

April 2023

Theme: Resistance

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 82 #4

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

Notes from the Executive Director

Tess Snook O'Riva

As the dust from the pandemic settles, we are working hard to help everyone navigate the New Normal. In this process, we have found some real problems and are doing our best to resolve them as quickly as possible.

Our financial processes, after four years of working on it, are finally more stable. Without timely reports, the finances seemed like a mysterious process. But with our new accounting firm, current reports are available through the monthly Treasurer's Report to the Board. We will have some deep-dive budget information sessions for those who want to get into the weeds and ask hard questions. Everyone is welcome to participate!

Our Information systems are being analyzed by our new IT Consultant after many months of spotty connections in both the Fireside Room and Sanctuary. We believe those problems are fixed and are now working on optimization, with the goal of everyone having consistent, reliable signal.

Everyone who has sponsored or worked on fundraisers and/or member events has been faced with the changes and challenges of our rentals process. Our use of Asana, our new project management system, is helping a lot, but the transition from paper processes to online was uncomfortable for many. In addition, we have come to terms with the fact that 15 hours a week may not be sufficient to handle all calendaring, scheduling, and rental coordination. We are working on a solution through the budget process and appreciate your patience.

The newly donated Parsonage house is coming along nicely. Paperwork is submitted, a general contractor hired, windows and cabinets ordered, and work has begun. We hope our new minister likes it!

And lastly, as we are fully in the swing of budget season, many of the stop-gap measures that we took during the pandemic are being carefully analyzed for sustainability. We were blessed to obtain large grants from the federal government to continue operations in 2021 and 2022, plus the \$20,000 grant from the UUA Disaster Fund for damage caused by recent storms this year, but decisions will have to be made that both support our staff and programs while ensuring the financial health of UUCB. Stay tuned for information on the upcoming Budget Workshops to stay informed and get involved!



April Services

Sundays 11 am

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

April 2

Fasting as Spiritual Practice

April 9

Jesus the Activist
(Easter)

April 16

TBD

April 23

What Does It Mean to Be
Human? (Earth Day)

April 30

Ministerial Candidate Preaching

Religious Education

April 16

Coffee Hour

Sundays at Noon

In person in the Social Hall

Sunday Programming

Personal Theology

Sundays at 9:15 am in person and on Zoom

April 23 – Intentional Conclusions. Rev. Michelle Collins, our energetic and amazing intern minister, is nearing the end of her 3-year service with UUCB. Her final talk for Personal Theology will be: “Intentional Conclusions – How to Think About End-of-Life Planning.” Resource workbook published by Rev. Michelle.

April 30 – The Poetry of Rumi. Victoria Lee is a psychologist, author, singer, and long-time member of UUCB. She will discuss and recite her favorite Rumi poems.

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

April 2 – Are We What You Wear? Dennis Monthei.

April 9 – Topic Selection for June and Short Topic Discussion. Ray Westergard.

April 15 – Why Do We Tell Stories? Timothy Travis.

April 23 – Are We Living in a Dark Time or a Promising Time? Paul Ulbrich.

April 30 – How Have You Changed in the Last Ten Years? Ray Westergard.

Good Neighbor in April

The **Women’s Cancer Resource Center** improves equitable access to cancer information, support, and care.

<https://www.wcrc.org>

Special Events

April 2

9:30 am Parents’ Discussion Group

12 pm Celebration Sunday (Stewardship)

12 pm Easter Prep Party for Youth

12:30 pm Membership/Info Mtg

1 pm Literature, Film, Drama & Music Contingent

2 pm Katya Kolesnikova Organ Recital

April 9 @ 12:30 pm

Easter Egg Hunt/Brunch/
Spring Festival

April 15

4-8 pm Parents’ Night Out

7 pm Youth Social Event

April 16 @ 8:30 am

Adult OWL

April 22 @ 7:30 pm

Luminescence & Kensington

Symphony Orchestra Concert.

First concert together in 3 years!

April 23 @ 1 pm

WOWS Working to Overcome
White Supremacy

April 28-30

Coming of Age Nature Vigil &
Credo Writing Retreat

April 30

UUCB Ministerial Candidate will
be preaching.

