



Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

July 2021 – Vol. 80, Issue 7

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Farewell Dear Alisa

Tess Snook O'Riva

I have mostly been in denial of Alisa's retirement. Losing the person who trained me, held my hand when things got scary, and helped me focus my energy to be able to do my best has been very scary to contemplate. Luckily, she has not allowed me to forget to plan for it!

I wanted to take a moment during the last Beacon Alisa will be involved with to recognize her roles and accomplishments that *I* know about. Although I have only been here two years compared to her 21, the impact she has had on UUCB is indescribable. And I don't know the half of it.

She has seen our spiritual home through four ministers (or sets of ministers), 21 different Boards, multiple personnel turnovers, and innumerable crises. Alisa has been in on every difficult discussion and soul-searching this church has done over the past two decades. She has developed and implemented so many policies and procedures that I shudder to think how we would be doing anything if she weren't so organized!

Having someone whose attention to detail and holistic thinking in her position has proven to be critical. Alisa just thinks of things the rest of us don't, like who our decisions affect. We all have grand ideas and passion projects, but Alisa actually asks the necessary questions and focuses us on the concrete ways that make ideas come to fruition. She makes things happen!

I will hold forever her communication lessons – making sure everyone is clear on what is expected of them and what they're responsible for. (The RACI system is posted by my computer! Feel free to ask if you aren't familiar...) She embodies the concept that Communication is Key.

Above all, Alisa has had a consistent focus on people's health and wellbeing. Her regular reminders to set personal boundaries and to remember self-care have helped all of us, especially staff, honor our own physical and mental health. I read *Held* by Barbara Meyers at her recommendation, reminding us that mental health is often invisible to others, and guiding us on caring for those in our own congregations and lives that are more vulnerable.

This small article cannot do justice to the long-term ramifications of having such a loving, dedicated human give so much of themselves to UUCB. I personally feel like I am a more effective employee and a healthier person because of her influence. I will miss her greatly and can only hope that we have contributed positively to her life half as much as she has contributed to ours. May she move into this next phase of her life with ease and grace, and may all good things come to her and those she holds dear.

Worship Services in July

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

July 4 – Scott Tayler preaching. Worship Associate Karen Elliott.

July 11 – Music Sunday. Bryan Baker. Dayana Claghorn Worship Associate.

July 18 – Paul Langston-Daley preaching. Andrea Brown Worship Associate.

July 25 – Rev. Catherine Boyle. Sarah Ward Worship Associate.

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 July

Wednesday July 21 at 6 pm Social Time, 6:20 pm Start Time

Zoom

Join us for our monthly 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.

Offered by Worship Associates Don Klose and Karen Elliott.

Click [this link](#) to join us

Meeting ID: 830 5378 2422

Passcode: chalice

Good Neighbor for July

[Lavender Seniors of the East Bay](#). The mission of the Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is to improve the lives of older lesbian, gay, transgender and queer residents of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. They do this through direct services, outreach, advocacy and education. A critical aspect of this work is insuring that LGBTQ elders are well prepared emotionally, physically, legally and socially in their later years.

Special Events and Announcements

- **The Board listening presence for July is Elaine Miller.** Calls, texts, email welcome: elau.usher@gmail.com or 510-528-2523.
 - **Looking for Religious Education (RE) Teachers for the Fall:** RE is gearing up for the Fall and looking for teachers, subs and advisors for all grades. To volunteer, email Rev. Catherine at family.ministry@uucb.org.
 - Please check the [church calendar](#) and The Week Ahead for additional events and announcements.
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Opening Task Force – Update

Thank you! Thanks to all who participated in true COVID style at the June 6 Flower Communion outdoor service. It was a lovely occasion, especially as it was the first

time Rev. Michelle could be with her congregation in person. All participants wore masks and tried to respect recommended social distancing. Thank you for your responsible observance of our church COVID protocols. Your compliance bodes well for our plans to renew gathering in person this fall.

We hope this fall to gather in person with the service also being available simultaneously virtually. During our down time this summer, we will be preparing the church for the hoped-for fall regathering. [Executive Director Tess Snook O'Riva's column](#) in this Beacon updates you on reopening efforts with respect to technology, ventilation, bathrooms and windows.

