
February 2023

Theme: Love

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 82 #2

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

From the Ministerial Search Committee

An Update in the Ministerial Search Process

January was a momentous month of emotions—anticipation, elation, joy and sadness. In a jam-packed three-week period, the search team kicked off this stage of the search process with a retreat. We reviewed candidate records and websites, listened to sermons, conducted zoom interviews and spoke with references.

What can we say about the process so far? It has truly been an undertaking, but the highlight has been speaking with the candidates. We wish we could publicly sing their praises and share some of the sermons we were moved by, but we are bound by confidentiality. Their wealth of experience is unparalleled, but their creativity and vision for the future are inspiring. Although we are sad that we could not say yes to them all, we are buoyed by the opportunity to have been given a small peek into their ministry and the gifts it will bring to future congregations.

We now have our 3 pre-candidates! A pre-candidate is a minister who has moved from the initial round of interviews and has been selected as one of the settled search finalists. Each pre-candidate will visit the search teams, secretly visit our campus, and preach at an undisclosed church, called a "neutral pulpit." We look forward to interacting with our prospective ministers on a deeper level during the pre-candidating weekends!

We will be making a presentation to all of you at our upcoming congregational meeting February 12.



February Services

Sundays 11 am

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

February 5

Happy Birthday Trees!

February 12

Music Sunday

February 19

Black History Month Service

February 26

When Welcoming Is Hard

Religious Education

February 12 & 26

Coffee Hour

Sundays at Noon

In person in the Social Hall

Sunday Programming

Personal Theology

Sundays at 9:30 am on Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/99027634430>

February 12 – Kayleen Asbo presents “Dante and The Art of Love”

February 26 – Victoria Lee presents “The Poetry of Rumi”

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

February 5 – Is Everything We Are a Result of Evolution? Timothy Travis.

February 12 – Topic Selection for June and Short Topic Discussion. Ray Westergard.

February 19 (in person) – The Dark: Have We Banished It? Gail Morrison.

February 26 – The Bhagavad Gita Decoded. Charles Carey.

Good Neighbor in February

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant. EBSC provides legal and social services, community organizing, and transformative education to support low-income immigrants and people fleeing violence and persecution.

<https://eastbaysanctuary.org/>

Special Events

February 4 @ 9 am

Coming of Age Social Justice Retreat with Faithful Fools

February 5 @ 9:30 am

Parents’ Discussion Group

February 5 @ 1 pm

LFDMC in celebration of Black History Month, Cordell Sloan will lead a discussion of *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*

February 11 @ 4-8 pm

Parents’ Night Out. Enjoy 4 hours of free child care. Reservations required: <https://bit.ly/3HsH4pz>

February 11 @ 7 pm

Love Songs & Chocolate: A celebration of tuneful romance and delectable desserts. Buy tickets: <https://bit.ly/3H2wmVo>

February 12 @ 12:30

Congregational Meeting

February 25 @ 11 am

Coming of Age Social Justice Retreat with Faithful Fools

Announcements

Board Listening Presence

Randall Hudson: call or text 805-705-6157 or send an email at rdhudson2001@gmail.com

Love Songs & Chocolate

Saturday February 11 @ 7:00 pm

A celebration of tuneful romance and delectable desserts. In a relaxed, cabaret-like setting, many singers from our community share beguiling love songs from the classics to Broadway to jazz.

Buy tickets: <https://bit.ly/3H2wmVo>



Opening Task Force (OTF) Update

Risk Up – Infections Up – New Variant – Ugh!

Boy, do we want to be finished with COVID. But COVID is not listening to us. Its goal is to morph and continue to be a problem for as long as possible and take advantage of any weakness in our public health status.

Thankfully our congregation has coupled its desire to be together with responsible levels of vaccinations and boosters along with masking compliance to be protective of themselves and others, especially our vulnerable members. This compliance and care has made UUCB likely one of the more safe places for large gatherings. The congregation's resilience after three years of this pandemic is commendable. Kudos to us all!

Check-In Improvement – Bar Code Scanner

To make checking in at church events easier, a bar code scanner will be available to use for check in. One only has to pass their bar code on the back of their badge over the scanner and check-in is done. Thanks to Tess O'Riva and the other staff for another improvement in our church COVID lives.

OTF Future – Safety Committee – You Can Help

The OTF is seeing the time when we can stop our three years of bimonthly meetings and activity to help the church gather safely and productively. The future will rest with a reorganized Safety Committee. Its mission will include further management and development of procedures on contagious disease and participation in church activity as well as child safety in church programs, earthquake preparedness, fire safety, and disruptive campus behavior. There are likely several members with talent in these areas that would be valued assets for this committee. If you are interested in exploring this possibility further, contact our ED, Tess O'Riva, at ed@uucb.org.

