

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BERKELEY

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

uucb.org

About UUCB

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley is a welcoming and vibrant congregation. We joyously support spiritual development guided by individual faith, reason, and conscience. We are committed to serving one another, the church community, the community at large, and the global community. We foster a spirit of generosity and trust that encourages care for our church home and affirms diversity and relationships consistent with Unitarian Universalist principles.

Mission

The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley is to create loving community, inspire spiritual growth, and encourage lives of integrity, joy, and service.

Covenant of Right Relations

We covenant to build a religious community guided by love and sustained by respectful relationships. Believing that building healthy relationships is a spiritual practice, we aim to listen appreciatively, speak with care, express gratitude, honor our differences, and assume good intentions. We endeavor to communicate directly, honestly, and compassionately, particularly when we are in conflict. When we hurt one another, we will try to forgive, make amends and reconnect in a spirit of love. In celebration of the common purpose that unites us, we will do our best to abide by this covenant.

From the Board of Trustees

One silver lining to these past two years of the COVID pandemic is that we have learned that UUCB can be – and is – a community wherever we are. Members supporting one another through separations or losses, the anxieties of a threatening disease, and feeling overwhelmed. And every Sunday and more, we stayed connected and engaged. Being understanding when things are different or don't go as planned. Finding sustenance and sustainability.

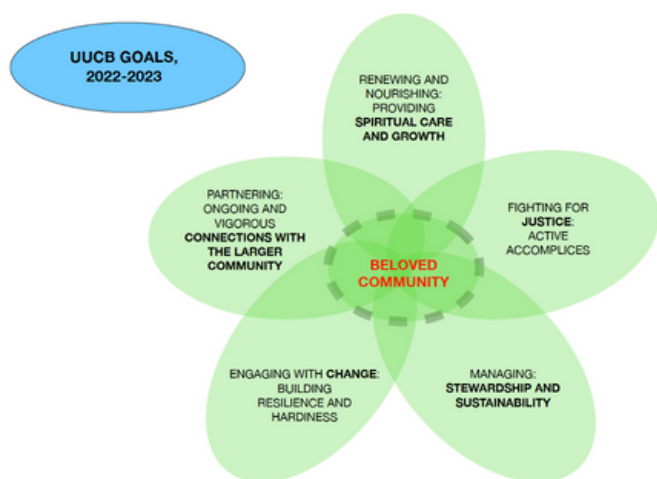
Last year's Congregational meetings, worship and other gatherings were all virtual. Last fall we weighed the urge to reconnect in person with being healthy, safe and inclusive, resulting in a Board policy requiring those who are eligible for vaccination, to be vaccinated when attending large church events (it has since been updated to ask for affirmation of vaccination for all church events), and holding off until risks had decreased.

In March 2022, after two years of being online/virtual only, we opened our physical church doors to in-person worship and other gatherings – while continuing online streaming on YouTube and Facebook. Members have responded cooperatively, compassionately and impressively – following masking and other protocols, and participating virtually when in-person is uncomfortable or infeasible.

Keeping us connected through thin times and enabling us to gather again in person are so many groups, volunteers, and staff in this church. So many, too many to name without overlooking or unintentionally undervaluing. A huge THANK YOU from the Board of Trustees.

The Coming Year

To guide and illustrate our work going forward, the Board of Trustees has adopted a **Pinwheel of Priorities**:



This pinwheel represents, propels and directs UUCB's energy, movement and joy towards priorities of justice, sustainability, connecting, nourishing, and more. It is a symbol of our ever-moving forward motion, a visual display of what the Board feels us called upon to pursue at this time to do. And at the center of it all, our grounding and goal, is beloved community.

Within these priorities nest our Areas of Emphasis for specific focus (next page)

Areas of Emphasis

- Revisit our mission and covenants to incorporate the goals of social justice and the principles of widening the circle
- Re-envision/enhance our virtual footprint
- Infuse the widening the circle principles of anti-racism, anti-oppression, and the elimination of white supremacy into the wide range of congregational activities
- Determine the future of the Freestone property
- Support staff
- Inspire, support and learn from youth, children and families
- Discern our ministerial needs and conduct a successful ministerial search
- Support ideas for community engagement
- Sustain and promote the health of the congregation in difficult times through transparency, skillful conflict transformation and the inclusion of all voices

Widening the Circle. The Board supports the work of its new Widening the Circle (WTC) Committee to engage with the congregation for bringing to fruition the recommendations of the Widening the Circle of Concern Task Force. With ending racism, oppression, and white supremacy as our focus, we have adopted a WTC vision statement, established a WTC Education Fund, and champion the Committee's small group outreach underway.

Freestone Property. Our interim minister Rev. Michelle developed a process and timeline, adopted by the Freestone Committee and the Board, leading up to a scheduled October congregational vote on the future of the church's Freestone property in Sonoma County – which historically has been used as a church retreat. The Freestone Committee has worked hard to gather information and host visits. Rev. Michelle conducted training on how congregations can work through charged issues such as feelings about Freestone's history, its condition and its place in our future. She will facilitate group sessions into the fall for the congregation as we aim towards a resolution about what comes next for the property.

Ministerial Search. We were able to keep the talented Rev. Michelle for an extra third interim year, but she goes off to new adventures next summer. From a list of candidates suggested by congregants, followed by a congregational vote, we have a Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) of eight respected, talented and dedicated members to look for our next minister. This MSC will be asking members your thoughts on UUCB and what we want in our next ministry, including what kind of ministry we want – such as settled, contract – and then look to find the best match for us.

Conclusion

So what is the state of the congregation? While we've gone through a lot, we have many strengths. We have the drive to end racism, oppression and white supremacy. We have the willingness to collaboratively tackle tough issues. We have the capacity to shape what we want in our next ministry. We show up for other members and for social justice. We generate energy, forward motion and joy!

Board of Trustees Decisions 2021-2022

July 2021

- Authorized signature authority on the Nancy Kelly Fidelity Account to Lenore Ralston, with authority to terminate upon transfer of all funds and closure of the account.

August 2021

- Discussed Widening the Circle of Concern Task Force Report. No actions taken.

