
November 2023

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Church of Berkeley Vol. 82 #11

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

From the Minister

Getting it Ripe. This silly play on words I've used to title our next arc of worship, from the end of October through the end of November, caught my attention as I sat out by the sea, searching for a metaphor to explore questions of inheritance and harvest. We prepare to feast at Thanksgiving, but we know our inheritance of this holiday of gratitude is also interlaced with grief, with the still raw wounds of the cultural and physical genocide of indigenous peoples. How do we grow hearts big enough to hold lamentation and celebration all at once? How do we give up getting it right, and instead learn to be with whatever it is that has ripened in our lives?

We begin this arc with the holiday at October's end, when so many traditions reflect on death and lift up ancestors. In the Gaelic pagan tradition, it's known as Samhain, marking the end of the season of harvest and the beginning of the darker time of the year. In this season, as we honor our beloved dead and mark our ritual of gratitude for the harvest, how do we turn our attention to the processes of ripening, both within and without? As our society grapples with its inheritance of cultural trauma, how do we live faithful lives as both the harvesters and the fruit?

One of the books that will accompany us in worship this month is *My Grandmother's Hands* by psychotherapist Resmaa Manekam. Manekam weaves our growing understanding of the neuroscience of trauma with family stories to articulate an understanding of how pain is passed and carried generation to generation, body to body.

Look forward to getting it ripe with you!
Rev. Marcus Liefert



November Services

Sundays 11 am

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

November 5

From Seeds We Did Not Sow

November 12

When Old Pain Ripens

November 19

The Table at the End of the
World

November 23 (Thursday)

Thanksgiving Day Service

November 26

Saving Us?: Surviving The
Anthropocene Age

Coffee Hour

Sundays at Noon

In person in the Social Hall

Sunday Programming

Personal Theology

Sundays at 9:15 am on Zoom

Nov 5 (Zoom Only) – Kanyon Sayers-Roods is Costanoan Ohlone-Mutsun and Chumash; she also goes by her given Native name, “Coyote Woman.” She is proud of her heritage and her native name (though it comes with its own back story), and is very active in the Native community.

Nov 12 – Tripping in Transylvania: Enlarging our Global Unitarian/Universalist Perspective, presented by Anne Greenwood and Rev. Jay Atkinson.

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’d love to have you join us!

Humanist Connections

Sundays at 1 pm on Zoom (in person on 3rd Sundays)

Nov 5 – Are You Optimistic about the Future? Harold Ogren

Nov 12 – Topic Selection for next month and Short Topic Discussion. Ray Westergard

Nov 19 (12:30 pm) – My Theology and Beliefs About God. Rev. Marcus Liefert. **In Person.**

Nov 26 – Is There a Conflict Between UU and Humanism?

Questions about our Humanist Connections group? Email adulthoodeducation@uucb.org.

Good Neighbor in November

Nurturing Independence through Artistic Development (NIAD)

Through its visual arts studio program, NIAD gives people with disabilities the skills and experience to express themselves, be independent and earn income as an artist. This nurturing community of artists fosters experimentation, increases competence to make informed choices, and increases connections among diverse communities through the commonality of creative expression. <https://niadart.org>

Special Events

Nov 5

In Service: New Member Welcome
1 pm: Love Song Waltzes & Chocolate

Nov 7 Election Day

Church closed

Nov 10 Veterans Day Observed

Church closed

Nov 10 @ 7 pm

Lawrence Lecture presents Rev. Matthew Fox

Nov 12 @ 1:30 pm [on Zoom](#)

Literature, Film, Drama & Music
Contingent of the Social Justice
Council—Potlatch/Giveaway:
Indigenous Stories, Poems and Songs,
presented by the Honoring
Indigenous Peoples Group (HIP)

Nov 19 @ 2 pm

Organ & Flute Recital with Katya
Kolesnikova and Rustam Baibikov

Nov 23 @ 1 pm

Thanksgiving Day Service and Potluck
Lunch

Nov 24

Day after Thanksgiving. Church Closed

Weekly Events

For up-to-date details: uucb.org/weekahead.

