

Beacon on the Hill, Sept. 2016

From Our New Ministers

Revs. Kristin and Christian Schmidt

WE ARE SO EXCITED! It's not our custom to write in all caps (in online communities, they call that "shouting") or to overuse exclamation points, but for once it seems entirely appropriate. We *are* excited – and a little nervous and out of sorts, too, in the midst of all this change – to come to UUCB, the East Bay, and California.



By the time you read this we will have crossed the entire continent, from the banks of the Delaware River, which is affected by Atlantic tides, to the shores of the San Francisco Bay. In other words, folks, that's literally a 3000-mile, coast-to-coast move. Shepherding a house full of stuff and two kids on that trip is going to be a bit of a challenge, so we are very much looking forward to settling in and enjoying the fabulous weather and the warm embrace of this congregation.

It was such a privilege to be called to minister with and to this congregation that is rooted in a storied past, living in the present, and oriented toward the future. While we've learned a lot about the history of UUCB, we look forward to learning even more as our relationships form and deepen. As our days with and among you draw closer to beginning, we are growing curious about what each of you feels is important in this time and place in our lives as individuals, families, and communities. And we are eager to hear more about your hopes and dreams for the future of this church and what we are being called to be and do together.

We had the chance to briefly meet many of you during Candidating Week in July and in the year ahead our main focus will be to get to know you, both as individuals and as this thing we call a congregation. As the beginning of the

church year unfolds there will be opportunities to meet with one or both of us. We hope you'll keep an eye out here in the Beacon and on Sunday mornings for those details.

In the meantime, we hope you'll join in the exciting lineup of events this month including the Solano Stroll on September 11, and our Water Ceremony and ingathering on Sept. 18.

See you in church!

Kristin and Christian

Fall Schedule

Starting September 18, **Sunday services will begin at 9:30 and 11:15.** The early service will be an intimate gathering on the chancel (stage) of the sanctuary. **Personal Theology will start at 9:30, beginning September 4.**

We have lots of exciting events planned for Sundays in September and October. See Family Ministry, UUCB at the Solano Stroll, and Music Matters below. Thursday suppers and vespers will start October 6.

For the September 18 Water Ceremony, you are invited to bring a small amount of water from a special place you have visited over the summer or water that is otherwise significant or symbolic to you.

Sunday Worship in September

Theme for Month: Rebels

September 4, 11 am **Rev. Kristin Grassel Schmidt and Rev. Christian Schmidt** with David Roberts

September 11, 11 am **Kathryn Jay** with Cordell Sloan

September 18, 9:30 and 11:15 am **Revs. Kristin and Christian Schmidt**

September 25, 9:30 and 11:15 am **Rev. Kristin Schmidt** with Jeanne Foster

Personal Theology in September

Sunday mornings at 9:30 am in the Fireside Room.

Sept 4: **Rabbi Tsvi Bar-David**, Ph.D., is the founder and director of Beit Simchah (house of joy). He has taught and practiced Jewish Mysticism, both as a path to healing, and as a good in itself. He has translated and taught – from the original Hebrew and Aramaic – portions of Jewish mystical texts, including Ma’aseh Merkavah, Zohar, and Tanya. He studied the connection between world shamanism and Jewish mysticism, particularly the worldview and healing practices of the Dineh (Navajo) Nation. He also leads sacred ecstatic song. Join us to hear ***“Dveikut in Jewish Mysticism: the Direct Experience of the Beloved.”***

Sept 11: **Joel Ben Izzy**, a renowned storyteller and recording artist, is the winner of numerous awards, including the Parents’ Gold Choice Award. In ***“Harvesting the Stories of Our Lives,”*** he will share stories about Rwanda and stories particularly suited to the arrival of fall, helping us think about how to reap and hold the tales from our own lives. He’ll also be sharing stories exploring just how it is that *curses become blessings*—as befits a gathering on this date.

Sept 18: **Jeanne Foster** will give a seminar on the *“The Dream That Almost Got Away.”* A UUCB member and Worship Associate, she received her M. Div. in Ministry from Starr King School for the Ministry and a Ph.D. in Religion from the Graduate Theological Union. She is the author of many publications, a prize-winning poet, and professor of English at St. Mary’s College.