September 2021

- Appointed Lenore Ralston as Treasurer.
- Authorized Intern Minister Ken Marino to officiate weddings on behalf of UUCB.
- Approved formation of a Widening the Circle Board Committee

October 2021

- Authorized applying \$8,412.52 from the Spatz Endowment Fund and \$4,165.58 from the Morgan Endowment Fund to the 2021-22 budget to support the ministerial intern position line item pursuant to past policy and practice, and authorized drafting of an amendment to the Governance Manual to reflect it.
- Appointed Suzette Anderson-Duggan, Lonnie Moseley, and Melissa Rosales to the Widening the Circle Committee; designated Kerry Simpson and Helen Tinsley-Jones as Board liaisons; authorized the committee to appoint additional members for an initial term.
- Appointed Randall Hudson to the Audit Committee and authorized him to recruit the other two committee members.

November 2021

No actions taken.

December 2021

- Adopted a policy to require persons eligible to be vaccinated to show proof of vaccination to attend church gatherings of more than 50 people.
- Adopted a Widening the Circle Vision Statement.
- Added a description of the Widening the Circle Committee to the Governance Manual.

January 2022

- Approved draft agenda for February 13 congregational meeting.
- Asked past presidents (=Awards Committee) for suggestions for Board self-evaluation.

Board of Trustees Decisions 2021-2022

February 2022

- Adopted proposed process, timeline and goals to determine the future of UUCB's Freestone retreat property (decision to be made October 23, 2022).
- Informed about UUA ministerial search by Dr. Melissa James, UUA/Pacific Western Region.
- Accepted Endowment Committee update about its new co-chairs – Dick Sherman and Anita Mermel; continuing member Jason Russell; Ira Nelken terming out; Lenore Ralston moving from Chair to advisor; and the search for diversity in filling three seats
- Updated about Stewardship's campaign, chaired by Patrick Cullinane.
- Elected Board Officers: Beth Pollard, President; Helen Tinsley-Jones, Vice President; Selene Fabiano, Secretary; Lenore Ralston, Treasurer.
- Said good-bye to Board members Kerry Simpson, Ann Harlow (Board Secretary), and Ariel Smith-Iyer. Welcomed Pier Sun Ho and Michael Armstrong, as well as Selene Fabiano as Board Secretary.
- Signed on UUCB to a Build Back Fossil Free Letter to President Biden to take Executive Action on climate, joining a coalition of UU congregations and other organizations.

March 2022

- Launched creation of a search committee to engage the congregation about our next ministry, and make a recommendation to the Board about ministry type (i.e. contract, settled), and conduct the search. The congregation to be polled on candidates for the committee, followed by an election and then Board finalization of committee composition – with spouses/partners of Board members ineligible.

April 2022

- Accepted Endowment Committee report and recommendations on the 2022-23 disbursement of 4% of the fair market value of each endowment fund.
- Launched a Board self-evaluation process.

May 2022

- Designated UUCB delegates to the June General Assembly: Suzette Anderson-Duggan, Stephanie Ann Blythe, Evelie Delfino Sales Posch, Liz Der, Jane Lundin, Melissa Rosales, Rev. Jane Ramsey; Alternates: Victoria Bowen, Helen Tinsley-Jones.
- Adopted 2022-23 Priorities and Areas of Emphasis.
- Recommended to congregation adoption of 2022-23 operating budget of \$1,083,626 in expenses and \$1,042,512 in anticipated revenue, with sufficient funds available from the 2021-22 fiscal year carryover to cover the estimated gap.
- Approved agenda for May 22 in-person and Zoom Congregational Meeting
- Approved composition of Ministerial Search Committee: Ariel Smith-Iyer, Deborah Schmidt, Don Klose, Greg Lemieux, Ladie Malek, Lorraine Schnurr, Sandy Portillo-Robins, and Suzette Anderson-Duggan.

June 2022 Actions

- Changed from requiring proof of vaccination for large events/worship service to requiring affirmation of vaccination for all events
- Encouraged congregants to visit to Freestone this summer
- Amended the Board's Widening the Circle Vision Statement to expand the types of anti-oppression to dismantle and amplify the role of our youth; an abridged vision statement to be read at Board meetings and included in the Beacon and Week Ahead.
- Received presentation from the Kensington Fire Protection District on its 18-24 month use/lease of the lower parking lot for a temporary fire station.
- Appointed Helen Tinsley-Jones and Cordell Sloan as the Board liaisons to the Ministerial Search Committee.

Opening Task Force



43 meetings since September 2020. That is how many times the Opening Task Force (OTF) has met so far to formally help UUCB respond to the COVID pandemic and plan for a safe and responsibly phased reopening.

The Task Force has been guided in its effort by the following principles:

1. The common good and the health and welfare of our congregants is foremost in our deliberations.
2. We commit to listen deeply to congregants.
3. Draft reopening plans will be shared for review and comment with key UUCB entities, e.g., Board of Trustees, Program Council, Executive Advisory Team, Buildings and Grounds, Family Ministry, Music, Social Justice, Pastoral Care.
4. Reopening will be consistent with congregational risk levels and tolerance and based on science-based health indicators set by the county, state, and World Health Organization (WHO).
5. The congregation will be kept informed of reopening efforts and have the opportunity to share concerns and suggestions.

To respond to its mission and honor its principles, the OTF:

- Created an OTF website for the UUCB home page so congregants and others could quickly access UUCB COVID status and reopening plans
- Established an email address for congregants to communicate directly with OTF members - planning@uucb.org
- Submitted 23 Beacon columns to help keep the congregation informed of activities and developments

Opening Task Force, cont'd.

- Contributed several Week Ahead articles when developments required increased congregational awareness of next steps in our COVID response Formally surveyed the congregation twice to seek input to the development of COVID safety protocols
- Conducted a Town Hall to inform the congregation of current COVID status and projections and to receive congregational feedback
- Continually researched and monitored COVID expert resources, e.g., World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Johns Hopkins, COVID Resource Center, COVID Act Now, California Dept. of Public Health, Alameda and Contra Costa County Health Departments, and the Unitarian Universalists Association (UUA)
- Developed phases and protocols to guide decision making for the gradual, safe reopening of UUCB that mirrored the mantra of Vaccination + Mitigation Stops Replication, based upon that research
- Also based upon that research, identified and implemented needed physical plant improvements to enhance the safety of the church environment
- Presented updates to the Board of Trustees, including policy recommendations for action to promote the safe reopening of UUCB, at relevant moments in the process
- Established procedures commensurate with Board action for vaccine verification and advance registration for Sunday services, with the possibility of safely reopening UUCB to Sunday service
- Recruited and trained volunteers to implement the reopening procedures

The OTF is pleased to have helped the congregation arrive to today safely participating in Sunday services with responsible safety protocols still in place, e.g., masking, sign in to enable contact tracing if needed, use of colored name badge lanyards to respect individual preference on social distancing, safely spaced Sanctuary seating.

