

February 2024

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 83 #2

The mission of this church is to create loving community; inspire spiritual growth; and encourage lives of integrity joy, and service.

From the Minister

I understand *invitation* as one of the elemental forms of leadership. At its best, Unitarian Universalism is an invitational form of religion. We don't want to scare, shame, or otherwise coerce anyone into joining us, but rather to make a beautiful invitation into a religious life of healing and liberation. Invitational leadership leads to voluntary associations—as our great 20th century theologian James Luther Adams would articulate—voluntary associations that have the capacity to shape lives and society through a power that is different than that which animates the wider culture of domination.

In that spirit, I offer three invitations this month, to co-create our unfolding future:

Continue to Speak About Article 2

Thanks to everyone who came on January 14 for a conversation about the proposed changes to Article 2, our UU Principles and Purposes. [Learn more about the process here](#). Invitations to discuss more deeply are coming soon! For now, join me in a conversation led by Rev. Cheryl Walker, one of the committee co-chairs that has led this work, **at the UU Society of San Francisco on March 17 from 1-3 pm.**

Celebrate the Beginning of Our Shared Ministry at Our Installation

On April 21 at 2:30 pm, we will have a ceremony and a party to celebrate my installation as your settled minister. My wildest hope for this event is that we co-create visual representations—artistic expressions, like an *art installation*—of our dreams and visions for the future of our shared ministry. We've been discussing these dreams in our Ground and Horizon conversations, and we will engage our visioning as the central theme of our Stewardship campaign in March. If you have ideas about how we might make some art about it, our atrium, social hall, and sanctuary are fabulous canvasses ready for your imagination!

Help Build a Conference for Spring 2025

What if the Lawrence Lecture was a keynote element of a larger conference sharing our values with the wider community? Since we no longer have "District Assemblies" with other congregations in our area, what if we held a gathering for Unitarian Universalists, non-profit and civic leaders in Northern California to connect and collaborate at our centrally located campus? Let me know if you're interested in helping to make a conference like this happen!



February Services

Sundays 11 am

In Person, [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube](#)

February 4

Rev. Aija Simpson-Newbury.
Topic TBD

February 11

The Hero Unmasked

February 18

Exorcising Descartes

February 25

Black History Month Service

Religious Education

Classes: February 4 & 11
Celebration Chapel: Feb. 18
Children's Yoga and Youth Group: Feb. 25

Coffee Hour

Sundays at Noon

In person in the Social Hall

Sunday Programming

Personal Theology

Sundays at 9:15 am in person and on Zoom

Feb. 11 – Rescuing the Revolutionary Black Patriots from the Shadows of History: An Accountability Project presented by Joanna Foley, MA, MSW.

Feb. 25 – Reflections on Black History Month presented by Lonnie Moseley and Cordell Sloan, UUCB Members. Zoom only.

Youth and Children’s Choir Rehearsal

Sundays at 10 am

The Choir is open to all children and youth, ages 5 ½ and up. Prior musical experience is not required. We rehearse in the Meditation Room (below the Sanctuary) or on Zoom. We help lead the Sunday worship service once or twice per month. Occasionally we participate in other music events. We’d love to have you join us!

Humanist Connections

Sundays at 1 pm on Zoom

February 4 – How to Write Your Own Obituary. Paul Ulbrich.

February 11 – Topic Selection for June and Short Topic Discussion. Ray Westergard.

February 18 – Spinoza, Einstein, and Theism. Don Anderson.

February 25 – Shiites and Sunnis. Paul Ulbrich.

Good Neighbor in February

SOS Safe Organized Spaces <https://www.sos-richmond.org/>

By partnering with local agencies and community members, we can serve isolated encampment residents and provide jobs and resources to help people sustain themselves. Staff work in the field to provide clean-up, mobile showers, laundry, food, clothing, drinking water, transportation, moving services, health care, and more. Through our earned connection with the unhoused communities, we aid public agencies and improve safety and stability for all.

Special Events

Feb. 1 @ 6:30 pm
Imbolc/Brigid Ritual and Concert.