As we prepare for the fall, it continues to be important for all who can be vaccinated to do so. The more of us who are vaccinated the better it will be for all in our community, especially for our fellow congregants who cannot be vaccinated due to health circumstances. As the Health Officer for San Francisco noted in his order of June 11, "Even though COVID-19 rates are now extremely low and more people are vaccinated in San Francisco and the region, there remains a risk that people may come into contact with others who may have COVID-19 when outside their residence."

The OTF (Opening Task Force) will continue to meet over the summer months to ensure as best possible that we will gather again in person this fall.

Please continue to follow UUCB protocols and 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

From the Executive Director

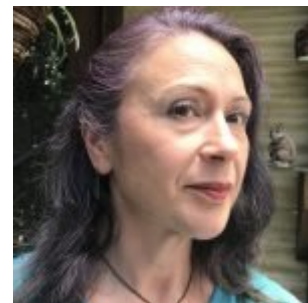
Tess Snook O'Riva, Executive Director

Hugging with reckless abandon.

I never thought that would be a goal. Even a year ago all the closures seemed temporary. Seeing people's faces and smiles close-up became something we began to long for.

And we are so close! There is already more hugging, according to each individual's comfort level, vaccination status, mask wearing, and other negotiated rules.

Personally, I appreciate the opportunity to start that conversation. I walk around wearing a mask, and ask people how they'd like to proceed. It shows respect and makes it more comfortable for someone to say, "I'm good with the masks." I don't ever want someone to have to *work* to be comfortable around me.



At this point, we are gearing up for in-person prime time Sunday to begin mid-September, barring any changes in the pandemic guidance. In order to do that, here are the things in place/getting put in place:

- Atrium bathrooms are now single use and gender-neutral, with locks on the doors to indicate occupancy. There are arm pulls and foot pulls to open said doors, with a trashcan outside to throw away paper towels.
- Ventilation of Atrium bathrooms is being fixed, with exhaust fans expected to be installed next month. Since there are no exhaust fans in there now, people are encouraged to use the Safir bathrooms.
- For ventilation plans for the Sanctuary, etc., please see the [Building & Grounds article by Tom Tripp](#) in this month's Beacon.
- For planned meetings, all rooms except the Sanctuary have operable windows, which can be opened by staff in advance upon request. However, because windows don't necessarily ensure air circulation, we are still reviewing ventilation systems all over campus.
- Group meetings are now able to be multi-platform, using Zoom for those calling in and observing protocols for those in-person. Two trainings were held by the OTF for lay leaders on the 14th to learn how to facilitate such meetings.
- The future of Prime Time Sundays will be multi-platform. We are implementing technology to allow for Live-streaming not only Sunday worship, but everything that happens in the Sanctuary, including rentals if desired. We hope to have this implemented and tested by mid-September.

So there's a lot going on this summer. We are still in need of volunteers, so if you find yourself with time on your hands, let me know and I'm sure we can match your interests to something going on!

Building & Grounds Committee

Tom Tripp

The Building & Grounds committee was tasked with investigating fresh air ventilation requirements for reopening UUCB.

Investigations by the committee, with engineering consultants, revealed that the original building ventilation systems are not working properly. The fresh air systems have been disabled, and do not meet current code, nor the enhanced recommendations of the CDC for COVID 19 ventilation. It is rumored that the fans were disconnected many years ago due to excessive noise, and have been idle since.

To meet the ventilation code requirements, the bathroom exhaust fan and the two sanctuary exhaust fans need to be repaired or replaced. The social hall and sanctuary control dampers need some modifications, and the Fireside Room should have minor modifications to provide fresh air to the furnace. The recently replaced sanctuary furnace will remain. Operable windows will not bring us into compliance with code or COVID guidelines.

UUCB has entered into a contract with Legacy Mechanical, a design/build HVAC contractor to provide new, high efficiency, quiet, variable-frequency-drive exhaust fans, one for the bathroom exhaust system, and two for the sanctuary fresh air system. It was decided to replace rather than repair, as the cost savings to repair was minimal, and the new fans are much quieter. Legacy will modify the outside air dampers to provide 100% fresh air ventilation in the Sanctuary, the Social Hall and the Fireside Room. This work should be completed by August.

While this work will provide fresh air to comply with current ventilation codes and COVID 19 guidelines, it will generally be energy inefficient while heating 100% fresh outside air. We have received, and are considering, a proposal for an industry standard control system, that will add new controllers, and use the existing dampers to reduce fresh air and increase recirculated air, based on room occupancy. They are also providing us with proposals to replace the other two large problem furnaces; with consideration for all electric, and/or heat pump systems.