Announcements

Board Listening Presence

Randall Hudson: call or text (805) 705-6157 or send an email at Rdhudson2001@gmail.com

Update on Freestone

The Special Congregational Meeting took place on March 26, and the **deadline to vote on the resolution is April 1 at 5 pm**. Members eligible to vote received the electronic ballot, and we will announce the results of the vote on April 2. If you have any questions, please contact Board Co-Presidents Helen Tinsley-Jones and Pier Sun Ho at president@uucb.org

Easter Egg Hunt & Spring Festival

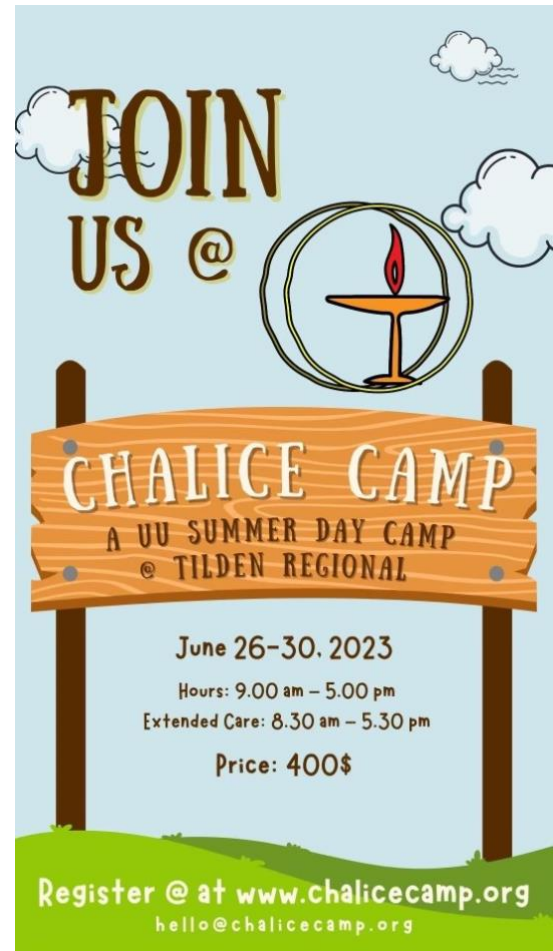
April 9 @ 11 am Could we say **11 am–2 pm?**

Easter Bunny Headquarters is back at it with our annual Egg Hunt, and this year we're also having a Spring Festival! Food, Fun, and Games await! It all starts with the 11 am service. See you then!



Chalice Camp

June 26-30



Ministerial Search Process

We spent a week in intense discernment about our three potential ministers after completing our last pre-candidating weekend. On March 27, we submitted our ranked list to the UUA Transitions Office. And on March 30, we made our first offer to our preferred candidate!

As you read this, if all goes well, we will be entering the phase of contract negotiations and background checks (March 30 to mid-April). When the contract is agreed upon, the background check is underway, AND the candidate has announced their plans to their current congregation, we can announce their name to you. This will probably happen in early to mid April.

Then (again if all goes well, which we have no reason not to expect) we can all look forward to **Candidating Week, April 30 - May 7**. The candidate will preach on the two Sundays, and in between there will be a full schedule of meetings and informal events designed to let all of you get to know the minister, and for the minister to get to know us, leaders, members, and staff. The candidate really acts as our minister during that week. The week culminates with a special Congregational Meeting to vote on calling the minister. According to our bylaw 8.1, "Called Minister(s) shall be chosen by at least a 90% vote of members of the Church present and voting at a congregational meeting duly called for that purpose." That high vote of confidence provides an ideal start for a ministry.

We, your search team, are feeling awed by and grateful for so much: the trust you have placed in us; the truly wonderful ministers that are excited about serving this congregation; and the visions and possibilities emerging for the next chapter in the story of our beloved church.

Stewardship Campaign Update



Reverend Michelle's sermon on March 5 was titled "We Are Seekers and We Are Stakeholders." Do you remember the sermon? What did you take from it? I found the sermon to be both thought-provoking and a little anxiety-provoking.

I'm very comfortable with being a spiritual seeker; the idea of being engaged in shared seeker-ship certainly resonates for me and was what initially drew me to UUCB. Seeing myself as a stakeholder has developed more gradually and is still a work in progress. The longer I attend UUCB, the more I notice the role volunteers play in every aspect of church life. Involvement in stewardship and the Board of Trustees has increased my understanding of the financial resources needed to sustain our church. For example, did you know that it costs over \$2500/day to run UUCB? Our contributions of time, talent, and treasure are essential to UUCB's ability to fulfill its mission. As a community we pool our resources. Just as our seeker-ship is shared, so is our role as stakeholders.