Thank you for continuing to follow these guidelines:

- 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

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

From the Board of Trustees

Board Service: A Chalice Circle of Leadership

If you'd like a video-recording of a previous Board of Trustees meeting, please contact secretary@uucb.org for a link.

Over my 35 years at UUCB, I was often asked to consider running for the Board, but I resisted citing my family and work life. I thought it would take too much time, be too contentious and separate me from my close friendships with other church members.

Each new Board year begins with an initiation of new members with a Chalice Circle-like introduction of each to one another. Each member speaks without interruption, without questions, for an extended period of time. This powerful process allows each of us to express something deep about our values, our involvement in UUCB and our aspirations for the connections among ourselves on the Board.

Each year we repeat this introduction among all the Board members only now via Zoom. These very intentional introductions set the tone for Board meetings that are equally intentional. We each come more prepared both inwardly and outwardly to set aside our other concerns and be with one another to focus on our work.

Together with the executive sessions that precede the regular Board meetings, each of us dedicates three to three and a half hours once a month plus additional time for our preparation and committee liaison work. Agendas and preparation by everyone allow each of us to be heard, sometimes at great length and other times just briefly. But after three years of these meetings, they have a flow and connection that keep us all engaged.

In reflection, I realize our meetings have become almost a spiritual experience for me. I see the little Zoom squares with my colleagues and members of the Church, and I recognize that I am in a uniquely gathered space.

Board service has helped me appreciate a deeper way of connecting. Truly listening, pausing, not reacting but processing, then expressing our considered thoughts, engaging from a position of trust with one another reminds me that Board service has been a privilege to share.

Dave Roberts

Board of Trustees January 2023 Actions

1. **Widening the Circle:** Approved recommendation from the Widening the Circle Committee to revise the language of the Board's charge for the Committee, as contained in the Board Governance Manual, to define the WTCC as having a collaborative rather than authoritarian position vis-a-vis the congregation.
2. **Freestone:** Upon report that guidance from Sonoma County on use of UUCB's Freestone property has not yet been received, committed to holding a special meeting if needed upon receipt of guidance, and to place Freestone on the March 1 Board meeting agenda (if no guidance has been received and/or has not been already addressed by the Board).
3. **February 12, 2023 Congregational Meeting:** Approved Agenda

Music Matters

After two long years, **Love Songs & Chocolate** returns in person. This beloved dessert buffet and concert—and a fundraiser for UUCB—arrives for one evening only, **Saturday, February 11, starting at 7 pm**. A celebration of tuneful romance in songs of many styles in a relaxed cabaret-like setting, accompanied by a wide variety of delectable desserts, especially chocolate. Please see UUCB's home page for more details.

UUCB's own **Barry Zuckerman** and his long-time colleague pianist Pierre will share a program of great art songs by **Brahms, Liszt, and Strauss on Saturday afternoon March 5 at 3 pm in the Sanctuary**. This is sure to be an afternoon full of uplifting beauty. Keep an eye out for details as we get closer.

Yours in harmony,
Bryan

Stewardship Campaign

Building A New Way



Dictionary.com defines “stewardship” as “*The responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving*”. Per Wikipedia, “*Stewardship is an ethical value*

that embodies the responsible planning and management of resources.”

At UUCB, we use the word “stewardship” in reference to our annual pledge campaign, but we practice stewardship throughout the year by caring for our human and material assets in countless ways. For example, we practice stewardship when we fairly compensate our talented, committed staff, and when we volunteer for work parties and pull weeds on church grounds. We practice stewardship when we upgrade our bathrooms, improve the ventilation in our sanctuary and social hall, and when we offer religious education and OWL classes to our youth.

Why do we do all this? I believe we give our time, talent, and treasure because we believe that our mission, our congregants, our staff, our youth, and our facilities are worth caring for and preserving.

UUCB’s annual stewardship campaign will formally kick off on Sunday March 5. As you make your pledge, we encourage you to be as generous as your budget will allow. Increases of 9% or more will allow UUCB to keep up with inflation and continue all our amazing programs. Member pledges, which make up 40% of UUCB’s revenue, are vital and allow us to do many things, such as:

1. Demonstrate to our new minister that UUCB has a committed congregation and is on a solid financial footing.
2. Retain our highly talented staff by continuing to provide fair wages and benefits.
3. Offer the engaging youth religious education programs that Heaven Walker, Director of Ministry and Lifelong Learning, jump-started this fall.
4. Provide UUCB and our community with exciting adult education programs (such as Personal Theology and the Literature, Film, Drama and Music Contingent)

5. Continue UUCB’s amazing music programs that enrich our services and satisfy our souls.

And so much more!

