
February 2026

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley
Vol. 85 #2

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

From the Stewardship Committee

Dear UUCB community,

The Pledge Drive has begun! Our theme this year is The Fire of Commitment and we're using the metaphor of building a fire to represent our collective contributions coming together as one roaring fire.

What's new this year? We're starting earlier and ending later. The kickoff was Sunday, January 25 with the SPARK that lights our fire. Our February 22 speaker will represent IGNITION, and the following Sunday evening is the chance for all early-pledgers to come to an evening soiree of wine and chocolate— anyone who completes their pledge form by March 1st is invited to the party at UUCB that evening! We've got some plans for bringing the conversation into Sunday worship and a chance to join a one-time, Chalice Circle-type meeting, called a Fire Circle, to explore our passion and how our commitment to our values connects to our giving.

We will be distributing the pledge materials in person on Sundays; if we don't see you there we'll put yours in the mail. **Please consider being an early pledger and joining the soiree!**

Next month's BEACON article will take the time to explain why we go through this process every year—check back next month for that and more info.

Yours in stewardship,

Paul, Ariel, Mary, Selene and Sima



February Services

Sundays 11 am

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

February 1

Still Here, Still Rising:
annual service honoring
Black History Month

February 8

In the Light of Truth

February 15

Holding the Light Together

February 22

Stewardship Ignition Kickoff

Coffee & Community

Starts at 10 am in the Atrium

Lunch

In the Social Hall following
the service

Sunday Programming

Parents/Grandparents Discussion Group

Some Sundays, 9:30 am, Safir Room

Meets on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month at 9:30 am. We welcome parents and grandparents at all stages of the parenting journey. Drop-ins welcome!

Caring for Aging Parents

1/25, 2/8, 2/22, 3/8. No drop-ins. 9:30 am, Safir Room

Are you caring for an aging parent? Join us for a supportive Discussion Circle where we'll explore the challenges and emotions of this journey together. Through readings, reflection, and deep sharing, we'll cover themes including grief and loss, complex emotions and changing roles, self-care and boundaries, and community support.

Youth and Children's Choir Rehearsal

Sundays at 10 am

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). We help lead the Sunday worship service once or twice per month. Occasionally we participate in other music events.

Religious Education

11:15 am. Email Rev. Kathryn Jay: kathryn@uucb.org

Humanist Connections

Sundays at 1 pm in person and on Zoom

Feb. 1 – Topic Selection for next month and followed by a “Freethinkers” group discussion. Harold Ogren.

Feb. 8 – Harold Ogren will discuss “AI problems today, AGI peril tomorrow?”

Feb. 15 – Paul Ulbrich will discuss “Ukraine and/or Russian?”

Feb. 22 – Don Anderson will discuss “Tackling Wittgenstein”

Special Events

Feb. 15 Rev. Sue Magidson's memorial at 2:30

Feb. 17 WEAV: How to Build Spiritual Community That Involves Counter-Oppressive Spiritual Engagement

Feb. 21 Joanne Wile Celebration of life at 2 pm

Feb. 21 Parents Night Out

Feb. 21 Youth Group

Feb. 22 Congregational Meeting

Feb. 28 Indoor/Outdoor Work Party

Feb. 28 Kensington Symphony Orchestra Concert

Good Neighbor

Youth Spirit Artworks (YSA).
youthspiritartworks.org

YSA envisions that local transitional age youth (16-25) will emerge centered, joyful and thriving in the world. The YSA mission is to create spaces of safety, dignity, and belonging for the healing, transition, growth and development of local TQBIPOC youth experiencing homelessness and various vulnerabilities and challenges.

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 (1/3)

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 (usually 3, this month 4)

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

WEAV: How to Build Spiritual Community That Involves Counter-



Oppressive Spiritual Engagement

WEAV is a curriculum designed by Starr King School for the Ministry (SKSM) for UU congregations to build spiritual community that involves counter-oppressive spiritual engagement. For more info and to register:

uucb.org/events/weav/

From the Board of Trustees

Departing Members Kay Fairwell and Helen Tinsley-Jones

What have we learned about UUCB during our times on the Board? Of course, we have experienced different challenges and successes and have shared some of the same experiences. We have found that even when some hurdles seemed overwhelming, we as a congregation have found that together we can find ways to move forward. We have also found that even when we differ, we can honor the positions and opinions of one another. Working through tender and sometimes difficult situations, we have found that we are resilient.

