
April 2024

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 83 #4

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

From the Minister

The rainbow—a magical trick of light and water in the eye, an ancient holy symbol, a celebration of human diversity—calls to us with a primordial sense of wonder and play. In Noah’s story the rainbow is the sign of the new covenant between God and humanity, a reminder of the sacred nature of life, the inherent value and worthiness of every living creature. We who still love the symbol today, who wave its flag and celebrate with every color the glory of life’s diversity, are called to follow the rainbow path: to let the beauty we love be what we do, in the words of the Sufi teacher Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi. Beauty—the ineffable way we are touched by the natural world, by art and story, by our human relationships—beauty may be our most trustworthy guide to the holy. These are the themes we’ll explore for our final worship series of the year, ending with flower communion on June 2nd.

As Unitarian Universalists we’ve often come to think of covenant as a set of words that capture promises we make to one another as human beings. There is a beauty to this kind of covenanting, a beauty that shines in articulating the aspirations of how we will shape our community through ethical standards of relationship. As we celebrate with our installation ceremony the covenant of shared ministry that we have entered into, I wonder what it would be like to see ourselves as arriving into a covenant not of our own making, but woven from the rainbow threads of our ancestors and the more-than-human world. What if we were called to this moment, this place, this sacred work of Beloved Community, by something greater than our words of promise to one another? What if our covenant begins in the wordless beauty of the cosmos and our earthly place in it?

In faith and beauty,
Rev. Marcus Liefert



April Services

Sundays 11 am

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

April 7

World Religions of the 21st Century: What Matters Most
Rev. Lucy Bunch, UU Society of Sacramento

April 14

The Whole Thing’s an Art Project

April 21

11 am: Special Guest Rev. Chris Holton-Jablonski, Preaching

2:30 pm: The Installation of Rev. Marcus Liefert

April 28

Under the Rainbow Sign

Religious Education

Classes: April 7 & 14

Celebration Chapel: April 21

Children’s Yoga and Youth Group: April 28

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

April 14 – UUCB Budget Process with Executive Director Tess Snook O’Riva. Formulating the annual budget for UUCB could be compared to the process of making sausage. If you are interested in learning more about how our budget is formulated, this session will help explain that process to you and help answer your questions.

April 28 – Aphrodite the Alchemical Goddess, Archetypal Psychology, and Healing, presented by Heaven Walker, Director of Family Ministry and Lifelong Learning. Please join Heaven for her presentation about Aphrodite before she departs to start ministerial studies in the next step in her spiritual ministry.

Youth and Children’s Choir Rehearsal

Sundays at 10 am

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

Humanist Connections

Sundays at 1 pm on Zoom

April 7 – Ethics, Sports, and Games presented by Don Anderson.

April 14 – Topic Selection for June and Short Topic Discussion.
Ray Westergard.

April 21 (Installation Sunday) – Biggest Social Construction Projects in World presented by Dennis Monthei.

April 28 – What Is Intelligence? Presented by Paul Ulbrich.

Good Neighbor in April

Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP)

BORP works to improve the health, independence, and social integration of people with physical disabilities through sports, fitness, and recreation programs. BORP believes that sports and recreation provide a path to greater achievement to which all people should have access and continually strives to make this a reality. <https://www.borp.org/>

Special Events

April 3 @ 7:15 pm
Board Meeting

April 7 @ 9:30 am
Parents’ Discussion

April 20
9 am Work Party
1 pm People of Color Caucus
4 – 8 pm Parents’ Night Out
6:30 pm Youth Social

April 20 @ 7:30 pm
Kensington Symphony Orchestra/
Luminescence Choir **Concert**

April 21 @ 2:30 pm
Rev. Marcus’ Installation

April 23 @ 5:30 pm
Passover Seder

April 27
9 am Birds of UUCB
11 am Plants of UUCB
7 pm Earth Day Celebration.
Screening of the documentary “The Letter”

Board Listening Presence

Michael Armstrong: (510) 219-3847
michaelarmstrong2494@comcast.net

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 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 pm Choir Rehearsal

Fridays

10 am Improving Your Balance through Tai Chi

Monthly Events & Meetings

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

10:30 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

9 am Work Party (3rd Saturday)

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

4 pm Parents' Night Out (3rd Saturday)

6:30 pm Youth Social Event

Announcements

KSO/Luminescence Concert

April 20 @ 7:30 pm



Rev. Marcus' Installation April 21. [RSVP.](#)



Passover Seder April 23 @ 5:30 pm. [RSVP.](#)



Stewardship Campaign

Wake Now Our Vision



During the last four years, our congregation has progressed from gathering only online in April 2020, and yes, still in April 2021, to gathering in person, beginning in late March 2022,

to the full calendar of activities that we experience today. Since the arrival of Rev. Marcus late last summer, our Sundays at UUCB are bustling with joy, enthusiasm, and action.