Sept 25: **Dr. Steven Herrmann** is a Jungian psychotherapist specializing in dream work and vocational development. He will present *“Vocational Dreams,”* in which he will discuss dreams, their meanings, and their vocational significance. He is the author of several books, a poet, a teacher, a scholar, and a candidate in analytic training at the C. G. Jung Institute, San Francisco.

Family Ministry

Merrin Clough

As a child I went through a phase when I’d personify the months in a year. Kind of like my own inner calendar. In my color pencil sketches August was a ragtag tomboy in a dress with dirty knees and uncombed hair. Her face was full of freckles that had bloomed over the summer months. My protagonist would bask in the summer sunshine but she also sensed that the winds of change were on their way.

September was a whole other picture. This little girl sat at a desk and was much more kempt. She had wide starry eyes, full of the life unfolding around and inside of her.

As a child those last days of summer felt more and more precious as free time dwindled away. But also there was this feeling of anticipation building as the new school year approached. So much was just around the corner beyond my view: new friends, new teachers, a new routine, and sometimes a new school. Then September came with all its force. Life then became all about taking the mixed-up bits of familiar and unfamiliar stuff and shaping them into a day. Inside it felt kind of like smashing different colors of play dough together. Sometimes making beautiful swirls, sometimes a muddy mess.

As adults our lives tend to be more constant. It's easy to forget the threshold time that September is for many young people. This month I encourage you to pay special attention to the changes happening in the lives of the children and teens you know. How can you help them shape these days into something wonderful, meaningful? How might our church community offer just the right bits of familiar or unfamiliar to balance out the picture? Certainly that's what we're here for... to create loving community, inspire spiritual growth, and encourage lives of integrity, joy and service.

Children & Youth Programs: This year our Family Ministry activities start up in phases.

- **On August 21** the youth groups resumed meeting. The elementary kids will continue to meet in multi-age groups through September 18. The children can choose to attend the Miracles Group that explores science and a sense of awe or music-making workshops with Katie Lipka, director of the Youth and Children's Choir.
- **September 11** is the Solano Stroll. All families are encouraged to join the parade and bring friends to our booth at the corner of Neilson Street, or sign up for a shift to help at the booth.
- **On September 18** at 11:15 there will be an All Ages worship service

with our new ministers! Childcare will also be available, as usual. After the service is the Volunteer Training for all teachers, advisors and mentors.

- **On September 25** children's religious education classes will resume. Our age groupings this year are toddler time, K-first grade, grades 2-3, and grades 4-5. You can learn about the curriculum on the UUCB website. After the 11:15 service everyone is invited to a Family Ministry Celebration with a taco truck, bouncy house and games on the field.

Help Needed: Did you know it takes over 60 volunteers to staff our Family Ministry programs? Most of our teams are well supported but we are looking for a few more folks to join the grade 4-5 teaching team, middle school advisors, Coming of Age mentors, and volunteer support team. Consider joining us in this fun and inspiring work with our children and youth. To learn more, email Merrin Clough, merrin@uucb.org.

UUCB at the Solano Stroll, Sept. 11

For years, you had to choose between going to the Solano Stroll Parade OR attending the first Sunday of UUCB's church season. This year, YOU CAN DO BOTH because we have moved our "Ingathering Sunday" (when we go to two services) to September 18th.

Furthermore, we invite you to help create a joyful UUCB presence by marching in the Parade with us!! Wear your "Standing on the Side of Love" t-shirt. (Get one at the Book Table in the Social Hall, if you don't have one already, or wear any bright color.) Meet on Fresno Avenue next to Andronico's by 9:45 am.

Also, you can join church leaders who are excited about sharing our storied religious tradition with people who might not know about UUCB. We are looking for volunteers to staff our expanded booth this year. If you are excited

about our programs in Music/the Arts, Social Justice, Family Ministry, or Adult Religious Education, sign up for a one-hour (or longer) shift with three other volunteers. If you fear you don't know what to say, we will give you "talking points" and plenty of handouts to tell our exciting story. Go [here](#) to sign up for a shift, or contact [Lonnie Moseley](#) for adult programs, [Sheldon Jones](#) for social justice, [Gail Simpson](#) for music/arts, or [Paul Hudson](#) for family ministry.

