

# Beacon on the Hill June 2017

## From the Ministers

### Rev. Kristin Schmidt

I write this after having spent a day with 1800 colleagues soaking in the wisdom and insights of some of the best preachers in this country and around the world. Much of what has been said at this conference so far has addressed the challenges faced by the institutional church right now. But what has resonated most for me has been the infectious spirit of hope and excitement about new places of connection, new opportunities to work for justice, and new possibilities for ministry in our rapidly shifting world.



Revs. Kristin and Christian Schmidt

Little more than a week after our installation, my heart overflows with that same sense of hope, excitement, and new possibility for our shared ministry here at the UU Church of Berkeley. We have sensed here overwhelming hunger for connection with what is greater than ourselves, with one another, and with our wider communities. So, in conversation with people across the congregation, we have been working to align the ways we use our time as your ministers with our shared mission to “create loving community, inspire spiritual growth and encourage lives of integrity, joy, and service.”

Our catered Thursday evening gatherings are shifting from every week to a shared potluck dinner and evening worship just the first Thursday of each month. Please bring a dish or beverage to share (if you can, if not just bring yourself!) and join us on Thursday, September 7 from 5:30 to 7:15 pm for the first of these monthly gatherings.

Beginning in September, alongside of our amazingly successful and meaningful Personal Theology series, the intern (yay!) and co-ministers will offer a rotating series of opportunities for connection, learning, and spiritual

deepening on Sundays at 9:30. These sessions will include classes about the roots of our faith, opportunities for leadership development, and open conversations about the month's worship theme.

We will also be offering opportunities to connect outside of Sunday mornings and even outside the church campus. From 10-11:30 am on the first Friday of each month one of the ministers will offer Community Office Hours, an opportunity to meet and chat with us over coffee or tea. We'll start on Friday, September 1 at Inn Kensington.

On the fourth Friday of each month from 6 – 8pm we hope you'll join us for Church on Tap – an evening of fun, fellowship, and froth at the Albany Taproom. This is a great opportunity to get to know folks from church outside of the church, and can be a great way to invite a friend to meet the ministers before visiting on a Sunday. We hope to see you and your friends for the first Church on Tap on Friday, September 22!

And finally, the ministers will be leading Parents Night Out while Merrin is away on parental leave, so we hope you'll take advantage of this awesome opportunity to connect with other parents and enjoy some time kid-free on the church! Join us on Saturday, September 9 at 4:30 for the first of these in the new program year.

We look forward to seeing where our shared love, values, and commitment to justice take this congregation in our second year of ministry together. What an honor and a joy it is to be your ministers!

Peace and joy,

Rev. Kristin Schmidt

## **Sunday Worship Services in June**

**Theme for Month: Zest**

June 4 at 11:15 am – ***Coming of Age Celebration***, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt with Merrin Clough, Molly Johnson, and Jim Gasperini, Worship Associate. Since the fall several youth in our congregation have probed the roots of our faith and explored their own evolving beliefs. This week in worship these youth will share their wisdom with us and we will celebrate how they have come of age through their search together for truth and meaning.

June 11 at 11:15 am – ***Joy as Resistance***, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt with Cordell Sloan, Worship Associate. In the midst of schedules with so much to do, budgets with so many bills to pay, homes with so many chores to do, and a wider world that is so broken, joy can seem like a distraction from “important” things. Yet, the experience of joy itself is resistance against all that robs our lives of their flavor, all that robs our lives of their abundance. Join us this Sunday as we thank our Family Ministry volunteers for the gifts they have given our community this church year, and for a whole service of steeping ourselves in joy!

June 18 at 11:00 am – ***Summer Awe***, Rev. Christian Schmidt with Ann Riley, Worship Associate. Albert Einstein once said, “Look! Look deep into nature and you will understand everything.” During this service we’ll use the eyes of our hearts to look deep into the wonders of nature and marvel at all we can and cannot understand. (Note that WORSHIP SWITCHES TO 11:00 am THIS WEEK)

June 25 at 11:00 am – ***Receiving Joy***, Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt with Mary Muehlbach, Worship Associate. While happiness is something we can pursue, joy is often an experience we simply receive, unpursued and unearned. This week in worship we will explore joy, what it is, what it isn’t, and why it’s a gift.