We hope you enjoyed and were inspired by the Stewardship activities, reflections, and celebrations during March. Wasn't the music wonderful? We sang (and moved to) "Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" and "Alive, Awake, Alert, Enthusiastic" with our children and youth, as well as revisiting the beautiful hymn "Wake Now Our Senses." Did you enjoy watching the sun rise in the chancel, and indulging in a few desserts on Kickoff Sunday? Did you consider participating in a new (to you) UUCB group? Did UUCB members' Stewardship reflections on March Sundays provoke new thoughts of what UUCB means to you?

As April begins, please keep in mind that pledges are still welcome! We asked for pledges of financial support in March in order to provide information for a realistic 2024-25 budget, which we hope to approve at our May congregational meeting. If you haven't pledged yet, there's still time for your pledge to be part of that planning.

For more information about Stewardship, and links to online pledging, please visit the UUCB's Stewardship and Pledging webpage at <https://uucb.org/about-us/give/stewardship/>.

Stewardship 2024 Team: Cynthia Asprodites, Selene Fabiano, Kay Fairwell, Anne Greenwood, Rev. Marcus Liefert, Lisa Maynard (chair), Judy Sam, Helen Toy, Karen Tripp, Anne Wardell.

Rev. Marcus Liefert's Installation

**Sunday, April 21, 2024, 2:30 pm (service);
4:00 pm (reception)**

Nearly a year ago, Rev. Marcus was unanimously called (voted on by the members of the congregation) as UUCB's settled minister. That was on May 7, 2023, and he officially became our minister in August 2023. A life-long UU, he first came to UUCB as an intern minister (August 2011 - June 2013) and was jointly ordained by our church and First Unitarian Church of Oakland in May 2014. We are excited about the installation because it is an opportunity for us — Rev. Marcus and the UUCB— to remember that momentous day of the call and to embrace our commitment to shared ministry and the journey that ensues from this partnership!

Three things to know about the installation celebration:

1. It is a sacred ritual service that honors our mutual commitment to sharing the ministry of UUCB, our joy in having made that commitment, and our dreams for our congregation's future.
2. All are invited, age zero to infinity, to the service (also live streamed) and reception at UUCB. Childcare, if needed, is provided.
3. Stay for the party while experiencing community, lively conversation, delicious food, and dessert.

The actual service will include special rituals like a procession & recession: while we sing, Rev. Marcus and a flock of ministers will dramatically walk from the back of sanctuary to the chancel. And will do the reverse at the end! [Click here to learn more](#) about the act of installation, gift, laying on of hands, and charges.

To participate in marking this important congregational milestone you can attend and celebrate with your congregational community ([RSVP here](#)), volunteer your time and talent ([sign-up here](#)), bring a dessert to share ([sign-up here](#)) or participate in any of the three ongoing community-wide creative projects ([learn more here](#))

Your presence is important at this special milestone for Rev. Marcus and our community. Let's celebrate!

Installation Committee

Suzette Anderson-Duggan, Natalie Campbell, Karen Elliott, Jean Gleason, Megan Hailey-Dunsheath, Lisa Maynard, Sandy Portillo-Robins, Kerry Simpson, Ariel Smith-Iyer, Kiran Smith-Iyer, Karen Tripp.

From the Board of Trustees

Spring is nature's way of saying "Let's Party!" – Robin Williams

And that we will...on **Sunday, April 21, starting at 2:30 pm** we install Rev. Marcus Liefert as our minister!

First up that afternoon we'll experience thoughtful moments integral to the UUCB community and Rev. Marcus covenanting with one another. Quoting from the [Unitarian Universalist Association Handbook](#) on Installations:

The Installation isn't something the congregation does for the minister; rather, it honors and celebrates the promises you are making to one another as you knit yourselves into shared ministry. As a result, the Service of Installation is centered around a spoken ritual that lifts up your covenant of shared ministry. As with the Service of Ordination, it's a worship service that offers an invitation to individual and communal transformation as well as an opportunity to live our faith in the world.

The Board encourages you to be present – in person or via livestream – as Rev. Marcus and our congregation commit to supporting one another and mutually advancing our mission. All in the presence of other UU's and loved ones of Rev. Marcus.

And then...time to party!! Celebrating our good fortune in finding one another. Not just UUCB finding and attracting Rev. Marcus to be our minister, and vice versa. Also, that we, as UUCB congregants, have found and continue to find folks with shared values; people who demonstrate curious interest and bold willingness to be part of a faith community – living out its progressive values – when such a commitment culturally has been on the decline.

