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January 2024

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# Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley  
Vol. 83 #1

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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## From the Minister

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The last couple years our family has begun a tradition of a sunrise hike on New Year's morning. It's the one day of the year Henry is excited to hit the trail. We wake up in early dark hours of the morning, brew a thermos of hot chocolate, bundle ourselves in our warmest coats and head to the hills to make the short trek to our favorite little rocky outcropping in Redwood Park where we watch the sun rise.

I don't make it out into the world in those early morning hours very often. Perhaps that adds to the sense of magic they hold for me: a world more serene in its still and quiet waking, before it's had a chance to shower and put itself together. Or maybe that's me who is not yet masked, feeling the air's chill touch on my waking flesh, my eyes discovering a particular intimacy with grass and earth and stone as they adjust to take in the lightening sky.

Our worship series beginning in January is *Real Change is Made by Real People: Joy and Justice in Unmasking the Self*. As we contemplate a new year ahead, and wonder if there are resolutions we will make, or keep, or feel like we should be making but know we're not going to, we find ourselves caught up in that quintessential human journey of searching for self. What if the most important thing we could do, for the quality of our own lives and to help bend the arc of the universe toward justice, was to just be ourselves? What if it wasn't about striving to be better or different, to have or achieve more, but settling more deeply into what we already are? While this paradigm of joy and justice gets us off the hook for all that striving, that's not to say it's easy. The risks are real, but risking being real will make us come alive.

Happy New Year!  
Rev. Marcus Liefert



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## January Services

Sundays 11 am

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

**Theme:** Real Change is Made by Real People: Joy and Justice in Unmasking the Self

### January 7

The Masks We Wear

### January 14

Unmasking Difference

### January 21

Mask Yourself in a Thousand Ways

### January 28

Behind the Mask of Safety

## Religious Education

Classes Jan. 7 & 14,  
Celebration Chapel Jan. 21

## Coffee Hour

Sundays at Noon  
**In person** in the Social Hall

## Sunday Programming

### Personal Theology

Sundays at 9:30 am in person and on Zoom

**Jan. 14** – Begin the New Year of Personal Theology with a message from our settled minister, Rev. Marcus Liefert. Topic: TBA (see The Week Ahead for details)

**Jan. 28** – **Rev. Aija Simpson-Newbury, “Reflections on a Lifelong Theology.”** Rev. Aija is a lifelong Unitarian Universalist who was ordained to the ministry (by us!) in 2013 and served the congregation in Boiling Springs, PA for eight years. Last year she was driving around the country with her wife and toddler, seeing the people they love and collecting stories for future sermons. She is currently settled(ish) in Berkeley, CA and wondering where her itchy feet will take her next.

### Youth and Children’s Choir Rehearsal

Sundays at 10 am, Meditation Room

The Choir is open to all children and youth, ages 5 ½ and up. Prior musical experience is not required. We help lead the Sunday worship service once or twice per month. Occasionally we participate in other music events. We’d love to have you join us!

### Humanist Connections

Sundays at 1 pm on Zoom (in person the third Sunday of the month)  
Check the church calendar or The Week Ahead for topics.

## Good Neighbor in January

**Berkeley Food Pantry:** <https://www.berkeleyfoodpantry.org/>

Mission: To provide good, nutritious groceries, household items, and opportunities for learning and self-empowerment for Berkeley and Albany households in crisis, especially those households at risk of upheaval and displacement.

## Special Events

**January 14 @ 1 pm**

**LFMDC** will host the first ever public screening of ***Resurrecting Love: The Cemetery That Can Heal a Nation***.

*Resurrecting Love* is the independent narrative documentary film about race, reparations, and reconciliation told through the lens of a small East Texas mixed community near the Louisiana border. The African American members of this community found themselves locked out of their nearly 200-year-old ancestral burial ground named Love as part of the hidden backlash to the 1960s Civil Rights movement. It is based on the 2007 book *Love Cemetery: Unburying the Secret History of Slaves* by China Galland.



