

MARCH 2025

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 84 #3

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

From the Minister

Last June, our Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly voted to adopt a new statement of Values to update the language of our seven principles, which had been adopted in 1985. In this new articulation of what holds us together as a religious movement, we named clearly the truth that has always animated the Universalist side of our heritage: love is at the center of our theology. It's looking through this lens that led our wonderful Stewardship team to organize this year's campaign around Gary Chapman's "Five Love Languages," and invite us into thinking about how we express and receive love in so many different ways at church. We're calling this series of worship services in March through our Stewardship celebration on April 6, Love in Translation.

In our new set of Values, collectively known as "Article II" of our UUA bylaws, one struck me as most aspirational and novel in our articulation of our UU identity: Generosity. It reads, "We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope. We covenant to freely and compassionately share our faith, presence, and resources. Our generosity connects us to one another in relationships of interdependence and mutuality." I say aspirational because I remember poring over charts in seminary that showed that in the U.S., religious traditions with demographics skewed highly educated and professional class, like ours, tended to give at lower rates than other religious traditions. My crackpot theory is that our tendency to have more economic freedom leaves us less viscerally aware of the interdependence and mutuality we proclaim in our values.

Our American rugged individualism, and certainly the dominant political winds of our times, would tell us generosity is foolish. It's foolish to place our faith in giving in a way that is not transactional but covenantal. Foolish to trust something as noble and ephemeral as the common good. Foolish to believe anything is possible besides a zero-sum game. This month let's try on being fools for love—however you show it, however you need it, in whatever language you speak it.

Foolishly yours,
Rev. Marcus Liefert



March Services

Sundays 11 am

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

March 2

Music Sunday: Love in Translation

March 9

If You Give It Away: Stewardship Kickoff

March 16

A Bigger Table: Stewardship Continues

March 23

Inherent Mirth and Dignity

May 29

With That Sweet Moon Language

Coffee & Community

Starts at 9:30 am in the Atrium

In person in the Social Hall

Sunday Programming

Personal Theology

Some Sundays at 9:30 am, In Person and on Zoom



March 16 – Channeling Jimmy Carter:
From Albany, Georgia to Albany, California." With Becca Black, local author and poet.

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!

Religious Education

Sundays at 11:15 am (during service)

We will explore our theme for the month, GENEROSITY, which means that we have giving hearts, that we share what we have, and that we practice being grateful. Please email Kathryn Jay, Director of Family Ministry for more information: kathryn@uucb.org.

Humanist Connections

Sundays at 1 pm on Zoom (3rd Sunday is in person, no Zoom)

March 2 – Topic Selection for next month and Short Topic Discussion. Ray Westergard.

March 9 – Paul Ulbrich will discuss “Trump’s mental health”

March 16 (In Person) – Harold Ogren will discuss “Is it a taboo to talk about meritocracy?”

March 23 – Paul Ulbrich will discuss “The difference between facts and opinions”

March 30 – Ingrid Kepler-May will discuss “Nutrition and animal survival”

Special Events

March 1

Kensington Symphony Orchestra
Concert: Russian Classics

March 9

Stewardship Kickoff

March 9 @ 5:30 pm

Social Justice Potluck

March 12 @ 6 pm

Screening of “Counted Out”

March 15

Death Café Conversations

March 15 @ 4:30 pm

Parents’ Night Out

March 15 @ 6:45

Youth Group Gathering

March 21 @ 5:30 pm

Church du Soleil: an XYZ/Millennial-ish sunset service

March 23 @ 5 pm

Coming Out Stories

March 24

Bylaws Review Committee Info Session

Good Neighbor in March

ECAP Emeryville Citizen's Assistance Program:
ecapprogram.com

Mission: Emeryville Citizens Assistance Program's all-volunteer mission is to unconditionally distribute surplus food, care and compassion to those in need in Emeryville, Oakland, and surrounding Bay Area communities. ECAP provides nutrition to approximately 300 families/individuals daily, 6 days/week.

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

Stewardship



Have you ever wondered about UUCB—
How much it costs to heat the
sanctuary on a cold January Sunday?
Does our staff receive a living wage?

How we can increase our impact in the world, now in
2025?

