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Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

June 2020 – Vol. 79, Issue 6

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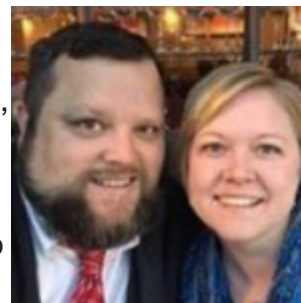
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From the Ministers

This is our final column as your co-ministers, and so it is time to say goodbye. We have loved being your ministers, and it is with many feelings – sadness, excitement, satisfaction at the work we have done, trepidation at the unusual times we are in, and more – that we leave here to head back East to new experiences.



It is best practice, and one we will follow, for departing ministers to give some space to the congregation and its members after we leave. This helps a new relationship between congregation and minister (interim minister, and eventually settled in this case). It is also ethically right for us to let go – the choices you and your future ministers will make may not be the same ones we would make, and that's as it should be. And in a congregation that has had issues with ministerial boundaries in the past, it is even more important for us to uphold this.

The standard recommendation is that we spend a year not communicating with former congregants. What does this look like in practice?

Since we're moving across the country, it's unlikely that we will bump into one another at the store. But these recent weeks have shown us more than ever that community is not limited to in-person interactions. Online, especially on social media like Facebook, we will still be present, and will not "unfriend" any of you. But what we won't do is seek you out for conversation, and we ask that you not seek us out – especially for any thoughts we have about the congregation or your new minister!

Know that we will be wishing the best for UUCB and for each of you, and that we respect you all enough to let there be some space in this time. We will be loving you, praying for you, and rooting for you from afar!

In faith,

Christian and Kristin

Sunday Services in June

[Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube Live](#), 11 am on Sundays

Theme for June: Mistakes

June 7: Teacher Appreciation, Kristin preaching; Bob Adams, worship associate. "There is a Love Holding Me": Explore how we are held, how we hold one another, and what can help bring us through these difficult times and into a new reality.

June 14: Blessings For The Journey: Schmidts Last Sunday, Christian and Kristin preaching. In the last Service with our outgoing ministers, the Revs. Kristin and Christian Schmidt, we take a chance to say goodbye and bless one another for the journeys ahead of us.

June 21: To Be Announced.

June 28: To Be Announced.

Virtual Coffee Hour 11:45 am

After worship we invite you to switch over to Zoom for a time to connect "face to face." The link to Virtual Coffee Hour is listed below, but we will also share it in the comments on the Facebook Live feed during worship. Use the following information to join us:

<p>Online</p> <p>https://zoom.us/j/332046821</p> <p>Meeting ID: 332 046 821</p> <p>Password: 810131</p>	<p>Telephone</p> <p>Dial</p> <p>(669) 900 6833 US</p>
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Vespers in June

Thursdays June 4 and 11 @ 7pm

Online <https://zoom.us/j/690225549>

Meeting ID: 690 225 549

Password: 251288

Wednesdays June 3, 10, 17, 24

Zoom, 6:30 pm

Please come to our NEW mid-week online vespers services, led by current Worship Associates, beginning this coming Wednesday evening, June 3! The 25-minute Wednesday evening service will provide a time for us to gather together to experience moments of reflection, prayer and song, grounded in our UU faith.

Please click [this link](#) to join us.

Meeting ID: 862 9046 0367

Password: chalice

Good Neighbor for June:

[Youth Engagement Advocacy Housing](#) serves and supports young adults who are currently homeless. They provide shelter, food, basic necessities, counseling, individual support, and help finding housing and opportunities for meaningful community involvement.

