
January 2023

Theme: Finding Our Center

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 82 #1

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

Ministerial Search Committee

Deborah Schmidt

What a fall it has been! As you read this (January 1), our documents packet and [Congregational Record](#) have been published and visible to ministerial candidates. We wanted to recap for you the progression that has led to this big moment.

You voted for us in April, and we were installed at the May 22 congregational meeting. We began meeting right away. In June and July, we acquainted ourselves with the Settlement Handbook, met with our transitions officer and with Rev. Michelle, attended a search overview webinar, and arranged for our retreat (held the last weekend of July), in which roles were assigned.

In August our main focus was preparing the congregational survey, which ran September 4 through October 6. When we had your responses in hand, they were tabulated, analyzed, and summarized. Once the survey was launched, we turned our attention to the focus groups and cottage meetings we held in October. We want to give a huge shout out to Don Klose and Greg Lemieux, who each did a hero's amount of work summarizing these results, Don for the focus groups and Greg for the survey ([Focus Group Summary](#) and [Survey Report](#)).

At the same time, Ariel and Don were preparing for the Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) workshop ([BCT Summary](#)), conducted November 5 by UUA Transitions Director Keith Kron, who also led a [search forum](#) (audio recording) for Personal Theology and preached for us that Sunday.

We want to thank all of you for participating in the survey and focus groups, for bringing open minds and hearts to the BCT workshop, and for your constant expressions of support and trust in us. Next step? The UUA releases names of candidates to us on January 2!



January Services

Sundays 11 am

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

January 1

Fire Ritual

January 8

Tech, Tech Everywhere!

January 15

Our World House
A Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Service

January 22

Finding Our Center in the
Whirlwind

January 29

Universal Acceptance

Religious Education

January 8, 22, 29

Coffee Hour

Sundays at Noon

In person in the Social Hall

Sunday Programming

Personal Theology

Sundays at 9:15 am in the Fireside Room and on Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/99027634430>

January 8 – Claire J. Baker presents “Poetry as Anchor.” Claire J. Baker, longtime UUCB member, from young adult poet, onward to seasoned at 95, extols her anchor as an escape from family abuse, a challenge to look inward and objectively in her renewed world in California, poetry serving as an adaptable anchor.

January 22 – Tess Snook O’Riva presents “Adventures in Thailand.” Tess, Executive Director at UUCB, recently traveled to Thailand, and she will share what she experienced and felt during this chapter in her spiritual journey.

Youth and Children’s Choir Rehearsal

Sundays at 10 am

Open to all children 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*

January 8 – Topic Selection for June and Short Topic Discussion. Ray Westergard.

***January 15** – Future of Ukraine/Russia War. Dennis Monthei. Starts at 12:30 pm in person in the Safir Room.

January 22 – Will the Supreme Court Allow State Legislatures to Override the Vote? Anne Fitzmaurice.

January 29 – Who Are Your Humanist (or other) Heroes? Timothy Travis and Ray Westergard.

Special Events

January 8 @ 1 pm

LFMDC takes a look at a fascinating and disturbing article: *The Elephant in the Courtroom*, "A curious legal crusade to redefine personhood is raising profound questions about the interdependence of the animal and human kingdoms," by Lawrence Wright: <https://bit.ly/3GaZv1l>

January 21 @ 7 pm

Third Saturday Youth Social Event

January 28 @ 7 pm

Flute and Keyboard Recital

January 29 @ noon

Board of Trustees Candidates Forum. Get to know the Board of Trustees Candidates in this informative and interactive forum immediately after service.

January Good Neighbor

Richmond High School Marching Band. The West Contra Costa Unified School District believes that every student has a right to equitable access to Arts Education in the classroom ... [and] to participate in hands-on artistic learning. The Richmond High School Marching Band is a perfect example of such learning. They are raising money to march at Disneyland this year. Big trips like this give Richmond High students a chance to travel outside their community, and provide the background for many learning opportunities. The impact of making music lasts a lifetime, as do the the friendships made along the way.”