**June Good Neighbor (Sharing Our Offerings):**

**[Developing Indigenous Resources](#)** is a small NGO testing an innovative

approach to development in selected slums in Punjab, India. When a permanent solution has been brought to any serious, chronic problem, it is almost invariably brought by the people who have the problem. We facilitate the people in developing countries solving their own problems, thereby enabling them to bring about their own form of national development.

**Note:** We follow the practice of most Unitarian Universalist churches of cutting back on programming during the summer, but please do keep coming on Sundays when you can, and watch The Week Ahead for other activities. If you are in charge of a group that will be changing its schedule over the summer, please be sure to let [Lissa Roos Parker](#), Scheduling Coordinator, know. Note that Sunday services will begin at 11 am starting June 18 and continuing in the fall.

**Lost and Found Sunday:** On June 11th we will display in the Social Hall all items from our Lost and Found, including travel mugs and serving dishes. Please check to see if anything is yours or your child's.

## **Summer Social Action Forum in June**

### **Sunday mornings at 9:30 in the Fireside Room**

June 4: **Dr. Don Klose**, retired psychologist, "Disarmament vs. Risking the Existence of the Planet."

June 11: **Occupella**. Witty political satire in song. **Hali Hammer** and Friends.

June 18: **John Gioia**, Contra Costa County Supervisor, "What's Happening in West County."

June 25: **Ray Westergard**, retired teacher, "The Language of Political Correctness and its Damage to the Liberal Agenda and Social Justice."

For July-August programs see [website](#).

## **Humanist Connections in June**

**Sundays at 12:45 pm, followed by a potluck at 2:15 pm. Check kiosk in Atrium for location.**

Format: A 10-minute presentation followed by moderated, timed discussion.  
All are welcome!

June 4: **Feminism for Men à la Simone Beauvoir**, Raydell Nelson

June 11: **Climate Change, 6<sup>th</sup> Extinction: Point of No Return?** Sherry Fuzesy

June 18: **Why Are White Men – All Men – Doing What They Do?**  
Helene Nelson

June 25: **The History of White Trash**, Susan Singh

## **Family Ministry**

Soon our Director of Family Ministry, Merrin Clough, will go on maternity leave. She will be gone July 9 through November 12. She'll return to work part time for a month, then resume a full time schedule December 10. It is inspiring to see the strength of leadership that is at the ready. We've got a great support team to guide the program while she is away. Please see ["Who's Who in Family Ministry"](#) on the website for names, faces and roles.

Exciting times are in store for Family Ministry this summer at UUCB! We welcome Ida Poberezovsky as the Summer RE Lead Teacher. Ida is excited to join the team along with summer RE volunteers to provide an exciting program. Alice Lemieux is coordinating the summer programming, ensuring that all needs are met during this time.

This summer we will be exploring activism through a Unitarian Universalist lens! Through creative engagement we will explore the ways that our shared principles manifest through intentional activism. At the end of the summer, participants will display projects as part of an exhibition.

Children and youth of all ages are invited to participate and all ages will be together this summer. All projects, games, and activities will be multi-age accessible. Traveling this summer? Not to worry, children and youth can drop in on any Sunday!

Summer RE will begin on June 18th and will continue through August 13th from 11 am to 12 pm each Sunday. Childcare will be provided each Sunday from 10:45 am to 12:30 pm. We are looking forward to an engaging and joyous season of learning, growth, and fun!

## **From the Stewardship Team**

At the May 21 Congregational Meeting, the congregation voted to revise the budget for next fiscal year to reflect the reality that pledges to date are about \$36,000 short of the \$506,000 goal the CT and Board had hoped for.