We are thankful for the patience, consideration, input, and resilience of the congregation in our journey. Given the increased cases with the COVID variant, we may feel finished with COVID but COVID is not finished with us. With significant vaccine compliance in our community, we look forward to responsibly expanding our in person activity to other Sunday prime time programming in a manner that continues to recognize the continuing presence of COVID and its variants in our midst and respect for member safety preferences, especially members who cannot be vaccinated, e.g., children and immune compromised members.

Current OTF Members: Patrick Cullinane (Chair), Sheldon Jones, Lisa Maynard, Tess Snook O'Riva (Executive Director), and Rev. Michelle Collins. (Earlier Participants: Greg Lemieux, Rev. Catherine Boyle)

Family Ministry

2021-2022 saw the church and family ministry move out from all digital service to hybrid in-person and digital. As a result, we were able to serve more families and children for whom Zoom was just not an option.

We served the youngest through family movie nights, Sunday childcare, an Easter egg hunt, and a Fourth of July bar-b-que. Community was developed and principles of inherent worth and dignity, compassion in human relations, the goal of peace in the world, and respect for the interdependent web of all existence were presented and instilled in our littlest through play, group interaction and role modeling.

Our elementary children were also served through family movie nights, Sunday crafts and care, the Easter egg hunt, and the Fourth of July bar-b-que. Not only did they develop their own community and learn the same principles as above, but they were offered a greater chance to develop their free and responsible search for truth and meaning as well as encouragement to spiritual growth by helping the younger ones during Sunday services. Some of them also took the opportunity to be part of our Youth and Children's Choir, led by Katie Lipka. The Youth and Children's Choir (YCC) runs every Sunday morning from 10-11 am, just prior to service.



Number of Youth

Served: 26

Under age 6: 6

Ages 6-11: 4

Ages 12 & Older: 16

Families Served: 19

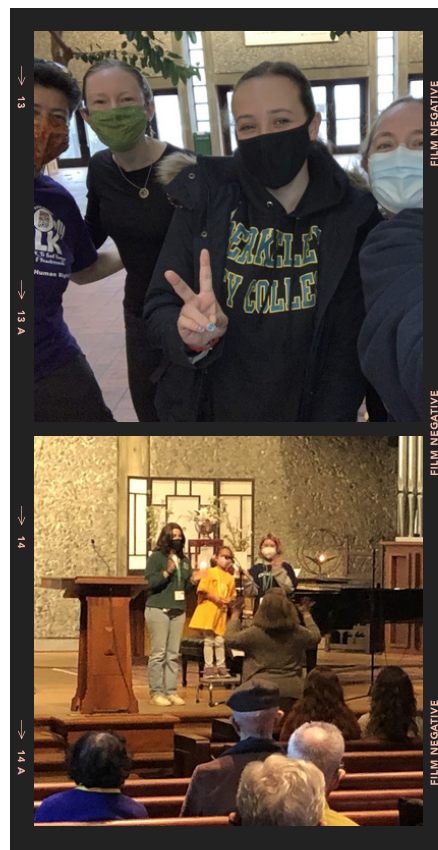
Our youth program flourished this year due to the tender care of our passionate youth volunteers; Ladie Malek, Mellissa Rosales, Michael Armstrong, Sarah Ward, and Haley Vivian Smith. Our youth, because of these fabulous volunteers, met at least once every month and created a very strong community. They helped collect food at the food drive, watched movies, ate pizza, talked about differing sexualities and made pride flags, baked cookies for the congregation, played pool and foosball, among other things.

Nothing showed our youth living our principles more than the work they did to set up our Easter egg hunt for the littler kids. Making sure each kid got a good number of eggs and didn't feel left out. Making sure that the environment the eggs were hidden in wasn't going to be destroyed by the hunt. Making sure that those who wanted to hunt could, but those who wanted to help could do that, too. Taking the time to help with this lovely spring ritual.

Family Ministry

Of particular note was the 13 session run of the Our Whole Lives program for 7th through 9th grades that was run in partnership with Epworth United Methodist. Most meetings took place on the UUCB campus, with the exception of a day-long retreat at Epworth in March. The program ran from January through May and served a total of 8 youth, with 5 completing the full 13 sessions. These sessions taught things from consent through abortion, safe sex, positive relationships and body positivity. We're proud of the youth that have gone through this program and will go on to be strong, value-based individuals. And we are proud of the connections made with Epworth United Methodist Church.

Also of particular note was the hiring of Heaven Walker in May. She comes to us as a legally ordained interfaith minister, previous preschool, K-5 teacher, and community college religion professor. Since her hiring, she has stabilized our childcare team by hiring more childcare help and set in motion several parent support programs (like reviving our parent discussion circle and parents' night out) and planned some family events (like potlucks and worships).



Looking forward to the next year, we plan to reinstate our RE program to welcome back families. We will also have our parent discussion circles and parents' night outs. Youth will continue to have their gatherings at least once a month. Adding in to everything will be the Coming of Age program which has not been run at UUCB for a number of years. This will serve youth aged 13-15. OWL (Our Whole Lives) will be offered again for 4-6 and K-1 this year - after a successful OWL facilitator training on the weekend of August 19th-21st for the entire Pacific Western Region.

In addition, family ministry will successfully expand to minister to the UUCB family and offer lifelong religious education by supporting not only current efforts like Personal Theology but also new things like Adult OWL and SACReD training in reproductive justice.



Membership

During 2021-2022 church year, the Membership team maintained most of its activity virtually. However, we had significant in-person events in September 2021 and May-June, 2022.

The Membership team members tentatively resumed in-person Welcome/Greeting at the Atrium door in May 2022. We improved our web-based Newcomer Form and responded personally to each submission, following up with getting Newcomers on to "The Week Ahead" newsletters and other UUCB publications and listservs. In addition, we made referrals per their interests to Choir, Children's Choir, Family Ministry, Social Justice, Chalice Circles, Humanists, Personal Theology/Summer Forum and, of course, worship services.

On September 16, 2021, we organized an In-Person Membership signing of six new members. Reverend Michelle led the gathering with Lonnie Moseley, Cristina Creveling, and Victoria Bowen from Membership. New members were given "Side with Love" t-shirts used for prophetic witnessing at rallies and social justice protests.