Mondays

9 am Write For Your Life

9:30 am Women's Meditation Group

Tuesdays

10:30 am Tai Chi

12:15 pm Applied UU Buddhist Sangha

Wednesdays

10 am Walk & Talk Group

10:30 am Aging with Grace

Thursdays

5 pm Javanese Gamelan

7 pm Choir Rehearsal

Fridays

10:30 am Tai Chi

Monthly Events & Meetings

For up-to-date details: uucb.org/weekahead.

Sunday

9:30 am Parents Discussion Group (1st Sunday)

11 am Religious Education (1st & 2nd Sunday)

11:30 am Celebration Chapel (3rd Sunday)

1 pm WOWS Working to Overcome White Supremacy (3rd Sunday)

Monday

11 am Textile & Art (2nd Monday)

Tuesday

10:15 am Volunteer Lunch Program at GRIP (4th Tuesday)

Wednesday

7:15 pm Board of Trustees (1st Wednesday)

7 pm Social Justice Council (2nd Wednesday)

7 pm Program Council (3rd Wednesday)

Friday

11 am Textile & Art (4th Friday)

Saturday

1 pm POCC People of Color Caucus (3rd Saturday)

4 pm Parents' Night Out (3rd Saturday)

Announcements

Board Listening Presence

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

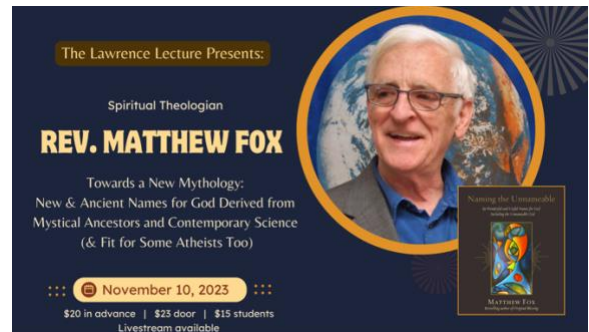
Thanksgiving at UUCB

Join us on November 23 for a worship service in the Fireside Room led by Karen Elliott at 1 pm and/or dinner at 2 pm. Turkey will be provided; please plan to bring a side dish or dessert to share and your own beverage of choice. RSVP for the potluck [online](#) or on the table outside the office, or, at the last minute, by emailing [Ann Harlow](#). Volunteer help will be needed and can also be indicated on the form or email to Ann.



Lawrence Lecture

2023 Lawrence Lecture Presents Matthew Fox, Friday November 10, 7pm



You are invited to hear Matthew Fox give the 2023 Lawrence Lecture on Friday, Nov 10 at 7 pm. The talk, titled *"Towards a New Mythology: New & Ancient Names for God Derived from Mystical Ancestors and Contemporary Science (& Fit for Some Atheists too),"* will be followed by a Q&A led by our very own Reverend Marcus Liefert and a book signing.

Rev. Dr. Fox describes his inspiration for this lecture: "Much of the collapse of culture and the quest for a new mythology in our time includes the collapse of God-talk as we have known it and stretching for new (and ancient) names for the divine. Just before Covid hit, I was invited to deliver a sermon at a UU church in Spokane, Washington on my recent book, *Naming the Unnameable: 89 Wonderful and Useful Names for God Including the Unnameable God*. Afterwards, an

atheist approached me and we had a most interesting exchange. In this reflection I will share what I learned from that encounter as well as new names for the divine emerging from today's science and mystics of old and from the suffering of Mother Earth and human culture today. Enough to give birth to a new renaissance and new mythology?"

An activist priest and spiritual theologian, Matthew Fox has 35 books in print. Find out more about him and his work or sign up for his free daily meditations at MatthewFox.org. He calls for "Social and Environmental Activists, Mystic Explorers, Justice Makers, Cosmic Thinkers, Earth Keepers" to hear him—sounds like a good fit for UUCB! Invite your friends!

Buy your tickets by linking from the uucb.org homepage or go to LawrenceLecture.com. Livestream available. No one turned away for lack of funds.

Executive Director Notes

Tess Snook O'Riva

We are in the busy season! Fall is the busiest season at UUCB for staff. Church is in full swing with events and rentals every single weekend, and then the holidays hit. Hold onto your hats!

