

# Beacon on the Hill January 2018

## From the Ministers

This month, we will be exploring the theme of “intention” in worship here at the UU Church of Berkeley. This seems like a wise thing for each of us to focus on as we begin the first month of a new year. But it seems even more auspicious considering what lies ahead of us as a congregation.



Like most other religious institutions today, we are in the process of figuring out how best to “do church” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As part of that, we are faced with several significant decisions, the most pressing of which have to do with how we can create a path toward financial sustainability. In brief, we have more building maintenance expenses than we can find funds to cover in our yearly budgets without making cuts that would impact our most beloved and effective programs. As a result, we have a significant deficit that has built up over many years.

This is a situation that can’t continue forever, but thankfully it’s anything but dire. Our church is rich in so many ways. We are blessed with an incredibly valuable property, considerable endowed funds, vibrant ministries and programs, and a congregation filled with passionate, intelligent, wise, and faithful people who are capable of making hard decisions guided by our values rather than fear. While this community may have to consider some changes that feel hard and unpleasant, these are very solvable challenges.

When it comes to making big decisions together as a community, the most important thing we can focus on is the process we use to do so. Your Board has been doing a wonderful job discerning a good process for exploring every potential option and leaving no stone unturned in the quest to find a financially sustainable path. Some of those stones include assessing our

community's capacity for a significant capital campaign, assessing our staffing structure in case there is some money to be saved there, and evaluating whether this is truly the right location and set of facilities for us today. Perhaps there are even more stones, like finding another organization to share our campus with us, or stones nobody has even thought of yet.

Ultimately, as your co-ministers, we are not on any "side" of this issue. We are committed to ministering with and among this community no matter what decision is reached to address the challenges ahead. Because no matter what our annual budget is, the state of repair of our buildings, or even where we are located, our call to be a liberal religious community where people can nurture their spirits and help heal our world will be the same. May we approach our challenges, whether in our personal lives or here at church, with great intention and commitment to our callings.

Happy New Year!

Reverends Christian and Kristin

## **Sunday Worship Services in January**

**Sanctuary, 11 am**

**Theme for Month: Intention**

**January 7 – *The Stars We Steer By***, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt with Mary Muehlbach, Worship Associate. What are your resolutions, or intentions, for the new year and beyond? This week in worship we will consider the power of intention and how it can guide us towards deeper purpose than we can imagine today.

**January 14 – *Reclaiming Our Roots***, intern minister Amanda Weatherspoon with Melissa Rosales, Worship Associate. This week millions throughout the country will celebrate and remember the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. However, over the decades, this legacy has been watered

down and sanitized for public consumption. What happens to our stories when we don't tell them? What happens when we don't claim our gifts, talents, sorrows, and experience? When we reclaim our stories we reclaim ourselves. Join us as we explore the radical legacy of MLK and how we can learn and grow in our own stories and experience.

**January 21 – *The Road to Torda***, Rev. Christian Schmidt with Jim Gasperini, Worship Associate (with help from youth.) It was 450 years ago, in a small kingdom in Eastern Europe, that something amazing happened. A Unitarian king, John Sigismund, was convinced by his minister and advisor, David Ferencz (often known as Francis David), to make a bold declaration: multiple religious traditions, not just that of the king, would be respected and protected in his kingdom. This is believed to be the first declaration of religious tolerance in the world. Today we honor this bold legacy with Unitarians around the world.

**January 28 – *By Faith, Not Fear***, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt. Whether it's funds for education here in California or the entire national budget in countries like Greece and Spain, austerity shapes so much in our world today. But even when things are tight and none of the options ideal, there is another way. Join us this week as we consider how we as a congregation are called to worship, live, and serve in community by faith rather than fear. *A congregational meeting with light lunch will follow the service. Childcare will be provided.*

January Good Neighbor (sharing our offerings): The [Berkeley Food](#) [Pantry](#) is a non-profit organization providing monthly bags of nutritious and delicious emergency groceries to Berkeley and Albany residents in need.

