

# Beacon on the Hill Newsletter, March 2016

## From Our Minister's Desk

Rev. Greg Ward



Dear Friends,

I struggle with how to talk about “sacrifice.” How to convey my belief in it. It’s an idea, I fear, that’s been too misused to recognize its usefulness. It’s like an old tool we don’t pick up anymore, even though it’s still capable of doing what it was made for. Sadly, we’ve cut back on the jobs that require it. We’ve lost faith in it. Don’t trust it. Even though we might admit that, used well, it can do jobs no other tool can do.

I know my faith in such a tool was tested every time people quoted Jesus and the parable of the rich man. Asked to give up all his possessions and join the disciples, the rich man balked. I knew it was really about following “love” — not about demonstrating blind fidelity. But the idea of giving up everything I’d carefully gathered to keep me safe felt scary.

But when I heard the story of Abraham and Isaac (“You shall take your son, Isaac, whom you love, up to the Mount of Moriah and make a sacrifice of him...”), I felt my mind close. That’s when I set the tool named “sacrifice” aside intending to let it rust.

I’d have been happy to never see it again. But for my interest in peace. And people like Fr. Daniel Berrigan, Thich Nhat Hanh and Mahatma Gandhi. When they stood against the forces of war and violence, they carried something on their marches and held something while in jail that looked a lot

like that old worn out tool.

And in my early ventures in justice, I saw Martin Luther King, Jr., thousands of clergy and ordinary citizens of color asking questions of fairness while being sprayed by hoses and bitten by dogs. They carried no thought of their own safety. They carried only a tool that helped them reason that though it would be bad for them, it might be better for those who came after them.

And as I listened for love—the hardest lesson of all—I kept hearing my Dad’s alarm go off at 4:00 every morning so he could deliver papers before going in to teach in the public schools. And the only explanation he ever offered for any of it was the hint of a smile whenever he was in the presence of his children as they explained that they were going further through college—and life—than he’d gone.

I struggle to explain sacrifice. Except when I think of the people who once gave much of what might have been for themselves to build the building we meet in on Sundays. Or teach our children. Or carry our “Standing on the Side of Love” banner in parades. Or when the many people here sacrifice some of what is theirs that others might learn the real holy lessons of life like “community.” Or how to make what really matters possible like peace and justice and love.

To the Glory of Life.

# Sunday Worship in March

Worship at 9 and 11am (except Easter Sunday, 11 am onl)

Theme for Month: *Sacrifice*

March 6 **The Cost of Reaching the Promised Land**, Rev. Greg Ward

with David Roberts. Moses led a

community of people out of a perilous

place. And they were grateful. For a while. But the vision of “milk and honey”

they’d hoped to find was more than a while in coming. Standing on the edge

of the promised land, there were some important conversations that took

place that helped decide if there was a place for them—and if they were the

people who could find such a place.

March 13 **MUSIC SUNDAY, *So Sings My Heart***, Bryan Baker with

Jeanne Foster. How music stirs the heart and brings us closer to our deepest

self.

March 20 **What Women Really Want**, Rev. Greg Ward with Ann Riley. Is

it really such a good idea to allow a divorced, middle aged, white man to talk

about what women really want? Regardless of our answer, that is what this

country—and much of the world—has settled for up until this point. In this

service, we will explore how far women have come, how far there is still to go,

whose responsibility is women’s empowerment and who suffers if it stays the

way it is.

March 27, Easter Sunday, **Easter as a Second Language**, Rev. Greg Ward

with Kathryn Jay. Years ago, our Unitarian forebears declared that

“Revelation is not sealed,” prompting religious descendants of our tradition

to expand our theological diversity to the edge of—and beyond—our Christian

past. But some sped so far and so fast beyond Christianity, we have forgotten the language once spoken. We've gained much by our search. But we may have lost something, too: wisdom, inspiration and theological partners who can help us resurrect hope for a hurting world.