Have you seen the Lego Pledge Chalice in the atrium? Created by Rev. Michelle, the Lego chalice is a visual representation of this year's stewardship campaign. Each little circle in the Lego chalice represents \$100. Our pledges are one of the ways that we take ownership of UUCB and fulfill our responsibilities as stakeholders. Together we can fill the Lego chalice with our pledges.

When you read this article, Celebration Sunday will be almost here, and the Stewardship Committee will soon announce our pledge total. If you have already made your pledge promise, THANK YOU! We are so grateful for your support. If you have not yet made your pledge, you can pledge online using this link: <https://uuchurchofberkeley.breezechms.com/form/2023-2024-Pledge-Form> or email stewardship@uucb.org for a pledge form.

Join us in the atrium on Sunday April 2 for cake and a celebration of the amazing generosity of our community of seekers and stakeholders.

Family Ministry

The Coming of Age Program is in full swing at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley. Coming of Age is a Unitarian Universalist program for youth that explores not only what it means to be Unitarian Universalist (UU), but also what it means to be uniquely themselves. They begin to build a faith-grounded “toolkit” for the joys, sorrows, wonders, and challenges of being human. With mentors and guides, participants explore their identities, beliefs, and connections to their faith communities, local communities, and beyond. Youth gather for classes and fun retreats that teach them Teamwork, Social Justice, and skills for writing their own spiritual mission statement or “Credo,” which is written during a Nature Vigil.

UUCB Coming of Age Participants attended the “Challenge Sonoma” Ropes Course in February to build teamwork skills, and a Faithful Fools Church Street Retreat in March to learn about homelessness and social justice in the Tenderloin District in San Francisco. They then had the opportunity to have a Game Night and Pizza Party at the Unitarian Universalist Church of San Francisco with youth from other UU communities in the Bay Area. In April Coming of Age Participants will participate in a “Nature Vigil and Credo Writing Retreat” at Tilden Park and will again have the opportunity to connect with one another and other Bay Area UU youth at a church “Camp In” at UUCB the night before. The Coming of Age Program will culminate in a church service in June co-coordinated and led completely by the Coming of Age Participants. After the service one or two of the youth will be given the opportunity to become youth advisors that can give input on church services. The participants will also have the opportunity to read their “Credo” to the church community during the Coming of Age Service.

I have had the privilege of co-teaching this program and mentoring one of our wonderful participants. I am so proud of each and every one of our Coming of Age Youth. It is an honor to accompany them on this journey.

Blessings, Heaven
Heaven Walker, Director of Family Ministry and Lifelong Learning

Partner Church



This month’s news from Transylvania is both good and bad. Let’s get to the sad news from our friends in Homoródújfalú. Rev. Attila writes: “ One of the most active members of our church suddenly died. Her name was Dávid Eszter. She was the wife of the Board president from Homoródújfalú. She was a very active and devoted member of the community. Her death shocked the whole community. And shocked me too because she was like a mother to me.” Anne Greenwood knew Eszter well, and has sent her condolences to the village.

The better news is the possibility of traveling to Homoródújfalú in September, 2023. First of all, we are invited to the 36th World Congress, scheduled to take place on September 4-6, 2023, at the Unitarian College in Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár), Romania. To learn more about the Congress and the pre-Congress tour, and to register and follow program updates (as they become available), please visit <https://iarf.net/congress-2023/>

Anne Greenwood is planning to go to the IARF (International Association for Religious Freedom) Congress and add a trip to Homoródújfalú. Talk to Anne at a Sunday service or contact her at annegt1@sbcglobal.net if you are interested in going. Planning is in the very beginning stages, but don’t wait to let Anne know if you want to come along.

For anything else, you can contact me, Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com.

Opening Task Force (OTF) Update

Three Pandemic Years – Next Steps

We have now lived with the pandemic for three years. Although its impact on daily lives and society in general has diminished, COVID is still with us and the OTF is focused on the transition to what will be our “new normal.”

