of wisdom and experience they give to our congregation and our wider communities. As part of that celebration, we bestow upon those who have turned 80 the honorary title of “Doctor of Durability.” This tradition has deep roots here at UUCB. The title of “Doctor of Durability” came about decades ago, when this congregation had very close ties to the University. Because regardless of how far any of us get in school, there is a special wisdom that comes only from eight or more decades in the school of life. On May 16, we welcomed our newest Doctors of Durability and milestone birthdays (upgrades!) from the past year:

80th Birthday - Doctors of Durability: Rev. Dr. Jay Atkinson, Rev. Dr. Jeanne Foster, Bob Hall, Mac Lingo, Bob Moore

85th Birthday - Doctors of Durability Cum Laude: Marin Fischer, Dean Flint, Dorothy Herzberg

90th Birthday - Doctors of Durability Magna Cum Laude: Martha Crowe

95th Birthday - Doctors of Durability Summa Cum Laude: Grace Ulp, joining DoD Summa Cum Laude Harlan Heydon, Kendra Smith, and Vivian Jackson

100th Birthday - Doctors of Durability Ultra Cum Laude: Joan Yates!!!

With Gratitude and Appreciation

by Alisa Gould Sugden

Twenty-one years ago, it was striking to me to realize that I received more gratitude and appreciation for my work in the first month of my job as Office Administrator at UUCB than I’d gotten in the previous decade in my last job! And it was one indication of what a good fit I felt this position would be for me. Now, as I’m preparing to retire on June 30, I’m reflecting on the past two decades and three words—gratitude, appreciation and gift—are very much on my mind.

Over these years, I’ve reflected on the difference between gratitude and appreciation as I have woven the awareness and practice of both more deeply into my daily life. What a gift that has been.

I’m so grateful for all I’ve learned about compassion, collaboration, kindness, forgiveness, and humor from those I’ve worked with—ministers, staff, leaders and members of the congregation. So many gifts over the years!

I feel such gratitude and appreciation for the support and flexibility of this community as I lived through the challenges of balancing my work life with my family life. Truly a gift at a fundamental level.

I appreciate all the ways I've learned about myself as I've come to know that community can be a mirror, reflecting our strengths and weaknesses back to us and offering us opportunities to grow more fully into ourselves. Too many gifts to count!

Thanks to all for the good work that is done together at UUCB and that radiates out into the larger community!

Opening Task Force – Update

Care, love, respect, hope, thoughtfulness – these words reflect our journey to safely reopening. Following the lead of the UUA, listening carefully to respected public health resources, and following pandemic protocols, we are progressing to the joyful time of being together at UUCB.

[Rev. Michelle's column](#) this month highlights the UU principles guiding us as we journey to a safe regathering of the congregation. To all who participated in the small group leaders and congregation Town Halls, your questions and observations continue to guide the Opening Task Force (OTF) on the best path forward to “normalcy.”

As June begins, UUCB remains in Reopening Phase 2. We have begun to schedule and enjoy outdoor gatherings, meetings and work parties, but are still not meeting indoors. While we hope that Contra Costa and Alameda Counties will move into the state's less restrictive Yellow Tier sometime this month, at press time, both counties clearly would remain in the Orange Tier for the rest of May. (Counties must meet the requirements to move to a less restrictive Tier for two weeks before the state approves their move; neither county had met the requirements to move to a less restrictive Tier at all by May 17.) When our county does move into the Yellow Tier, the Opening Task Force will review our readiness for UUCB Reopening Phase 3, which will allow for small group meetings indoors, with full observance of safety protocols.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has considered the CDC's new (May) guidelines regarding masking, and announced on May 17 that "California will keep its existing guidance around masks in place until June 15 when California aims to fully reopen the economy." We also note that "In indoor settings outside of one's home ... face coverings continue to be required regardless of vaccination status." When this mid-June opening of the California economy was announced in April, the CDPH cautioned that "Common-sense health measures such as masking will remain across the state." At UUCB we ask everyone in our community, regardless of vaccination status, to observe the safety protocols that do so much to prevent the spread of disease: wear a mask, maintain physical distancing, and stay home if you or others in your household are ill. Face masks are required for outdoor gatherings at UUCB. We look forward to learning the new state guidelines in mid-June, and to responding as appropriate to our community.

