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July 2023

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# Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 82 #7

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

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## Executive Director Notes

Tess Snook O'Riva

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### Living Our Values

This month I would like to continue to underscore projects and activities wherein your UUCB staff incorporate our mission, covenant, and values into everything we do.

**Pride month:** In addition to supporting various activities and celebrations hosted by Ministry and Family Ministry, UUCB staff have reviewed our Employee Handbook to remove binary pronouns and ensure there is gender and sexuality-affirming language throughout.

**Environmental Stewardship/Climate Justice:** We have purchased recycling containers for every office and both recycling and compost for every RE classroom and the Admin offices. Additional sorting bins are now outside each RE building & floor. Signage has been posted in all bathrooms reminding people to compost their paper towels. A contract to become a plastic bag recycling center is in the works. HVAC system has been updated to summer setting to reduce fossil fuel consumption. Progress towards an all-electric campus continues.

**Widening the Circle of Concern/Anti-racism:** Tess is attending multiple trainings through the UUA and AUUA (Association of UU Administrators) to review policies, procedures, and communications for patriarchal and white supremacy-supporting language. We continue our work to identify and engage with BIPOC vendors and business owners to support their financial success. We work with the Landscape Team and Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group to be in right relations with the land.

**Social Justice:** We continue to work on becoming a resilience hub for natural disasters, which disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. We are working to bring a blood drive to UUCB and have agreed to be a disaster evacuation location for the YSA village in Oakland.

Whew! There's a lot more, but I can't think of more right now. Feel free to reach out and ask questions about what else we're doing, because we're always doing \*something!\*



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## July Services

Sundays 11 am

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

### July 2

Service by the Rev. Kaaren Anderson of Rochester, NY.

### July 9

Gaia, Mother Earth and The Oneness of Everything. UU Musician Jim Scott leads service.

### July 16

Navigating The In Between Times

### July 23

Rev. Jeanne Foster preaches.

### July 30

Rev. Dr. Alvin C. Bernstine, pastor of Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church, leads service.

## Coffee Hour

Sundays at Noon

**In person** in the Social Hall

## Sunday Programming

### Summer Forum

Sundays at 9:30 am on Zoom. Link in [The Week Ahead](#) and [Calendar](#)

**July 9** – Stephanie Ann Blythe, former UUCB Board of Trustees President, will share, for the first time, “My Transgender Journey Is My Spiritual Journey.” Don’t miss it!

**July 16** – Cancelled

**July 30** – Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity Director, Rev. Deborah Lee, will talk about IMHI’s twenty years of bringing together congregations to work on immigration and the rights of the incarcerated.

**Summer Forum Committee:** Dorothy Herzberg (chair), Cynthia Asprodites, Beth Jerde, Lonnie Moseley, Sheila Tarbet, Helen Toy, Natalie Campbell.

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### Youth and Children’s Choir Rehearsal

On break until August 20.

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### Humanist Connections

Sundays at 1 pm on Zoom

**Please contact Marcia Bates for July meeting information.**

## Special Events

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### July 8

**Freestone Work Party.** Lunch will be served. RSVP to Dave Wemmer, 510-406-1984, [david.wemmer12@gmail.com](mailto:david.wemmer12@gmail.com).

### July 14-16

Berkeley Shakes performs **A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Musical** at UUCB. UUCB members and congregants get a special discount at the door.

## Good Neighbor in July

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### Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP)

<https://www.borp.org/>

**Mission:** BORP works to improve the health, independence and social integration of people with physical disabilities through sports, fitness and recreation programs. At BORP, we believe that sports and recreation provide a path to greater achievement to which all people should have access, and we continually strive to make this a reality.

## Announcements

### Board Listening Presence

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

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### Pastoral Care in the Summer Months

During the summer months, the Revs. Jane Ramsey and Sue Magidson share responsibility for emergency pastoral care. If you have a pastoral emergency, the outgoing church voicemail will include the name and contact information of the minister on duty. For less urgent needs, you may email [pastoralcare@uucb.org](mailto:pastoralcare@uucb.org), which goes to Sue, Jane, and Barbara Cullinane.

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## Freestone Committee

Different from the Freestone Oversight Committee

The Freestone Committee hit the ground running following the successful vote to move forward with rehabilitation and reopening of the property. The committee thanks you for your support and needs volunteers to help us implement. Please come join us for a work party on July 8. Lunch will be served. RSVP to Dave Wemmer, 510-406-1984, [david.wemmer12@gmail.com](mailto:david.wemmer12@gmail.com). Also please consider attending one or more of our fundraising dinners this summer. If you like Alan's cooking on Sundays, think about joining us for delectable dinners especially for Freestone supporters.

