
November 2022

Theme: Change

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 81 #11

The mission of this church is to create loving community; inspire spiritual growth; and encourage lives of integrity joy, and service.

From the Board of Trustees

Beth Pollard, President

Heading into a season of thanks, I'm awed by how many members and friends are moved to contribute time, talent, and energy into UUCB's mission. Building loving community through pastoral care, chalice circles, coffee hours, and more. Inspiring spiritual growth in worship, personal theology, music, family ministry, the list goes on. And encouraging lives of integrity, joy, and service by helping us gather virtually and in-person, relishing each generation, supporting the everyday functions, finances, and facilities of our church, and fighting for social justice free of racism and oppression.

We need all the energy we can muster to dismantle white supremacy – such as that expressed in the destruction of our Black Lives Matter sign. On Sunday, November 6 we will show the strength behind our values when we stand together and collectively install our new sign.

Underlying our loving community, inspired spirits, and encouragement to be our best selves is the land the church now occupies in Huchiun, the unceded territory of the Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone people. Being able to strive towards fulfilling our mission from this spot of land comes with deep gratitude and a commitment to respectfully care for it on an ongoing basis.

We are so blessed.

With heartfelt thankfulness,

Beth Pollard

Board President



November Services

Sundays 11 am

In Person, [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube](#)

November 6

BLM Sign Dedication
RE classes

November 13

In the Past & in the Present
RE Classes

November 20

Gratitude as a Spiritual Practice

November 27

TBD

Coffee Hour

Sundays at Noon

In person in the Social Hall

Sunday Programming

Personal Theology

Sundays at 9:30 am on Zoom

November 13 – ‘Sweatlodge: Culture and History.’ Cuauhtemoc Mendoza (Geno) is a Mexica-Uto-Nahuatl and is the founder of TloqueNauaque Teocalli, an Indigenous cultural educational non-profit organization. Their mission is to establish and maintain a place for cultural revitalization and healing ceremonies that restore our families and communities. He will be talking to us about the history, culture, and spirituality of sweatlodges. <https://zoom.us/j/99027634430>.

November 20 – Our Whole Lives (OWL) for Adults. Alice Lemieux is a lifelong UU in Family Ministry as the OWL Program Coordinator, on the Executive Advisory Team, on the Program Council, and on the newly formed Conflict Transformation Team. She spends her free time crafting everything from needlework to woodwork. She is a member at UUCB with her husband, Gregory, and her daughter, Adeline. <https://zoom.us/j/99027634430>.

Youth and Children’s Choir Rehearsal

Sundays at 10 am

The Choir is open to all children and youth, ages 5 ½ and up. Prior musical experience is not required. We rehearse in the Meditation Room (below the Sanctuary) or on Zoom. We help lead the Sunday worship service once or twice per month. Occasionally we participate in other music events. We’d love to have you join us!

Humanist Connections

Sundays at 1 pm on Zoom

November 6 – This Year's Science Nobel Prizes. Harold Ogren

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

November 20 – Do We Need Nuclear Energy After All? Dennis Monthei

November 27 – How to Lie and Get Away with It? Paul Ulbrich

Special Events

November 4, 7 pm

Lawrence Lecture: An Evening with Keith Knight, award-winning cartoonist of "The K Chronicles," author of "The Knight Life," educator, and co-creator of Hulu's "Woke."

November 5, 9 am-noon

Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop. Highly recommended part of the ministerial search process for the entire congregation.

November 6, after service

BLM sign dedication

November 8

Election Day

November 11

Veterans Day – Church offices closed

November 24, 12-4 pm

Thanksgiving service and potluck (contact: annharlow@pacbell.net)

November 25

Free Friday: second annual day of opting out of rampant consumerism. a day of swapping, donating, or fixing the stuff you already have.

Good Neighbor

[Berkeley Food Pantry](#): Provides good, nutritious groceries, household items, and opportunities for learning and self-empowerment for Berkeley and Albany households in crisis, especially those households at risk of upheaval and displacement.

Announcements

Board Listening Presence

Elaine Miller: call or text 510-528-2523 or send an email at elau.usher@gmail.com

The Lawrence Lecture is Live!!

Friday Nov. 4 @ 7pm



Our speaker for the 2022 Lawrence Lecture is Keith Knight, award-winning cartoonist of "The K Chronicles," author of "The Knight Life," educator, and co-creator of Hulu's "Woke." There will be Q&A, book sales and signing.

[Buy tickets online](#) or at the door

Ministerial Search Committee

The Search Team wants to thank you for participating in our focus groups and cottage meetings! We heard from the Bereavement Chalice Circle, the Board, Buildings and Grounds, Chalice Circles Facilitators, the Choir, Climate Justice, the Family Ministry Committee, Men's Groups, the Humanists, Parents' Discussion Group, Pastoral Care, the Program Council, Widening the Circle, Women's Insight Meditation, Worship Associates, WOWS, the POCC, Staff, the Social Justice Council, and youth. In addition, we included non-affiliated congregants through three cottage meetings. We will report responses for the next Beacon article.

