

November 2025

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley
Vol. 84 #11

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

From Rev. Kathryn Jay

Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley and Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) invite you to a special evening with Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, President of UUSC

Please join Rev. Marcus Liefert, Rev. Kathryn Jay, and UU's from around the Bay Area who support UUSC's work for a gathering with Rev. Mary Katherine Morn to hear her firsthand stories of the impact of UUSC's human rights and social justice initiatives. Come to be inspired, to learn how UUSC partners around the world have resisted authoritarian governments for years, and to connect with others who care about advancing human rights over a simple soup supper.

Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2025, 6 – 8 pm in the Atrium at UUCB

Kindly [RSVP here](#) so we are sure to have enough soup.



November Services

Sundays 11 am

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

November 2

Standing in the River. Rev. Kathryn Jay. An All Souls Service.

November 9

Music Sunday

November 16

Your Daily Book. Rev. Amy Zucker Morgenstern

November 23

Rev. Bryan Plude

November 30

Emotional Accounting. Rev. Amy Zucker Morgenstern

Coffee & Community

Starts at 10:30 am in the Atrium

Lunch

In the Social Hall following the service (except Nov. 23)

Sunday Programming

Personal Theology

Some Sundays, 9:30 am, Fireside Room and on Zoom

November 9 – Josh Kornbluth

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). The theme for September and October will be BUILDING THE COMMON GOOD. Email Rev. Kathryn Jay, Minister for Congregational Life: kathryn@uucb.org

Humanist Connections

Sundays at 1 pm in person and on Zoom

November 2 – Harold Ogren will arrange for the selection of topics and speakers for December. Then a Bonus Discussion led by Marcia Bates, "Why Proposition 50 is so important"

November 9 – "Water Concerns." Dennis Monthei.

November 16 – "The Grand Jury and the Regular Jury." Paul Ulbrich

November 23 – "The Mindful Use of Technology." Karla Patel.

November 30 – "Bertrand Russell." Don Anderson.

Special Events

Nov. 2

Haunted House
Freestone Info Session

Nov. 7 Family Movie Night

Nov. 9

Music Sunday
Newcomer Q&A
Christopher Keady Organ
Recital (pg. 3)

Nov. 11

Freestone Info Session

Nov. 12 "Bridging for Democracy" - Social Justice Council (pg. 4)

Nov. 15

Parents' Night Out
Youth Group Gathering

Nov. 15

Music, the Brain, and Healing

Nov. 16

Freestone Congregational Mtg

Nov. 22-23

Holiday Sale

Nov. 23 Pathway to Connection: Covenant

Nov. 27

Thanksgiving Program (office closed Nov. 27-28)

Weekly Events (see uucb.org/weekahead)

Mondays

9 am Write For Your Life

9 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 (1=1st Sunday, 2=2nd Sunday, etc.)

9:30 am Parents Discussion Group (1/3)

1 pm Working to Overcome White Supremacy 2

1 pm Immigrant Support Group (1)

Monday

11 am Textile & Art (2)

5 pm Climate Justice Committee (4)

Tuesday

10:15 Prep/Serve Lunch GRIP (4)

7 pm World Peace Committee (3)

Wednesday

7:15 pm Board of Trustees (1)

7 pm Social Justice Council (2)

7 pm Program Council (3)

Thursday

10 am Thank You Circle (3)

Friday

11 am Textile & Art (4)

Saturday

9 am Work Party (3)

1 pm POCC People of Color Caucus (3)

2 pm Death Café (quarterly)

4 pm Parents' Night Out (3)

6:30 pm Youth Social Event (3)

Announcements

Board Listening Presence

Helen Toy helen_toy@yahoo.com

Organ Recital with Christopher Keady



Nov. 9 @ 3 pm Experience the brilliance of the pipe organ in the acoustical warmth of UUCB's Sanctuary! Join us for a recital by **Christopher Keady**, Associate Director of Music at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

Music, the Brain, and Healing



Music, the Brain, and Healing

Nov. 15 @ 10 am Join UUCB member Barbara Minton for a day of science, music, and discovery. This interactive workshop blends research, live performance, and hands-on experiences that will help you understand and harness the healing power of music. More info on our website and at musicandhealing.net.