Announcements

Board Listening Presence

Pier Sun Ho: call or text 734-649-8240 or send an email at ms_sunho@hotmail.com

Got Extra Flash Drives Lying Around?



Often the new year is a time when folks clean out and let go of things they no longer need. How about letting go of things for an important cause? The organization **Flash Drives for Freedom** collects flash drives, SD cards, and micro-SD cards to smuggle into North Korea filled with vital outside information. In such a closed totalitarian regime, getting non-censored information from the outside to the citizens of North Korea can make a tremendous difference. Working with activists in South Korea, Flash Drives for Freedom seeks to do just that. This January, bring your unused flash drives, SD cards, and micro SD cards to UUCB and we'll send them on to be part of this work. See <https://flashdrivesforfreedom.org> for more information about the program. Questions about UUCB's drive can be sent to Rev. Michelle at minister@uucb.org.

Nominating Committee

Helen Tinsley-Jones

The UUCB Nominating Committee is pleased to announce its list of candidates for the Board of Trustees:

Three-year terms (three seats): Kay Fairwell, David Rosales, and Helen Tinsley-Jones (incumbent)

Many thanks to these dedicated members for stepping up to serve our community! And gratitude to departing Board members Elaine Miller and David Roberts.

Nomination by Petition

As outlined by UUCBs bylaws, candidates for election to the Board of Trustees shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee or nominated by written petition. Nominating petitions must be signed by at least 4% of the certified membership of the Church (i.e., at least thirteen signatures) and emailed to Nominating Committee member Victoria Bowen at Nominating@uucb.org. The deadline for petition submission was December 23.

Important Upcoming Dates:

January 29: Candidates Forum; Voting begins

February 12: Final Date for Voting for Board Candidates

Questions? Contact the Nominating Committee at Nominating@uucb.org.

Opening Task Force (OTF) Update

Trifecta Surge

As public health experts predicted, the winter season has brought a significant increase in COVID infections, flu cases and RSV. In the Dec. 18 COVID Act Now report, COVID patients and hospital admissions were trending up in Alameda and Contra Costa Cos. Community risk in the counties has increased from low to medium. (cont'd)

With too many believing the pandemic is over and not taking advantage of the latest effective booster and the overall relaxing of mask wearing, these trends sadly may not improve. Although our church community has been very responsible and effective in keeping infections very low at church, many more members are now being exposed outside the church environment and sadly fallen prey to COVID. Although vaccines and boosters have demonstrably reduced the risk of serious illness and hospitalizations, they do not prevent one from being infected. Masks are the number one preventative to protect one and others from infections and to offer protection for our vulnerable members and our children.

Thus, our best advice for the winter's season is the following:

- Stay home and attend online services/events if you have any symptoms of contagious disease
- Wear your mask at all times indoors at UUCB, unless actively eating or drinking in the Social Hall only
- For those who can, get the latest COVID booster

COVID circumstances in China with quarantine and lack of effective vaccines for billions of folks raises concern for the future of the virus and possibly new variants. For now, following the above advice is our best strategy and New Year's resolution to being personally safe and keeping UUCB accessible and welcoming to all.

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

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

From the Board of Trustees

by Cordell Sloane

If you would like to view a video-recording of a previous Board of Trustee's meeting, please contact secretary@uucb.org for a link.

It's December and I have finally settled into the spirit of the season. As a UU, I'm enjoying a fine blend of Divali, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and any other festival celebrated in December.

Personally, I'm checking the traditional boxes: joy, togetherness, reunions, warm conversations with friends and colleagues, generous gift-giving and festive gatherings. I hope you're doing the same.

As a community here at UUCB we add some additional holiday boxes to check: volunteering, donating money or goods to charity, or helping out local organizations, showing that we care not just for our friends but also for our neighbors, and others who might be in need.