We hope that everyone can attend the **Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop** this Saturday, November 5, 9 am-12 noon! Please RSVP [here](#) if you can so we can plan refreshments. Childcare is available (with pizza provided!) for families who RSVP. This program is an important tool for congregations to become aware of biases, both conscious and unconscious, around identities our potential minister may hold, including gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disability, mental health, class, age, size, etc. Sponsored by the ministerial search committee and presented by Keith Kron, Director of the UUA Transitions Office, the [Beyond Categorical Thinking](#) is adapted to address the concerns of the congregation.

Looking ahead, our next big focus is pulling together the documents packet and updating our Congregational Record. Both of these are designed to provide prospective ministers with a detailed picture of our congregation. The documents packet includes a comprehensive range of church documents, such as our budgets, annual report, board minutes, and orders of service. The Congregational Record includes demographic information and summaries of reflections gathered from the survey, focus groups/cottage meetings, and Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop. All of this is due to be submitted to UUA by Dec 1. And then maybe this team can take a little bit of a breather!

Opening Task Force (OTF)

“Winter is coming – with flu, COVID-19,” SF Chronicle Headline Oct. 12, 2022

Will we ever be free of COVID? As much as we want to put this virus behind us, as the experts note, it is still here and we still need to follow the science, take advantage of the successful vaccines and boosters preventing serious health consequences with any infection, and act appropriately with care and support for those among us that remain vulnerable due to health conditions and/or an inability to access the vaccines.

The Opening Task Force considers these issues in its semi-monthly meeting as we discuss how best to assist our church and its members to safely and with care navigate to our “new normal.” To date, our efforts and your response have proven to be very successful in significantly minimizing infections at the church. Thank you.

Risk Levels and Protocol Adjustments

Now, as we note that the risk levels in Alameda and Contra Cost counties have been low for several months, the California Dept. of Public Health now recommends we align with the following CDC guidance on masking: “Everyone: People can wear a mask based on personal preference, informed by their own level of risk. Vulnerable people: Consider wearing a mask in crowded indoor public places.” In response and with a desire to wisely move forward, the OTF has adjusted some protocols while continuing to affirm others.

- Move after-service refreshments indoors to the Social Hall. Continue to track the CDC community level of COVID risk and adjust as necessary depending upon community risk levels
- No longer require masking in the Social Hall and Atrium. Vulnerable people continue to be advised to wear masks indoors, per guidelines from the CDC and the California Department of Public Health. Our ventilation system provides an excellent air exchange rate; limited outdoor seating will be provided, weather and outdoor air

quality permitting, for those who prefer to consume their refreshments outdoors.

- Masking still required in the Sanctuary to maintain accessibility of that space for all members, especially our vulnerable members. All attending in person in the Sanctuary must wear a well-fitting mask, covering both nose and mouth, at all times (with these strictly limited exceptions: infants and children aged 2 years and younger do not wear masks per standard health guidance; worship leaders and song leaders may remove masks for audio quality while speaking/singing on the chancel). *Masks are required during congregational singing.*
- Vaccination for COVID-19, and sign in affirming freedom from symptoms of contagious illness still required for Sunday service in-person attendance. Visitors either affirm their vaccination status on the sign in sheet as they enter, or present vaccination documentation.
- Attend online service if you have recently tested positive for COVID-19, have symptoms of any contagious illness, or have recently been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

Hybrid Meetings

Lastly, staff has made significant progress on support for hybrid meetings in the Fireside and Safir Rooms. Scheduling meetings in those rooms on the church calendar enables staff to engage with the meeting organizer on how easily one can arrange a hybrid meeting.

If any questions or comments, contact the OTF at planning@uucb.org.

OTF (Opening Task Force)

Members: Patrick Cullinane (Chair), Sheldon Jones, Lisa Maynard, Tess Snook O’Riva (Executive Director), and Rev. Michelle Collins.