Spooktacular Haunted House

Nov. 2 Our Coming of Age youth invite you to a *spooktacular* morning of fun! Created and run entirely by the youth. Expect thrills, laughter, and Halloween fun for the whole family!

Concerned About Our Democracy?

Come learn about BRIDGING FOR DEMOCRACY, at the upcoming Social Justice Council meeting: 7 pm, Wednesday, November 12. Zoom link to follow.

Cal's Othering and Belonging Institute is testing a new initiative, bringing together people of various races and political views for conversations focused on the humanity of those we differ with. Mansi Kathuria, who leads the project, will describe the work, answer our questions and seek our input. [Click here for more information.](#)

From the Board of Trustees

By Carla McCasland

As one of your two new Board Members, it has been my honor to become more intimately involved in the work of discernment and decision-making. In our Executive Sessions and Board meetings, I have been deeply moved by the spirit that guides our conversations—one grounded in kindness, generosity, and care. Even when we wrestle with difficult or contentious issues, there is not a trace of malice or mean-spiritedness. Instead, I see people speaking with care, listening across differences, and living into the principles of the credo we recite each week.

The season of generosity is upon us, and the 2025–26 Board of Trustees reflects the same warmth and giving spirit that characterizes our congregation as a whole. As the golden sun slants toward shorter days and the leaves blaze briefly before drifting to the earth, I am reminded that autumn is a season of both abundance and letting go. It is a time to gather the fruits of our labor, to savor what has ripened, and to prepare for reflection and renewal. In this turning of the year, may we continue to meet one another and the work before us with open hearts and generous spirits.

Board of Trustees October 2025 Actions

- 1. 5-Year Project Budget.** The board reviewed an initial draft of a 5-year project budget, a new planning tool that was recommended by our former Interim Executive Director.
- 2. Freestone Committee's Offer.** The board received, and retained a real estate attorney to review, an offer from the UUCB members Dwight & Gloria Merrill to purchase Lots 1 and 2, and from the Merrills and Bob Moore to contribute the remaining funds needed to meet the first milestone in the congregation's Resolution 22-1. Upon deep reflection on the offer and UUCB's current and future priorities and vision, the Board decided to reject the offer and recommend that the congregation vote to sell the entire Freestone property. A special congregational meeting, along with information sessions, will be convened for a congregational vote on the Board's recommendation.

Hospitality and Fundraising

Thanksgiving Day: There will be a short worship service at 1:00 in the Fireside Room, followed by a potluck feast. Please sign up [HERE](#) with what you will contribute. The wider community is invited to join us.

Our annual **Holiday Sale** will start Saturday, Nov. 22, with holiday decorations and giftable items including jewelry, small art works, and crafts. Donations for the sale would be best brought in the previous Sunday, Nov. 16. (We have plenty of jewelry already in stock!) There will be a silent auction that will, ideally, include some events hosted by UUCB members. It can also include objects or groups of objects (e.g. a theme basket) valued at \$20 or more. To donate auction items, please fill out the form [HERE](#) or on the table outside the church office. Ideas for events you could host, alone or with partners, include a New Year's Eve party, theme dinner, brunch, or afternoon tea; game night; music performance or talk or demonstration with light refreshments; behind-the-scenes tour; etc. These events not only raise money, they build community! People have also over the years offered babysitting, yard work, computer tutoring, and other services. Bidding for the auction will be online and in person and will close on December 7.

Ann Harlow, annharlow77@gmail.com

Partner Church

We recently sent \$3,200 to our Partner Church in Homorodújfalú. Most of the money will go to the students attending high school, university, and seminary. The village has a scholarship committee that oversees the distribution of the funds received from UUCB. Rev. Attila also receives a stipend to cover his internet connection costs and other incidental expenses. We understand that the villagers determine the final use of our donations, and we are satisfied with that.