## **Personal Theology**

Sunday mornings at 10 am in the  
Fireside Room

March 6 **Bill Garrett**, past professor of religion and philosophy at JFK University and UC Berkeley; now teaches through the Osher Lifelong Learning Program. ***Jonathan Haidt's The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion***

March 13 **Bill Garrett** (see bio above). Research on the intersection of dog evolution with the story of humanity. ***The Human/Dog Story: a Tail with a Heart***

March 20 **Matthew Fox**, internationally acclaimed spiritual theologian, Episcopal priest, activist, author and professor; founder of University of Creation Spirituality. ***Sins of the Spirit, Blessings of the Flesh: Lessons for Transforming Evil in Soul and Society***

March 27 **Beverly Allen in conversation with Frank Ferrante**, Beverly is a PhD, Professor Emerita at Syracuse University; visiting professor at Stanford; and author. Frank is an award-winning author of *May I Be Frank*. ***Transformation: Not for the Faint of Heart***

*Personal Theology Program Committee:* Barbara Rockhold, Gloria Merrill,

## **Family Ministry**

Merrin Clough, Director of Family Ministry

In our modern world technology helps build community and even can help us to grow spiritually. That's why we're so excited about our new website, check it out!

Our goal is to provide you with more content rich communications to support your family's religious journey. You'll see the family ministry pages now have lots of content to help you deepen into our community. Keep up to date on upcoming activities for families. Explore our family community. Learn more about children & youth programs.

They say knowledge is power, I say that meaningful information provides soulful possibilities. The website now gives you the opportunity to know what children and youth are doing in their religious education groups. My hope is that this will help families explore those experiences together throughout the week. I also encourage adults who don't have kids in the program to check in with the new web content. The weekly session descriptions are a great way to learn more about the activities of young people in our community.

As you look at the family pages you'll see event listings on either the right-hand side or bottom of each page. Click on one of the children's classes or youth group sessions. You'll find a description of what's happening on that specific day. You can also explore this feature in the email below or in the new calendar.

**Easter Celebrations** at UUCB are full of life and love. Invite friends and family to join us on Sunday, March 27! Activities will begin at 9:30 am with brunch that will continue until 11:30 am. The egg hunt overlooking the bay will be at 10:30 am. Then, like most Sundays, the children are invited to attend the beginning part of the 11 am worship service. After a time for all ages, children will leave the service for a spring activity fair on the field. Note that there will not be a 9 am all ages worship service. Childcare will be available all morning in Skytown from 9 am–1 pm.

Easter is a big celebration here at UUCB and we need lots of helping hands: egg hidiers, brunch servers, ticket sellers, and folks to host activities at the spring fair. Email [family.ministry@uucb.org](mailto:family.ministry@uucb.org) to volunteer. And thanks to our event leaders: brunch gurus Shannon & Tom Roberts, egg hunt mastermind Michael Armstrong, and activity fair coordinator Vicki Augustine!

**I encourage you to buy brunch tickets in advance.** Tickets will be sold online; keep an eye out for email announcements about this. You can also pick up tickets on Sundays at the Easter table in the atrium or social hall. We are collecting plastic eggs (empty or full) for the hunt plus stickers and goodies to go into the eggs. We appreciate creative egg fillings. Candy is delicious, but stickers, toys, coins, riddles, jokes, or other non-sugary egg fillings are encouraged. Drop off your donations in the collection bin in the atrium, or bring them to the Family Table in the atrium on Easter Sunday.

## **President's Corner**

Deborah Schmidt

Dear Fellow Congregants,

Since we kept our Awards, Canvass and Elections meeting brief and to the point, I am using this space to summarize for you the board's work since the May congregational meeting. I am really impressed with the amount of territory we have covered, both as a board and as a

congregation. We are truly in a different place than we were nine months ago!

We have radically rethought our structure, creating a Coordinating Team that is smaller and much more clear in its organization. We have established the Program Council, which is already taking its place as a meaningful way to connect and synergize our many and lively programs. We have arrived at an effective solution for monitoring progress toward our congregational goals, or ends; you will soon hear more about a questionnaire that will be key in this process.

The board is looking closely at its working groups, aiming to both lighten and tighten responsibilities. Task forces especially vital at this time include the Safety and Personnel Policy Task Forces, which are part of an overall policy housecleaning; and the Freestone and Asset Management Task Forces, which are devoted to helping us create long-term plans in line with our vision.

The focus of our visioning has been on inspiring our new stewardship campaign. We have also been working with the Search Team, through the Negotiating Team, to craft the language of our ministerial agreement, which provides a healthy and enduring basis for our partnership with our incoming minister.

I know that, for all of us, getting ready for our settled minister has been intense, challenging, sometimes even exhausting. But we are beginning to see the reward for all of our work: a community ready to dance into our next shared ministry with energy, lightness and love.