Thursday Night Fundraising Supper at Rubio's, Sept. 15

Have an inexpensive dinner out, celebrate "Mexican Independence Day Eve" with Mexican food, socialize with UUCB folks (hopefully our new co-ministers and their sons will join us), and raise funds for the church! In order to earn our 20% share, we need enough attendees to buy at least \$250 worth of food and drink at Rubio's in El Cerrito Plaza—and more is better—so please mark your calendar for September 15, 6-8 pm.

Thursday Night Suppers and vespers services at church will start on October 6. If the choir or anyone else would like to organize a potluck on any other Thursday night in September, feel free to schedule it with Lissa Roos Parker and publicize it through The Week Ahead and the uucb_discuss Google group.

President's Corner

Deborah Schmidt

As our ingathering begins, I want to share some notable resources and directions that emerged from this year's Fifty-Fifth Annual General Assembly, held in Columbus, Ohio June 22-26. The theme was Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect. While it is almost impossible to summarize a convention with such extensive offerings,

and each attendee's experience was unique, the focus on interfaith relationships was very timely and nourishing for congregations like ours that are seeking ways both to be more truly welcoming and to bridge into our surrounding communities.

The plenary sessions were remarkably civil, despite their challenging topics, and resulted in adopting the following: as congregational study/action issue, "[The Corruption of Our Democracy](#)"; the business resolution, "[Thanksgiving Day Reconsidered](#)"; the actions of immediate witness (AIWS), "[Build Solidarity with our Muslim Neighbors](#)," "[Some Guns, All Guns: Legislating Appropriate Restrictions](#)," and "[Stop the Hate: Protect and Support our Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Family](#)"; and the responsive resolution, "[Reaffirmation of Commitment to Racial Justice](#)." It was very moving to be part of a democratic process crafting meaningful responses to current issues.

Yet there were thoughtful voices questioning the impact of all these agendas, committees, and carefully drafted verbiage. We voted to suspend AIWS during GA next year so that we can focus on justice-making. Our final worship service, created by members of the Black Lives of UU organizing collective, put out a powerful call to all of us to move way beyond passing resolutions and hanging banners.

The UUA has made available many [videos and handouts](#) from the workshops, business sessions, services, and lectures. I highly recommend the handouts from the workshops "[What Are Microaggressions and Why Should We Care?](#)" and "[Adaptive Leadership for Tricky Challenges](#)," as well as Krista Tippett's soul-expanding [Ware Lecture](#) on the art of living.

Next year in New Orleans!

Help Our New Ministers Learn Names and Faces

Michael DeWitt for the Fellowship One Team

Please click [here](#) to create or update your profile in the online Church Directory. If you need help, volunteers will be available on Sundays starting September 18. You will also be able to have a new photo taken. If you have questions, contact Alisa at [\(510\)525-0302](tel:(510)525-0302) x306, administrator@uucb.org.

Coordinating Team Report

Lisa Maynard, Convener

The Coordinating Team represents the four facets of our church that need to be part of the operational leadership of UUCB: ministry, administration/staff, lay leadership, policy. Each CT member identifies especially with one of those facets: the minister, of course, with the ministerial facet, the Director of Administration with the administrative and staff facet, the Program Council Convener with the lay leadership facet, and the CT Convener with the policy facet. Since the CT has responsibility for overseeing day-to-day operations, each member also has the responsibility to consider every one of these vital facets of our church. The CT's work is driven by this responsibility to represent all the facets, rather than by the personalities of the members and their personal interests. When one member is not present, the other members work to make sure that all four facets are represented nonetheless.

Updates on recent work at UUCB:

- The new wi-fi has been installed and is working great!
- The new hearing assisted devices have been in operation in the sanctuary since mid-August; instruction cards are available to help congregants adapt to this new system.
- The refurbishing of the Safir Room has uncovered some mold behind ceiling

panels. We are looking into whether there is any additional damage in this area of the building, including the rooms above. We will be bringing in a remediation company to make sure that the mold is safely and thoroughly removed. This work has required some changes in scheduling for these rooms. We will keep you informed as to our progress and we will have these rooms back on-line as soon as possible.

- Thursday Supper and Vespers will start on October 6 so that our new ministers can be involved in planning after they begin their co-ministry here on September 1.
- The CT plans to begin using the UUA logo and graphic guidelines (adopted in 2014) as the standard logo for UUCB website, publications, and signs. Making this change will be a long-term process, since we prefer, when feasible, to use up any materials already printed, in the interests of resource conservation.