Special Events and Announcements

- On Sunday June 7, **UCLA Professor Karen Brodtkin** will discuss her book: *How Jews Became White Folks: And What That Says About Race in America*, with the Literature, Film & Drama Contingent of the Social Justice Council (the LFDC). Lenore Ralston will facilitate the discussion. Join [Zoom Meeting](#) at 12:30p.m.
- **June 24-June 28:** General Assembly goes virtual! Every year thousands of UUs gather to worship, speak out for social justice, share best practices and decide on important policies and positions. It is an inspiring event! Because this year, there is no venue, the price is significantly lower. Plus, there is NO cost for travel and lodgings. Please attend! For more information and to register, go to www.uua.org/ga. If you would like to be one of seven delegates representing our congregation, please email victoriabowen903@gmail.com by May 31.
- **Congregational Meeting Recording Available:** The May Congregational Meeting on May 17 was a great success! Our volunteer tech team ran a smooth, zoombomber-free meeting where participants (over 100!) were able to convene to make their voices heard. If you would like to watch a recording of the meeting, you may request it by contacting the office at info@uucb.org or 510-525-0302. **If you request the recording, we ask that you exercise extreme caution to only share between members privately and not to post to the discuss list or social media. This is paramount to protect everyone's privacy, safety, and private data (in this case, people's likeness, the discussion, the inside of people's houses, etc)**
- **Let's not just weather this time together, let's celebrate together, too! Send us your Good News and we will feature them in the Good News Corner!** Send them to beacon@uucb.org.

Humanist Connections

Sundays, 12:30 pm, Zoom

A discussion group to explore our humanity, values, ideas.

“A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.”

(Fourth principle of Unitarian Universalism.)

June 2020

June 7 – How and what we choose to eat. Dennis Monthei

June 14 - Short topics and topic selection for July. Ray Westergard

June 21 – The origin of human speech. Marcia Bates

June 28 – Jane Mayer on Trump and McConnell's relationship. Anne Fitzmaurice

Newcomers welcome. Co-Chairs of the group are Marcia Bates, mjbates@ucla.edu, and Anne Fitzmaurice, buckley@lmi.net. Contact them with any questions.

Chalice Leadership Team

The Chalice Leadership Team, with partners from Pastoral Care and Membership, decided that although this is the time of year when Chalice Circles are usually wrapping up, we would like to offer some additional Chalice Circle opportunities to our community. These next few months will be marked with much uncertainty in our church family and in the wider community as a whole. For this reason, we want to offer a chance for everyone to connect on a deeper level with one another.

A form of small-group ministry, the hallmarks of UUCB's Chalice Circles are that they are open and inclusive. They include time to check-in, but they also are organized around an agreed upon topic and have trained facilitators.

We are planning a set of summer Chalice Circle options, from small series of three sessions to fuller sessions of two months, with most groups meeting every other week. They will start during the week of June 15th and continue through the week of August 21st.

Our overall intent is to facilitate your participation in as much community as you would like. We invite members, past and present to join us. If you have a friend who is not already a part of our church community, who might be glad of a new connection, invite them, too! We are open to all. If you think you might be interested, please contact Natalie Campbell at nataliehcampbell@yahoo.com and let her know by the first week of June if you are interested in day or evening groups, and which days work best for you. We look forward to connecting with you!

Family Ministry

Catherine Boyle, Acting Director of Family Ministry

“And please secure your own oxygen mask before helping those around you.” Do you remember that from the Time Before (trademark pending)? The last time I heard this was in January, on a flight back home from holidays on the east coast. I recognize that privilege affords me the many opportunities in that sense that the majority of our country has never and may never; however, despite this, I cannot think of an example more demonstrative of the parallel opposite of why we should wear and encourage others to wear masks. For, unlike oxygen masks, we don't wear them for ourselves but for others.



There's a picture you may have seen gone viral on the internet. It went viral for all the reasons things go viral on the internet because: it had a cat in it. This particular picture was of a little cat over one hundred years old, wearing a tiny kitty-sized face mask. The cat is held up by his human family members all also clad in face masks. This is from the Spanish Flu outbreak in 1918.