The window project is currently on hold, due to the urgency and cost of the ventilation systems upgrades.

Social Justice Council

Diverse Books for Richmond Schools Program

A huge first step! We purchased 280 books, half of which Judy Sam and Helen Toy delivered on May 24 to two very appreciative elementary schools, Grant and Highland. Two more schools, Verde and Sheldon, will receive books next month. All who donated would be overwhelmed by the thanks we received! Your generosity and aspirations for better racial understanding have accomplished wonders.

helen_toy@yahoo.com).

[Read more about it in this month's Anti-Racism Task Force article.](#)

Environmental Justice

We're busy! Some of us are learning solutions to climate change through the Drawdown Ecochallenge with UU Ministry for Earth. Ideas for next year include hosting speakers and films, advocating for critical state legislation identified by 350.org legislative volunteers and offering presentations about vegetarian/vegan cooking, the Green New Deal and more. And we may begin a pollinator garden!

Contact Sheila Tarbet at starbet99@gmail.com for more information.

Good Neighbor Program

UUCB's Good Neighbor Program in May was a wonderful success! The Social Justice Council teamed up with the Chalice Circle program and hosted a pop-up food drive for The Berkeley Food Pantry. On May 22nd we collected four vehicles full of food, and \$2,440 in cash donations. Online donations for the month were \$1,695, for a grand total of \$4,135 donated! Thank you to everyone who volunteered or donated. (nataliecampbell@yahoo.com)

Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP)

GRIP has resumed offering free Souper Center lunches for hungry, homeless, and other disadvantaged people in and around Richmond. UUCB will continue to participate in this worthwhile and enjoyable activity with our fourth Tuesday lunches. We make and serve sandwiches at GRIP in Richmond. If you are willing to participate occasionally in either or both activities, contact Ray Westergard at raywest2@sbcglobal.net, or 510-904-4145.

Literature, Film & Drama Contingent

We had a rousing discussion of *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee, and learned how racism was and continues to be harmful to everyone. Next month, we celebrate the Buddha's birthday with a discussion of *The Dalai Lama's Cat*, by David Michie. (camilleparker@comcast.net)

Whites Opposing White Supremacy (WOWS)

WOWS, a space for white-identified people to challenge racism within ourselves and elsewhere, has been learning the Kim Constructive Conversations Model to engage in challenging conversations about race. Next meeting: Step Four, July 25, 12:30-2 pm. For more information, contact Julia Rogers at jlundyr@gmail.com.

Youth Spirit Artworks/Tiny House Village Report

Residents have filled all the tiny houses and the program continues making plans for other exciting builds! A few UUCB members recently joined the residents and staff at The Empowerment Village for an ice cream social. Jim Acock and Randall Hudson received certificates of appreciation for their hard work helping with the build. To find out how you can participate, contact jim.acock@gmail.com.

From the Board of Trustees

Randall Hudson

Let us take a moment to reflect upon the trials and tribulations we've faced this year. What an imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete world. Yet, even with all its challenges, disappointments, and tragedies (and we've had quite a few), life is still filled with incredibly beautiful moments that we can savor. That may be 'corny', but, truth be told, I really wouldn't have it any other way. To know Sadness, is to know Joy. To know Despair, is to have Hope. And, as the long dark tunnel of last year is moving past, I can see a summer filled with hope and promise before us. Plans are being laid, reservations are being made, and hotels are being stayed. Flights are taking off with scarce rental cars throwing us off. Oh what a difference a year (and an effective vaccine) make. Now, before many of you roll out the door, **I just want to catch you up on 'things UUCB' to remember to celebrate as you begin to amble through the world:** We transitioned to online services and learned how to Zoom! We significantly increased our Stewardship Pledges. We passed an expanded and balanced budget. We welcomed our new Interim Minister Dr. Rev. Michelle. We fixed the Safir Room and the purlin [rafter] tails! We worked on widening the circle for Racial Justice and chipped away at White Supremacy. We supported our Sanctuary Family and started on the path to make right by our Ohlone neighbors. With our solar panels on the roof, we generated and sold (for hard cash) many megawatts of electricity — saving many tons of carbon that would have otherwise been generated. We Zoomed, sang, scrubbed, fixed, audited, edited, streamed, patched, painted, epoxied, repaired, reconstructed, refurbished, plowed, whacked, hacked, and planted our way to a more beautiful, connected, and sound church. And let us not forget all our efforts with the Tiny House Empowerment Village where 24 Transitional Age Youth are now living! I am proud to be a Trustee of UUCB. May the spirit of goodness be with you all.