The Coordinating Team meets twice monthly. During September we expect to meet as usual on the first and third Wednesdays from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., but may adjust that schedule to accommodate our new ministers. If you're interested in attending, please [contact me](#) to verify our schedule and meeting place. Questions for the CT? Email CT@uucb.org.

Program Council Report

Ann Harlow, Convener

The Program Council is currently immersed in joining with the Growth Strategy Team to bring our wonderful church to the attention of people out in the wider community who might find coming here a life-changing experience.

At our August retreat we celebrated the arrival of several new Program

Council members and thanked Joanne Wile for bravely leading this new venture for its first year. We did some looking back and a lot of looking forward, talking about how we will work together mindfully and what we would like to accomplish together.

Our next meeting will be on September 7 at 7:15 pm, then in October we will return to 3rd Wednesdays. Members are welcome to observe Program Council meetings. A report of the decisions made by the council in 2015-16 can be downloaded from the Church Documents page of the UUCB website, <http://uucb.org/about-us/church-documents/>.

The View from Personal Theology

Gloria Merrill, Personal Theology Chair

September begins the Fall/Winter semester of Personal Theology. If you don't have the new schedule already, please pick one up in the racks in the Atrium near the office door. The PT Organizing Committee has an exciting line-up of speakers, so you won't want to miss a speaker or a topic you're especially interested in. Come and bring a friend. **Just remember: Personal Theology will be starting at 9:30 am**, half-an-hour earlier than before. But it will still be in the Fireside Room.

The PT Organizing Committee is changing. Barbara Rockhold has stepped back from Chair to become a consultant for the committee. Gloria Merrill is the new Chair; Anne Wardell is staying, while Barbara Norrish is moving on. John Maes and Dick Sherman are joining the Committee. Dave Rockhold will relinquish the audio technician's position to Mac Lingo, Dwight Merrill, and Charlie Wright. Thank you all, Barbara Norrish, and Barbara and Dave Rockhold for jobs well done!!

A Note from the Endowment Committee

Are you a member of the Maybeck Legacy Society? If yes, you should have received an invitation to a luncheon on October 9 to say “thank you!”

The Maybeck Legacy Society recognizes those who have declared their intent to leave a current or legacy gift to the UUCB Endowment. This may be to the General Endowment, which currently pays into both the operating budget and a building reserve, or one that is for a specific purpose, such as theological education.

Here is what Legacy Society member Grace Ulp, who recently established a Building Fund Endowment, says about her intention in planning this gift: “Church buildings age. Providing continuing care for them frees up our energy for the true mission of the church.”

Please contact one of the Endowment Committee members if you have not received your invitation, or if you are not a member but would like to attend to learn more about it: Grace Ulp, Abbot Foote, Anne Greenwood, Lenore Ralston, Austin Henderson, or Linda Laskowski; or email endowment@uucb.org.

Join a Chalice Circle This Fall!

Chalice Circles are “small group ministries” of 6-12 people who meet twice a month and center on deep and appreciative listening. Speak from your own heart, without fear of interruption or commentary, on a variety of topics the group chooses. Come experience self-revelation and renewal of spirit through this unique practice.

Registration begins in September with the first circles starting up in October. A registration table is set up in the Social Hall on Sundays, or contact [Lenore Ralston](#) (510-527-0696).

The Chalice Team: Markate Daly, Lenore Ralston, Dick Sherman, and Joanne Wile

Write for Your Life II

The Write for Your Life group founded by Beth Glick-Rieman and now facilitated by Kit Hewitt has been so popular there hasn't been room lately for new people to join. It has also conflicted with the Monday morning timing of the Women's Insight Meditation group. So this fall Carol Carlisle has agreed to facilitate a Tuesday morning Write for Your Life group starting on September 20. You can contact her with questions at by [email](#) or call 510-967-3672, or just drop in any Tuesday to see what it's like.

Music Matters

Bryan Baker

The choir season begins in September; our first rehearsal is Thursday night, September 1st, at 7:30 in the sanctuary. New members are welcome! Just show up and give it a try; you might like it:-)

Luminescence (the adult choir) goes a-strolling on the 11th. We will join many UUCBers at the Solano Stroll, and we will sing from one of the stages. So will the Youth and Children's Choir, Soul Rising, and the Gamelan.