On May 1, we hosted another In-Person signing in the Safir Room which included a luncheon. Reverend Michelle led the gathering. Lonnie Moseley and Victoria Bowen hosted. Beth Pollard, UUCB Board President and Jean Gleason, Program Council Convener welcomed the new members as well.

Lonnie and Victoria arranged for individual signings on various Sundays for different members and on June 17, Reverend Jay Atkinson and Victoria hosted a virtual informational membership session. Rev. Jay Atkinson will continue to support membership with these informative UU History sessions.

On June 19, with lots of invitations, safety planning, and fanfare, we held our first In-Person Ritual of Welcoming New Members in the Sanctuary during Worship Service. This was our first in-person Ritual Welcome since December 2019. (The one scheduled for March 2020 was canceled due to pandemic.)

All members who had joined UUCB since March 2020 were invited as well as 2021 and up to June 19, 2022. During the worship service, the new members gathered on the Chancel at the front of the church and the entire congregation read a commitment statement with a response read by the new members. Roses were given to all new members. This sacred welcoming ceremony is a treasured tradition at UUCB. Following the service at Coffee Hour, congregants continued to welcome new members. All of the New Members are participating in some way in the life of the Congregation.

The 13 new members who joined UUCB in 2021-22 are: Debi Clifford, Hailey Hibler, Carolyn James, Gerry Keenan, Deb Lloyd, Gary Lloyd, Yanick (Nick) Lindquist, Evalie Delfino Sales Posch, Sylvia Scherzer, Vakhid Shimanski, Haley Smith, Sarah Ward, Karin Werner. We're glad to have them!

Finances

ASSETS: Counting our Blessings!

Some of our most precious assets are our staff, our wonderfully generous Congregants, our children, our lay leadership, our ministerial leadership, our progressive programs, and our beautiful campuses – both in Kensington and at Freestone. We have pulled together and given extremely generously of both our time and treasure.

In addition to our living assets:

- We are mortgage-free.
- We have more than 1.5 million in our Endowment Funds.
- We have solar panels.
- We recently invested close to 1 million dollars into our Kensington campus to take care of deferred maintenance and capital improvements.
- The diseased trees (Larry's trees) have been removed and there are plans for replanting.
- We have an amazing music program which has nurtured us throughout COVID.
- We have grown our UUCB Programs: Black Lives Matter, Chalice-Circles, Climate Change, the LFD MC, Personal Theology, Social Justice Program, support of homeless youth, taken on paying reparations to the Ohlone People, Widening the Circle of Concern, WOWs.

To care for our church home, we still have \$233,000 set aside of the \$758,000 Congregationally- approved money from the General Endowment Earnings, and there is \$50,270 in the Endowment Maintenance fund ready to be spent on the next maintenance project on our list!

Areas of Concern:

We also still have areas of concern – e.g. continuing to sustain our pledges, increasing membership, hiring new staff to round out our support team, and continuing to tend and care for our church home.

To care for our staff, we are offering a budget with staff Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) and some reclassifications where more complicated levels of work performance are involved, particularly with regard to the technical broadcasting UUCB has engaged in as a result of COVID.

To care for our financial system, this year -- with the audit and financial review behind us and many of the most critical church repairs completed or underway -- your finance team plans to tackle our data dictionaries and cross-walks to strengthen the interplay between our two current financial databases (Breeze and Fund EZ) as an essential part of preparing for our migration to Quick Books.

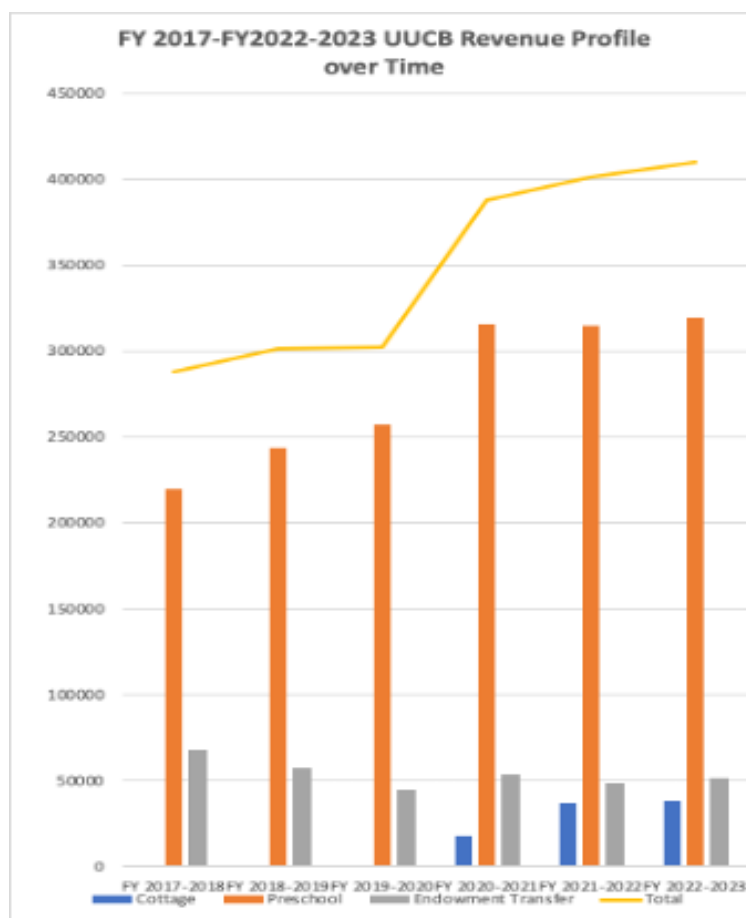
Finances

And with regard to pledges? After much digging and hard work, Anne Greenwood reported that the 2021-2022 actual paid pledge total is 169 pledges for \$437,828.90 as of 4/25/2022. We still have May and June to go; we expect the final pledge amount for 2021-2022 to climb! Note that we budgeted for \$382,500, so we have outdone ourselves by \$55,328.90.

Celebrating our Progress:

We have a replenished campus, and we are COVID-safe. In addition to all the unexpected campus catastrophes that Tess, for example, walked into in 2019 -- furnace quitting, gas main breaking, staff turnover -- let it not be lost that we have a wholly NEW staff that supports each other and us that have been hired and led by Tess and Tess brought in \$200,000 plus in COVID grants which saw us through 2020-2022.

Some of us are tired? Yet so joyful to be with one another!



Adult Education

Personal Theology

Personal Theology was on ZOOM through 2021-22. Committee members, Lonnie Moseley and Anne Wardell successfully provided 17 of 18 planned programs. One cancellation was due to health issues. Several speakers were members of UUCB who kindly donated their time and thoughts on a variety of subjects.