People who attended service on October 15 definitely noticed a change. There was so much furniture rented for a member's wedding on Saturday, we couldn't find a place to store it until pickup on Monday! Thank you all for your understanding and flexibility.

Moving deeper into this challenging season, I have been asked to clarify how people get things done and/or who they should contact for different needs. We are in a period of updating some job descriptions for the coming year, but for now, the linked document should help. We will be adding items to this document as needed:

<https://tinyurl.com/whowhathow>

Of note is the big news that Janae Heard is now officially our Office Administrator! Janae had been working as our Rentals Coordinator for many months, proving her excellent administrative capabilities. Our dear Caitlyn has stepped back as the administrator but remains available as a Certified Sound Engineer. We're so glad to have them both supporting our work in their new capacities!

We also want to remind people that as a UU community, we welcome all our diverse backgrounds

and experiences, and would love to celebrate your heritage and holiday traditions with you. If there's a celebration you wish to bring to UUCB, just let us know!

Lastly, **we are looking for a few experienced grant writers to assist us in applying for the funds recently made available for entities converting to an all-electric campus.** This effort was approved at a recent Board meeting and will be a big step towards becoming a Green Sanctuary! Many thanks to the Climate Justice Committee for spearheading this effort.

If you'd like to respond to anything in this article or have any questions, please reach out to me at ed@uucb.org and I'll do my best to respond the same week. Thank you!

Fundraising News

Thanks to everyone's generosity, our Upscale Rummage Sale in September raised more than \$4,000. That leaves about \$6,000 still to be raised to meet this year's non-music fundraising events budget. The next event will be the **Holiday Fair on Sunday, December 10**. We will need:

- Donations of holiday decorations, holiday clothing, and recycled gifts (e.g. jewelry and crafts in like-new condition)
- UUCB craftspeople who would have their own 3-foot table and split proceeds 50-50 with UUCB
- Volunteers for before, during and after the sale (which will run that day from 10 am through the Messiah Sing intermission)

Please email fundraising@uucb.org to let me know how you can contribute.

This year I plan to postpone the silent auction portion to January or February. I hope by then more folks will be willing to offer events in their homes (or yards or elsewhere) for spring-summer-fall. Let me know if you'd like to help organize an online auction of events and services. Then maybe in spring of 2025 we can get back to the tradition of a "gala" or other special fundraising event including an auction, but someone other than me will have to come forward this spring to chair it, set a budget goal, and get it on the calendar. I can provide guidance from past experience.

Ann Harlow, Fundraising representative to Program Council

From the Board of Trustees

Honoring Change

We are in a season of change. As the leaves change color, the evenings get darker earlier, and the air gets (hopefully) cooler, our planet's procession at this time of year is a reminder that change requires preparation.

While this is also a time of busy social calendars and gatherings with friends and families, it is also a time of remembering to slow down so that we can appreciate one another and think about where we are and where we want to go.

I appreciate everyone who attended the Ministerial Startup Workshop (Startup Weekend) on September 9. Despite being the first post-pandemic, in-person workshop that Dr. Melissa James from our UUA region has conducted (Thank you, Melissa), the turn-out was exceptional with around 50 attendees from our congregation. The Board of Trustees, Minister, and Executive Director also met for a workshop session on the Friday night before.

These Startup Workshops were designed to help us start our journey with our new Minister, *"to find grounding, deepen relationships, and create clear shared expectations about ministry as they begin their ministerial journey together."* A key question that we are trying to answer is: How do we all participate in a successful, long-term ministry? I learned that our success requires an honest conversation about roles, responsibilities, expectations, and limits. That we are trying to honor the culture of the congregation that exists currently, question what needs to change, and ask what is it that we long for? Who do we want to be?

We seek to honor what is while we prepare for change.

Do not worry if you were not able to participate in Startup Weekend, this is just the beginning, and the workshop just scratched the surface. This work will be ongoing. To continue the discussion, I encourage you to sign up for the small group conversations with Rev Marcus (visit tinyurl.com/uucb-small). Let us share our hopes and dreams and envision together what is next for UUCB.