On our campus we will have the pleasure of spending quality time with loved ones, enjoying festive food and drinks, taking part in holiday activities or events, and other holiday traditions with our family members and friends. In your celebrating remember to support in every way our marvelous staff and our volunteer crews during this time. So much of their work goes unsung and they are essential to the impact and value that UUCB brings. Our staff and volunteers work hard throughout the year upfront and behind the scenes to make sure UUCB makes a difference in our community both within and without so while enjoying holiday season, let's be sure to capital THANK! them for their dedication and hard work. And don't be too shy to lend a hand in whatever setting you find yourself in. With all that's happening and all that's being done find an opportunity to volunteer in some way that fits your temperament and talent. On behalf of

all UUCBers I thank you in advance for your generosity, for these gifts we give ourselves.

It seems to me that recent years have brought growing social activity at UUCB. This inspires and reassures me when I think of the challenges of our world. I love that numbers of you have chosen important roles, joined consequential groups, stepped up and added to the meaning and purpose to our congregation. I am grateful for the spirit within you that seeks to have positive effect in our community and in our world.

And to all UUCBers, I want to thank you for the endurance with which you bear the various demands of this unusual time and for the making the many commendable adjustments required due to Covid's tenure. Thank you for caring enough to make our safe togetherness the most important thing. You have been tested, and to my mind have risen to the occasion and have and put your better nature on display. The grace we have displayed has grown within us, and we deserve to take it with us on our journey. With abundant collective resilience and kindness, we have come together to make each other stronger during various difficult circumstances. May this holiday season bring us all closer, as we continue our journey ahead with greater understanding and empathy towards each other. I'm looking forward to a great year ahead. I hope WE all are.

Board of Trustees December 2022 Actions

1. **Vaccine:** Continued current policy to require affirmation of COVID-19 vaccination to attend in-person events.
2. **Contagious symptoms compliance:** Supported the application of the disruptive behavior policy for attendees on campus who refuse our health & safety protocols, contingent upon conflict resolution or de-escalation training for persons who are responding to such situations.
3. **Trust:** Discussed outcomes of Rev. Michelle's Congregational Trust Survey. Higher trust areas were openness (highest), integrity, benevolence, concern; Mid-range: Commitment, competence; Lowest ranges (relative): Vulnerability (lowest), satisfaction/representation, identification, diversity. Rev. Michelle will conduct a Board/leadership workshop on the topic in the first part of 2023.
4. **Nominating Committee for Board of Trustees seats:** Approved Nominating Committee recommendation that to assure staggered terms going forward, approve the following terms for Committee appointment in May 2023: One-year term: 3 new members; Two-year term: 2 continuing members + 1 new member; Three-year term: 3 new members.
5. **Freestone:** Awaiting receipt of Sonoma County guidance on allowed use(s) of UUCB's Freestone property; the Board will discuss at its Jan. 4 meeting the scheduling of the postponed October congregational meeting on the future of the property. Outcome of that discussion will depend on receipt of County information. In the meantime, Jan. 22 and Feb. 5 have been reserved as potential congregational meeting dates.
6. **Negotiating Team:** Ladie Malek from the Ministerial Search Committee, Pier Sun Ho from the Board of Trustees, and Linda Laskowski as a congregation member are the negotiating team for the next minister's agreement/contract.
7. **We appreciate UUCB Employees:** Announced year-end contribution drive for Staff Appreciation!

Note: Board Agendas, minutes and other meeting materials can be found on the UUCB website under: [About-Governance-Board of Trustees-Board Meeting Agendas](#)

2023 Stewardship Campaign Is Coming: Let's "Build a New Way" Together

"We are building a new way, feeling stronger every day."

(Hymn 1017 in "Singing the Living Tradition"; lyrics by Martha Sandefer)

Growing up in Massachusetts, I remember the excitement I felt when the first crocuses emerged in the spring: a sign of new life after a long, cold winter. UUCB's transition from our primarily remote connections during the hardest part of the pandemic to more in-person activities and connections feels to me like a similar kind of springtime and blossoming of new life.