Kay Fairwell

As I've aged, I've found that I'm not as sharp or as efficient as I used to be. I wasn't sure how well I'd do as a Board member—much less as Board president. But in the heartbreaking and disturbing world we are living in, I decided that one thing I could do would be to serve this community in providing sanctuary and support for our members and to be of use in creating a more just and freer world. What I was reminded of in my Board service is that we are not alone. I have been blessed to serve on a Board that is collegial and dedicated. Even when we have disagreed, we were generally respectful and supportive in finding our way through complex times. I hope that more members can experience the satisfaction and sense of accomplishment that comes from serving on the UUCB board.

Helen Tinsley-Jones

As my days on the Board are rapidly winding down, I find myself doing the same. Reflecting on my experiences, I feel a bit sad. I will miss the work, the challenges, the collegiality. But also I am feeling a lot of gladness. More time awaits! I'll have no excuse for not finishing that memoir! But, truly, my gladness is also about what I envision as an exciting, exhilarating future for UUCB and the invigoration that comes each year when new Board members come onboard.

The wonderfulness of UUCB cannot be overstated. The Board, congregation, Minister and wider community are in beloved partnership. Through joys and struggles, we support and care for one another. During these times marked by terror and increasing oppression, fierce partnerships taking action are powerful.

Serving the congregation as a Board member, Vice President and Co-President has been personally transformative. In these roles, I have met folks I otherwise probably would not have, learned more about the structure and functioning of the church and, in deep collaboration with others, worked to support the structure and functioning. I am forever grateful for this community and this opportunity.

So, should a friendly Nominating Committee member invitingly ask you if you might be interested in being on the Board, seriously consider it. What you learn and what you contribute may be transformative for yourself and for UUCB.

Partner Church

We received holiday greetings and news from Homorodújfalú recently, sent by Rev. Gyëro Attila. Here is his message (with slight editing):

I wish you and the entire community of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley a blessed, peaceful, and happy New Year. Even before the holidays began, we started the repair of the church organ. As a first step, the pipes were removed and are being repaired by a company specializing in organ restoration, after which they will be able to repair the entire organ.

During the Advent season, we once again organized the event called the Advent Calendar. During this time, the children went from house to house each evening, singing Christmas carols and receiving sweets. A few days before Christmas, we organized a Christmas Fair, where decorations made by the children and goods from other vendors were displayed. On Christmas Eve, we held our traditional Christmas celebration: the children performed the Nativity story and received gifts. On Christmas Day, we attended a festive worship service, and for New Year's Eve, we welcomed the New Year at the church with the ringing of bells.

On the second-to-last day of the year, a sad ceremony also took place, as we had to bury the oldest member of our village. Her name was Anna Egyed, and the Lord called her home at the age of 92.

Attila also expressed gratitude for our recent remittance from UUCB's Village Education Fund. Eight students received scholarships; three are attending high school and five attending university. We'll have the list of

recipients at our Sunday table in the Atrium so you can find out who they are and where they are attending school.

Often we find that the list of scholars is the most satisfying communication that we receive from the village. It shows that your contributions are making a real difference in real people's lives. Your ambassadors are [Stephanie Ann Blythe](#) and [Anne Greenwood](#).

SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

Our Zoom meeting takes place on the second Wednesday of the month, February 11, 7 pm. This month we will highlight social justice activities focused on Black Lives and Black History month.

In these times of great challenge and need, the Social Justice Council is in need of a co-chair to assist in the growing work of social justice at UUCB.

In addition, the UU Service Committee that works with NGOs worldwide is in need of a Congregational Liaison. Time Commitment: 2 hours a month. To learn more, [visit this link](#).

The UUSC was formed aiding Jews to escape Germany. They created the Chalice symbol. Please consider these invitations to serve UU values and commitments.