First public screening of  
**RESURRECTING LOVE**  
THE CEMETERY THAT CAN HEAL A NATION

**January 14 2024 1 pm**  
[uucb.org/resurrecting-love](http://uucb.org/resurrecting-love)

Scan to RSVP



Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley  
1 Lawson Rd Kensington, CA 94707

**January 28 @ 12:30 pm**

**Candidates Forum.** Q&A with the candidates for Board of Trustees Election 2024.

## Weekly Events

For up-to-date details: [uucb.org/weekahead](http://uucb.org/weekahead).

### **Mondays**

9 am Write For Your Life

9:30 am Women's Meditation Group

### **Tuesdays**

10 am Improving Your Balance through 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

7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal

### **Fridays**

10 am Improving Your Balance through Tai Chi

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## Monthly Events & Meetings

For up-to-date details: [uucb.org/weekahead](http://uucb.org/weekahead).

### **Sunday**

9:30 am Parents Discussion Group (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday)

11 am Religious Education (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday)

11:30 am Celebration Chapel (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday)

1 pm WOWS Working to Overcome White Supremacy (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday)

### **Monday**

11 am Textile & Art (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday)

### **Tuesday**

10:15 am Volunteer Lunch Program at GRIP  
(4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday)

### **Wednesday**

7:15 pm Board of Trustees (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday)\*

7 pm Social Justice Council (2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday)

7 pm Program Council (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday)

### **Friday**

11 am Textile & Art (4<sup>th</sup> Friday)

### **Saturday**

1 pm POCC People of Color Caucus (3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday)

4 pm Parents' Night Out (3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday)

## Announcements

### **Board Listening Presence**

**Michael Armstrong:** (510) 219-3847

[michaelarmstrong2494@comcast.net](mailto:michaelarmstrong2494@comcast.net)

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### **Conversations on the Horizon**

In October, Rev. Marcus shared that that one of his main goals for this first year of ministry is to hear from you about your histories with this congregation and your hopes for its future. For this, we are gathering in small groups of 8-12 people, in person, hosted in members' homes. To sign up for one of these conversations, [click here](#) or visit [uucb.org/minister](http://uucb.org/minister).

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### **About Our Website**

Whether you are new to UUCB or have been around for years, keep [uucb.org](http://uucb.org) in mind as a place for answers to any questions you may have. We recently added 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](#)

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### **Lost and Found**

Missing something you may have left at UUCB? Water bottles seem to get left behind the most. You can check the Lost & Found box in the office hallway, second lower cabinet, or for food-related items check just inside the kitchen door.

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### **\*January Board Meeting**

Due to the New Year holiday, the January exec and regular Board meetings will be held on 1/10/24, the 2nd Wednesday of the month.

## Stewardship Campaign

### Looking Into The Future



The goal of each year's Stewardship campaign is to engage our congregation in looking ahead to the next church year. What do we want to accomplish together? How can we each support that journey in the next year? What amount of financial support can we predict from pledging? (For an explanation of pledging, please see Stewardship and Pledging at <https://uucb.org/about-us/give/stewardship/>)

Our Stewardship theme this year is "Wake Now Our Vision." Here's the final verse of our "theme song," *Wake Now My Senses*:

Wake, now, my vision of ministry clear;  
Brighten my pathway with radiance here;  
Mingle my calling with all who will share;  
Work toward a planet transformed by our care.

I hope you'll look up and read the entire hymn (#298, grey hymnal).

We have a new settled minister and new members joining us throughout the year. We have a congregation with a long history and cherished traditions, and also a lot of energy for change, for working towards a world "transformed by our care." Sometime when you're sitting in the UUCB Sanctuary, looking at the large windowless wall of the chancel, try creating in your mind a window into that beautiful, transformed world. What do you see there?

Let's look forward to exploring that question.

Lisa Maynard, Chair, Stewardship Team 2024

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## Family Ministry

We will start the new year in Family Ministry with some new events! The K-3 Religious Education (RE) team is adopting a new curriculum called "Moral Tales." They will be seeking Elders in the community to speak with the children during RE, so be ready for someone to approach you for your wonderful life stories. The 4-12

graders will continue to explore our UU shared values with creativity, music, and service. The youth will be offered a "Chalice Discussion Group" on the fourth Sunday of the month to explore their spiritual and life exploration beginning in January. Family Ministry will also offer a "Family Yoga" designed for kids during Religious Education the fourth Sunday of January. We will also continue to offer "Parents Night Out" on the third Saturday of the month, Youth Group Social the third Saturday of the month, and the Parent Discussion Group on the first Sunday morning of the month. In February, we will offer a Family Meetup Group for dinner and games at the Victory Point Café in Berkeley.