Your dedicated Stewardship Team has the singular goal of helping pull together the resources of this community so that these ends can be met. Your role is critical to ensuring that UUCB is able to pay our precious staff fair wages, keep the lights and heat turned on, and make it possible for UUCB to work toward its vision of "serving one another, the church community, the community at large, and the global community."

We've planned a beautiful theme around love and the many wonderful ways our members express their love for this community. The stewardship campaign to ask for your pledge will run for 5 weeks, from Kickoff Sunday on March 9 until Celebration Sunday, April 6. Each Sunday a different speaker will share how they express their love for UUCB, touching on the popular concept of Love Languages.

Watch for Lynne C. to talk about "physical touch," Melissa to share about "acts of service," Suzette and Sandy to talk together about how they've shared "quality time," Barbara and the Pastoral Care Team who represent "words of affirmation" and finally Lenore and the Shelter Rock supporters who will talk more specifically about the monetary gifts we share.

And if that's not enough, we'll celebrate on April 6 with cake and the world debut of a poem by our beloved poet laureate, Claire Baker, who is writing a poem just for this occasion.

As a reminder, pledging is an expectation of members. If you're a visitor, we want you to know that your presence is a gift and we hope you'll consider formally joining UUCB when the time feels right to you.

Please feel free to reach out if you have questions: stewardship@uucb.org

Yours in creating loving community, inspiring spiritual growth, and encouraging lives of integrity, joy, and service,

Ariel, Greg, Selene, Paul, Mary, and Anne W.

From the Board of Trustees

As my tenure on the Board of Trustees comes to an end and I transition from this chapter in my church life (don't worry I'm not going anywhere, just transitioning off the Board), I reflect on my journey and my awe of what this congregational community accomplishes every single day. Learning more about how both our Bylaws and Governance Manual guide our work together has been especially rewarding. I have reflected on these passages, including some of the relatively newer ones from Widening the Circle of Concern: "Brave Perseverance Guides Us, Doing the work is vital—educating ourselves ... developing emotional tools for responding to criticism and change ...".

I cling to these words as it seems all sanity in the world collapses around me. But the words from our Bylaws & Governance Manual don't just provide a structure for our congregation, they calm me and help carve a path toward action. They remind me of the tenets of our liberal faith, and they ground me. If you have a moment read the words of novelist Lori Gallagher on what it means to her to be 'liberal': Lori Gallagher Witt *Thoughts on 'Being a Liberal'*

We are so blessed to have committees (guided by these documents) of dedicated, fearless congregants accessing the resources embedded in our structure and culture and creating new ones. Resources and committees such as Social Justice, Climate Change, Program Council, Widening the Circle of Concern, Chalice Circles, the upcoming Pathways to Connections, Adult and Family Religious Education, Adult Exploration Events - even the UUCB Discuss List emails (just to name a few).

I encourage anyone reading this that when the weight of our current political and social turmoil threatens, do as I have and look to the resources at UUCB to find an outlet toward action. I also encourage anyone who hasn't yet, attend the Board Meetings and consider becoming a Board Member. Its rewards can be surprising.

Michael

Opening Task Force (OTF) Update

Board of Trustees February 2025 Actions

1. Adopted this statement in support of our

LGBTQIA+ community: The current administration campaigned on a platform of homophobic and transphobic hate and now is implementing policies that are damaging to LGBTQIA+ people, especially transgender folks. We at UUCB stand with our LGBTQIA+ and gender diverse siblings. We welcome the important diversity that transgender folks bring and we will not stand silent in the face of attacks on their wellbeing. We celebrate our transgender members, guests and their families.

2. Immigration protection signage:

Endorsed erection of signs indicating areas of the church considered private, and therefore not permitting immigration enforcement officials to enter without a warrant—as consistent with the congregation's Sanctuary Church policy.

3. General Assembly (GA), June 18-22:

Invited members to contact UUCB member Rev. Jane Ramsey with general questions about GA, which will take place virtually and in-person in Baltimore, as well as questions about scholarship assistance or becoming a delegate to GA.

UUCB Bylaw Review Committee

The UUCB Bylaw Review Committee 2025 will be holding 2 Congregational Feedback Sessions, one virtual and one in person.

Virtual: Monday, March 24 from 7 – 8:30 pm (a link will be sent out via the UUCB Discuss List)

In person: After Service on Sunday, April 6, in the Sanctuary.