As we celebrate our dedication to this new chapter of UUCB – one full of rainbows with hope and enthusiasm – wouldn't it be great to also cheer reaching or exceeding our Stewardship Pledge Goal by April 21? Meaning all members have said *"Yes, I believe in UUCB and will commit right now to financial support!"* (Preferably by March 31)

Reflecting on the Installation ceremony theme of **"From Compost to Rainbows"** combined with the Stewardship theme of **"Wake Now our Vision,"** I have an image in my mind of UUCB finding our pledge pot full of gold at the end of the rainbow – as we enter into the next year

and new ministry. One that will fund and inspire us with a reinvigorated vision, and more fully fulfilling our mission, enhancing our visibility to others with our values who may not yet have found us, and being the best UUCB we can be.

In beloved community,
Beth Pollard
Member, UUCB Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees March 2024 Actions

- 1. Freestone:** Decided to move forward on an offer for the two vacant lots (Parcels 1 and 2) – an action recommended by both the Freestone Committee and the Freestone Oversight Committee and provided for in the March 2023 Freestone congregational resolution. This decision follows Board action on its January agenda to list the lots for sale, as recommended by the two committees.
- 2. New Members:** Welcomed the 18 new members who have joined UUCB since January 2023 – with a personal welcome to new members attending the Board meeting.
- 3. Director of Family Ministry Search Committee:** Approved the following composition of the committee to work with Rev. Marcus in the search for a new director to replace Heaven Walker: Pier Sun Ho, Robin Cooper, Melissa Rosales, and Suzette Anderson-Duggan.
- 4. Land Acknowledgement Statement:** Modified/shortened it to read: *As we begin, we want to acknowledge that this church occupies land in Huchiu in the unceded territory of the Chochoyeno-speaking Ohlone people. May we have the humility and courage to do our part to restore what has been broken and the wisdom to live into a new solidarity with Indigenous communities and the earth.*
- 5. Annual Report:** Received the 2022-23 Annual Report, beautifully designed by staff.
- 6. Congregational Meeting Agendas:** Authorized the Board President to make minor changes to Board-approved congregational meeting agendas.
- 7. Board Member Assignments:** Board members signed up for [Board Committee and Liaison appointments.](#)

For a recording of previous Board of Trustees meetings, please contact secretary@uucb.org for a link.

Freestone Oversight Committee

The Freestone Oversight Committee (FOC) consists of Beth Pollard (Board Rep and Co-chair), Tom Tripp (Co-chair), David Wemmer (Freestone Committee Rep), Alan Davis (Freestone Committee Rep), Susan Lankford, and Larry Nagel. The FOC actions for March 2024 include:

- The Freestone Committee applied for an Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) 2024 grant through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) department of the US Department of Agriculture. The proposed easement included Parcels 1 and 2 and a large portion of Parcel 4 where the dome resides. The Conservation Easement application was denied on February 20, 2024, on the grounds that the Freestone property has never been used for agricultural purposes. The Freestone Committee has decided to not further pursue the easement(s) this funding cycle. The committee will consider submitting an application for next year's funding cycle on the dome parcel. By then they should understand how to achieve a more successful outcome.
- The UUCB Board of Trustees approved the listing of Parcels 1 and 2 of the Freestone properties at the January 10, 2024 Board of Trustees meeting. The Freestone Committee negotiated a listing agreement for Parcels 1 and 2 of the Freestone properties with Realtors Laura Richards and Kent Byers of Coldwell Banker in Sebastopol. Parcels 1 and 2 were listed in MLS on February 23, 2024 and the list price for both parcels is \$300,000. The listing may be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/yc4stzfk>.
- The FOC recommended to the Board of Trustees the acceptance of a purchase offer for the parcels, after review of the Freestone Committee's recommendation for its acceptance and discussing the offer with Realtor Laura Richards.

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

Social Justice

There's SO much going on in the Social Justice Council's various committees – and we welcome everyone to join in. The Council itself meets via Zoom at 7 pm on the

second Wednesday of each month. Check The Week Ahead for the link.

Here's some of what has been happening recently and what we'll be up to in April and beyond.

Voting Justice

Write postcards with us!

We are sending postcards out to support youth and people of color who have historically faced barriers to voting. **We currently have postcards, scripts, and pens in the atrium every Sunday just waiting for your help to Get Out the Vote in Georgia.** Once you have written a sample postcard with us, we send you home with a packet of 5 postcards to do on your own and return to us for mailing. **Join us! Action is the antidote to despair!!!**

Cynthia Greenleaf, Norie Clarke, Karen Elliott

World Peace Committee

The UUCB World Peace Committee is in the process of re-activating and re-constituting itself. New members are most welcome at fourth Tuesday, 7 pm Zoom meetings, link announced in the Social Justice and Discuss lists. In March, we decided to undertake **two actions**. **First**, to circulate a **petition** (an open letter to President Biden and members of Congress) **calling for an immediate and permanent cease-fire in the Israeli/Hamas war** and stronger action from the U.S. government toward that end. The petition is **available in the Atrium**. **Second, to give a donation of \$2,000** in March from the Peace Committee Fund to an organization poised to deliver food, medical supplies, and other humanitarian aid to the civilian population of Gaza. We are currently researching which organization would be most effective.