Right to Wear a Mask – Unchallenged

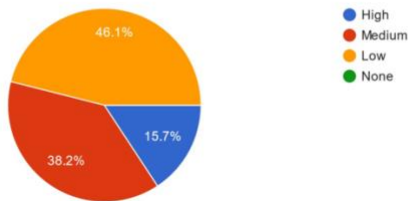
Any person at the church has the right to wear a mask and to do so unchallenged. Some of our members may need or prefer to wear masks as they assess their personal risk and comfort level. Recently, individuals in public settings have been asked to take their mask off. In part, this may be due to hearing issues that are presumed to be due to the mask. Especially in public meetings, individuals often are not using the microphone properly, i.e., speaking directly into the microphone. New batteries for listening devices should be in place by the time you read this. This will improve and expand the number of devices available to congregants.

Snap Poll Results

Thanks for the respondents to the snap poll about masking in the church building, especially the sanctuary. 16% of respondents reported feeling a high risk of infection at the church with another 38% reporting medium risk.

What is your assessment of your personal risk level in general at the church? (i.e. your risk of infection)

89 responses



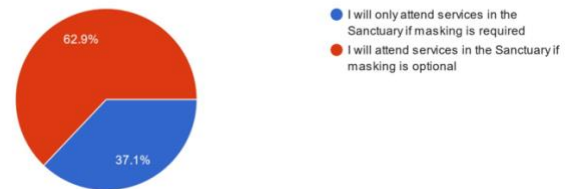
37% of respondents reported that they would attend less frequently if masking is optional.

How might a change in masking requirements affect your in-person attendance?
89 responses



And lastly, 37% said they will not attend service in the Sanctuary if masking is not required.

Ventilation improvements now exceed recommended air circulation recommendations in the Sanctuary. Knowing this, how might a change in mas... affect your attending services in the Sanctuary?
89 responses



These results are being considered by the OTF as we prepare a report on pandemic transitions for the Board of Trustees meeting on April 5.

Very High Gas Bills – Sanctuary Ventilation

We have kept air circulation in the Sanctuary at levels above the CDC recommendation. With cold weather and increased gas costs, this has resulted in significantly higher and unsustainable gas bills for the church. The OTF has concurred with our Executive Director that we can lower air circulation to the CDC standard.

For any questions or comments, please 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

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

Building a Bright Future

In this ever-changing world, we remain grounded in and guided by UU principles, as we continue building new ways to live into our mission and to adapt to new needs and challenges. In this regard, I'd like to highlight two opportunities.

First, our spectacular 2023 Stewardship Campaign, which reminds us that, among several things, our pledges take "care of our church home," "attract and retain talented staff," and support and enrich religious education for adults and children. We thank the Stewardship Committee—Cynthia Asproditis, Lynne Cahoon, Selene Fabiano (Chair), Kay Fairwell, Lisa Maynard, David Roberts, Karen Tripp, Anne Wardell, Rev. Michelle Collins, and Tess Snook O'Riva. And lift up the Stewardship theme of "Building a New Way." Your pledge is valued and appreciated and allows us to build toward that bright future. Here's the link for pledge info and to make your pledge—<https://uucb.org/about-us/give/stewardship/#MakePledge>



Second, UUA's June 21-25 General Assembly (GA), in-person in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and virtual, has two big items on the agenda: electing a new President who'll serve for six years and a vote on changes to Article II. In addition to a rich array of workshops, lectures and worship services, GA allows all UU churches to weigh in on these major decisions. You can be a part of that decision making by being a UUCB delegate. For more info on GA, including links to Article II and what it means to be a delegate, please see the excellent and informative slide show put together by Melissa Rosales: [Brief summary about upcoming GA 2023](#)



"...change your leaves, keep intact your roots."
—Victor Hugo

The Stewardship Committee asks us, "What's your vision of building a new way?" Let the Board know at president@uucb.org.

In Beloved Community,

Helen Tinsley-Jones
Co-President
UUCB Board of Trustees

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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Pier Sun Ho, Co-President
Michael Armstrong, Vice President
Selene Fabiano, Secretary
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David Roberts
Cordell Sloan
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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

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Alice Lemieux (Family Ministry)
Victoria Bowen (Membership)
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Barbara Cullinane (Pastoral Care)
Marin Fischer (Music/Arts)
Jim Gasperini (Communications)
Carol Carlisle (Social Justice)
Lonnie Moseley (Adult Religious Exploration)
Lenore Ralston (Finance)
Cordell Sloane (Board Liaison)

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