The first Sunday of October, the 2nd, we will have a sing-along showing of *The Sound of Music* at 1 pm. Come join the fun! Costumes admired, not required;-) And it's free.

Be on the look out for Charlie Brown at UUCB. Donna Davis will direct a production of the fun, funny and heartwarming original version of "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" opening on Sunday, October 16.

Yours in harmony,

Bryan

Social Justice

Social Justice Council Meeting – Participating at the SJC August meeting were Merrin Clough and members of the Family Ministry Committee Leadership Team (both youth and adults). Our small groups met: One thought ahead about working together on UUCB's annual Bring-Your-Weight-in-Food event. Another reviewed Family Ministry's draft Covenant for Partnership. The third discussed how to build bridges to engage families in Social Justice work, and the fourth group spoke together about current social justice work.

Social Justice Chalice Circle Summer Pilot – After four Summer meetings of new and long-time UUCB members, feedback and an online survey by participants will determine whether Social Justice Chalice Circles will be commenced in the Fall.

Literature, Film & Drama Contingent (LFDC) of the Confronting Racism Project – Members of the Literature, Film & Drama Contingent of the Confronting Racism Project discussed *The Invention of Wings*, an unusually creative piece of historical fiction by Sue Monk Kidd (who also wrote *The Secret Life of Bees*). The book selection for September 4th is *The Underground Railroad*, by Colson Whitehead, another work of historical fiction in which Whitehead envisions an actual railroad tunneling underground in telling the story of two escapees from a plantation.

Good Neighbor Nominations – If you want to propose a non-profit to be chosen as one of our Good Neighbors please contact [Beth Jerde](#).

Confronting Racism – Plans are being finalized for both a workshop and a film.

Miscellaneous other Social Justice Opportunities and Information:

Ceasefire Walks – Friday nights in Richmond at 7, contact [Jane Eisenstark](#).

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? Contact [Ray Westergard](#).

Vigil for Incarcerated Immigrants – This vigil takes place monthly on the first Saturday from 11 to noon. Advocate and stand in solidarity with those incarcerated at the West County Detention Facility in Richmond at 5555 Giant Highway.

September Good Neighbor: [Read-Aloud Volunteer Program](#) Read Aloud Volunteer Program is a relationship-based program that fosters in children the joy and love of learning through reading and storytelling. An adult volunteer connects to a child over the school year and provides a consistent, respectful encounter with the child each week, reading to and listening to the child.

If you want to be added to the **Social Justice email list** contact [Jane Eisenstark](#).

The Read-Aloud Volunteer Program

Judy Sam

Our program will begin again this fall, as one of UUCB's Social Justice Council actions. This is the 21st year that some of our church members will participate by reading to children at schools in Richmond and San Pablo. Our annual **Orientation will be held at UUCB on Wed.**

September 21 from 10 am to 12:30 pm. We hope to see you then! If you'd like to learn more about the program, you can pick up a brochure from the kiosk in our atrium or talk to someone at the Social Justice Table after a

Sunday service. For more information, please check online at read-aloud.org, or [email me](#).

Community Ministry

Sue Magidson

Mornings at the hospital where I work:

Supervisor (warmly and collegially): “So what are your plans for the day?”

Sue: “Ask me when it’s over.”

(Laughter)

Hospital chaplaincy is, by its very nature, unpredictable. I never know who will need me, when they’ll be available, what they’ll need, or how long we’ll have. So many variables disrupt the best-laid plans. Sometimes I manage to be in exactly the right place at the right time; other times, I spend entire days trying to connect with a patient, only to find that the patient isn’t interested in a visit after all.

Over the years, I’ve learned to be both methodical and opportunistic, paying attention to what’s in front of me, as well as my To Do list of intentions. After all, it only takes a moment to exchange a smile, say a kind word, offer a hug, or check in to see how someone’s feeling. A moment of connection at an emotional time can make all the difference.

As a chaplain, I step in and out of people’s lives, accompanying them through challenging times and rarely learning the end of the story. Hello. Goodbye. In between, a moment. Of varying duration. Sometimes pedestrian; other times deeply connective and transformative. A dance of connection and release, connection and release. Will I see this person again? I never know.

Isn't that how life is? Unpredictable. Filled with opportunities to touch each other's lives, even if just for a moment. What if we held our To Do lists a little more lightly, paying attention to what's right in front of us? What if we lived our lives, knowing that all we have are precious moments?