# Personal Theology

**Sundays, 9:30 am, Fireside Room**

**Jan. 7: Rev. Craig Scott**, retired lawyer and UU Minister, UUCB member, social advocate, and Schweitzer Award winner. ***Hate Cannot Drive Out Hate: Yellow Tee Shirts in a Troubled Time.***

**Jan. 14: Merrin Clough**, lifelong UU, Director of Family Ministry at UUCB; trained as an educator; hiker, seamstress and poet. ***Searching Truth, Finding Purpose.***

**Jan. 21: Hana Matt**, teacher of world religions at GTU and Interfaith Chaplaincy; author, spiritual director, and counselor. ***Transforming Worry.***

**Jan. 28: Hana Matt** (see bio above). ***Overcoming Anxiety and Coming to Inner Peace and Effectiveness.***

## Humanist Connections

**Sundays, 12:30 pm, RE Building, Rooms 3 & 4**

Format: A 10- to 15-minute presentation followed by moderated, timed discussion and a potluck at 2 pm (bring a dish to share or donate \$5). All are

welcome!

**Jan. 7: *Suicide Prevention: How My Cat Saved Me***, Sherry Fuzesy

**Jan. 14: *End of Life Issues***, Kendra Smith

**Jan. 21: *Healthy Longevity and the End of Alzheimers***, Lee Lawrence

**Jan. 28: *Beyond Mars and Venus for Men and Women***, Kathy Rai

## **Special Events in January**

**Thurs. Jan. 4, 5:30 pm** – All-Church **Potluck Supper**, Social Hall, and **Evening Worship**, Fireside Room

**Fri. Jan. 5, 10–11:30 am** – **Ministers' Community Office Hours**, Inn Kensington

**Sun. Jan. 7, 12:30–3 pm** – LFDC Discussion of **Daring Democracy** book, Fireside Room (see Social Justice News)

**Sun. Jan. 7, 1–2 pm** – **SongFest**, Sanctuary (see Music Matters)

**Sun. Jan. 14, 12:30 pm** – Board of Trustees **Candidates' Forum**, Sanctuary ; information on Safir Room repair project, Atrium

**Fri. Jan. 19, 6–8 pm** – **Church on Tap**, Albany Taproom

**Sun. Jan. 21, 12:30 pm** – **Becoming a Sanctuary Church: Presentation & Panel**, Sanctuary

**Sun. Jan. 28, 12:30 pm** – **Special Congregational Meeting**, Social Hall  
(Note: A light lunch will be served. All meetings normally held at 12:30 or 1 pm will be moved to one hour later.)

# Stewardship Alert

Thanks to everyone for sharing your thoughts about our three vision questions: Who have we been? Who are we now? What do we want to be? Grounded in our UU principles, your thoughts reflect our commitments to lives of integrity, love and justice.

To support our principles and vision, we have started work with the Stewardship Committee for the 2018–2019 pledge campaign. The focus of our campaign is **nurturing our inheritance and living our values**. We will share more information in January and February on how we hope to partner with you in financially supporting UUCB. For now, please place two key dates on your 2018 calendar: March 4, Kickoff Sunday, and March 25, Celebration Sunday.

In faith,

Reverends Christian and Kristin

## Family Ministry

### Suzette Anderson-Duggan

January gets its name from the two-faced Roman god of gates and doors. In this month of beginnings, the allure of resolutions is strong. Some might call it a case of collective foolishness. With a glint in our eye and a spark in our heart we embark on a grand plan and set a timeline toward an actual or figurative prize. And oftentimes along the way we find the path pitted with setbacks and distractions that whittle away our resolve. Because we hold the prize as *the measure of success*, we conclude, sooner or later, that we don't have the skills or smarts to carry on. And this realization pops our bubbling excitement. We

resolve never again to make another silly resolution! In the drama of the quest, we overlook that the prize isn't the object, but rather that indelible, hard-wired desire to improve ourselves and by extension the world we share. This is why the hero(ine) finds the object. Slaying the dragon or solving the riddle or finding the gemstone improves the life of the hero(ine)'s community. This is why we make resolutions. Every resolution is a promise to make or do or be better. We may stop many times, but every start is an affirmation that we move forward on the path to improvement. Like Janus, we step into the new year with two faces: one looking behind at 2017 and one ahead to 2018. In this month of beginnings we carry all of our learning from the year and the years before into this new one. Let us together resolve to begin anew in the ways that are most meaningful to us and leap into the promise of this year that has yet to be lived.

## RE Events for January

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1/7  | RE Teacher Reflection Circle, RE Office, 12:15 pm                             |
| 1/13 | Parents' Night Out, free childcare in Skytown, 4:30–8 pm                      |
|      | Parents connect briefly in RE Bldg. Room 6 before stepping out.               |
| 1/14 | Parents' Discussion Circle, RE Bldg. Rooms 3 & 4, 9:45–10:45 am               |
|      | RE Teacher Reflection Circle, RE Office, 12:15 pm                             |
| 1/21 | Volunteer Training, Fireside Room, 12:30–3 pm, childcare & lunch provided     |
|      | RE Teacher Reflection Circle, RE Office, 12:15 pm                             |
| 1/28 | Parent Discussion Circle, RE Bldg. Rooms 3 & 4, 9:45–10:45 am                 |
|      | Legacy Links, Middle & High School Groups, Meditation Room, 11:00 am–12:00 pm |
|      | RE Teacher Reflection Circle, RE Office, 12:15 pm                             |

## Last thoughts

A prosperous and happy new year to all!