## **Stewardship**

**MOVING FORWARD ... BUILDING OUR FUTURE**

**Moments that Matter ... Exciting New Video**

By now you have received a letter and a pledge form in the mail ...

announcing the beginning of our Annual Pledge Drive for 2016-2017. Attend

our all church lunch on February 28th after the 11am service with this new video and featuring a celebration of our Stewardship Honorees – Jeanne and Ladd Griffith, John and Lynne Cahoon and Raymond and Lucile Miles. These families have contributed so much over many years in many amazing ways. Come be inspired by their extraordinary love and dedication to UUCB. A special matching pool has been donated for all of us to participate in. We are asking you to sustain and increase your pledge from last year if possible. Move to the right on our bell shaped pledging curve! Don't leave just a few high donors to carry the load. Pledge Increases will be matched by this pool. The amount available will be announced on February 28 and the connecting will begin on March 6. The intention is to sustain our giving level from last year's spectacular result, and clearly demonstrate to our ministerial candidates we are all in this together and Moving Forward. Contact any member of the Team at [Stewardship@uucb.org](mailto:Stewardship@uucb.org)

## **UUCB or Uncle Sam!**

The Endowment Committee invites you to attend a

### **Seminar**

on strategies to reduce your taxes through charitable giving.

Laurel Randell, UUA (Legacy Gifts Manager)

Eugene Demmler, LPL (Registered Investment Advisor)

**Saturday, March 19, 2016**

Coffee and pastries: 9:30 am

Seminar: 10 – 11:30 am

Safir Room, UUCB

Please RSVP at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JMVQ6QP>

Emerging info at: <http://uucb.org/about-us/give/endowment/endowment-seminar-2016-03-19/>

To contact the committee, send email to: [endowment@uucb.org](mailto:endowment@uucb.org)



# Social Justice

**Social Justice Council Meeting** – At the January meeting, SJC members spoke in small groups about their social justice work recognizing and supporting those in need. Connections made with UUCB members and other communities are valued. As they work and learn, they feel bound together, making a difference that can lift spirits. At the January 17<sup>th</sup> Martin Luther King Service, members of the Council/LFDC participated by sharing the journey and hanging up (or pinning on) anti-racism signs and quotes.

In February, after holding a meeting with interested congregation members, the Coordinating Team approved the hanging of a Black Lives Matter banner in the church by the Social Justice Council. When banner concerns are noted, several Council members have volunteered to assist. March meeting members expressed interest in continuing the Confronting Racism Project and the Council will be accepting Applications for new Projects. Contact Kelly at [npkelly@att.net](mailto:npkelly@att.net).

**The Confronting Racism: Literature, Film & Drama Contingent (LFDC)** – *Well, hello Dolly!* February's meeting began with shared personal experiences of awareness of unconscious bias and a debriefing of the group's participation in church services on January 17. Following were glowing reviews for *Satchmo at the Waldorf!* while discussing the Jim Crow era, Louis Armstrong's "minstrel act," and the transition to the "black-and-proud" period to present-day Jim Crow politics. We heard a very favorable movie review of *Chi-Raq*, a bold re-telling of the Greek farce, *Lysistrata*, before settling into a spirited discussion of "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness," by Michelle Alexander. [CamilleParker@comcast.net](mailto:CamilleParker@comcast.net).

## Upcoming Social Justice Events

Sunday, March 13, 6 pm – Monthly Social Justice Council potluck/meeting.

All are welcome.

Saturday March 20, 1 pm – **Heartbeat** is a young Israeli and Palestinian band that aims to bring peace, trust and understanding between Jewish and Palestinian youth. The group will be one of 80 organizations under the Alliance for Middle East Peace pushing to launch the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, which would provide \$200 million a year to grassroots peace-building efforts. Bring your friends—it's free! (Donations requested.)

Saturday, April 2, 6 pm – **Ghost Town to Havana** film – tells the story of an Oakland inner city youth baseball team that plays a Cuban team in Havana. It is a “heart-wrenching and hopeful documentary that is a poetic love letter to inner-city mentors who give so much of themselves to help others.” Good for families and free for all!

**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? Contact Ray Westergard at [raywest2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:raywest2@sbcglobal.net).

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

**Good Neighbor for March: International Convocation of UU Women** [www.intlwomensconvo.org/community/](http://www.intlwomensconvo.org/community/)

The purpose of ICUUW is to create a community of Unitarian Universalists and women of other progressive faiths dedicated through action to building global partnerships to enrich women's lives. ICUUW will focus on access to education; health care, including reproductive justice; violence prevention;

empowerment in decision-making; and the elimination of poverty.