Happy New UU Year!

Heaven Walker

Director of Family Ministry and Lifelong Learning

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## Partner Church

Boldog új évet! The Hungarian version of "Happy New Year" will become more meaningful on Saturday, January 20, 2024. The Transylvanian Partner Church Committee and members of the UUCB Board of Trustees will be meeting with Rev. Gyerő Attila and members of the church board in Homorodujfalu. Of course, we won't be meeting in person, but online via Zoom. The call is scheduled for 10 am Pacific Standard Time, which will be 8 pm in Transylvania.

The agenda for this meeting is still to be determined, and a lot of details, such as translators, need to be lined up. This is all new for us, but we're excited to finally be doing this. Look for announcements or emails about the agenda. We're asking that you contact Stephanie Ann or Anne if you wish to participate. The Zoom link will be sent when we get close to January 20, and we know who is attending.

We're also laying plans for a visit to Transylvania in September 2024, with the International Convocation of UU Women at their gathering in Koloszar, and a pilgrimage to our Partner Church village. Any UUCB member is welcome to come along. Check with us if you are interested.

Contact us about the Zoom call or travel via email. Stephanie Ann Blythe at [steph62850@yahoo.com](mailto:steph62850@yahoo.com) or Anne Greenwood at [annegt1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:annegt1@sbcglobal.net). One or both of us are at church on most Sundays. Look for us or our table in the Atrium!

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## Freestone Oversight Committee

Freestone Oversight Committee (FOC) members: 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 for December 2023 include:

- The FOC agreed to recommend to the Board of Trustees at the January 10, 2024 meeting to approve the Freestone Committee's request to list Parcels 1 and 2 with a Coldwell Banker agent in Sebastopol. This listing probably will go onto Multiple Listing Service (MLS) in January 2024. (Parcels 1 and 2 are the two undeveloped parcels outside the entrance gate to the dome. Parcel 4 is the developed parcel which contains the dome, a well, a septic system, and parking lots).
- The FOC decided to delay approving a new survey for a couple of months in case the Contingency Loan Fund is needed for something else. This survey is a lot line survey to clarify the location of one of the property lines and may be necessary to resolve the encroachment issue with the neighbors at the Villa (our neighbor downhill from the dome).
- The FOC has been monitoring the Conservation Easement application process. A Conservation Easement is governmental compensation to a landowner for permanently foregoing development on environmentally sensitive property. The Freestone Committee is now officially in the grant application process and applied on December 13, 2023, for an Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) 2024 grant through the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) department of the US Department of Agriculture. The proposed easement includes Parcels 1 and 2 and a portion of Parcel 4 where the dome resides.

If you have any questions, please e-mail us at [FOC@UUCB.org](mailto:FOC@UUCB.org).

## Board Nominations

The UUCB Nominating Committee would like to announce the candidates for the Board of Trustees Election 2024. Listed alphabetically by last name:

- Michael DeWitt
- Beth Jerde
- Helen Toy

These outstanding candidates will submit a personal statement and be on hand to answer your questions at the Candidates Forum on Sunday, January 28 beginning at 12:30 pm. (You'll be able to attend in person and via Zoom.)

The Nominating Committee would like to thank these individuals for their dedication to our congregation and their willingness to partake in the election process.

If you have any questions, please email UUCB Board of Trustees Vice President Michael Armstrong at [michaelarmstrong2494@comcast.net](mailto:michaelarmstrong2494@comcast.net) or call him at 510-219-3847.

Thank you,

UUCB Nominating Committee Members (listed alphabetically by last name): Michael Armstrong, Don Klose, Anita Mermel, Sandy Portillo-Robins, Ariel Smith-lyer, Terry Stokes, Andrew Swan, Marta Tobey.