It's never too late to volunteer! Contact [Colleen Farrell](#) or [Megan Hailey-Dunsheath](#) (RE) or [Karl Rimbach](#) (Legacy Links) to explore how your interests, skills, and experience can meaningfully shape the spiritual formation of our youth.

## President's Column

**Jack Duggan**

This is going to be a hard year at UUCB. The financial reality of 380 some members in a facility built when UUCB had a thousand members has finally sunk in and now we must figure this out, not put it off any longer and make concrete plans for a sustainable future. One of the obvious answers to our dilemma is to grow our congregation larger to support our church. It's not just our problem; most old-line liberal churches including other UU churches are declining in membership the same way. The long-term trends are against us.

We are all members of UUCB because it fills a space in our lives and our families that is very important to us. For me the key to UUCB is fellowship, a place to bond with people of different backgrounds and experiences in a community of respect and open inquiry. Unitarian Universalists are not unique in providing welcoming fellowship; our liberal sisters and brothers do much the same thing and their numbers are dwindling too. The difference is we guide ourselves by our principles, not a creed.

I think in a way we are failing our broader community. We personally know the hunger for a human fellowship of values that we satisfy by being UUs. We heartily welcome people when they find us, we are a vital community with



new people joining us, but are we actively going out and sharing what we ourselves have found? For most of our history Unitarians have been a small group of people not tied to the strictures of the past, outliers. More than a hundred years ago Universalists actively shared their understanding of God's universal love, but when that message began to spread through other denominations the evangelism of Universalists dwindled. It's wrong to keep it to ourselves, we're not an exclusive club. Our community needs what we have.

We have members who already think this way and are taking action, but as a congregation we need to support their efforts, make it more central to our mission and follow their lead. I think we've kept the secret too long, that one can be a rationalist or a mystic with an open mind and still deeply involved and accepted in a religious fellowship, that creed is not necessary.

I'm not comfortable "selling" Unitarian Universalism. When someone asks I get all gummed up in explaining what we're not. Proselytizing evangelicals, whether they're pushing the Bible, a guru, or chanting to happiness have never made me comfortable and I'm not about to go knocking on doors or passing out literature at BART stations. But I think as an Association and a Congregation we need to overcome our shyness and frankly our elitism and get out there and reach people, not because we need members to sustain ourselves but because now more than ever our religion without creed, our spirituality without strictures is a desperate need in our world.

There are people out there who know that there's more to community than a digital connection and that consumerism, individualism and materialism don't satisfy the human spirit. We need to seek them out and tell them who we are and what we do.

I'm not aware of any campus outreach on our congregation's part even though Cal is an important part of our history and many members are associated with the university. Have we even considered Contra Costa College? Reverends Christian and Kristin have begun Church on Tap.

Should we be stepping out of our comfort zone more? And by actively reaching out to the people who need a place for connection and values we can become a stronger community and we hope a sustainable community. Instead of needing people to fill the space we would need space for the people.

Is it time to consider becoming Evangelical Unitarian Universalists?

## **From the Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce our slate of candidates to serve on the Board of Trustees beginning in February 2018! Cordell Sloan, Linda Zittel, Jack Duggan and Logan Stump-Vernon have graciously agreed to stand for election/re-election to our Board. A candidate forum will be held in the Sanctuary after the Service on January 14. Please come and hear from our candidates. Voting for new board members will take place later in January and early February before our congregational meeting on February 11, 2018. If you or a friend would like to be considered for a board position, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee as soon as possible. We are happy to share any helpful information. Thank you!

**Members of the UUCB Nominating Committee:** Randall Hudson, Lonnie Moseley, Ralph Nelson, Lenore Ralston, Pier Sun Ho, Conveners: Maryann Simpson, Cindy Maxim.