If you want to be added to the Social Justice email list contact Jane Eisenstark ([maw.jane@gmail.com](mailto:maw.jane@gmail.com)).

## **Music Matters**

Bryan Baker, Director of Music

March is an exciting musical month that concludes with Easter and the resounding fanfares of a brass quartet. “So Sings My Soul” is the title for Music Sunday on March 13, when we will explore some of the physical and emotional benefits of singing as a group. Lots of music, of course, including many beloved hymns, both the more contemplative and more energizing.

“Heartbeat” is a group of Israeli and Palestinian young people using music to bring people together and increase awareness as they seek to bring healing to the conflict in Palestine. They will sing in the 11 am service on March 20 and offer a concert that day at 1 pm.

This March even has a theme song at UUCB: “We’re Going to Keep on Moving Forward,” and we will sing some version of that Pat Humphries song each week. And of course, we will sing many other things. On the first Sunday the choir will sing Aaron Copland’s uplifting “The Promise of the Living.” And on Music Sunday you will get to enjoy one of my favorite pieces, Leonard Bernstein’s beautiful and heartwarming “Make Our Garden Grow.”

# Wonderful Wednesdays

Gather at 5:30 pm – Dinner at 6 pm –  
Vespers at 7 pm

Enjoy a catered dinner with your friends—or get to know new friends—at church on Wednesdays. See “The Week Ahead” for the menus, the themes of the vespers services, and Wednesday night programs and meetings. The first Wednesday of each month is especially geared to families, but childcare is available every Wednesday by reservation.

**Reservations:** Email [suppers@uucb.org](mailto:suppers@uucb.org) or sign the sheet outside the office. Deadline is 4 pm Monday.

Adults: \$15 (includes wine, light snacks, and dessert)

Family (two adults + two children, ages 12-18): \$35; children under 12 eat for free.

What is Vespers? An intimate half-hour worship service in the Fireside Room with meditative music, a reading, singing, and a story or homily. Come check it out!

March 2: New Orleans style dinner; Family-Oriented Vespers with Merrin

March 9: Barbecued pork loin dinner; **Imagine Us Beloved** with Rev. Greg – Can you name someone whose heart broke for you... ? So that you didn't have to suffer? Who offered up an act of love – sometimes a fierce love? Sometimes a sacrificial love? And, in so doing, named you 'beloved'? This is a service about THAT kind of love.

March 16: Menu TBA; Vespers with Zackrie

March 23: Menu TBA; **Plotting a Resurrection** with Rev. Greg – Despite our preferences, the world continues to rotate, to change, to evolve, to grow... and it asks us not only to change, evolve, grow with it, but to help benevolently lead it to change, growth and evolution that is ‘good.’ What does it take to be such evolutionary philanthropists?

## **Mist Tree Moon Circle**

**March 20, 7 pm, Spring Equinox Mist Tree Moon**

**Circle**, Safir Room, facilitated by Allyson Rickard

(phone: 510-482-5968). At this time of spring’s return

from winter’s rain and cold, we honor the pre-Hellenic

Greek mother goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone’s return from

the Underworld. We also honor the “Foremothers of the Women’s Spirituality

Movement” and a recently published book by that name. Come celebrate in

song and verse the Movement, which was born and richly cultivated in the

San Francisco Bay Area. For our altar please bring a personal memento

(book, goddess figure, photo, etc.) which connects your “herstory” to the

Movement. Also bring any books about goddesses or women’s personal or

spiritual growth that you are willing to pass on to others to keep the

Movement alive and growing. Snacks and drink to share after the circle are

welcome.

## **From Our Intern Minister**

Zackrie Vinczen

This is an exciting time in the life of UUCB. Not only is

our Stewardship Campaign kicking off this month, but

with each day we are closer to deciding whether or not to call a new minister.

Both of these events invite us into a deeper connection with the church and

allow us a chance to share ownership and embrace new possibilities together.

I know these events can also bring an air of tedium with them. The seemingly

endless meetings and conversations. The constant updates and special announcements. But the thing is, all of these things are an important part of how we organize ourselves.

As Unitarian Universalists, we practice congregational polity. Which essentially means that each church is responsible for managing its own affairs. In our churches, we affirm the democratic process as the way to make decisions, and as such our operation is dependent on an informed, active, and committed membership. We need to do more than simply show up, we need to participate and take ownership. This is our church, and its success or failure is tied to our participation.

We have it in our ability to make this church the beacon on the hill we all know it can be, but in order to make that dream a reality, we need your help. We need your support in whatever form you can muster: time, talent, or treasure. Each of us has something of value we can bring into this community.