Feb. 2 @ 6 pm
Dinner & Movie “E.T.” presented by the Freestone Committee.

Feb. 7 @ 6:30 pm
Family Meetup Group for dinner and games at the Victory Point Café in Berkeley.

Feb. 10 @ 7 pm
Love Songs & Chocolate: A celebration of tuneful romance and delectable desserts.

Feb. 11 @ 12:30 pm
Congregational Meeting

February 17 @ 9 am
Work Party

February 17 @ 4 pm
Parents’ Night Out. Enjoy 4 hours of free childcare. RSVP required.

February 17 @ 6:30 pm
Youth Social Event.

Feb. 18 @ 12:30 pm
Newcomer Q&A

Weekly Events

For up-to-date details: uucb.org/weekahead.

Mondays

9 am Write For Your Life

9:30 am Women's Meditation Group

Tuesdays

10 am Improving Your Balance through Tai Chi

12:15 pm Applied UU Buddhist Sangha

Wednesdays

10 am Walk & Talk Group

10:30 am Aging with Grace

Thursdays

5 pm Javanese Gamelan

7 pm Choir Rehearsal

Fridays

10 am Improving Your Balance through Tai Chi

Monthly Events & Meetings

Sunday

9:30 am Parents Discussion Group (1st Sunday)

11 am Religious Education (1st & 2nd Sunday)

11:30 am Celebration Chapel (3rd Sunday)

1 pm WOWS Working to Overcome White Supremacy (3rd Sunday)

Monday

11 am Textile & Art (2nd Monday)

Tuesday

10:30 am Volunteer Lunch Program at GRIP (4th Tuesday)

Wednesday

7:15 pm Board of Trustees (1st Wednesday)

7 pm Social Justice Council (2nd Wednesday)

7 pm Program Council (3rd Wednesday)

Friday

11 am Textile & Art (4th Friday)

Saturday

9 am Work Party (3rd Saturday)

1 pm POCC People of Color Caucus (3rd Saturday)

4 pm Parents' Night Out (3rd Saturday)

6:30 pm Youth Social Event

Announcements

Board Listening Presence

Michael Armstrong: (510) 219-3847

michaelarmstrong2494@comcast.net

Freestone

The Freestone Committee invites you to our Dinner and a Movie fundraising night on Friday, Feb. 2nd.

The classic film ET will be shown. A gourmet pasta dinner will be served at 6 pm, followed by the movie at 7 pm (with popcorn). Families are \$20 and individuals \$10. Tickets are available at the door, but please RSVP as soon as possible.

Love Songs & Chocolate

Saturday February 10 @ 7:00 pm

A celebration of tuneful romance and delectable desserts. In a relaxed, cabaret-like setting, many singers from our community share beguiling love songs from the classics to Broadway to jazz.



Save the Date!

Rev. Marcus Liefert's Installation Ceremony & Reception April 21, 2024, 4pm - 7pm, UUCB, child care available.

Stewardship Campaign



Wake Now Our Vision Looking into the Future What Can We Awaken in Ourselves?

Rev. Marcus has prompted us in recent weeks to consider “the masks we wear,” and to think of our true selves that exist behind the masks. What about thinking of it from the other direction? How might we see things differently if our vision weren’t obstructed by a mask? Can we wake up to a new way of looking at the world, at our lives and choices?

In each verse of our Stewardship theme song “Wake Now My Vision,” we can find an aspect of ourselves that we might wish to awaken: our senses, to feel our connection to the earth and all of life; our reason, to make new discoveries or learn about the past; our compassion, to care for others; our conscience, to fight injustice; and our vision, to see a path before us. As individuals, we can search for ways to awaken these aspects; I have certainly enjoyed solitary contemplation of our natural world and felt the blessing of providing care to others. And what can we do as a congregation? What do we need to do to awaken our ability to see ahead to what can be? How will what we do now and next year help us toward the future we would like to see in years ahead?