Unfortunately, this tiny sliver of fabric shook the tree of outrage and fear. It does not help that somehow in the century since the Spanish Flu, the mask has fallen away in popular use in the West, unlike Asia where masking is the polite protocol for when you are sick, even if you have just a cold or hay fever. Once as an English teacher in Japan, after a beautiful burst of flowers, allergies ruled me and I wore a mask every day. Teaching phonics wearing Hello Kitty over my mouth and making huge gestures with my hands to show the sound is an experience I'd not soon forget. Or that the CDC went back and forth on whether people should wear a mask or not, thus giving folks a skewed perspective on them. The individualistic nature of American culture is the icing on the complicated case. Is wearing a face mask unAmerican? Is it against UU Principles? After all, we rose from the Protestant tradition as heretics, extreme pursuers of the promise of freedom of religion to believe or not believe of your own choosing. Heretic comes from that phrase in ancient Greek: of your own choosing. This is not a choice made by us individually but by others. This is the stuff of our faith of Ralph Waldo Emerson: the Unitarian father of individualism.

Or is there a UU case for wearing masks? In Oakland, a Baptist preacher was asked if he would reopen his church for in-person services. The man responded that Jesus' love for humanity forbids him from reopening the building because it would harm humans rather than help them. Is there a similar case in UU theology?

I say, yes. Let's return to the plane mask motif. In the case of emergency oxygen masks drop down on a plane. Passengers are instructed to put on the mask on their own face and then help others, like small children and the elderly, to put on theirs. However, you wear a face mask not because it protects you but because it protects others. The little barrier does not serve as a shield to completely protect you from COVID-19 but it stops your spit from traveling to other people. COVID-19 travels quickly to others through the air (as the case of the choir in WA in March proves). Thereby in a space especially with no social distancing, all of us wearing masks may be the very thing stopping the spread of COVID. As a proud member of the faith of the free and a person who enjoys reading Emerson even outside of graduations, I support wearing masks because masks protect what is sacred, each other. The First Principle is respect and dignity for all humanity. That respect and dignity can only be assured if life is assured. The Seventh Principle beholds us to respect the interdependent web of life, that very web that includes all of us human. You give a person no dignity and no respect if you risk their life.

I hope you stay like that family with the cat from 1918, all masked up and safe. We have so many, nine billion I'd say, reasons to wear masks. Stay safe. Stay healthy. You are loved.

In faith,

Catherine Boyle, Acting Director of Family Ministry

From the Board of Trustees

Elaine Miller

I was born into this church, and as a small child, remember construction here on the hill, the stone sanctuary walls lying on the ground, my sisters and I stepping through the unglazed window openings, one small step at a time, a three-dimensional hopscotch. There were lots of grownups, parents, Sunday school teachers, a minister, church secretary, custodian – the leaders of the church. Now I'm one of the grownups, a leader writing about the church, and my experience as a new board member.

This is an intense time – as the quarantine wears on I notice people are both more tense, and more friendly. A formerly grouchy neighbor is more neighborly, people are out on the streets talking, waving, saying hello, taking family bike rides, politely giving six feet of space to passers-by. And yet people are also

more tense, snarling at other shoppers who get too close, hoarding toilet paper.

As a board member, I feel more responsible for the church and our congregation. Recently, I took a bike ride and found myself climbing the hill leading to church. As I looked up at the building from the south, it looked so big and imposing. And empty; no sounds of choir or organ floating over the hill. I felt sad, a flash of grief, and worry for the congregation. Coming here used to be about seeing my family and singing with the choir. Now it's about facing problems, doing the work of keeping our congregation connected, and making impossible financial decisions. I wondered, am I up for this?

The board has been meeting frequently; I've lost count of the number of meetings I've attended since joining the board this spring. My first meeting was in person, the rest have been on Zoom. So, like many people, I'm spending a lot more time on my computer. I felt down in the dumps when I heard our UUA President's recent recommendation, "...that congregations begin planning for virtual operations for the next year (through May 2021)." Another year of this?!? But I'm learning how very different people's experiences are with the quarantine. Some are sitting around bored; others' schedules are bursting at the seams. I have a friend who actually likes the shelter-in-place and thinks this is what life should be like all the time. She is disabled, so with all the new online offerings, her life is richer; she takes classes and attends performances – all free, takes less time and uses less energy traveling places; the world is more accessible to her. Behind the scenes here at church, our staff and volunteers are working hard, spending hours learning new technical skills and producing meaningful services every Sunday. What if we didn't have that way to connect?