**Expansion of Committee** – The committee can really use some additional help moving forward. There is plenty to do and all that is needed is enthusiasm and the desire to have some fun working with a great group of people! If you are interested please call Dave Wemmer, 510-406-1984. "Ask not what your Country can do for you ...".

**Funding** – We met with the USDA's local director to discuss our getting a conservation easement(s) (CE) to fund the refurbishing of the dome. Their regional manager was very supportive. Next, we are meeting onsite with their biologist to get an assessment of resources that would be protected by a CE. We also

are investigating the possible sale of Lots 1 & 2, if a CE does not pan out. In the meantime, with just \$20,000, we could re-open the dome and are eager to fund that portion of the process through donations and dinners. With that in mind, unsolicited donations are always welcome! Donations can be made to UUCB to the Freestone Fund.

**Approved Uses** – We continue our coordination with the County in procurement of a vacation rental permit. The application has been submitted and accepted. As requested by the County, some additional information has been provided. We anticipate receiving this permit in about 4-6 weeks. This will allow us to charge rent (and pay taxes) for overnight use, whether for ourselves, or via an app like Airbnb (which could help in generating operating income). We also have requested the County give us a formal opinion on County code allowing us free use of our "single family dwelling" without the need for a County permit or oversight.

**Rehabilitation** – We are moving forward with coordination with the County to determine what is needed for access road improvements to meet the standards for safe ingress/egress. When this is determined then a cost estimate will be prepared for the road budget process. We also have a structural engineer (SE) (friend of a congregant) who visited the house on Friday June 16. We want to get a second opinion of the dome's structural issues and suggested mitigations, from those provided previously by another SE in 2017. David Wemmer and Jeff Mertens have already done considerable refurbishing work and more can be done in the near future with volunteers to help to make the dome usable again.

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## Freestone Oversight Committee

Larry Nagel

At the Board of Trustees meeting on May 7, 2023, the Board established the Freestone Oversight Committee (FOC) with the charge to monitor progress of the Freestone renovation project and to report to the Board on a monthly basis on the status of Freestone. At the same meeting, the Board also passed Resolution 23-1 establishing a Freestone

Contingency Loan Fund and charging the Freestone Oversight Committee (FOC) with administering it.

The Board appointed the following UUCB members to the FOC: Beth Pollard (Board Rep), David Wemmer (Freestone Committee Rep), Alan Davis (Freestone Committee Rep), Tom Tripp, Susan Lankford, and Larry Nagel. The Board may choose to add more members as necessary.

The mission of the committee is as follows:

- "To administer the direction of the congregation expressed in this Resolution for the future of the Freestone property, while minimizing impact on UUCB annual fund and capital campaign fundraising and monitoring accomplishment of the criteria passed in this motion and overseeing the management of the Freestone process, decisions, and goals" (Congregational Resolution 22-1)
- To report to the Board on a regular basis the status of the Freestone renovation Project
- To "ensure there is no-to-very-minimal net cost, including staff time, to UUCB from the Freestone enterprise ... unless so authorized by the annual budgeting process or congregational vote" (Congregational Resolution 22-1)
- To administer the Freestone Contingency Loan Fund established by Board resolution 23-1

The FOC has jumped into their oversight role with both feet. We held organizational meetings on May 11, May 23, and June 12, 2023. Four members visited the Freestone property on May 23, 2023, and had an extensive tour of all three lots. Tom Tripp has contacted a recently retired and highly regarded structural engineer, Greg Luth with GPL Engineers, who has agreed to consult with us pro bono on the structural issues of the dome. Larry Nagel agreed to speak with Brian DeCarli, Fire Marshal and Battalion Chief for the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, of ingress/egress requirements for the fire department.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [laurencenagel32@gmail.com](mailto:laurencenagel32@gmail.com) or call me at (510) 558-0842.

## From the Board of Trustees

Bill Brown

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

There is good reason to be optimistic.

So much has changed during my tenure on our board over the past two years. Both within our community at UUCB and within my own life.

We did the work of healing our congregation with Reverend Michelle. We've set a path forward for Freestone. We've resumed in-person worship services. And of course, found a new minister, Reverend Marcus Liefert, who will be joining us next month. There is good reason to be optimistic.

I am a dad now! Cordelia will be 9 months old this month and will have attended every UUCB board meeting within her lifetime! I always knew being a parent would be A LOT, but I am pretty sure it's a near universal truth, nobody is truly prepared. But in the last month or two, Andrea and I have started to feel human again. We are getting out of the house more with Cordelia. She loves tearing up the grass at the park, seeing other babies, and of course FOOD! She may only have two teeth, but she seems to enjoy just about everything, from steak to spicy food! There is good reason to be optimistic.