There is so much returning and blossoming to celebrate and enjoy at UUCB! In-person religious education, the adult choir, the children's choir, and snacks in the social hall have all returned. Our first in-person Lawrence Lecture in three years was held in November, with a speaker who uses art and humor to address anti-black racism. Our community renewed our commitment to anti-racism in a beautiful ceremony dedicating our stronger-than-ever Black Lives Matter sign. And our Ministerial Search Committee is working to bring a new minister to UUCB.

Just as nature has its seasons, so too does UUCB. With the start of the new year comes UUCB's Stewardship Campaign. Every year a group of volunteers work with the congregation to make their pledge commitments for the new fiscal year.

In choosing a theme for the 2023 Stewardship Campaign, the committee was drawn to ideas and images of rebuilding, growth, and transformation to reflect the positive changes UUCB is making in our church and community, the excitement of returning to more in-person activities, and our preparation for a new minister. We chose "We Are Building a New Way" as UUCB's 2023 Stewardship hymn. During the next months as our congregation

comes together to make our pledges, we look forward to singing and having fun together.

This is a very important year for stewardship for UUCB as we search for a new minister. As they consider offers, ministerial candidates will assess UUCB's financial stability and our congregation's commitment to supporting the church with our time, talent, and treasure. We want to demonstrate to applicants that we are able to support our next minister with a healthy budget and an engaged congregation.

Here are a few things to look for in this year's campaign:

- During Sunday services in February and March, we will highlight members' reflections on the meaning and impact of UUCB in their lives.
- Our campaign kicks off on March 5 and ends with Celebration Sunday on March 26.
- Reverend Michelle will engage some of our youth in building a Lego chalice.
- In March, Stewardship Committee members will contact new UUCB members for one-on-one conversations. Our goal is to answer questions and provide information about church finances and the pledging process.

Let us know if you have any questions about the campaign or want to help the stewardship committee at stewardship@uucb.org.

Your 2023 Stewardship Team: Cynthia Asprodites, Lynne Cahoon, Selene Fabiano (Chair), Kay Fairwell, Lisa Maynard, David Roberts (Board Liaison), Karen Tripp, Rev. Michelle Collins, and Tess Snook O'Riva (Executive Director).

January brings us a year of brand-new days.

If this time of year is difficult for you, and you would like additional care and support, please email us at pastoralcare@uucb.org. Our pastoral care associates provide important connections of comfort and healing. They are available through calls and visits of listening presence and supportive notes.

You are not alone.

In case of a pastoral emergency, you may contact Rev. Michelle Collins at 301-675-5314 or minister@uucb.org. She is always available for pastoral needs.

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 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.

Board of Trustees

Beth Pollard, President
Helen Tinsley-Jones, Vice President
Selene Fabiano, Secretary
Lenore Ralston, Treasurer
Michael Armstrong
Bill Brown
Pier Sun Ho
Randall Hudson
Elaine Miller
David Roberts
Cordell Sloan

Executive Advisory Team

Tess Snook O’Riva (Executive Director and Convener)
Rev. Michelle Collins
Alice Lemieux (Family Ministry and Program Council liaison)
Heaven Walker (Director of Family Ministry & Lifelong Learning)
Beth Pollard (Board president)

Program Council

Jean Gleason (Convener)
Suzette Anderson-Duggan and Alice Lemieux (Family Ministry)
Victoria Bowen (Membership)
Lynne Cahoon (Buildings & Grounds)
Barbara Cullinane (Pastoral Care)
Marin Fischer (Music/Arts)
Jim Gasperini (Communications)
Sheldon Jones and Natalie Campbell (Social Justice)
Lonnie Moseley (Adult Religious Exploration)
Lenore Ralston (Finance)
Cordell Sloane (Board Liaison)

Staff (partial list)

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Director of Family Ministry and Lifelong Learning: Heaven Walker
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Facilities Coordinator: Antonio Toro
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