Attendance ranged from 22-91, with an average of around 40. Virtual sessions allowed attendance from as far as Wales, England, Ecuador, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Tennessee, New Mexico, Louisiana, Washington, and various parts of California. We were able to do all of these programs and still come in under budget due to the generosity of many of our nationally known speakers. We hosted Rev. Matthew Fox, James Baraz, Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, and Kayleen Asbo to name a few.

The wide range of speakers and topics received positive feedback. A sample of seminar titles include: "Seeing the Light", 'Awakenings', 'Joy in Difficult Times', and 'Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a Time of Pandemic-And Beyond'. The seminars provided by our members were deeply moving and indicated yet again what a rich and talented group of members we are fortunate to have.

Currently, five programs are confirmed for the fall semester on Zoom, which allows us to host speakers who live out of the area and/or prefer not to be in a large group setting for health reasons. We hope to recruit more committee members with Zoom skills to help us facilitate them.

Humanist Connections

We have been meeting on Zoom throughout pandemic to discuss ethical, social, political, religious, artistic, and scientific matters each week.

One week a month we discuss short topics and select the long (full-session) topics for the succeeding month. One or two people present each topic, taking 10 to 15 minutes, then the remainder of each session is devoted to group discussion. Marcia Bates has been the moderator and communications person. Ray Westergard moderates the next month's topic selection meeting. Other group managers are Susan Singh & Kris Homme. Recent topics include: Interpersonal Ethical Issues, Why are we going to Mars?, Cryptocurrency and the Environment, Preparing for Climate Change, The Pandemic's Effects on Children, Digital Art, and Are Humanists Winning the Reality Wars? We have 40 people on the email list, 10-15 attending each Sunday on Zoom. Humanist Connections has been a lifeline for many of us, lighting up the many lockdown days during COVID. These attendance numbers have remained steady throughout the time of COVID.

Lay Pastoral Care

Who are we?

We are lay members of the pastoral care team, working closely with our Interim Minister Rev. Michelle Collins and other members of the ministerial pastoral care team, community ministers Rev. Sue Magidson and Rev. Jane Ramsey. We provide important connections of comfort and healing and embody our important Mission of **"creating loving community."** Barbara Cullinane, Chair, Pastoral Associates and Pastoral Associates Lynne Cahoon, Dorothy Herzberg, Judy Sam, Marta Tobey, and Anne Wardell.

What do we do?

We call, visit, listen to, and support UUCB Members and Friends to acknowledge their joys and concerns, losses and tough times. We also reach out to older congregation members unable to attend in-person worship. We help free our ministers' time to better share their professional pastoral skills with church members and their loved ones, supporting those who are seriously ill, dying, bereaved and suffering, and creating celebrations of birth, wedding and lives well lived.



Caring by the numbers

In the last 12 months we connected directly with 80+ persons who were experiencing injury, illness, serious illness, and/or bereavement or other concerns or joys, themselves or of a loved one. At least 48 of these persons were under 80 years old, as hardship is shared by all ages.

How do we know who might welcome support?

People respond to our ads in UUCB publications to tell us themselves or about a friend who is "sick, hospitalized, recovering, grieving or otherwise in need of attention and support". They also contact Rev. Michelle for her professional pastoral attention, and she may request that we follow up non-confidential contacts.

Special Projects

On May 15, we provided tokens of appreciation to 37 **Doctors of Durability** with milestone birthdays of 80 and better. We have 78 current and past honorees.

On December 10, 2021 on "Giving Saturday," we created **Holiday Messages for Our Elders and Others** (younger members who were ill or injured.)

Lynne Cahoon's colorful **Super Cards** with messages of support are a valued and tangible symbol of being part of a loving community and warm those who've given permission to share their joys and concerns.

"In this human circle, caring is a calling. All of us are called."
-Richard Gilbert

Stewardship

Sustenance and Sanctuary in Challenging Times



Thank you! The congregation's pledges for next year, currently valued at \$401,463, are vital to the church's financial health and capacity to provide the services and programs we value. The initial pledge goal of \$575,000 for 2022-23 was inaccurate, due to a migration error to our new database Breeze. Once the error was caught, we adjusted our expectations to a more realistic \$425,000. Our committee members diligently and with diplomacy talked with members about UUCB's value in their lives and their financial commitment to maintain that value for themselves and others. If many of the current committee members will agree to serve again next year, it will help with continuity of effort and aid Don Klose and Selene Fabiano, who will co-chair next year's Stewardship Committee and campaign.

Our campaign efforts started in October to set the campaign calendar, determine the theme and logo, arrange logistics for the first quarter in the calendar year, and prep communications for initial distribution with the January Beacon.

While we anticipate next year's pledge campaign will return to an in person effort, the virtual elements of our last two campaigns were valuable and should be maintained, along with pledge process and data reports during services; testimonials from members by video or in person highlight the value of UUCB in members' lives and their decisions to pledge as generously as their circumstances allow. This year's committee also recommends:

- Prior to the campaign, survey members about their pledges, ways UUCB is important in their lives, and the reasons for their financial commitment.
- Provide more detailed data in congregational information about the importance of generous pledges in the annual operating budget.
- Return to the previous procedure of individual and more personal thank you notes for each pledge received vs. programmed notes from the Breeze database.
- Offer committee participation to member(s) who increased their pledge by 10% or more.
- Encourage feedback about improved pledge campaign efforts.
- Especially thank members who increased their pledge by 10% or more, and survey them for reasons they increased their commitment.
- Explore a fun launch to the campaign to enter the campaign with joy and laughter.

Your Stewardship Committee: Patrick Cullinane (Chair), Lynne Cahoon, Don Klose, Selene Fabiano, Ladie Malek, Ariel Smith-Iyer, David Roberts (Board Liaison), Rev. Michelle Collins, Tess Snook O'Riva (Executive Director).