This is a time we will never forget. In some ways, technology is everything right now. But the world is cold and lonely without authentic connection. Let's talk to our neighbors, shop for each other, share our extra toilet paper, be kind to the person having a meltdown because they can't get into a Zoom meeting, and give lots of love and appreciation to our technical support. Didn't our tech crew do a great job creating a smooth-running, bomber-free, congregational meeting? It was exciting to witness and be a part of this historical event for our church, our first virtual congregational meeting. Thank you to all those people working so hard to keep our congregation connected.

Note: Each month a different member of the Board of Trustees writes this column so you can get to know them better and get a sense of the issues dealt with by the Board. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Board as a whole.

From the Executive Director

Tess Snook O'Riva, Executive Director



It has been such a roller coaster these past few months. Some days I'm on a roll, doing a deep dive into all the things, finally reaching Understanding. Other days, I couldn't tell you the date and my eyes can't stay on the page I'm reading.

I tell you this to say that you're not alone, no matter where you are in your processing. And just like grief, this is not a linear process. We aren't all getting consistently better at life in quarantine. We are coping, adjusting, helping each other, and taking it one day at a time. And no matter how I trip and fall, the people of UUCB catch me. I have been consistently supported and held throughout this process, and I am in awe at what everyone is still able to accomplish in these indescribable times.

What about reopening? You have probably heard by now that the UUA has recommended planning to be virtual until May 2021. There are a whole bunch of caveats to that understanding, like the fact that they are speaking to the nation and trying to combat the over-zealous that are putting profit before people's lives. We are not those people.

We are looking at the recommendations for houses of worship, state guidelines, and county public health statements. We are working with the two preschools that lease parts of our campus to help them reopen this month – with severe modifications to their intake processes and school schedules. I am convening a taskforce to discuss when we might open, under what circumstances, for whom, and what would need to be in place to keep everyone safe. And we need to be ready to react swiftly to close again if needed. Nothing is decided, everything is in flux, and conversations will continue as new data is released. Keep your hands and feet inside the ride car at all times.

This is a great time to get involved in UUCB should you have any extra time on your hands. There are so many great ideas that UUCB staff could not possibly implement them all. Whatever your interest, there's a project or a taskforce waiting to engage with you! Feel free to reach out to me directly (ed@uucb.org) or join my new UUCB Open Lounge Hour on Tuesdays at 4 pm (see uucb.org for details)!

From the Treasurer

Larry Nagel

The month of March 2020 was one of the most challenging months in the history of UUCB and certainly in my short tenure as Treasurer. The COVID-19 corona virus has shut down our facilities almost entirely and, as a result, has seriously curtailed our revenues from events and rentals. At the same time, congregants are losing jobs and undergoing various other degrees of stress, so revenues from pledge payments are also decline.



In short, March 2020 was a perfect storm. Year-to-Date Pledge income is less than budget by \$55,261. A precipitous drop in the stock market caused our UUA Endowment Funds to lose \$117,112 in one month, and this and other losses show in the books as a negative income in Investment unrealized gain and Endowment unrealized gain. Altogether, Year-to-Date Total Revenue is behind budget by \$48,096. The good news is that Year-to-Date Expenses are \$ 44,684 less than budgeted.

The bottom line is that, as of the end of March, the Year-to-Date Deficit is \$12,843, which is \$3,412 worse than budgeted. Our cash reserves stand at a very healthy \$ 456,512, and the UUA Board Designated Endowment now at \$685,040 because of a precipitous \$78,859 drop in value in March.

If you any questions, please contact me at lwn@att.net or call me at (510) 558-0842

Buildings & Grounds Committee

Jane Lundin & Tess Snook O'Riva

Remember the Bridge to Nowhere?