The Partner Church Committee

The wait is over, and that long-promised video from General Assembly, “The UUPCC-ICUU Legacy: Stories Light Our Way” is now available to all. “Celebrating the UU Partner Church Council and the International Council of U/Us as they come to a close. We will share the emerging new vision of international relationships, grounded in mutuality and equity. Current and past leaders around the globe lead worship with music and readings from various traditions.” Here’s the link: <https://ga-recordings.uua.org/watch?vod=663>

One of the key figures in the Partner Church movement was the late Rev. David Keyes who passed away in September. I was lucky enough to secure a spot in his 2016 excursion to Hungary and Romania. I call it an excursion because it wasn’t a choir tour and it wasn’t a pilgrimage as we have often described our journeys to Transylvania. Instead, we did things like talk with a former minister in the liberal Hungarian government which preceded Viktor Orbán. We visited a refugee camp near the Serbian border, a camp which Orbán would soon close. We learned why some ethnic Hungarians in Romania would eagerly claim dual citizenship in Hungary while others saw little incentive to do so. While in Kolozsvár, a morning spent with the Bishop of the Hungarian Unitarian Church and his top assistants made divisions and tensions within the church palpable. A day spent with past Balázs Scholars highlighted different philosophies between ministers in rural parishes and those serving urban congregations or those teaching in schools or seminary. I am grateful to have been a witness to these remarkable events.

The video celebrates a rich history of our international engagement. Rev. Keyes used an inquisitive mind to delve into issues that some would have preferred to be left unexamined.

Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net will want to hear the issues you would like to be examined more closely with our Transylvanian partners.

Music Matters

“The Importance of Congregational Singing”

By Susan T. Mashiyama, PhD

This article fulfills a requirement for the UUA Musicians Leadership Certification Program that Susan is completing.

Congregational singing enables people to actively participate, to express feelings and ideas aloud, and to connect with others by blending their voices together to create a much larger whole. It allows people to let loose their spirit and gladden the hearts of themselves and others, or express companionship and compassion in sorrow. Through the trials and challenges as well as joys in life, let’s continue to sing together to comfort, nurture, and uplift our spirits.

The word “hymn” comes from the Greek for *hymnos*, which means “song of praise.” Hymns, or spiritual songs, exist in all cultures, and some survive that came from ancient Sumer and Greece. But whether or not the congregation joins in on the songs has varied widely. For example, in the Christian religion, the popularity and acceptance of the practice of congregational singing has passed into and out of fashion over time, and sometimes only trained musicians performed songs during services. However, by the end of the 17th century, congregational singing was re-established in church services.¹

I’ve been singing in groups since I was a child, but leading congregational songs is newer to me. One way to lead songs is in call-and-response. Recently, I taught the song “Evening Breeze” this way in church. It was an amazing experience to hear the contrast of my single voice call a melody, and then hear the congregation’s voice sing back in response, the full beauty and gentle power of many voices singing together as one reverberating throughout the sanctuary. I hope more singers can experience this. It’s a joyous, uplifting feeling, and explains why the call-and-response tradition is an ancient part of spiritual singing in many cultures.

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hymn>

Executive Director Notes

Tess Snook O'Riva

Just a pile of updates this month.

The audit report comes before the Board November 2 for approval. Our last audit was in 2016, and with this one complete, we can finally put historical financial concerns behind us. We will be providing timely information to the Treasurer and the Board starting next month. Many thanks to the Audit and Finance Committees for reading the draft report and making recommendations.

We also welcomed our new tenants last month – the Kensington Fire Protection District. The buildings are built, the fence is up, and the firefighters have moved in. And they make great pancakes! Of course, our parking situation is now more challenging, and we are having creative discussions about that in preparation for increased parking needs in December.

There is now a dedicated laptop in the Fireside room for use with that TV (Thank you Rev. Michelle!) to facilitate Zoom meetings there. We are adding lights to the cameras in the Sanctuary to communicate live feeds to the speakers/musicians on the chancel and reduce the burden on our volunteers. Self-check-in at the front door is improving, but we will be expanding that to decrease the need for multiple front door volunteers.

As you know, our Black Lives Matter sign on Arlington Avenue was vandalized on September 22. Antonio has been hard at work reconstructing a stronger, better version, and we have contracted with a metalsmith to do some custom work. The re-dedication ceremony will be after services November 6 in front of the sign. We've requested a road closure permit from the El Cerrito Police Dept.

James A. Jackson was recently hired as our new Facilities Assistant, and he is a wonderful addition to our team! He has extensive experience in both janitorial and gardening work. He has already brought the entire building into "maintenance mode," and is making incredible progress on the outdoors. His schedule will be Sunday through Thursday. Welcome!

The Climate Justice Committee has been proactive with UUCB rentals management to improve education and

communication regarding waste management protocols. Support UUCB's commitment to the environment! Sort out your organic waste!

Rentals and scheduling are on fire! We are heavily utilizing our new project management software, Asana, to coordinate the influx of rentals, member events, and new leases. Our campus feels alive and welcoming, and we are seeing more and more visitors every day. Welcome, all!

Social Justice

Literature, Film, Drama & Music Contingent:

For National Native American Heritage Month, UUCB's Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group (HIP) will once again provide the LFDMC program, on November 13 at 1:00 on [Zoom](#). The topic is Robin Wall Kimmerer's acclaimed book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. HIP members and other participants in last summer's Spiritual Journey Book Read will read and comment on short passages and invite discussion. For more information, contact Helen Tinsley-Jones at htinsleyjones@yahoo.com.