I hope that during our March Stewardship campaign, you will find ways of engaging in the community efforts and activities that embody our desire to wake up and create a bright new future. We (the members of the Stewardship Team) plan to provide an opportunity for UUCB groups to invite your participation on March 3, Stewardship Kickoff (look for announcements in The Week Ahead and your email—there will be comestible enticements!). We hope you’ll join one of the UUCB work parties (February 17 and March 16), and ready our church campus for spring. Our plan this year is to conduct our Stewardship campaign over four weeks in March, since our great excitement and energy will be focused on Rev. Marcus’ installation as our new settled minister, on April 21. You can help by making your pledge early!

Lisa Maynard
Chair, Stewardship Team 2024

Social Justice (SJC)

UUCB's Social Justice Council started off the year with two back-to-back events. On January 14, our LFDMC (Literature, Film, Drama and Music Contingent) presented the very well-attended premiere of the deeply moving film, "Resurrecting Love." On the following day, many in the congregation joined the annual El Cerrito MLK Day parade and rally (see photos on the next page).

In our January SJC meeting we expressed our hopes for peace in the Middle East, which aligns with the growing World Peace Committee headed by Don Klose and Roberta Shaw. Several members spoke of their hopes that the SJC will continue to expand on the work we do in our local communities, outside the church itself. One of our most important hopes is to begin a major push for the Get Out The Vote effort in the 2024 election with postcard writing every Sunday starting soon.

Topics we hope to discuss in future meetings:

- Sponsored Project reviews and approvals
- Green Sanctuary progress
- UUCB member on GRIP board
- Kelly Kelly funds
- Good Neighbor selection

We Want Your Ideas: How Should UUCB Address the Climate Crisis?

The Climate Justice Committee (CJC) formed a subcommittee to work on the “Opportunity Assessment,” part of the UUA Green Sanctuary (GS) process, and we’d love to hear from you! How can we all work within our congregation and community to address the global climate crisis? As we work toward GS recognition, the UUA encourages us to transform our congregation, lower our emissions, adapt to a changing climate, and address the social injustices connected to climate change. If you have ideas about how you would like to see UUCB address the climate crisis, please send them to Sheila Tarbet, CJC Chair, at starbet99@gmail.com. Thank you!



Family Ministry

A Month in the Life of Religious Education at UUCB!

The **First and Second Sundays** of the month are **Religious Education Classes**. Religious Education classes are divided into two different groups. K-3rd grade is working on “Moral Tales.” Moral Tales attempts to provide children with the spiritual and ethical tools they will need to make choices and take actions reflective of their Unitarian Universalist beliefs and values. The 4th through 12th grade is working on a “UU Shared Values” themed group. The Unitarian Universalist shared values are: Love, Interdependence, Pluralism, Justice, Transformation, Equity, and Generosity. On the **Third Sunday** We have “**Celebration Chapel.**” Celebration Chapel is a church service that is geared towards children but open to all adults. Celebration Chapel includes the Youth & Children’s Choir with a different theme every month and will feature a shared art project with the RE children from

our sister church in Transylvania! February Celebration Chapel will focus on Love for all Humanity, March on Stewardship, and April on Earth Day. **The Fourth Sunday** will now feature a **Yoga Class** for children K- 5, and a **Chalice Discussion Group** for youth in 6th through 12th grade that will include Orange Juice and Doughnuts! Childcare is available every Sunday of the month for children ages 0 to 4 in the “Good Earth” Childcare building.

I am so excited to offer our children at UUCB so many wonderful educational opportunities.

Blessings,
Heaven

Partner Church

We can’t report right now on the Zoom meeting between the boards of trustees from the two churches, so we’ll focus on another important matter: our Transylvanian gate outside the Safir Room. The gate, known in Hungarian as a Székely kapu, is in need of some TLC. Some of the shingles on the roof need replacement, and the weathered wood needs a sealer. The sign next to the gate has fallen over and needs refurbishment as well.

We’re looking at possible sealants, including an epoxy sealer for boats, but none of the solutions will come cheaply. Will you step forward and contribute to the needed materials? Donated labor will be welcome too. We’ll keep you posted on our next steps.