Worship

The pandemic has profoundly affected the Worship Program at UUCB. From March 2020 to July 2021, we broadcasted pre-recorded worship services every Sunday on YouTube and Facebook, followed by a virtual live “coffee hour” on Zoom. This was the effort and collaboration of church volunteers and our interim minister, Rev. Michelle Collins. Dave Rosales, Dayana Claghorn, Greg Lemieux, Katie Lipka, Larry Nagel, and Cordell Sloan were the exceptional covenantal Broadcast Team central to the creative and logistical delivery of the program – donating an astounding number of hours month after month developing, ever-improving, and ultimately broadcasting the final product, our beautiful services, filled with music and meaning. Our Worship Associates (Bob Adams, Cynthia Asprodites, Andrea Brown, Bill Brown, Karen Elliott, Don Klose, Deborah Schmidt, and Sarah Ward) took on a much higher level of responsibility as they not only pre-recorded their own Reflections and worship service segments, but became “wranglers,” helping the Broadcast Team to bring together all the Contributors of the worship elements and prepare the videos for broadcast by deadline. Karen Elliott became liaison to the Broadcast Team to help with this.

On Oct. 31, 2021, we started live-streaming from the chancel to our online congregation and an empty Sanctuary. Staff and volunteers, led by Executive Director Tess Snook O’Riva and Rev. Michelle had prepared the Sanctuary and the new Audio/Visual system for live-streaming capability. HVAC was significantly upgraded. A new Livestream AV-Worship team formed, initially made up of a few staff (Tess O’Riva, Caitlyn Vincent, Charis Domador) and volunteers (Michael DeWitt, Larry Nagel, Paul Hudson, Karen Elliott, Don Klose).

Worship was disconcertingly disorganized for some time. None of us was used to worship being a “production.” We found this an excellent opportunity to practice being in covenant with each other!



Technology idiosyncrasies had to be learned and navigated – and although Andrew Brown was hired as an Events Host and began training in all aspects of Livestreaming, most staff had soon withdrawn from regular Sunday service, and our volunteers took on much of the AV load despite their elementary knowledge. As Rev. Michelle remarked more than once, we were building our plane as we flew it. To help with this, staff member Caitlyn Vincent was deputized as AV team lead.

On March 20, 2022, checking vaccination and booster status of all attendees, the church shifted to hybrid Worship Services: livestreaming in-person services from the Sanctuary to Facebook and YouTube. In addition to Rev. Michelle, the Worship Associate, Music Team (leader, song leaders, sometime soloists or guests), Time For All Ages (this was Rev. Michelle until the hire of Heaven Walker in early summer 2022, although sometimes Alice Lemieux of Family Ministry volunteered), basic AV team and occasional Good Neighbor rep on the chancel, there were now additional AV volunteers needed (Projector and Producer of Sanctuary slides), Check-in volunteers, Greeters, Ushers, and eventually (in early summer) Coffee Hour hosts. And of course, the congregation itself.

Worship

We quickly found that our volunteer bench was shallow – in every case, really, but especially regarding AV, given that we needed to fill every task every Sunday.

As the job of Worship Associate (WA) increased in complexity, and the need for careful coordination and collaboration became apparent, Karen Elliott took on the role of lead Worship Associate. In the summer a second AV tech person was hired for the Sound board, which eased the burden on the volunteer AV team. Sandy Portillo-Robins joined the WA team in spring 2022, and Sarah Ward and Deborah Schmidt termed out, while Robin Cooper signed up to begin in July.

As of June 30, 2022, the Luminescence choir had only sung from the chancel steps a few times – and at those times it was just one musical item per service, without singing any special pieces from the pews. Bryan Baker, our Music Director, was being very careful because of congregational concerns about aerosol particles, even though the HVAC system in the Sanctuary was so good. Bryan and Katya Kolesnikova, organist, performed most of the Music selections on piano and organ, sometimes with guest soloists; a few Song leaders – primarily volunteers during the summer (Kathleen Baumgardner and Don Wollwage were regulars) – led the songs for the congregation.

Volunteers in Support of Worship July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022:

Worship Associates: Bob Adams, Cynthia Asprodites, Andrea Brown, Bill Brown, Karen Elliott, Don Klose, Deborah Schmidt, Sarah Ward; Jason Russell; Sandy Portillo-Robins, Robin Cooper
Virtual Coffee Hour Hosts: Selene Fabiano, Carol Carlisle, Barbara Cullinane, Michael DeWitt, Ann Harlow, Elaine Miller, Lonnie Moseley, Smiley Nelson, Julia Rogers, Marta Tobey, Ray Westergard.

AV volunteers (Livestream, Sound board, Slide production, Slide projection, Monitor): Michael DeWitt, Larry Nagel, Jim Gasperini, Karen Elliott, Paul Hudson, Don Klose, Jason Russell, Bob Adams, Beth Pollard, Andrea Brown, Bill Brown

Song leaders: Kathleen Baumgardner, Don Wollwage, Evelie Delfino Sales Posch, Lynn Hammond, Susan Mashiyama, Elaine Miller, Roberta Shaw, and others

Check-in volunteers: Lisa Maynard, Selene Fabiano, Lenore Ralston, Kristen Jensen, Marta Tobey, Beth Jerde, Barbara and Patrick Cullinane, Sheldon Jones, Helen Tinsley-Jones, Natalie Campbell, Helen Toy, Judy Sam, Cynthia Asprodites, Kerry Simpson

Greeters: Lonnie Moseley, Victoria Bowen, Marin Fisher

Ushers: Marta Tobey, Selene Fabiano, Beth Jerde, Ray Westergard, Albert Kueffner

Coffee Hour hosts: Gerry Keenan, Michelle Laasi, Ann Harlow, and others

In June, the WAs prepared to host the guest ministers during July when Rev. Michelle would be on vacation: the Revs. John Young, Emily Webb, David Sammons, Jane Ramsey (one of our community ministers), and Jeanne Foster were the first guests in the pulpit since Spring 2020!

Music

As the church moved gradually to in-person services and meetings, the music program went hybrid. Song leaders, soloists and instrumentalists shared music during in-person services from the outset. And while we still make use of our extensive virtual archive, most of the music in Sunday services now is live.

Choir rehearsals, with Covid precautions including careful masking, distancing, and well-ventilated spaces, have been in person with a virtual option. This has been true for Luminescence (the adult choir) and also the Youth and Children's Choir. Likewise, concerts have offered both in-person and virtual options.

The adult choir started meeting in person, masked and distanced, outdoors on Thursday evenings after a great deal of research and once advice from epidemiologists and infectious disease experts indicated it could be done safely. We gradually moved to well-ventilated indoor spaces, the Fireside room, then the Atrium, and finally the Sanctuary. The Youth and Children's Choir, somewhat later, started gathering in person in the Meditation room on Sundays mornings.

We had a limited number of fundraisers, where the audience could attend in person or virtually. They were safe, successful, and celebratory, and they raised some money for the church's general fund.