Don Klose, Roberta Shaw

Climate Justice Committee

Upcoming Earth Day Activities

Mark **Saturday, April 27**, as a day to celebrate Earth Day at UUCB. At **7 pm** we'll show the **acclaimed film *The Letter*** – featuring Pope Francis and extraordinary earth champions from around the globe. We'll provide refreshments, and everyone is invited to participate in a discussion of this touching film. That same morning **Phil Maynard will lead two walks around our campus**. At 9 am, he'll focus on the birds we see at UUCB, some of them quite amazing, and at 11, he'll focus on our plant communities – native and otherwise. **Earth Day activities will be featured in our**

RE program on April 21. Climate Justice Committee members and other congregational members are in the initial stages of planning these activities. They may include: a creek or beach clean-up and an invasive plant clean-up on our UUCB grounds. The Climate Justice Committee will staff the SJC table during the month of April so we can provide information on both our environmental justice activities as well as how everyone can address the climate crisis and other environmental issues, including increasing voter turnout with the evidence-based Environmental Voter Project. We look forward to meeting you as you come by and check out our table.
Sheila F. Tarbet

LDFMC

The Literature, Film, Drama and Music Contingent of the Social Justice Council invites you to join us Sunday May 6 for a discussion of the Oscar-nominated film *American Fiction*. Our zoom discussion will be moderated by Lonnie Moseley and Cordell Sloan. See you 1:30 – 3 pm!

This film was nominated for four Academy awards and won for Best Adapted Screenplay; the two main actors, Jeffrey Wright and Sterling K. Brown, are winners in everything they do. It is currently showing at the AMC theater in Emeryville but you can also find it on Amazon Prime. I won't summarize the plot here but it has more levels than satirizing the publishing world and cultural expectations; it concerns family life in middle age, identity and masculinity.

Christina Creveling

Partner Church

The year is going by rapidly, or so it seems. We recently buried the ashes of longtime UUCB member and Partner Church Committee founder Jay Hanks. Jay's son, David, was very moved by the number of people who gathered by our Transylvanian gate on February 25 to share memories of Jay and all he did to make our partnership with Homoródújfalú a reality. Thanks to all who attended.

We've acquired many pieces of embroidery produced by the women of the village over the years. Rather than sit in a closet in the church office, why not sell them as a fundraiser for the Partner Church Committee? Stay tuned for more details about when this will happen.

A number of UUCB members have expressed interest in traveling to Transylvania this September. It's getting time for serious organizing if this pilgrimage is going to happen. We'll be putting out information soon on when we will meet (probably via Zoom, if not in person on a Sunday following the service). Watch for announcements. If you think you want to go and haven't said anything, let us (Stephanie Ann or Anne) know right away!

Stephanie Ann Blythe can be contacted at steph62850@yahoo.com and Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net. You know we want to hear from you! Don't wait!

Chalice Camp

Chalice camp is a fun and meaningful week-long summer day camp for 1st through 6th graders. It deepens our Bay Area youth's understanding of themselves and Unitarian Universalists values.

When: Aug. 5–9, 9 am– 4:30 pm

Where: Tilden Regional Park

Contact: support@chalicecamp.org

Info and Registration: chalicecamp.org



CHALICE CAMP
A UU SUMMER DAY CAMP

Hours: 9:00am–4:30pm
Now @ Tilden Regional Park
Presenting Chalice Camp III:
Climate Justice

Registration → \$400
www.chalicecamp.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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Pier Sun Ho, Co-President
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Lonnie Moseley (Adult Religious Exploration)
Lenore Ralston (Chalice Circles)
Helen Tinsley-Jones (Board Liaison)

Staff (partial list)

Minister: Rev. Marcus Liefert
revmarcus@uucb.org 510-525-0302 ext. 303
Executive Director: Tess Snook O’Riva
ed@uucb.org 510-525-0302 ext. 305
Director of Family Ministry and Lifelong Learning: Heaven Walker
family.ministry@uucb.org, 510-525-0302 ext. 307
Office Administrator: Janae Heard
janae@uucb.org, 510-525-0302 ext. 306
Connections Coordinator: Charis Domador
connections@uucb.org, 510-525-0302 ext. 304