The International Convocation of UU Women has published new details regarding their gathering in Kolozsvár in September. The theme is: “Weaving a Tapestry of Peace and New Perspectives.” Activities will include: international expert speakers, workshops and creative expression, chalice circles, and more. There will be an opportunity for a guided pre-conference tour of the beautiful Transylvania region, an important place in Unitarian history where the Edict of Torda, an unprecedented decree of religious freedom, was declared in 1568.

Want to get in on any or all of this? You can contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net. One or both of us are at church on most Sundays. Look for us or our table in the Atrium!

From the Board of Trustees

For a recording of a previous Board of Trustees meeting, please contact secretary@uucb.org for a link.

Board of Trustees January 2024 Actions

- 1. Freestone:** Authorized the listing for sale of Parcels 1 and 2 of the Freestone property, upon the request of the Freestone Committee and support of the Freestone Oversight Committee. Board approval for an actual sales transaction would still be required at a later date; this action would depend on purchase offers and/or other fundraising measures to raise the minimum of \$250,000 required for Freestone dome/property repairs.
- 2. Leadership:** Thanked Jean Gleason for her dedicated work as Program Council Convener for 7 years and announced Marta Tobey would be the new Convener. Also thanked Karen Elliott for her 4.5 years as Lead Worship Associate and Don Klose for stepping in as the new leader.
- 3. Sewer line:** Received report from Tom Tripp on the completion of the mandated sewer lateral line replacement.

Program Council

Marta Tobey to Take Over Program Council Convener Position

It is my pleasure to announce that Marta Tobey has accepted the position of Program Council Convener. It is time for me to step down and Marta brings the skills and interest that the position needs.

Most recently, Marta is known for her leadership of the Sunday morning ushering crew and for organizing the group of volunteers who made the candle lighting on Christmas Eve such a beautiful part of the service. She, along with her viola, also has been seen in some of the special UUCB music performances with the Messiah being an example. Professionally, Marta played viola with the Berkeley and Vallejo Symphonies as well as worked as a music librarian.

I have turned over the Convenor's "baton" to Marta at the January 17 Program Council meeting. I will miss working with the Program Council but leaving is much easier knowing it will be in Marta's capable hands.

Blessings,

Jean Gleason
Former Program Council Convener
Until Jan. 17, 2024

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Tom Tripp

You may have noticed the construction operations on campus around the holidays! When any major permitted project is completed, the County requires the private sewer lateral (PSL) be pressure tested from the buildings to the street manhole. After the Safir Room renovation, the County required the PSL test, with a commitment for completion by 2025. No major future permits would be issued after 2025 without this test.

Our sewer lateral includes over 1,100 ft of pipe, mostly 6" diameter, serving all buildings and down the hill to the manhole on Highland Ave. The original sewer was all clay pipe, which would not pass any pressure test. We awarded a construction contract after receiving multiple bids, receiving Endowment Project Oversight Committee approval to use the endowment fund and receiving board approval. At our kickoff meeting, the contractor learned that the school was off for 2 weeks and asked to start work immediately. They started two days later. With such short notice, the congregants and school were not notified before starting.

The contractor started work on Sunday, December 17, and substantially completed the project on January 12. They installed plastic pipe, using the "trenchless" process, but needed to excavate about 20 separate pits at the multiple building laterals, cleanouts, and fittings. Some excavations were up to 10 ft deep, and some required tunneling. Cleanup and punch list work happened during the week of 1/15, as well as the final EBMUD testing and certification.

The contractor caused some disruption and significant piles of dirt and debris, but the school lost no days, and all church and rental operations continued.

Thanks to Tess, Peter, and James for the work with the contractor and thanks to all of you for your patience and understanding!!

Endowment Project Oversight Committee

The Endowment Project Oversight Committee is comprised of Beth Pollard (Board), Jason Russell (Endowment Committee), Larry Nagel (Buildings & Grounds), Lenore Ralston & Tom Tripp (both at-large).

The committee was established by the January 20, 2018 congregational resolution authorizing the use of \$758,000 from the Endowment Fund (fund) for specific projects. The specific projects have been modified by the Board of Trustees, as authorized by the congregational meeting of October 27, 2019.