We look forward to safely being together on June 6. Please continue to share any questions or observations with the OTF at planning@uucb.org.

OTF (Opening Task Force) Members: Patrick Cullinane (Chair), Sheldon Jones, Greg Lemieux, Lisa Maynard, Rev. Catherine Boyle, Tess O'Riva, ED, and Rev. Michelle Collins

Family Ministry

Rev. Catherine Boyle,
Director of Family Ministry



Daisy Chains

What is better than a summer afternoon spent in the sunlight with friends making a daisy bracelet or chain? Each pluck is pulled from the earth with care as your friend outstretches their wrist and you press the stem against them to tie their new fetching floral accessory? A daisy chain is beautiful not only because it is made of flowers but because it is made by love. The daisy chain is also incredible because it can be as long as you want it to be, endlessly connecting a bit of beauty with a bit of beauty. However, you must be gentle with it because it is delicate and easily broken.

As we go into our first service in person since COVID, please remember the daisy chain when returning to our community. We are eager and excited to see each other! However, the risk of COVID to the vulnerable in our communities still remains out there. We are connected as delicately as a daisy chain. Our actions affect one another. Masks and social distancing help keep all of our daisies safe from the youngest to the oldest.

I cannot wait to see your smiling faces,

Rev. Cat

Write Your Own Story with UUCB Myth and Magic Chalice Camp This August

UUCB Family Ministry is proud to offer summer day camp this August for children and youth. This week long camp is immersive in UU religious education, games, and fun! The camp will be outdoor, socially distanced, and masked at UUCB. Registration is limited.

Monday August 2 - Friday August 6, 2021

9 am - 4 pm

Campers must bring a bag lunch every day

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Social Justice Council

At our May **Social Justice Council, four Sponsored Projects** were accepted to continue their work informing and inspiring our congregants' participation in important areas of Social Justice. Confronting Racism and Oppression, Restoring Our Planet for All, Standing with Homeless Youth, and Cut the Pentagon Budget; Shift Funds to Human Needs through the Peace Committee under SJC. The projects will be announced at the next UUCB congregational meeting.

New officers were selected by the SJC for the 2021-2022 fiscal year:

Co-Chairs – Natalie Campbell and Sheldon Jones

Treasurer – Jean Gleason, Helen Toy

Scribes – Minutes: Judy Sam; Beacon: Camille Parker

The Literature, Film & Drama Contingent, Camille Parker

May's LFDC meeting focused on Professor Cathy Park Hong's brilliant and revelatory memoir-cum-book-of-essays: *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*. We also shared personal stories relating to our experiences with race and racism in America.

On June 13, we will consider *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, by Heather McGhee. Whereas the "zero-sum game" refers to the feeling by some that if one side gains, the other side loses (for example, people vote against their own best interests, to keep other people from being better off, as well), it may behoove us all to consider opting for the "win-win."

Announcements

- Dedication of the Periwinkles, June 6, planted in memory of the many unmarked graves of Africans held in slavery in this country.
- Lonnie Moseley will be collecting money for Congrats to Grads that will be presented to high school seniors in the UUCB community at the July 14 Social Justice Meeting.
- Wows - Whites Opposing White Supremacy meet June 27.

Environmental Justice, Sheila Tarbet

Join UU Ministry for Earth and the UUCB team for the UU Drawdown Ecochallenge through June. Have fun, learn about proven solutions, create climate justice, and take collective action with UUs everywhere. We're making a difference! Contact Sheila Tarbet at starbet99@gmail.com for more information on how to participate.

Sundays June 6 and 13, 10 am–2 pm, Free – Join us on the virtual Green Home Tour and learn how you can save money and time, and improve your health while combating climate change by ditching natural gas, generating clean electricity from your own home, and installing energy-efficient (and health-protecting) induction stoves and heat pumps.