An income line was added, called “Faith, Hope and Charity” and equalling \$36,000, which still leaves a projected overall deficit of more than \$16,000. So we are calling on you at this time to either make a generous pledge for next year if you have not already done so or increase your pledge to help close the gap. Ira said at the meeting that the annual cost of operating the church is about \$1800 per member, but it’s actually closer to \$3000 per member. Please consider what you can do—another \$5 a week? \$50 a month? 5% of your adjusted annual income? Put your money where your heart is and help UUCB thrive! You can fill out a pledge form or just email your commitment to [stewardship@uucb.org](mailto:stewardship@uucb.org). Thank you!

**Stewardship Team:** Ira Nelken and Cordell Sloan, Co-Chairs; Patrick Cullinane, Mac Lingo, Bob Moore, Jo Maxon, Marta Tobey, Rev. Christian

## **Coordinating Team Notes**

### **Lisa Maynard, Coordinating Team Convener**

As I mentioned last month, my term as CT Convener will end in August. Who will be the next CT Convener?

The CT Convener should possess the ability to understand and participate in practical aspects of managing church operations. Some experience with budgeting and human resources is desirable. Even more important is the ability to look at the “big picture” when making decisions about church operations—or in other words, the ability to view church operations from the perspective of pursuing our mission and achieving our ends. Other important qualities are discretion (for example, in the area of human resources), a commitment to collaborative working relationships with UUCB staff and lay leadership, and respect for the contributions of all members of our church community.

The CT Convener makes monthly reports to the Board of Trustees and attends Board meetings and also writes this monthly Beacon article in order to communicate to the congregation.

I have found the job interesting and rewarding. If you think you might be interested in taking on a leadership role such as this one, please contact me at [lbmaynard3@me.com](mailto:lbmaynard3@me.com) to learn more about it!

*The Coordinating Team currently meets twice monthly, on the first and third Thursdays from 10 am to 12 pm. If you're interested in attending, please contact me ([lbmaynard3@me.com](mailto:lbmaynard3@me.com)) to verify our schedule and meeting place. Questions for the CT? Email [CT@uucb.org](mailto:CT@uucb.org).*

## **Program Council**

# **Jean Gleason, Interim Program Council**

## **Convener**

Post-Its. Those little sticky pieces of paper are critical tools for the “Calendar Summit” hosted by the Program Council on May 13th. Combined with all the extensive preliminary efforts of Lissa Roos Parker to create a first draft, we now have a very comprehensive basic calendar of UUCB events, meetings and room needs for September 2017 through May 2018. It already helped different groups avoid “double booking” or creating competing activities. Check the [calendar on UUCB.org](http://calendar.on.UUCB.org) and you will see that this is one busy place! If you have a church activity that needs to be included, find an available time and fill out a “Green Sheet” to start the reservation process.

If anyone is interested in seeing what the Program Council is doing, please join us in the Fireside Room on June 14th. Visitors are always welcome. The representatives of the various groups will review their activities and accomplishments, as well as their plans for the coming year.

## **Community Ministry**

### **Rev. Jane Ramsey**

Why am I here?

Why doesn't God take me?

These are the questions I get asked most often in my job as a hospice chaplain.

As they look to me expecting an answer.....

Or not; they don't seem surprised when I respond with “I don't know.”

It actually is a trick question; if I gave them an answer they wouldn't believe



it.

I have met very few who actually fear death...palliative care medicine has advanced to the point where I rarely see anyone in physical pain.

So the person is....existing....just existing and ever

So

Slowly

Fading.....

“Why am I here?” they say

“I don’t know” I respond.

Possible answers:

1. There is something left for you to do.
2. God has God’s reasons.
3. Would you believe – there is no reason?
4. Your body parts are wearing out and that can be a slow process.

Have you given it much thought?

Why are you here?

Is there a reason?

Does there need to be a reason?

Think about it.