We all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the volunteers of the tech team, who - with staff support - made the virtual option work for both services and events.

We recognize that the situation remains fluid, the pandemic continues to evolve, and our plans must remain flexible. With cautious optimism, we are looking forward to more choral singing in services, and a series of musical events including fundraisers. Bryan Baker and Friends will come in early October, our Messiahsing-along in December and other events which have been shown to attract an audience and raise funds for the church.

Chalice Circles

Committee Lead - Duties and Contributions

Lenore Ralston oversees the chalice circle program, participant and facilitator recruitment, outreach to other churches, and curriculum development. Lisa Maynard is in charge of trainings, meeting agendas and minutes. Natalie Campbell manages enrollment, Zoom rooms, the calendar, facilitator appreciation and surveys. All three lead chalice circles during the year.

Committee Members

Dick Sherman, Joanne Wile, Cynthia Asprodites, Victoria Bowen, Beth Pollard (Board Liaison) Barbara Cullinane (Pastoral Care)



This past year along with the year prior were not normal. We have been in the middle of a Global Pandemic, with people still desperately in need of connection. We decided to extend our circles, again, through the Summer months. Over the course of the summer and the rest of the year we had a total of 87 participants. We continued to offer flexible times of: 4-, 8-, and 16-month sessions. This change to the Chalice program overall seems to have provided more incentives for facilitators and well as participants to participate. We also have been supportive of offering teams of co-facilitators as another way of strengthening our program.

New Chalice Circles started in October of 2021. We added several new facilitators - Liz Der and Read Heath, Linda Laskowski, Lonnie Mosely and Tom Ayers. Having new facilitators is essential to keeping the circles open and running, and the leadership "fresh"!

Two of the Circles offered were theme-based: One focused on issues of importance to People of Color. Another used topics related to the many facets of "Love." Facilitators were encouraged to bring their own focus to the group while paying attention and keeping to the Chalice Commitment to attentive listening.

Of our 13 new members joining UUCB, 8 have been active Chalice Circle participants. In July, we held our facilitator's appreciation celebration in Lenore's backyard! It was lovely to be outside!

The Partner Church



Most activities of the Transylvanian Partner Church Committee remained on hiatus during the past year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. On May 5, 2022, we sent \$2,700 to our Transylvanian partners in Homoródújfalu. The donation was to be split three ways: \$2000 to the Village Education fund, \$500 to the Ukrainian relief efforts and \$200 for Rev. Attila for his expenses. Included in this remittance was the \$1,000 approved by the Social Justice Council in 2021 as an alternative to the Good Neighbor program.

COVID and the war in Ukraine have put travel to Transylvania on hold for 2022. There have been cases of COVID in the village, but most restrictions were lifted in March, 2022.

Our monthly reports in the Beacon for 2022 have focused on the war in Ukraine and how members of UUCB can contribute. The International Women's Convocation initiated two fundraising campaigns on the UUA's Faithify.org website. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is also collecting donations through its website. Our partners in Homoródújfalu have also raised funds for Ukrainian refugees, particularly those who come to Kolozsvár, third largest city in Romania and Transylvania's largest.

The UUA's Partner Church Council continues to envision its future in collaboration with International Council of Unitarian/Universalists. They will report on their efforts at the 2022 General Assembly.

Contact information:

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Endowment Committee

The essence of the EC's work is to encourage endowment growth; to monitor our funds' investments through the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF); to accept and record new endowment gifts as well as to assure that the wishes of the donor are institutionalized; and to recommend to the Board the annual payouts from the distinct unrestricted-in-use endowment funds as well as the periodic payouts of the restricted-in-use funds, consistent with applicable policies.

UUCB's various endowments support the work that we do as a church community by establishing a vital and enduring stream of income to help prepare for and offset future expenditures. Over these past five years, through the astute management of this precious resource, payouts from our endowments helped UUCB address critical deferred maintenance challenges as well as invest in Covid-triggered air ventilation upgrades.

In their lifetimes, the beloved donors to our three largest endowed funds⁽¹⁾ placed no restraints on how the income streams from their gifts were to be used. Together, as of 3/31/22, the market value of their unrestricted gifts was \$1,093,295. Per Board policy enacted in 2015, all annual payouts from these unrestricted endowments have gradually shifted from supporting general church expenses to, since FY2020-21, exclusively supporting building maintenance and essential facility upgrades. They have been essential in improving the safety, functionality and spiritual beauty of our campus.

Two years ago, we received a \$250,000 endowment gift (now valued at \$285,741) from a familial estate of former member Ann Lane. Annual payouts will begin streaming from that fund towards the end of 2023. As the use of that permanent endowment was not restricted by the donor, the Board will decide in 2023 to which church use its income stream will be directed.

The market value of the few endowments whose donors restricted their use⁽²⁾ totaled \$237,166 as of 3/30/22. Their payouts go towards supporting purposes such as the maintenance and improvements of several of our gardens, sponsoring of our well-attended Lawrence Lecture, and specific areas of religious education. One of these funds is restricted by its donors to support only building maintenance expenditures; this use may not be modified by the Board.

A major accomplishment of the EC late spring of last year was a thorough review of all recommended annual draws from the various Endowments over five years compared to what was actually withdrawn from our accounts held with the UU Combined Endowment Fund.

Moving forward, the EC urges the Church's financial team to transfer each year's approved endowment payouts during the first quarter of that fiscal year (i.e. before September 30). This would not only move a significant annual influx of funds into the church's coffers quicker, but would also make calculations of the 13-quarter rolling averages of the market values of our various endowments more consistent from year to year.

Endowment Committee

Clearly, 2022 has brought with it a volatile market along with inflation rates this country has not experienced in decades. We will continue to watch how our endowments fare, and be in communication with the UUCEF investment team to see how their investment practices are adapting to the new circumstances. Unsurprisingly, our total endowment investment dropped 6.2% from \$1,722,816 in December 2021 to \$1,616,202 in March 2022, a decline fairly consistent with the market overall. Russia's war in Ukraine, rising gas prices, continuing supply chain issues, and the current steep inflation we are all experiencing are negatively affecting the financial markets, and we see no easy resolutions in sight.

While restricted gifts will never be refused (so long as they support the mission of the church), we strongly encourage future gifts of endowment whose use will be unrestricted. Gifts without restrictions most empower future generations of church leaders and members to best define what the most critical funding needs are during any given period of time or history.