From the Board of Trustees

Cordell Sloan

New Butterfly

We have already begun to sprout out of our COVID restraints eager to continue our collective journey. Soon we will be free to share the joy of gathering together, without screens, icons, keyboards, mute buttons and all that. Imagine singing together again, sitting in sacred circles or rows. It will be so. Yet while we were in separate spaces we remained engaged in doing those activities that uniquely define us as a community with a mission. We have without interruption continued to strengthen our community with amazing people joining us both staff and in our membership. We have solved some problems and continued our progress on others. Our many groups have remained vital each advancing steadily, milestone after milestone. We haven't missed a beat. We have embraced new ways to progress, to support each other. Our vitality has grown all the while. Our capacity to effect positive change in our community and world grows as we continue to build knowledge and understanding, implementing focused programs related to becoming a community of consequence.

As we change again in response to the stepwise opening of our facilities, let's also recognize and develop the new facilities we have been required to incorporate and master. For those with mobility or distance challenges, let's keep a robust remote place where they can be a part of our collective outer activity and inner sharing. The meanings of together and interaction have evolved. I hope we will be creative and bold in our goal setting. Sustaining the vitality of social justice and community work. Building and steeling our resolve to be a factor for good where we can. The world sorely needs real grit behind the urge to do good. I am gratified to see the energy we commit to deepening our studies of the many entanglements that shape our history. This gaining of enabling knowledge will further our mission and help us hold up our principles.

To you, UUCB, I say bravo! We have shown ourselves to be adaptive. And we have watched a world in need of new ways, too. The board has taken up the goal to expand our view in facilitating the intentions of our community becoming more beloved. The world has changed, we too are changing – so how should we go forward? Our vision articulation is to reach in and out. To reach in with programs to enable our members to serve our community. To reach out with relevance and impact. We are a leader church able to share, be a model and collaborator in the larger community of churches. I'm excited by my view of our future. I feel that here I am not alone in this.

– Cordell

From the Treasurer

Jessica K. Rider

There is no significant change to UUCB's financial position as compared to last month. The Mechanic's Bank savings account contained \$152,871.60 and the checking account contained \$598,988.86 as of April 30.

The Finance Committee provided input on a revised budget (including high, low, and realistic scenarios) which was forwarded to the Board for discussion at the May 5 Board meeting. The revised budget presented to the Congregation on May 23 reflects the combined thinking and planning of our Board and our fantastic ED Tess O'Riva.

Looking ahead, the Finance Committee is continuing to work closely with the ED to develop a plan to strengthen UUCB's financial system with an eye toward a full audit in 2022. The goal is to make our accounting practices, reporting, documentation, and financial software more robust, consistent, and user friendly for everyone involved.

Humanist Connections

Sundays, 1 pm, Zoom

A discussion group to explore our humanity, values, ideas. *"A free and responsible search for truth and meaning."* (Fourth principle of Unitarian Universalism.)

June 6 – Why is Weight Such a Big Issue? Gabriela Kramer.

June 13 – Topic Selection and Short Topic Discussion. Ray Westergard.

June 20 – Why on Earth Are We Going to Mars? Harold Ogren.

Zoom links are available under the “Calendar” listing on the UUCB website, and are included with each week’s email notice about the upcoming discussion. For additional information contact Marcia Bates, mjbates@ucla.edu. *Group managers: Susan Singh, Ray Westergard, Al Kueffner, Lee Lawrence, Kris Homme, Anne Fitzmaurice.*

Partner Church Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

Isten Hozott!

If you’re going to know only two words of Hungarian, then “isten hozott” might be the two that you want to learn. It means “God has brought you” and it is a way our Transylvania brethren say, “Welcome!” In my mind it also expresses trust.



It’s been fifteen years since I made my first pilgrimage to Transylvania and our partner church in Homoródújfalú. To say that it was a journey based on trust is an understatement. My flight into Bucharest wouldn’t arrive until well after midnight. Traveling alone into a former Iron Curtain country was, to be honest, terrifying. I needn’t have worried. When I cleared customs and immigration the first faces I saw were those of Roger Dillahunty, Jeanne Griffith and Rev. Chris Holton-Jablonski. They remained at the airport long after their arrival just to greet me and get us all safely to our hotel. It was 3:00 am when I knocked on the door of my room. Anne Greenwood immediately woke to let me in. Isten hozott, indeed! Should I have ever thought not to place my trust in my fellow UUCBers?