### Board of Trustees December 2023 Actions

**Capital Improvement Projects:** The Board received a [presentation](#) from Tom Tripp, and then approved the following:

With input from the Buildings & Grounds Committee and oversight from Endowment Projects Oversight Committee, authorized the Executive Director to spend up to \$189,419 from the \$758,000 endowment project funds for (1) the replacement of UUCB's private sewer lateral - as required by EBMUD; (2) replacement of the Music Room gas furnace with an electric heat pump; and (3) engineering and preconstruction costs to continue investigation for HVAC & electrical upgrades, including the potential for an all-electric campus.

The congregation has authorized spending up to \$758,000 from UUCB's quasi-endowment earnings on capital projects. The approved projects list is expected to exhaust the remainder of the congregation-authorized funds for capital projects—unless donations are received to offset costs.

## Social Justice

Happy New Year. Let us start the year as we mean to continue, rededicated to love, peace, justice, equity, and safety for all beings, and to securing the health of the interconnected web of life. In this time of world upheaval and pain, let's remember the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

*"Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love."* - Nobel Peace Prize [acceptance address](#) December 10, 1964, Oslo, Norway.

The Social Justice Council will meet by Zoom on **Wednesday, January 10 at 7 – 8:30 pm**. Zoom links will be sent out closer to the meeting date. All are invited to join.

The calendar for Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend is a busy one! Consider joining fellow UUCB members to usher in the new year for the following events.

### **January 12, 6-8 pm Ceasefire Night Walk**

**Location:** First Mt. Sinai, 1970 86th Ave.

6 pm: Gathering for pre-walk/corners process

6:30 pm: walk or stand on corners

7:30 pm: returned back to starting location or completed from the corners

By 7:45 pm, walk process completed

### **January 14, 1-2:30 pm First ever public screening of *Resurrecting Love: The Cemetery That Can Heal a Nation*.**

Hosted by the Literature, Drama, Film, and Music Contingent of the Social Justice Council, the film will be followed by a discussion with the producer and author/editor. It will also be available on Zoom and live streaming. All are invited!

### **January 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

#### **Martin Luther King, Jr. Annual Celebration in El Cerrito**

9 am - Meet at El Cerrito City Hall

10 am - Parade begins

11 am - Rally starts at El Cerrito High School

### **January 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

**Location: SF Caltrain Station @ 11 am**

**4th Street @ Townsend Street**

Please plan to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday with a march and parade from San Francisco Caltrain station to Yerba Buena Gardens, in an exciting event supported by the San Francisco Interfaith Council.

Join thousands in honoring the Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama marches and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by experiencing the MLK2024 commemorative march/parade from San Francisco's Caltrain Station to Yerba Buena Gardens. The march begins at 11 am on Monday, January 15, and participants are encouraged to arrive early. The 1.5-mile journey crosses the Lefty O'Doul Bridge and stops at Willie Mays Plaza at AT&T Park to commemorate the crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, a symbol of violence and victory in the civil rights movement.

Groups can register and march together at the [MLK2024 March Eventbrite page](#).

At the conclusion of the march, in partnership with the [San Francisco Interfaith Council](#), an interfaith commemoration will bring together the region's faith leaders to commemorate the vision of Dr. King and to lead participants in a spiritual reflection of his message.

Finally, thank you to everyone who participated in reviewing and voting for our Good Neighbor nominees. We have a full calendar of social justice giving ahead for 2024, with organizations that will offer us new opportunities to live into MLK's vision.

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

–Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## 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 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  
Beth Pollard  
Bill Brown  
Randall Hudson  
Cordell Sloan  
Kay Fairwell  
David Rosales

## Executive Advisory Team

Tess Snook O’Riva (Executive Director and Convener)  
Rev. Marcus Liefert  
Heaven Walker (Director of Family Ministry & Lifelong Learning)

## Program Council

Jean Gleason (Convener)  
Robin Cooper (Family Ministry)  
Victoria Bowen (Membership)  
Lynne Cahoon (Buildings & Grounds)  
Carol Carlisle (Social Justice)  
Barbara Cullinane (Pastoral Care)  
Marin Fischer, Virginia Frederick and Phyllis Van Kranenburgh (Music/Arts)  
Jim Gasperini (Communications)  
Ann Harlow (Fundraising and Hospitality)  
Lonnie Moseley (Adult Religious Exploration)  
Lenore Ralston (Chalice Circles and Finance)  
Cordell Sloan (Board Liaison)

## Staff (partial list)

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