Good Neighbor: The deadline for submitting Good Neighbor applications for 2023 to Sheldon Jones has been extended to November 9. The form is available on the information table or at <https://uucb.org/wpfd/file/good-neighbor-nomination-2023/>. Watch for an announcement of the special meeting in late November or early December to learn about and vote on Good Neighbor candidates.

Food Drive: This annual collaboration of Social Justice and Family Ministry will be in December.

Holiday Fair, December 4

Please contact [Ann Harlow](#) or fill out a signup form if you can donate items or services for the silent auction, holiday decorations, crafts, or recycled gifts for the sale, and/or your time to help make this festive annual event happen—or if you are a craftsperson who would like a table to sell your products with 50% going to UUCB.

A Thanksgiving Day Letter

from UUCB's Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group (2021)

When planning your celebration, please consider that while Thanksgiving is a beloved holiday for many, it is also a painful one for many. With the persistent retelling of the story of a joyous meal between Native Americans and Pilgrims, the holiday completely covers over the reality of the history of Native Americans. In short, Thanksgiving is based on a false narrative and has been called "The Day of Mourning" by some indigenous people.

The Thanksgiving story does not typically take into account the fact that huge populations of Indigenous peoples were killed, lands stolen, and children placed in boarding schools, forbidden to speak their native languages – all in an attempt to decimate Indigenous peoples and culture.

So, as we gather together with family and friends – in person and virtually – consider some of the following:

- Read up on some of the history around Thanksgiving.

[One Way to Honor Indigenous People This Thanksgiving — Kajora Lovely](#)

[How to Decolonize Your Thanksgiving Dinner](#)

[With Thanksgiving: A Native American View](#)

[THANKSGIVING: A Day of Mourning](#)

[8 Ways to Decolonize and Honor Native Peoples on Thanksgiving](#)

- Include a simple dish that honors Native Americans. For example, the *Three Sisters* – corn, beans and squash – prepared to your liking. "Call in the spirits of the land and ancestors. Let them know this offering is out of respect, and you can also add anything else you like. For example, you can ask that the spirits and deities continue to guide and protect their living descendants."
- Read a land acknowledgement during your event – we offer one here – or make one of your own! During this Thanksgiving holiday, we acknowledge that our home sits on land formerly stewarded by the Muwekma Ohlone people. We pay deep respect to the ancestors and to members of Indigenous peoples in the community. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal of Indigenous peoples from this land and extend honor and recognition to those still connected to this land. Colonization is an ongoing process, and it continues to harm. We commit ourselves to continue on the long road toward true equity and liberation for all.
- Encourage conversations with questions such as:
 - How has our awareness of Native American history, especially around land theft, changed over time? How is it different from what you learned in school?
 - How did our family get to where we live? To this continent, state, and city?
 - What family stories do we have that are in relationship to Indigenous people?

We are thankful for our awareness of the history of this holiday and this land, and we are committed to continue to highlight and contribute to the work currently being done by and for the people indigenous to this land.

Love and best wishes for this Thanksgiving holiday,

The Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group: Mimi Bull, Carol Carlisle, Rev. Michelle Collins, Ann Harlow, Lynne Henderson, Don Klose, Wyndy Knox Carr, Helen Tinsley-Jones, Anne Wardell, Julie Winkelstein

Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Covenant of Right Relations

Love guides this church.

The quest for truth and justice is its common purpose.

To give thanks, listen deeply, speak with care, honor our differences, and seek and grant forgiveness –

These things we covenant with one another.

MEMBERSHIP in this Unitarian Universalist congregation is open to all who see this church as their religious home and the principles for which the church stands as their own. People who wish to join participate in an “introduction to membership” session, sign the membership book, and commit to supporting this church through participation and financially. To become a member, please contact membership@uucb.org.

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. (Beacon is compiled and edited by Charis Domador.)

WEBSITE: <http://uucb.org>

PHONE: 510-525-0302

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS:

To subscribe to the email version of this newsletter or “The Week Ahead at UUCB,” email connections@uucb.org. You can also find both newsletters at the uucb.org website under “News.”

UUCB general discussion/announcements list:

http://groups.google.com/group/uucb_discuss/about

Email list for families: Email family.ministry@uucb.org

Our Board of Trustees Widening the Circle Vision Statement:

We, the trustees of UUCB commit ourselves to championing racial justice, embodying anti-racist practices, and confronting and dismantling white supremacy culture and all forms of oppression (including but not limited to racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ageism, xenophobia and religious oppression, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia) in everything we do.

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Heaven Walker (Director of Family Ministry & Lifelong Learning)
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