Trust was still in short supply in Romania, fifteen years after the fall of the Communist dictatorship. But I saw a glimmer of hope even in a moment when trust seemed to be lacking. During our time in the village, a community meeting was hastily called. I can’t recall the exact circumstances, but it was also the time when we would present our gift from the Village Education Fund along with cash for the villagers to apply to other needs. It was all in good ol’ American greenbacks. That the money was counted out very loudly and for everyone to see was emblematic of the tense situation. However, there was one grizzled old man sitting in back, taking this all in. Don’t be fooled by his appearance, he was one of the church trustees and respected by all. The community hall had a stage at one end, and embroidered on the curtain were the words “Isten Hozott.” The man simply pointed at those words and reminded us all that they were why we were there. It broke the tension, and we were able to conclude the meeting without further rancor.

Our Village Education Fund represents trust and a way to say “Isten Hozott!” to our friends. Next time you’re mailing a check to UUCB or making a contribution via PayPal, consider a donation to the fund! You can learn more by contacting Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net

Chalice Circles

Lenore Ralston

As I write this, my heart is full... I am so very proud of the women and men who have given of their personal time, their kindness, and their skills to facilitate our Chalice Circle program. They have spent hours preparing and conferring. They have come to team meetings, to facilitator meetings, to Program Council Meetings, to ad hoc meetings. :-) In the face of the Pandemic, they agreed that the Chalice Circle Program had a role to play – that THEY had a role to play – in holding our Congregants in Beloved Community and providing a place for new visitors, new members, to connect and rest. Our usual facilitators were joined by others who had facilitated in the past, and met the need. We reached out to a sister UU community in Lake County which is now engaging with a summer offering by our Chalice Circle team to train other members in the LLCUU so that they may strengthen their lay leadership and supply their OWN Chalice Circle offerings in the face of the loss of their ministers last year after the dual disasters of the Lake County fires and COVID.

I would like to honor these leaders here –those who give of their time, their hearts, their being-ness. Here are the names of the Chalice Circle facilitators for 2020-2021. Note: New facilitators are highlighted in green and members of the Leadership team are asterisked:

* Cynthia Asprodites	Karen Elliott	Lynne Cahoon
* Dick Sherman	Kristen Jenson	Lynne Henderson
Don Klose	*Lenore Ralston	Marta Tobey
Hilary Lorraine	Linda Laskowski	* Natalie Campbell
Jane Thanx (Lake County)	* Lisa Maynard	Tom Clyde
Jean Hyams	Lorraine Schnurr	* Victoria Bowen
* Joanne Wile		

We hosted roughly 16 Circles and met with 246 people (some of these attended all three sessions of Circles – Summer2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021).

With love and deepest gratitude.

From the Executive Director

Tess Snook O'Riva, Executive Director



I am very excited for this month's theme of Play.

During my final panel interview for my position here at UUCB, one of the last questions (asked of me by Suzette Duggan-Anderson) was about how I bring fun into the workplace. That was when I knew this was the place for me!

I value play in my life. I wear costumes, have parties, and participate in world-wide scavenger hunts. (You're invited!) I enjoy being silly with my kids. I love stand up comedy. There are stuffed animals in my office and all around my house. Laughter and joy are prevalent in the things I do because I choose to do them that way. I see it as much better than the alternative!

The health benefits of play are well-documented. It improves your stress levels, your mental well-being, and your ability to adapt to changes. It was doubly unfair during the pandemic that one of the things that would help us cope with everything the most was really difficult. We just didn't feel like playing as much when we needed it the most.

Now that things are starting to open up, our options for play have increased. Even with all the restrictions in place, with social distancing and wearing masks, feeling more comfortable being outside and/or in social situations has certainly made it easier to relax. I am so excited to be seeing people again, I don't care that it's outdoors and with masks on. And regardless of people's vaccination status, I will be happy to wear a mask and hold off the hugs, because not seeing everyone, not being able to play with others, was so much worse.

And if anyone wants to participate in the world-wide scavenger hunt, let me know. 😊



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