## **Membership Signing**

On Sunday, January 21, there will be a beginning-of-the-year Membership signing at 12:30 in the Co-Ministers' Office for those who feel that UUCB offers them a community of like-minded/hearted people and also offers opportunities for growth, connection, and social justice involvement. Becoming a member means that you wish to join with others to help guide the actions of UUCB in how it serves each congregant and the community at large. Rev. Kristin or Rev. Christian will bring you into membership and explain the benefits and responsibilities of

membership. Lunch will be provided.

## **Buildings and Grounds Committee**

### **Larry Nagel and Susan Lankford**

We are happy to welcome back Mary Ellen Morgan after a leave of absence for heart surgery, which was very successful. At the same time, Larry Nagel is taking a leave of absence for hip replacement surgery and leaving the reigns of the Buildings & Grounds Committee in the very capable hands of Susan Lankford. Thank you very much, Susan! We continue to work on the design of the renovation of the Safir Room and will present the plans at a special Congregational Meeting, which has been rescheduled for January 28, 2018.

### **Safir Room Repair: Scope and Costs**

Visit the informational table in the Atrium after the service on January 14, for face-to-face conversation with members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee on the planned repairs to the Safir Room. A written FAQ will be provided, and a YouTube informational video will be posted later for those who cannot attend on January 14.

Interested in serving on the Buildings and Grounds Committee? Contact Larry Nagel, [lwn@att.net](mailto:lwn@att.net), or Susan Lankford, [susan@lankforddesign.com](mailto:susan@lankforddesign.com). Future meetings will probably take place on third or fourth Thursdays at 4 pm.

## **Coordinating Team Notes**

### **Deborah Schmidt, Coordinating Team Convener**

I begin the new year even more grateful than ever for the talent, commitment, and spirit of this incredible community.

- The Program Council and CT have approved a split job description for the Program Council Convener and Liaison, which will make it easier for volunteers to fill these roles. The Program Council has chosen Gail Simpson as their new convener (yay!!), and there is reason to believe that we will soon be able to announce our new Liaison.
- With help from our staff, especially Alisa Gould Sugden, Communications Team chair Ann Harlow has created a handbook for lay leaders. Called *How Things Work at UUCB*, it includes a guide for event planning and links to many other useful resources. Look for an announcement soon on uucb\_discuss and in The Week Ahead, with a link to the document on our website.
- We have experienced a delay in transitioning to our new pre-school tenants but hope to welcome the Good Earth pre-school in March.

*The Coordinating Team's next meeting is January 11, 10-12, and after that we will resume our normal first and third Thursdays at that time. If you're interested in attending, please contact the CT Convener to verify meeting time and place. Questions for the CT? Email [CT@uucb.org](mailto:CT@uucb.org).*

## **Social Justice News**

### **Sheldon Jones, Reporter**

The LFDC/s meeting in December included discussions of two “field trips”: one, led by Jim Acock and Lonnie Moseley, who attended a concert in Santa Cruz featuring Rhiannon Giddens: the other, led by Christina Creveling (who sings with Oakland Interfaith Gospel Community Chorus), as some of us attended the fabulous concert in Oakland that included the main gospel choir and the young peoples’ chorus. We listened to music from these events and sang along! Then, a very thoroughly prepared Cordell Sloan so titillated us that we voted to carry over the discussion of *The Obama Inheritance, Fifteen Stories of Conspiracy Noir*, edited by Gary Philips, ‘til February. Join us! But first, we hope you will join us on **January 7** at 12:30 for a discussion of

*Daring Democracy: Igniting Power, Meaning, and Connection for the America We Want* by Frances Moore Lappé and Adam Eichen, the UUA Common Read for 2017-18.

In December, a trio of us were delighted to see and hear Julie Rogers perform Hanukkah songs with her chorus—Kol Truah, at the Congregation Netivot Shalom in Berkeley.

The New Year will see the UUCB engaged by Social Justice Council's project on Immigrant Sanctuary starting with an informative meeting with local immigrant justice speakers immediately following the **January 21** service, and culminating in a vote to become a "Sanctuary Church" during the Congregational Meeting on **February 11**. For those interested in becoming part of the Sanctuary "Accompaniment Team" to support local undocumented youth or a mixed-status family, please contact [Elisabeth Jay](#).

The New Year is also the time for existing and new Social Justice Projects to (re)apply for the coming 2018-19 church year. Applications and guidelines can be found on the UUCB website, or by contacting Craig Scott. They are due by the second Sunday in February.

## **Partner Church Committee News**

### **Stephanie Ann Blythe, Reporter**

Relationships are always complex situations. Our 20+ year partnership with Homoródújfalú is more than just their village/congregation and our congregation. Their church is a member of the Hungarian Unitarian Church (HUC) just as UUCB is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). We are also a member congregation of the UUA's Partner Church Council. Our Anne Greenwood is on the UUPCC board. And let's not forget our deep connections with the Balázs Scholars Program at Starr King School for the Ministry.