Come and learn what updates have been suggested by your committee and give us feedback.

Committee Members:

Michael Armstrong, Cynthia Asprodites, Andrea Brown, David Rosales, Lorraine Schnurr.

Partner Church

It's time for the next UU Global Partnerships event. Note that you can attend in person or on Zoom. Here's the invitation from Rev. Kevin Alan Mann of the Oakland UU Church:

Dear Global UU Friends,

Please save the date and tell a few friends about the next Quarterly U/U Global Partnerships gathering on Saturday, March 22nd @ 12noon-2:30pm hosted in-person at the First UU Society of San Francisco and on zoom: bit.ly/globaluuzoom

Bring a friend and something to share for the potluck. We will be joined by the new U/U Global Network Facilitator Esther Mukera from the Unitarian Church of Kenya!

Thanks friends! Please RSVP to me so we know how many to expect. May the light of global Unitarian Universalism shine bright!

It would be great to have a contingent from UUCB attend. If you are interested in attending, be sure to RSVP to [Rev. Kevin](#). Then, please let us know too! Either to [Stephanie Ann Blythe](#) or [Anne Greenwood](#). We want to see you there.



New Name Badges Are Here!

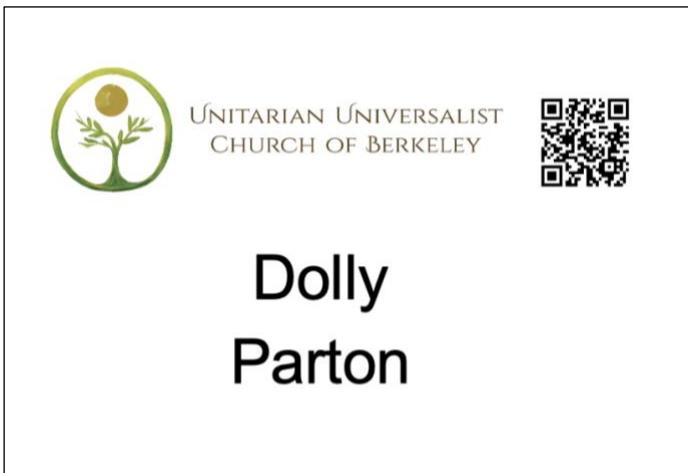
We're excited to announce that we've replaced our name badges with new ones featuring our updated logo.

If you are a member, your badge has already been printed and placed in a black box labeled "MEMBERS." These boxes are organized alphabetically by last name (A-G, H-N, O-T, U-Z) and can be found on the **left-hand side of the breezeway**, outside the main entrance.

Non-members who dropped off their old badges last week will find their new badges in **black boxes with hot pink labels**, also organized alphabetically, located on the **right-hand side of the breezeway**.

Please check the signs carefully to locate the correct box and retrieve only your own badge to keep the process smooth for everyone.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we make this transition. We hope you enjoy your new badges!



Social Justice Council

The Social Justice Council will have a **potluck meeting on Sunday, March 9** in the Fireside Room, starting at 5:30 pm. We welcome all to join us in fellowship to pursue our social justice goals and principles! Please also help us out by volunteering to help clean up after the meeting.

In its February meeting, the Social Justice Council approved a new Sponsored Project, UUCB Immigrant Support 2025. The project aims to:

1. Educate UUCB and other congregations about the needs for support that immigrants are facing
2. Take part in actions that are supportive of immigrants, in partnership with faith and social justice groups in our communities
3. Review and revise the sanctuary statement adopted by the congregation in 2018 for the May 2025 Congregational Meeting
4. Keep the Board of Trustees apprised of immigration issues impacting the church
5. Investigate best practices for sheltering immigrants if needed and take action to do so.

For more information about this new project, contact Francy Liefert. Cyndy Greenleaf, SJC Co-chair - socialjustice@uucb.org

Pride Project

January's LBGTQIA+ Movie Night, sponsored by UUCB's Pride Project, was a big success, thanks to the group's PR work. Charis helped promote it in a wonderful way, and the group is so thankful to her.

We had over 20 people in attendance. And several of those were youth, some of whom identify as queer. They had a great time. Everybody loved the movie, *Nimona*, which features a gay male lead.