We haven't said much lately about the Balazs Scholars Program, but it is morphing into the Balazs Global Committee! And guess what? They want to sponsor a minister from the Hungarian Unitarian Church to come to the Bay Area again! Rev. Lehel Molnár has been doing archival work for the Starr King School for the Ministry, and there will be an opportunity to add sponsorship to his important work at a hybrid event on December 6 with Dr. Molnár at the Starr King School offices, and the new President, Dr. Stephanie Krusemark, will join in. Look for more information on our Sunday table or on-line about contributing to this vital cause.

Current events might cast shadows over international travel, but here is a way to fight imperial dictates and promote greater understanding of Unitarianism as seen through different lenses. Again, look for our table on Sundays, or contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net.

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 September-October 2025.

- At the September 10, 2025 Board meeting, an offer from congregant Dwight Merrill to purchase Freestone Lots 1 and 2 was discussed in open session with the opportunity for congregants to ask questions and express opinions. The Board then adjourned to closed session and deliberated the issue, finally deciding to decline the offer.
- At its September 17 meeting, the FOC was informed that the Freestone Committee would be revising the offer to satisfy the Board's objections and would be resubmitting a revised offer. The revised offer was submitted to the FOC on September 22. The Freestone Committee asked for FOC inputs in anticipation of the Board requesting an opinion from the FOC as they did for the first offer.
- FOC members offered suggested edits to the proposed offer for purposes of clarity and consistency with Resolution No. 22-1. After extensive discussions and revisions among FOC members, the Freestone Committee submitted a second offer to the Board of Trustees on September 27.
- Under the offer, Dwight & Gloria Merrill would purchase Lots 1 & 2 for \$130,000, provide \$20,000 for roadway improvements, and donate \$40,000 in January 2026. Additionally, Bob Moore would donate

\$60,000 in January 2026. Both donors provided, by September 30, promissory notes for the donations. In addition Dwight and Gloria Merrill provided a \$20,000 to be cashed upon close of sale of the properties. The FOC advised the Board that the offer sufficiently meets the September 30, 2025 milestone to raise \$250,000. The FOC further advised that they are not qualified to provide legal counsel on the offer.

- The Board considered the offer at its October 1 meeting and decided that they needed to obtain advice on the offer from a real estate attorney before taking action on the offer.
- Meanwhile, the Freestone Committee is engaging a licensed structural engineer and a licensed architect to develop construction plans for repairs and improvements and to file for a building permit for procurement by the March 31, 2026 milestone date. A subgroup of the FOC (Beth, Larry, Susan and Tom) visited the dome on September 30, and Tom had the opportunity to review previously prepared plans and specifications from 2017, and to attend a site visit with the architect and structural engineer and Dave Wemmer on October 14. Based on discussion with the engineer the previous approach to dome repairs will be modified.

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

Good Neighbor for November



Contra Costa Family Justice Center:

cocofamilyjustice.org

The Contra Costa Family Justice Center seeks to create a community that is there to support the healing process for those who are affected by any form of family violence and human trafficking. We strive to integrate capable partners with common goals to create a comprehensive service network to alleviate or prevent future instances of family violence.

Bulletin from the Board

We are in the process of preparing an FAQ about the Board's recommendation to sell the entire Freestone property.

The Board will be holding two information sessions to share the thought process that led to our recommendation regarding the Freestone property. We will also have a table in the social hall on Sunday 11/2 and Sunday 11/9 to answer questions. Below are the dates and times of the **two information sessions**. We hope to see you there.

1. Sunday, November 2, 9:30-10:30 am, Fireside Room, **In-Person**
2. Tuesday, November 11, 7:00-8:00 pm by **Zoom**

Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/93464839757?pwd=h35FSLNkFTEkblhbprX3QyaBnfx2T4.1>

Save the Date of Sunday, November 16, 1 pm for a **Congregational Meeting** about Freestone.

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: 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 kathryn@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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