And on a final note, the Endowment Committee actively seeks two or three new members. What we most need is new participants who share our love for the church and would like to help strengthen its financial base for the long haul. We seek in particular members who have persuasive writing skills or event planning skills (help us organize the next lunch honoring Maybeck Society members!). You do not have to have proven skills in overseeing investment funds, but should have an interest in learning the basics.

Please write us with your questions, comments, or to explore joining the committee at: endowment@uucb.org.

- (1) Two of these are permanent endowments (UU Church of Berkeley and Kay Davis Memorial Funds) and one is a quasi, board-designated endowment (General Endowment Fund).
- (2) Lawrence Lecture, Morgan Theological Education, Spatz Religious Education, UUCB Building Maintenance, and Armstrong Garden endowed funds.

Social Justice Council (SJC)

SJC Sponsored Projects

Restoring Our Earth for All

- **Summer Forum Speakers:** Teron McGrew, of Bay Area Climate Reality leader; and Steve Simon, Ph.D., long time UU, scientist, and Co-Chair of Elders Climate Action's national Policy Committee.
- The **Climate Change Grief Group** met weekly over a period of 10 weeks to recognize, experience, and process feelings about the state of the world; connect with others to create a non-judgmental space; ease feelings of isolation and helplessness; honor and navigate the pain of living in a destructive culture; gain an understanding of the connection between personal and environmental resilience; and engage in climate activism.
- **Healthy Air For All Forum:** Dr. Teresa Munoz and Dr. Juan Aguilar, from Climate Health Now, each gave engaging talks on climate change, fossil fuel use, and the health and environmental justice implications. Dr. Munoz, as an OB-GYN from Richmond Kaiser, included a focus on pregnant women and birth. Dr. Aguilar, a physician and researcher from Stanford University, spoke about sources of particulate matter pollution.



Confronting Racism and Oppression

- **The People of Color Caucus (POCC)** meets every other month to provide support and a place to share cultural histories and moments of resilience. For Black History Month, the POCC read and recorded verses of the Langston Hughes poem, "I Dream a World." The POCC also requested that multi-racial families be interviewed and videoed by our interim minister, Rev. Michelle Collins, on how they were addressing racism with their children and young adults. The recorded poem and interviews were presented during the February 20 service (youtu.be/toR8x9BHxKw). Three members of the POCC are collaborating on lyrics and music of a POCC song to be presented to the congregation in 2022.
- **WOWS (Working to Overcome White Supremacy).** In 2018, in partnership with the People of Color Caucus, the group formed as "Whites Opposing White Supremacy" to give white-identified people a place to challenge racism in ourselves and in our world, without burdening People of Color. We have temporarily (and likely permanently) changed our name to Working to Overcome White Supremacy, opening the group to anyone who wants to challenge racism. WOWS has shared MAUBs (Moments of Awareness of Unconscious Bias, a term introduced by UUCB's Literature, Film, Drama and Music Contingent), MOIs (Moments of Illumination), and personal struggles. We have had rich and challenging conversations about American democracy and its connection to white supremacy, and about what it means to be an ally.



Supporting **Youth Spirit Artworks (YSA)** and its Tiny House program as they lay the groundwork for the next phase of its Hundred Homes for a Hundred Youth initiative. The project coordinator participates in monthly YSA organized interfaith meetings and hauls furniture, lumber, trash, or anything else needed. We varnished two Murphy beds and provided bedding and other basic household items while cleaning and decorating recently finished tiny houses. In December 2021, we voted YSA, for the fourth time in five years, as one of the recipients of its Good Neighbor offerings in 2022.

Literature, Film, Drama and Music Contingent (LFDMC)

meets monthly and explores racism and other oppressions through literature, film, music, and theatrical performance. Its activities this year included *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, by Heather McGhee; Celebrating the Buddha's Birthday! *The Dalai Lama's Cat*, by Davi Michie; *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons*, by Imani Perry; *Better Not Bitter: Living on Purpose in the Pursuit of Racial Justice*, by Yusef Salaam; Native American History Celebration; *So Many Beginnings: A Little Women's Remix*, by Bethany C. Morrow; Play-reading: *The Mountain Top*, by Katori Hall; Honoring Black History Month: *All That She Carried*, by Professor Tiya Miles; Discussion of *As Brave As You*, by Jason Reynolds; *This Is The Fire, What I Say to My Friends About Racism*, Don Lemon; Honoring Asian Pacific American History Month: Novels by Julie Otsuka; June's Black Music Appreciation Month observed through *The Songs We Carry with Us*, the playing and discussion of some of the songs and artists that have had special meaning for participants.

Honoring Indigenous Peoples Group

meets monthly and Curates The Honoring Indigenous Peoples Blog (<https://honoringindigenouspeoples.group/>), filled with news from and affecting Indigenous communities locally, nationally and internationally. During the November 2021 LFDMC meeting, HIP shared specific ways in which we can be in right relations with Indigenous peoples, presenting on Ohlone history and Ohlone people's presence today. We also sent a Thanksgiving letter to congregants highlighting ways in to reflect on and take actions which honor Indigenous people. We sponsored a 5-session Summer Spiritual Book Read of *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer.



World Peace Committee

"Cut the Pentagon Budget; Shift Funds to Human Needs" Unfortunately, when the proposed budget came up for a congressional vote, a large majority of our government representatives approved the new military budget, which was for an even larger amount than the previous administration. We will continue making an effort to create a more peaceful world – with fewer (preferably ZERO!) nuclear weapons and more U.S. governmental funding for human needs.

SJC Ad-Hoc Activities

Nueva Esperanza Sanctuary Team

In spite of limited recent legal activity related to the family's immigration issues (the court date is this coming November!), the team has stayed busy with considerable work including English lessons for Anita, securing Guatemalan and Salvadoran travel visas for the girls, and helping Anita avoid bogus traffic fines in Los Angeles related to her car being stolen.

Developing Indigenous Resources (DIR) is continuing to operate during the Covid pandemic and to provide much needed supplies and services to improve the health and well-being of residents of a large slum community just outside the city of Chandigarh in northwest India's Punjab state.



GRIP

Greater Richmond Interfaith Program

Every month for the past 25 years, UUCB has purchased, prepared, and served lunch to the disadvantaged residents of GRIP (Greater Richmond Interfaith Program) and others who walk in from the street for a free meal. This is possible due to the financial support of UUCB and volunteer help from many church members.



A Garden for Ukraine: The Landscape Committee and Social Justice created a Garden for Ukraine with a lovely painted plaque and sunflowers.