Ooh how my life has changed. Last month I found myself debating with my neighbor (with a newborn) on the size vs utility of a longer/shorter handle on a butt-paste spatula. FYI: Get the ones with longer handles! (What you lose in agility, you gain in control.) Andrea and I don't talk about politics as much. We have these hopeful, introspective, and sometimes difficult discussions about how we are going to raise our child and not repeat the mistakes of our parents. We have a pretty good handle on what NOT to do. So now we're figuring out what we are going to get right. There is good reason to be optimistic.

Something that has come up frequently is how excited we are for the UUA Our Whole Lives OWL program. It's not just for the kids, but to also help

parents make those awkward conversations not awkward. Lifelong learning. I like the sound of that.

I am excited for our future. We have a new minister to help us build community. A daughter to watch grow with my partner. And of course, the undeniable superiority of long-handled butt-paste spatulas. There is good reason to be optimistic.

#### Board of Trustees June 2023 Actions

- **UUA General Assembly June 21-15, 2023:**  
Designated final list of delegates: Anne Greenwood, Evelie Delfino Săles Posch, Reverend Jane Ramsey, Reverend Fran Moulton, Suzette Anderson-Duggan, David Rosales, Melissa Rosales.
- **Freestone Oversight Committee:** Received first report from the Committee (appointed by the Board in May) on its first two organizational meetings to oversee implementation of the Freestone Resolution approved by the Congregation in March.
- **Stewardship:** Received with gratitude a final “We are Building a New Way” 2023 Stewardship campaign report and suggestions from Committee members: Chair Selene Fabiano, Kay Fairwell, Lisa Maynard, Dave Roberts, Cynthia Asprodites, Lynne Cahoon, Karen Tripp, and Anne Wardell, with support from Patrick Cullinane, Bob Adams, Rev. Michelle Collins and Executive Director Tess Snook O’Riva. The campaign “We are Building a New Way,” which included events, testimonials, creative displays, phone calls and other outreach to members, to-date has garnered \$432,095, with 141 pledges from 180 members and two friends of the church.

## Partner Church

*Join us for the International Association for Religious Freedom's (IARF) 36th World Congress, "Faith in Reconciliation", held virtually and in Romania September 4-6, 2023. We aim to create an inclusive, globally accessible space to explore the role of religion in healing and reconciliation. Hear stories, engage in interfaith worship, and discuss reconciliation efforts.*

*Our diverse speakers include Prof. George Williams, an expert in Eastern religions and an American Chapter of IARF's Distinguished Service Award recipient. His keynote will examine how unraveling historical narratives can facilitate reconciliation. Our program includes lectures, workshops, panel discussions, devotional sessions, multimedia presentations on IARF's global work, the Greeley Award ceremony, and a pre-Congress tour of Transylvania's historic landmarks. Following our Congress, the International Association of Liberal Religious Women (IALRW) will host their own Congress on "Religion in Action: From Reconciliation to Inclusive Diversity." To learn more, you may contact the Rev. Dr. Esther Suter at [dr.estherrsuter@bluewin.ch](mailto:dr.estherrsuter@bluewin.ch) or visit the website of the IALRW ([www.ialrw.org](http://www.ialrw.org)).*

The Congress is located at the Unitarian College and the House of Religious Freedom in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Register on our website: [www.iarf.net/congress-2023](http://www.iarf.net/congress-2023), with in-person and online options available. For registration help, contact the IARF Administrator, Luke Liniewicz, at [luke@iarf.net](mailto:luke@iarf.net) or WhatsApp +31641744951. For programme details, speakers, and timetable, visit our website or contact Luke. Rev. Kinga-Reka Székely ([szkingareka@gmail.com](mailto:szkingareka@gmail.com)) can provide pre-Congress tour details.

We hope to see you at the IARF World Congress, a global gathering exploring faith's potential in reconciliation. Together, let's discover new collaboration methods and work towards shared goals!

**UUCB's own Anne Greenwood will attend in person and will visit our Partner Church in Homoródújfalú after the Congress.**

## 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](mailto:membership@uucb.org).

**NEWSLETTER ITEM SUBMISSIONS:** Submit announcements and articles by email to [beacon@uucb.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:connections@uucb.org). You can also find both newsletters at the [uucb.org](http://uucb.org) website under “News.”

### **UUCB general discussion list:**

[http://groups.google.com/group/uucb\\_discuss/about](http://groups.google.com/group/uucb_discuss/about)

**Email list for families:** Email [family.ministry@uucb.org](mailto: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

Helen Tinsley-Jones, Co-President

Pier Sun Ho, Co-President

Michael Armstrong, Vice President

Selene Fabiano, Secretary

Carolyn James, Treasurer

Bill Brown

Randall Hudson

Cordell Sloan

Kay Fairwell

David Rosales

## 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)

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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