David Rosales, member Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees October 2023 Actions

1. Climate Justice: Endorsed the Climate Justice Committee's engagement in the UUA's Green Sanctuary 2030: Mobilizing for Climate Justice program and submittal of UUCB's Green Sanctuary Proposal.
2. Information items included: Empowerment and Expectation Guidelines for congregant and staff interactions; work underway to update Safety Policies.

For a video-recording of a previous Board of Trustee's meeting, please contact secretary@uucb.org for a link.

Music Matters

In addition to wonderful and varied Sunday morning music, your UUCB musicians have been working up a variety of concerts as fundraisers for the church's general fund. Three are coming up this Fall. The first is **Love Song Waltzes and Chocolate** on November 5, Sunday, at 1 pm in the Fireside Room. From Brahms to Broadway, seven splendid singers and two pianists join together to share Brahms at his most charming in the Liebeslieder Waltz, and a varied array of other vocal delights. And there will be chocolate treats all around; guaranteed to be a lovely and fun early afternoon program.

Two weeks later, Katya and Rostam join for what is sure to be a marvelous **Flute and Organ Recital** on November 19, Sunday, at 2 pm in the Sanctuary. Katya plays meaningful music on our magnificent organ, and Rostam joins her for lyrical and lively flute music. And our annual and very popular **Messiah Sing Along!** comes early this year. It's earlier in the month than usual, December 10, and earlier in the day than usual, starting at 4 pm. Enjoy the evergreen wonders of Handel's masterpiece. With orchestra and soloists, and the audience singing the chorus numbers, we gather for the joy of making great music together. Hallelujah!

Yours in harmony,
Bryan Baker, Director of Music

Social Justice Council (SJC)

By the time you read this, the Social Justice Sunday extravaganza will be over. Many thanks to Helen Toy and all the volunteers who put it together.

The next priority for SJC is creating the list of **Good Neighbor organizations** who will receive half of the Sunday offerings in 2024. This is a democratic process, with nominations due October 31, a Zoom meeting on November 30 in which representatives from the nominated organizations will speak, and the congregation will be invited to vote through December 3.

The Social Justice Council will meet on Zoom at its regular date and time, Wednesday November 8 at 7 pm.

Our plan to become a UUA-certified Green Sanctuary church is underway, the Congregational Profile having been submitted. The next step will be an Opportunity Assessment in which congregants and staff will look at where we could improve in collective and individual actions toward environmental justice.

Family Ministry

Happy Harvest Month! In Religious Education on **Sunday November 5 Grades K-3 will** participate in **World of Wonder**: A Program on the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism. **Grades 4 -12** will explore UU Principles and Shared Values through hands-on activities in three areas: **nature/being outside, service, & art/music**. On **November 12** all RE classes will celebrate the Hindu Holiday of Diwali with Ajit and the Smith-Ayer Family. On **November 19** we will hold "Celebration Chapel" where children and adults will scatter California Poppy seeds and hunt for Monarch butterflies that are migrating now! There will be a Youth Social in the Chrysalis Room on **November 18 at 6:30 – 9 pm**. Parents, don't forget to join us for Parents' Night Out, **November 18 from 4 – 8 pm**. We provide pizza and childcare, and you get a night out!

The signup link is here:

<https://tinyurl.com/uucbparents>

Partner Church

Hopefully, we had plenty of you stopping by our table at Social Justice Sunday. Anne Greenwood's recent visit to Homoródújfalu brings a couple of possibilities for engagement of both of our congregations.

Reverend Gyerő Atilla has expressed a desire to learn more about our way of governance. Perhaps our respective boards of directors might meet via Zoom, even if there is a 10-hour difference in time zones. Anne also learned that the village's church has a hole in the roof and needs other repairs costing \$360,000! They may be able to secure a grant to pay for the repairs, but the fee for filing is around \$6,000. We can explore ways in which we can help them cover that cost. Stay tuned.

Whatever we can do in the coming year to support the village and its students holds exciting possibilities. You can share your excitement with Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net.