Lots of volunteers helped with set up and clean up. And the food was varied and delicious!

Marsha Lanier, MSW, chair - socialjustice@uucb.org

Climate Justice Committee

The Climate Justice Committee recently reviewed the UUA's materials for its revised Green Sanctuary program and reported twice to the UUA Green Sanctuary community of congregations. UUCB will be paid for this, and we'll use this money to support our climate justice work! All this will help us as we implement the UUA's comprehensive model of intersectional climate action.

Here are the Four Essentials of Climate Action as defined by the Green Sanctuary program:

- **Congregational Transformation**
- **Community Resilience**
- **Justice**
- **Mitigation**

In February, our meeting focused on outlining a plan for our mitigation work—how to reduce our emissions and pollution, using a UUA process. We'll be reaching out to the congregation to learn what projects you most support and are interested in working on. It will take a lot of us in our UUCB community working together to do this work. We'll need your help.

If you are drawn to helping plan and carrying out UUCB's climate actions, short term or long term, please let us know. We're now regularly seeing devastating fires and weather events, so let's get started. We can take constructive action out of love and faith for future generations, for ourselves, and for our beautiful web of life.

We're also planning a variety of activities and events for the congregation for April, Earth Month. We're inviting everyone to join us and **learn** about diverse aspects of climate and justice, be **inspired**, and **take meaningful action**.

Sheila Tarbet, CJC Chair - socialjustice@uucb.org

Freestone Oversight Committee

The Freestone Oversight Committee (FOC) is comprised of Beth Pollard (Board Rep and Co-chair), Tom Tripp (Co-chair), David Wemmer (Freestone Committee Rep), Bob Moore (Freestone Committee Rep), Susan Lankford, and Larry Nagel. The FOC has the following items to report on from February 2025.

- Despite one of the driest Januaries on record, it was not possible to schedule drilling the second well in January due to holidays and the driller's availability. The incoming atmospheric river starting on January 31 further delayed drilling the well until sometime in March.
- Because the second well requires grading for access, and because of the wet weather, an additional layer of gravel is necessary to provide access even in wet conditions. A culvert pipe at the existing drainage swale also is required. With the addition of gravel and culvert pipe, the estimated cost to drill the second well has grown to \$43,500, which is being paid for by an angel donor.
- With some luck, the Freestone Committee may be able to drill the second well in March, but even if the well drilling is successful, the \$250,000 required to repair the building at Freestone will not be raised by the Board-extended deadline of April 1, 2025. At the March Board of Trustees meeting, the Freestone Oversight Committee will recommend to the Board that the April 1 deadline, and other deadlines, remain in place unless extended through approval by the congregation.

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

Lay Leadership Opportunities

The **Shared Pulpit Program**, created by the Rev. Erika Hewitt, is designed for lay people to practice crafting sermons based on their own lived experiences. In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, we talk of ministry as something "shared," something we all practice together in community. Sharing spiritual reflections in the form of sermons or shorter reflections during worship is one way we practice shared ministry, and anyone can do it—with some practice! In this seven-session virtual program, we will explore the art of sermon-crafting and practice writing and preaching progressively longer reflections in a small group setting. Although we will gain practical skills, the process is primarily one of spiritual growth and deepening connection. We look forward to taking this journey with you!

We will be using Erika Hewitt's book, *The Shared Pulpit: A Sermon Seminar for Lay People* (2014). You will need to purchase the book before the first session. The program **begins on March 17 and will run on Monday evenings from 7 to 9 pm on Zoom. The dates are March 17, 24, April 7, 21, May 5, 19, and June 2.** The program will be held over Zoom, although we will hope to spend the final two sessions in the Sanctuary. Each session will be two hours long, with brief reading and writing assignments in between. Regular attendance is crucial to the integrity of the program, not only because the sessions build on each other, but also because of the group trust we'll need to create and maintain. So we ask that you make a commitment to attend all the sessions, if possible.

The Shared Pulpit class will be led by Rev. Kathryn Jay, who previously taught the class in 2022. Rev. Marcus Liefert will drop in with wisdom and practical tips occasionally.

For more information please email [Rev. Kathryn Jay](mailto:Rev.Kathryn.Jay).

Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

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.

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.

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Lenore Ralston (Chalice Circles and Finance)

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