The Balázs Scholars have helped drive a progressive wing within the HUC, even going as far as publicly supporting marriage equality in Romania. There is also a conservative wing in the HUC, which even includes some former Balázs Scholars. Unfortunately, due to extreme pressure from conservative Christian groups in Eastern Europe, the HUC voted at its recent synod to define marriage as a relationship restricted to a man and a woman. That's very disappointing, especially for LGBTQ UUs who have been deeply involved in Partner Church activities.

Just as we do not all agree on everything our church and government does, we still strive to stay in relationship. We hope that this action doesn't turn you away from support of our Partner Church and we encourage your inquiry into this situation. Please take time to read the statement from the Executive Director of the UUPCC

at [http://www.uupcc.org/sites/uupcc.org/files/statement\\_to\\_global\\_uu\\_community-10-27\\_on\\_website.pdf](http://www.uupcc.org/sites/uupcc.org/files/statement_to_global_uu_community-10-27_on_website.pdf)

And then please read the collegial letter from UUA leaders to the HUC:

[http://uupcc.org/sites/uupcc.org/files/message\\_of\\_hope\\_courage\\_and\\_concern.pdf](http://uupcc.org/sites/uupcc.org/files/message_of_hope_courage_and_concern.pdf)

Your Transylvanian Partner Church Committee is fully committed to maintaining a thriving relationship with Homoródújfalú. Please join us in this quest. Feel free to ask [Stephanie Ann Blythe](#) or [Anne Greenwood](#) for more insight into a very complex situation.

Music Matters

**Bryan Baker**

In addition to beautiful music during services there are some special events coming in January. The first one is part of the ongoing series celebrating song; SongFests are

performance of classical and popular songs from centuries past and from today. And we will have auditions for our production of the great musical *Cabaret*, set in pre-World War II Germany. Full of famous and beloved songs like “Money, Money,” “Wilkommen,” “Maybe This Time,” and the title song, it also has a great deal to say about life as a dangerous regime takes control. The show opens May 4 at UUCB.

**SongFest** – January 7, Sunday, 1–2 pm in the Sanctuary: A short program of songs of all styles and shapes, interesting, funny, lovely songs. It’s free and uplifting.

**Auditions for *Cabaret***, the musical – January 13, Saturday, and January 14, Sunday, 3–5 pm in the Social Hall: Open auditions for production of this great musical UUCB in May; please prepare one minute of a song in English (any style) and expect to be asked to do a cold reading. To schedule an audition on January 13 or 14 please [email me](#).

**Chocolate!** Chocolate and Love Songs together again the first weekend in February. Mmmmm.

Yours in harmony,

Bryan

## Poetry

### EVENING SONG

Whoo? Whoo? the owl asks  
from distant perch  
As the neighborhood mockingbird  
takes up the question  
While the sleek black cricket  
tunes his mandolin  
And the raucous caucus of jays

go quiet.

Then, as certain as sunrise  
the moon crests the hill  
The first star winks  
And ... night descends.

© Gerry Keenan

## WHEN WE ARE BELOVED

we are sunrise,  
a sturdy sunflower  
nodding “Yes,”

roses and daffodils,  
comets and moonlight,  
lavender footprints

across a snowy meadow  
where we walked  
today, and long ago.

© Claire Baker

## **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 a “pathways to membership” session, sign the membership book, and commit to supporting this church through participation and financially. To become a member, please contact our Membership Co-Chairs, Lonnie Moseley or Paul Hudson ([membership@uucb.org](mailto:membership@uucb.org)), or speak with one of the co-ministers.

**NEWSLETTER ITEM SUBMISSIONS:** Submit announcements and articles by email to [beacon@uucb.org](mailto: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](mailto:beacon@uucb.org).

**WEB SITE:** <http://uucb.org>

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS:**

**To subscribe to the email version of this newsletter** or “The Week Ahead at UUCB,” email [administrator@uucb.org](mailto:administrator@uucb.org). You can also find both newsletters at the [uucb.org](http://uucb.org) website under “News.”

**UUCB general discussion list:**

[http://groups.google.com/group/uucb\\_discuss/about](http://groups.google.com/group/uucb_discuss/about)

**Email list for families:** Email [family.ministry@uucb.org](mailto:family.ministry@uucb.org)