**Partner Church**

**Stephanie Ann Blythe**

It might be the best kept secret at UUCB that's hidden in plain sight. One of the kiosks in the Atrium has a panel maintained by the Partner Church Committee. On it is a sheet of paper, but it is written in Hungarian so very few people know what it is. It lists all of the students from Homoródújfalú who are receiving financial assistance from UUCB's Village Education Fund to attend high school, university, or a trade school. It seems like we are always a year behind, so the current list is for the 2015-2016 school year. Whether you make a monetary donation or buy a bowl of goulash, you are helping the young people of our partner church to continue their education.

If you have seen Lonnie Moseley's "Congrats for Grads" display in the Atrium or "The Gift from A Black Church" piece that she recently posted on the Google discussion list then you will understand why we have to be so much more proactive about how we honor the young people of this church, our Transylvanian Partner Church, and any neighboring churches we may become aligned with.

That list posted on the kiosk is not just names. It is a list of families that UUCB members have stayed with when making a pilgrimage to the village. Anne Greenwood has actually seen most of these kids grow up during her many visits. Some of them have been our interpreters when we visit. The connection with Újfalú is greater than we know. Whether you make a one-time donation or set up a monthly contribution on the UUCB website you are continuing a tradition that makes a difference. Villagers say that this is best way we can support Újfalú.

We are expecting the village to officially call their new minister this month. We'll have more information as we receive it. Meanwhile, if you see Susan Toth on a Sunday, ask her to translate that list of students. If you see Stephanie Ann Blythe ([steph62850@yahoo.com](mailto:steph62850@yahoo.com)) or Anne Greenwood ([annegt1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:annegt1@sbcglobal.net)), ask us anything else!

# Social Justice News

**The Social Justice Council has elected a new leadership team** for the upcoming church year. Co-chairs are Nancy Kelly and Beth Jerde. Co-Treasurers are Lorraine Schnurr and Barbara Weisman. Secretary is Sheldon Jones. Social Justice Sunday table coordinators are Jim Acock and Susan Blair. Dorothy Herzberg will coordinate the Good Neighbor work.

Our June **potluck and meeting** will be on Sunday, June 11, 6 pm. All are welcome.

We plan to offer additional workshops in **Nonviolent Communication (NVC)** in August and September.

In September and October a series of workshops and caucuses are planned to address the issues of race and white supremacy brought up in the May 7 service, “Whose Faith Is It?”

**LFDC (Literature, Film and Drama Contingent of the Confronting Racism Project)** was pleased to be part of the very special service on May 7: “Whose Faith Is It?,” concerning white supremacy, and how UUCB might want to ensure that all truly feel welcome on the hill. LFDC member Helen Tinsley-Jones added her very personal and moving story to those of UUCB choir members Rod Lowe and Dayana Claghorn. Following the service, we offered our meeting time for a “talk-back” session. Rev. Jay Atkinson lit the chalice and Lonnie Moseley facilitated a discussion of some of the written responses from congregants to questions posed during the service.

**Our book selection for June 4: *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America***, by Nancy Isenberg. And for **July 2: *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race***, by Debby Irving. (FYI: If you missed it, the movie *Get Out* is now streaming on Amazon and iTunes.)

## **Other Social Justice Opportunities and Information**

**Ceasefire Walks:** Friday nights in Richmond at 7, contact [maw.jane@gmail.com](mailto:maw.jane@gmail.com).

**GRIP:** UUCB volunteers prepare and serve lunch to hungry and homeless people at the GRIP Souper Center in Richmond on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Want to volunteer? [raywest2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:raywest2@sbcglobal.net). To help with supper at GRIP on fourth Saturdays, contact [arielwest@yahoo.com](mailto:arielwest@yahoo.com).

**Read-Aloud:** Volunteers needed for next school year to read aloud at local elementary schools in Richmond and San Pablo. Contact Judy Sam at [jssam47@yahoo.com](mailto:jssam47@yahoo.com).