So, next time the call goes out asking you to show up and participate, calling you into a deeper degree of commitment and understanding, don't be afraid to answer. Don't be afraid to show up and share in the work of the church. This is our work, this is our church, and the degree to which we commit ourselves to one another, will determine the degree to which we are able to transform the world.

## **Program Council**

Joanne Wile, Convener

In our January meeting we heard a presentation by the Growth Strategy Team and discussed ways of strengthening our “Pathways to Engagement.” A task force was designated to discuss Sunday morning programming and presented its recommendations at the February Program Council meeting, for referral to

Joanne Wile, Program  
Council Convener



the Coordinating Team.

The Heartbeat concert on March 20 is an example of the kind of cooperation across groups (Social Justice, Music and Facilities) that the Program Council fosters. We are also looking at how we can support Family Ministry efforts.

We agreed to reinstate an old policy against tables in the Atrium except in a few exceptional situations. All Sunday attendees are encouraged to visit the various tables in the Social Hall.

## **Ministerial Search Committee**

When you read this report, your UUCB Ministerial Search Committee will be in the midst of its pre-candidating time with the prospective ministers. We are meeting face-to-face with each of our three hopefuls. Over the dinner table and in conversation with deep questions that go in both directions we are learning about each other and who will be the best person for UUCB. And, of course, we are observing the ministers in worship services. We know how much you value inspiring and thought-provoking sermons.

We are also trying to keep you as informed as much as possible about our progress. These Beacon articles, blurbs in the weekly announcements, short talks from the Chancel on Sundays are some of the ways we are communicating with you. We also have the search committee's website at [uucbminsearch.wordpress.com](http://uucbminsearch.wordpress.com) to keep you up to date, and we recently made access available to the information packet website that has informed the prospective ministers. To see it for yourself, please send an email to [searchcommittee@uucb.org](mailto:searchcommittee@uucb.org). Put "packet access" in the subject line and include your name in the text. The information packet is an inclusive look inside UUCB.

What comes after all this? The search committee does not simply say, "Rev. X is our candidate that we will present to the congregation." We may find that more than one minister can be the person to lead our congregation. In that

situation we would have to decide whom we would ask first. At the same time, our first choice might be another congregation's first choice. No telling how that might play out, but let's be optimistic and say that UUCB will always rise to the top.

Come visit us at <https://UUCBMinSearch.wordpress.com>. Email us at [searchcommittee@uucb.org](mailto:searchcommittee@uucb.org)

## **Coordinating Team**

Lisa Maynard, Convener

At this time of year a major focus for the Coordinating Team is the budget for the next fiscal year (July 2016 through June 2017). The CT reviews, discusses, and suggests changes to the budget proposed by the Treasurer, in a collaborative process that leads to presentation of a budget proposal to the Board of Trustees, and eventually to the congregation. One of the important numbers in the proposed budget is the projected pledge income. Your Coordinating Team urges you to give your most loving and generous attention to the pledge campaign, which begins in early March!

Lisa Maynard, Convener

Let's keep on moving forward...building our future!

*The Coordinating Team meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 3 to 5 pm. Our meetings are open to the congregation, but we occasionally change meeting date and place to accommodate member obligations and church operations, so 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).*



# **Building Project Management Team**

John Cahoon, Larry Nagel, and David Rockhold

All of the doors from the Atrium to the Terrace have been installed, and new lighting poles have been ordered and should arrive within two weeks. It now appears that the Terrace will be ready for use by the end of March.

The roof project is complete and we now have a watertight roof that will last for decades. However, come spring we still will need to install treads and harness ties to allow OSHA-approved access to the roof.

Contra Costa County is requiring yet another arborist study to justify not replanting any trees on the campus. Because nesting season is now upon us, we may also need another biologist study to certify that we will not be disturbing any endangered nesting species.

Please bring any problems or concerns you may have to our attention immediately.

## **Coming May 7<sup>th</sup>: The All-Church Spring Gala**

Ann Harlow, Ira Nelken and Gail Simpson

Mark your calendar now for the social event of the spring season, featuring desserts, dancing (live band!) and a silent auction. Please think about donating goods and services to the auction, soliciting donations from businesses you frequent, and/or participating in the event as a volunteer. Stop by our table on Sundays to find out more. We're especially looking for

people with FileMaker database experience—email [annharlow@pacbell.net](mailto:annharlow@pacbell.net) if that's you.

**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).