That's how the ramp feels to me. Nowhere was just an Alaska-small settlement on an island off Ketchikan, but the idea of building a bridge to an empty place caught people's imaginations. How about building a ramp in a church where nobody can worship?



But you need to know the church's sad ramp history to fully appreciate my feelings. I originally proposed building one years ago, when two medal winners used wheelchairs – they rolled up to the foot of the stairs but nobody much

past the first row could see them. A committee was set up, only it was all men, which clearly excluded me, and the project evaporated.

New ministers, new leadership, time for a gift to remember my late husband, Bob, and then the architect for the Safir Room renovation suggested a far better plan than anyone had imagined before. So this time the ramp has been built, and it looks great... Only there's nobody in church to use it.

They still use a ferry in Ketchikan – their bridge never got built.

If you have any questions or want to help out, contact Jane Lundin at (510) 778-9055 or jmlundin@toast.net.

Partner Church Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

We approved a preliminary 2020-2021 budget for UUCB at the May Congregational Meeting. That got me thinking that the details of the Transylvanian Partner Church Committee's annual budget remain invisible to most church members. Let's dive into the details!



At the gold level of budgeting we would pay dues to the UUA's Partner Church Council at \$600 for our size congregation. UUCB was to be the host congregation for the next Balázs Scholar (one for fall semester at Starr King School for the Ministry and another for the spring semester), and we budgeted \$500 for that purpose. Support to our partners in Homoródújfalú has been lagging lately, so we projected support to the Village Education Fund as well as Christmas gifts to village children at \$1000. Silver or bronze level budgets would be considerably lower. As we move through summer and into fall, we may be adjusting our budget to fit the realities of our time.

We have recently received communications from the Partner Church Council regarding Future Visions for Partnership. The world has changed immensely from many influences, with COVID-19 being only the latest issue. How we do partnership will need to reflect the changing times; something greater than US and Canadian congregations making connections with only a narrow group of Unitarians world-wide. The cohort that founded the Partner Church movement is aging, if not passing from us. How do we spread our mission and vision to younger UUs? Watch this space for further information. In the meantime, the UUPCC's Annual Meeting will take place virtually at 12 pm Eastern / 9 am Pacific on Friday, June 19, 2020. (Zoom meeting specifics are forthcoming)

Some of you have asked about our Village Education Fund. It's alive and well, but it needs replenishment. Next time you're mailing a check to UUCB or making a contribution via PayPal, consider a donation to the fund! You can always contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net.

Good News Corner

This pandemic, what we're living through, seems like a real-life version of an episode of The Twilight Zone. Remember that show? It is becoming increasingly difficult to stumble upon positivity and good news. It feels more and more like we have to battle for hope and optimism.

In this new section of The Beacon, we want to include all the celebrations, fun moments, and every instance that fills our congregation with hope, and keeps us going day after day. When you need a pick-me-up, come to the Good News Corner!

- **COVID-19 Can't Stop Love**

With many weddings put on hold due to the coronavirus outbreak, other ways of ensuring people can still get married have been enacted around the world. In Anaheim, a pop-up socially distanced wedding service has been erected where only one witness is allowed.

Paola Agnelli and Michele D'Alpaos live in Verona, Italy, the city of Romeo and Juliet, where people have been in lockdown since February 2020. But Paola and Michele managed to fall in love from a distance, and like in Shakespeare's play, their love story also involves a balcony.

- **Captain Tom Moore Receives A Knighthood**

Captain Tom Moore, the British Army officer and centenarian who went viral for raising over \$40 million for the NHS, is to receive a knighthood.

- **92-year-old Holocaust Survivor Teaches Piano**

According to the New York Times, Dr Cornelia Vertenstein is continuing to teach piano to students from her home in Denver. The music teacher has been delivering the lessons via FaceTime from her iPad.

- **Flamingoes Flock to Lakes in India**

In India, flamingoes have flocked in their thousands to lakes like this one

in Mumbai, lighting up the lake in a shade of pink.

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