## **Buildings & Grounds Committee**

### **Larry Nagel**

One of our goals was to have terrace landscaping in time for the Ministers' Installation, and thanks to the hard work of Lynne Cahoon and her landscaping subcommittee, the irrigation system was installed and beautiful flowers were planted. We had our first meeting with our architect to develop a plan to refurbish the Safir Room after the mold remediation. Bids for tree removal have been sent out to four contractors with a bid return due date of mid June. Finally, we hired a consultant to create a hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) plan. The HACCP plan is a systematic preventive approach to food safety from biological, chemical, and physical hazards in production processes that can cause the finished product to be unsafe and designs measurements to reduce these risks to a safe level. We are reviewing the first draft of this document.

If any of these projects fits your interests and your skills, we would love to have you on our team. Please contact Larry Nagel at (510) 558-0842 or

lwn@att.net. Or, just drop in at the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting, which is every fourth Monday at 4 PM in the Fireside Room (except for December and May, when it is the third Monday).

## **Sing with a Rock ‘n’ Roll Band!**

**Community Rocks on Tuesday Nights at UUCB** (hopefully all Tuesdays in June, 7–8:30 pm) is a free, non-audition, sing-along rock-n-roll community chorus supported by an accomplished rock band, Soul Rising, directed by Moses Channels, with the purpose of engaging UUCB members and the wider community in sharing the joy of making popular music together. Community Rocks welcomes all singers (and non-singers) to learn popular songs from the peaceful and loving side of the classic rock repertoire.

This is guaranteed “free fun” in the Sanctuary! For more info contact [Randall Hudson](#), UUCB coordinator for this group.

## **The State of the Congregation**

### **Jack Duggan, President, Board of Trustees**

We’ve just come through a long period of getting ready. Since Reverends Barbara and Bill Hamilton-Holway announced their retirement we’ve been preparing ourselves for today. It hasn’t been easy. We did a capital campaign that has paid for needed repairs to the church buildings. With Reverend Greg Ward we made painful personnel changes. We made changes that improved our governance structure and operation. We began searching for new ministers, a long process that in the end left us waiting and wondering.

And then the Reverends Kristin and Christian Schmidt found us and we found them. The strength, care and hard work of our Search Committee, so well done, paid off. Kristin and Christian made the move, settled in with their family and became part of our family. This May we affirmed our commitment to them and they to us.

The waiting is over, we are here. As UUs we know that the congregation, the leadership and the ministers are jointly responsible for who we are, who we are becoming and what we do. Like the legal phrase “jointly and severally,” we rely on others but we also take responsibility for ourselves. We are not by nature followers, which can make the process difficult but richer for the effort. Our relationship with our leadership and our ministers is one of joint responsibility and decision making.

In my opinion our greatest strength is who we are. My family and I came to UUCB because of the members who call this church their community. We are inspired by and supported by this extraordinary gathering of people.

We the congregation can take credit for this because it has always been the congregation that makes UUCB work. We have done the work. Now we have new ministers who have joined us in doing that work, who are committed to doing their part, adding their experience and wisdom to ours.

Yes, we have a nagging deficit. It's even worse this year than we originally thought. It's not insurmountable but it's a problem that must be solved. Financially we are barely keeping up, and deferring maintenance and needed improvements on a sixty-year-old building is not sustainable. Like many churches we have a shrinking and aging congregation.

I believe the way to address our financial concerns is to build the kind of community we want to be that includes enthusiasm for who we are, a unity of purpose and a strong sense of responsibility for each other including the financial sacrifices necessary to sustain our community.

When I look around at us, our staff, our community and family ministers and interim ministers there is a great vitality, energy and people actively engaged in making this work and in applying our principles and faith in humanity in the larger community. We are attracting new members and our programs for the members and outreach to the community are strong and active. We are a welcoming congregation and it works. Our success tells us we need to reach

further.

In the coming months we will be working on defining our Mission and Vision and our path to the future for this time of renewal. One more time we will take responsibility for who we are and who we want to be and commit ourselves to the work we need to do. One more time we will renew ourselves.

I am very confident knowing our community and now knowing our ministers that we are going to do good things together.

## **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.

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)

Deadline for submissions to the Beacon is the 15th of each month. Submit items to [beacon@uucb.org](mailto:beacon@uucb.org).