SAVE THE DATE:

March 5 Kick-Off Sunday Extravaganza – After Sunday Service, we’ll start “Building a New Way” together in the Social Hall with delicious food and fun, hands-on activities for all ages.

- Selene Fabiano

Partner Church

What’s going on in our Partner Church in Homoródújfalú? Here, only slightly edited, is Rev. Attila’s holiday message to UUCB:

Only a few days until Christmas. We are preparing to get ready when the Holiday will arrive. But there is still time to sit in front of my laptop and write to you. Here in Homoródújfalú there is everything ok. The weather is cold but thanks God everybody have’s enough firewood. The snow hasn’t come yet but we are hoping that in Christmas Eve there will be some snow. The children are preparing for Christmas Eve. They are learning a play about the first Christmas. I can see in their eyes, that they are very enthusiastic and they can’t wait to celebrate the Holiday. The parents and the rest of the community is preparing too. I can see that everybody is in a hurry to be ready for Christmas and I can feel the energy that the most beautiful Holiday is coming. I wish you all the best for the next few days. May the Lord help you and everybody from your church to get prepared for the Christmas and I hope that when the Holy Child will be born, we can say each other “Merry Christmas”!

Your friend, Attila

P.S.: This year I read and saw (maybe for the hundredth time) my favorite Christmas story: “A Christmas Carol,” written by Charles Dickens. I love this story so much!

What will 2023 will bring to our partnership? Help us explore the ways. Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net are eager to hear what you would like happen with us and our Transylvanian partners.

Executive Director Notes

Tess Snook O'Riva

It feels like things are ramping up without actually ever calming down!

Brief report this month:

1. The Board mandate that UUCB use its space for the benefit of the congregations and broader community is moving along nicely. Donation-based Tai Chi classes are offered on Tuesdays and Fridays at 10:30 both days. The E-waste drive is schedule for March 5-12. We are working on a Blood Drive.
2. We are expanding our long-term leases as much as possible. We are currently in talks with Trackers Earth to use our site as a pick-up/drop off site for their summer camps and potentially additional classrooms in the Fall.
3. The Green Sheet process, reported to the Board in December, is ready to roll out! Please complete this form with as much information as possible and a staff member will reach out if more information is needed. You're just using a mouse instead of a pen!
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1zmZN00wwZ8P9My5HwGDZ8FzrJ4FunxxrbKAWvG6DH4A/edit>
4. Financials for the Fiscal Year ending 6/30/22 and year-to-date 12/31/22 will be reported at the February Board meeting. It was a long process to get everything updated after the audit. We will transition to our new accounting firm 2/1/23 and look forward to timely reporting!
5. We received a \$20,000 grant from the UUA Disaster Relief Fund to assist us in removing the fallen pine trees, repairing the broken fence, and hopefully removing more dead pine trees!
6. The East Bay Amateur Radio Club will host a Winter Field Day on January 29 before services. Come learn more about ham radio and disaster resilience!

A lot going on, so I better get back to it! As always, email comments and suggestions to ed@uucb.org.

Social Justice Council

Thoughts from My Chair

This is what I'm saying to comfort myself as I watch the death tolls rise in 3 mass shootings in the first weeks of January. As I watch people dying for no reason at the hands of madness, I ask myself what can be de done? My husband is going to a funeral of a man that died on the streets of a drug overdose. How do we, people seeking a more just world, respond? I made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to be given out to folks living on the streets of Oakland. A friend is writing political leaders asking them to create stricter gun laws. Another friend is seeking climate justice, another is demanding reproductive justice... You get it, the list goes on. We do what we can. You never know what action you take that makes a difference in a person's life. Puts food in a belly, stops a bomb cyclone so a man is warm and dry and not stressed and frustrated, no gun is to be had for an angry person to pick up: all these can change the course of a person's, as well as a community's, life. Whatever you are doing, my friends, is the right thing. Just keep doing it with the intention of making a difference. Send out love with those letters, those sandwiches, those bottles recycled and those smiles and kind words to a stranger. Just keep on keeping on and have faith you are making a difference.

Oh yes and "Make good trouble!" John Lewis.

-Carol Carlisle

UUCB @ El Cerrito's 35th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade and Rally



Starting at the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station, the close-to-a-mile-long car caravan proceeded to El Cerrito High School for a program of music, dance and inspiring words.

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.

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Lonnie Moseley (Adult Religious Exploration)
Lenore Ralston (Finance)
Cordell Sloane (Board Liaison)

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