Freestone Committee Update

I recently visited the dome, and it is hard not to visit this spiritual place without moments of inescapable awe of its beauty and quiet solitude. I look forward to the day when this special place is fully re-engaged into our community. Regards, Dave Wemmer.

Join us for Fall Freestone Open Houses: We plan to host at least one open house this fall similar to those held last summer. Please contact Dave at david.wemmer12@gmail.com if you are interested.

Freestone Daytime Use: We are exploring whether, when, and how there could be daytime use of Freestone by UUCB members starting in the very near future. If you, to include small groups, are interested in such daytime use, please contact Dave at david.wemmer12@gmail.com.

First major Freestone donation and more to follow: The Freestone committee recently received donations of \$3334. Please contact Dave at david.wemmer12@gmail.com if you can also donate. If we can raise \$30,000 or more, we can most likely begin the minimum level of repairs needed to open the dome to overnight use. We continue to pursue conservation easements to meet our \$250,000 funding goals. We are also poised to proceed with sale of lots 1 & 2 should conservation easements not work out.

Volunteers Wanted: The Committee could really use some support. We need a note taker, help with outreach/marketing, grant investigations, and planning and executing fund raising events.

Latest Work at Freestone: We recently hired a contractor to clear vegetation along our access road and around the dome to be completed by the end of October. This work will meet all CalFire regulations and is an important first step in providing safe egress/ingress. Next will be to install passing turnouts.

Dave Wemmer
Freestone Committee Chairperson
510-406-1984

Freestone Oversight Committee

The Freestone Oversight Committee (FOC) is comprised of Beth Pollard (Board Rep), David Wemmer (Freestone Committee Rep), Alan Davis (Freestone Committee Rep), Tom Tripp, Susan Lankford, and Larry Nagel. The FOC actions and September 6 Board of Trustees review and actions included:

- **Volunteers Needed** – The Freestone Committee is in dire need of volunteers to assist in all sorts of tasks. The success of the Freestone Project depends on adequate volunteer assistance. If you are interested in helping, contact Dave Wemmer at david.wemmer12@gmail.com.
- **Wildfire Fuel Reduction and Hazard Mitigation** – Because of the lack of volunteers to assist, the work details for fuel reduction have not been effective and there is an unacceptable amount of grass and brush around the dome and along the ingress and egress road. We still have a month of fire season left, and UUCB as the owner of Freestone has a legal and moral obligation to keep the property clear of brush and in conformance with all county and state fire codes. Because of this, the FOC voted unanimously to ask Tess O'Riva, UUCB Executive Director, to take steps to see that excess vegetation is removed in keeping with fire safety requirements.
- **Fundraising guidelines** – the Freestone Oversight Committee approved new guidelines regarding Freestone fundraising:

- Avoid timing conflicts with other congregational fundraising.
- Not at expense of financial support for the church as a whole.
- Encourage partnerships with other activities/events.

If you have any questions, please e-mail us at FOC@UUCB.org.

About Our Website

Whether you are new to UUCB or have been around for years, keep uucb.org in mind as a place for answers to any questions you may have. The Communications Team (Charis Domador, Jim Gasperini, Ann Harlow, Lonnie Moseley and Tess O'Riva) recently decided to add a section to the home page, "Events at UUCB," where you can quickly access events in the church calendar related to one of the following:

[Family Ministry](#)

[Music & the Arts](#)

[Social Justice](#)

[Adult Religious Education & Exploration](#)

Just below that is the link to Breeze, where you can not only find the directory of members and active attendees (if you are one) but can add details to your profile or make a donation in a few short steps.

Explore the drop-down menus from any page of the website, too. And if you see something out of date, let Charis know what it should say instead: connections@uucb.org.

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 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

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Bill Brown
Randall Hudson
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Rev. Marcus Liefert
Heaven Walker (Director of Family Ministry & Lifelong Learning)

Program Council

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Barbara Cullinane (Pastoral Care)
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Ann Harlow (Fundraising and Hospitality)
Lonnie Moseley (Adult Religious Exploration)
Lenore Ralston (Chalice Circles and Finance)
Cordell Sloan (Board Liaison)

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