The role of the committee is to oversee the use of the funds and to report financial status to the board and congregation. Based on the value of the fund in November of 2023 and the requirement to preserve the corpus (principal), withdrawals were limited to \$725,000, which has been withdrawn from the fund.

In addition to the \$725,000 authorized from the fund, three congregants have donated a total of \$180,000 for specific facilities projects, which brings the total available to \$905,000. This could be more, if adjusted for subsequent growth in the endowment fund and/or additional targeted facility project donations.

The following is a list of completed projects.

1. Safir Room renovation, including adjacent skylights and mold remediation.
2. Cottage renovations, sanctuary furnace replacement, and outside gas line repairs.
3. Rotting purlin (rafter) tail repair.
4. Sanctuary, Social Hall, and Fireside Room ventilation upgrades, including computer building management controls system, bathroom refresh and design consulting for future work.
5. Additional HVAC and electrical consulting with vision for future all-electric campus.
6. Replace and test private sewer lateral, as required for future permitted work. Contractor has agreed to remove and replace the exposed aggregate concrete sidewalk around the main church entrance.

The completed projects have totaled about \$856,000, leaving a balance available for future projects of about \$49,000.

The board has authorized the use of these funds to continue heating and ventilating and electrical upgrades and replacements, and to work toward planning for the vision of an all-electric campus. The Buildings & Grounds Committee is currently working on those tasks.

Please contact any member of the Oversight Committee for more information.

Freestone Oversight Committee

The Freestone Oversight Committee (FOC) is comprised of Beth Pollard (Board Rep), David Wemmer & Alan Davis (Freestone Committee Reps), Tom Tripp, Susan Lankford, and Larry Nagel. The FOC actions for January 2024 include:

- Bringing to the January 10, 2024 Board meeting the request from the Freestone Committee to list for sale Freestone Parcels 1 and 2, with support from the FOC. Parcels 1 and 2 are the two undeveloped parcels outside the entrance gate to the dome. Parcel 4 is the developed parcel which contains the dome, a well, a septic system, and parking lots. The Freestone Committee had requested to list Parcels 1 and 2 with the goal of exploring the potential sale of the two parcels for raising the funds necessary to repair and improve the dome property; under the March 2023 Congregational Resolution, \$250,000 needs to be raised by December 1, 2024. The FOC considered the request and agreed to recommend to the Board of Trustees listing Parcels 1 and 2 with Coldwell Banker in Sebastopol with the express condition that there be no obligation to sell the properties. Any decision to sell the properties would require Board approval later. After a thorough discussion, the Board unanimously agreed to allow the listing of Parcels 1 and 2. This listing will go onto Multiple Listing Service (MLS) in late January or early February of 2024.
- The listing of the Parcels 1 and 2 for sale is on a parallel track with an application for a conservation easement that has been submitted and is currently under review by the granting agency. The proposed easement includes Parcels 1 and 2, and an undeveloped portion of the dome lot. The conservation easement is another potential source for repair and improvement funds. If you have any questions, please e-mail us at FOC@UUCB.org.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Covenant of Right Relations

Love guides this church.

The quest for truth and justice is its common purpose.

To give thanks, listen deeply, speak with care, honor our differences, and seek and grant forgiveness –

These things we covenant with one another.

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 an “introduction to membership” session, sign the membership book, and commit to supporting this church through participation and financially. To become a member, please contact membership@uucb.org.

NEWSLETTER ITEM SUBMISSIONS: Submit announcements and articles by email to 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. (Beacon is compiled and edited by Charis Domador.)

WEBSITE: <http://uucb.org>

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ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS:

To subscribe to the email version of this newsletter or “The Week Ahead at UUCB,” email connections@uucb.org. You can also find both newsletters at the website under “News.”

UUCB general discussion list:

http://groups.google.com/group/uucb_discuss/about

Email list for families: Email family.ministry@uucb.org

Our Board of Trustees Widening the Circle Vision Statement:

We, the trustees of UUCB commit ourselves to championing racial justice, embodying anti-racist practices, and confronting and dismantling white supremacy culture and all forms of oppression (including but not limited to racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ageism, xenophobia and religious oppression, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia) in everything we do.

Board of Trustees

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