WOWS (Working to Overcome White Supremacy)

will meet on Sunday, February 8, from 1:30 to 3 pm on Zoom. Contact: [Julia Rogers](#)

Immigration Justice

Learn Some New Resistance Songs
All are invited to the Feb. 15 meeting of the Immigrant Solidarity Project. We'll begin at 12:45 with a brief check-in about our January activities and then launch into learning songs

for resistance to the current administration.
See you in the Meditation Room!

Equity in Berkeley Schools

As supporters of the Berkeley Public Schools Fund, several UUCB members work weekly in Berkeley classrooms with students who need extra help. We also offer assistance at the schools, distributing healthy food provided by the Berkeley Food Network to families of Albany and Berkeley school students. As funding is cut and needs for the services are increasing rapidly, our members have stepped up to help on a week to week basis. They participate as often as they wish. Please let Helen Toy know if you'd like to help either in the classrooms or in food distribution.

Bridging For Democracy

We have been invited to participate in the Bridging for Democracy research project at Cal's Othering and Belonging Institute. Director Mansi Kathuria spoke to us and explained that the project aims to bring together people of opposing views, to engage in a dialogue meant to bridge our differences, and listen to better know each other and understand our shared humanity. Several of our members have expressed interest in participating in this project. We are talking to Reverend Marcus about how this could be organized with a neighboring community.

Please reach out to Helen Toy if you are interested in finding out more about Bridging for Democracy.

Climate Justice Committee

We joined Postcards to Congress initiated by Elders Climate Action and Our Kids Climate. Twenty-five or so Climate Justice Committee members and allies sent over 130 appeals to our representatives! And a total of 15,000

postcards were sent by volunteers from across the nation! Thanks to all the folks who participated!

Our committee has lots of great ideas, but we need your help to make them a reality. Here's what we're aiming to accomplish in 2026:

- Organize presentations for the UUCB community on health effects of plastic and how to reduce our use;
- Highlight our Green Sanctuary recognition from the UUA in 2024 as well as in 2025, and start projects to retain this honor in 2026;
- Support Richmond's Tiny House Village to provide greenery and promote clean air;
- Organize a clean transportation show on UUCB's campus;
- Participate in postcarding and phone banking with the Environmental Voter Project as we approach critical midterm elections in November.

Join us! We meet on Zoom, the fourth Monday of the month from 5 to 6:30 pm.

Please contact [Sheila Tarbet](#) for the link.

People of Color Caucus

Lonnie Moseley said that diverse stories and music will be presented at the February 1 Sunday service, kicking off Black History Month.

Program Council

The Program Council is addressing how to better match up prospective volunteers with needs and how to equitably assign rooms as there is increased competition for space to hold Sunday afternoon meetings. The PC meets on third Wednesdays on Zoom from 7 to 8:30 pm. More info: Convener [Marta Tobey](#).

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.

Board of Trustees

Kay Fairwell, President
Pier Sun Ho, Vice-President
Selene Fabiano, Secretary
Lisa Maynard, Treasurer
Michael DeWitt
Kristen Jensen
Beth Jerde
Carla McCasland
David Rosales
Helen Tinsley-Jones
Helen Toy

Program Council

Marta Tobey (Convener)
Carisa Orwig (Family Ministry)
Victoria Bowen (Membership)
Tom Tripp (Buildings & Grounds)
Cynthia Greenleaf (Social Justice)
Barbara Cullinane (Pastoral Care)
Virginia Frederick (Music)
Jim Gasperini (Communications)
Ann Harlow (Fundraising and Hospitality)
Lonnie Moseley (Adult Religious Exploration)
Lenore Ralston (Chalice Circles and Finance)
Kay Fairwell + David Rosales (Board Liaisons)

Staff (partial list)

Minister: Rev. Marcus Liefert
revmarcus@uucb.org 510-525-0302 ext. 303
Minister of Congregational Life: Rev. Dr. Kathryn Jay
kathryn@uucb.org 510-525-0302 ext. 307
Operations Director: Janae Heard
janae@uucb.org, 510-525-0302 ext. 306
Membership and Engagement Mgr.: Charis Domador
connections@uucb.org, 510-525-0302 ext. 304
Facilities Manager: Peter Barnholdt
peter@uucb.org, 510-525-0302 ext. 308