With Love,
Randall Hudson

Actions Summary from the Board

At its June 2, 2021 meeting, the Board of Trustees:

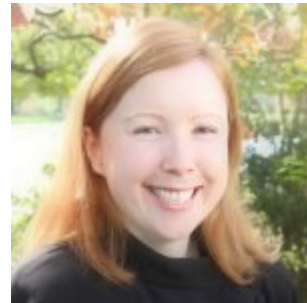
- Appointed UUCB delegates to the 2021 UUA General Assembly: Alice Lemieux, Anne Greenwood, Rev. Fran Moulton, Helen Tinsley-Jones, Melissa Rosales, Suzette Anderson-Duggan, and Victoria Bowen.
- Authorized sending the remaining 50% payment to the UUA Annual Program Fund, for a full 100% payment, since sufficient funds were available in the 2020-21 operating budget.
- Discussed identifying metrics and other measurements for tracking, monitoring and evaluating UUCB's sustainability and how well we are living

our mission; this item will come back to the Board.

- Rev. Michelle led a Board discussion on six areas of interim ministry focus: Heritage, Leadership, Mission, Connections, Future, and Anti-Racism. The Board selected Anti-Racism and Leadership as top two priorities for interim processes in 2021-2022.
- The Board is seeking a new Treasurer, as Jessica Rider completes her Interim Treasurer appointment.

Family Ministry

Rev. Catherine Boyle,
Director of Family Ministry



Summer Fun at Freestone

Get the camping gear ready and gather the kids for a weekend of fun in the last week of July in Freestone.

When: After 5 pm on Friday July 30 - Sunday August 1

Where: Freestone

What to bring: Camping supplies, food and whatever you need to have some fun.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP with Rev. Catherine at family.ministry@uucb.org

Looking for RE Teachers for the Fall

RE is gearing up for the Fall and looking for teachers, subs and advisors for all grades. To volunteer, email Rev. Catherine at family.ministry@uucb.org

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.)*

July 4 – Decision and Discernment. Bethe Etcheverry.

July 11 – Short topic discussion and topic selection. Ray Westergard.

July 18 – Why Do We Need Trees? Gail Morrison.

July 25 – Health Care in a Digital World. Paul Ulbrich.

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

We’re going to Transylvania! This time we’ll be meeting up in Budapest on June 14, 2022. With all that is going on in the world, it may seem foolhardy to be committing to something a whole year from now. But this is what faith is all about, isn’t it? We have faith in our return to our friends

in Homoródújfalú. Of course, we’ll be more prudent, like not buying airline tickets too far in advance. But now is the time to start preparing for the journey. What did we say last month? *Isten Hozott!*

If you are a singer, this is your chance to take a choir tour through Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece. Mark Sumner, music director at the UU Society of San Francisco, describes this as his “last big TOURAH!” Not a singer? Any band on tour always needs roadies to lend a helping hand. Mark has cleverly broken the tour into three parts: Tour A covers Hungary and Romania, Tour B is Bulgaria, and Tour C includes a cruise among the Greek isles. Each tour is priced separately so you can participate in any parts of your choosing. When the tour reaches Udvarhely (Odorheiu Secuiesc, if you’re looking for it on a map) we make a break for it. We are now on our own for our time with our partner church village. Don’t worry, we’ve done this before! You might even come home dreaming in Hungarian like I did.

A lot of things could stand in your way. Some questions and uncertainties can be answered by us; for the others you may have to look inward. Not to worry, you will find a way. If cost is a concern, there are many ways to make the nut. There are scholarship possibilities, fundraising sites on the internet, bake sales etc. If you can’t go, you can always sponsor someone else. Who is that youth or young adult



that could go as a result of your generosity? Maybe it is one of our elder members who seeks to make the pilgrimage at long last. The possibilities are endless.

If your answer is yes, or if you want to give this serious consideration, contact us at one of the email addresses below. We can get you connected with Mark Sumner and his awesome spreadsheet that has all details.

To speak personally and frankly, we would be a little disappointed if it's only Anne and me that ventures to Homoródújfalu. We want lots of company. Lots of villagers want to meet and feed you. Reverend Attila wants to preach to you! You can learn all the details by contacting Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net



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