
June 2025

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley
Vol. 84 #6

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've felt ambivalent, to be honest, about the encouragement I've heard and offered myself over the last several months, that having our joy is an act of resistance. While I know that the phrase summons a truth of great wisdom and depth, it also summons my worries about how easy it is to enjoy the comfortable privileges of my life while others who reside at the edges of this empire that provides them suffer its brutal violence. When tossed around too casually, joy as resistance—coupled with what can be an essential permission to turn off the news—can feel too much like “enjoy your life and stop worrying so much about the world.” I think there may be something of our Puritanical ancestors in the part of me that hears it this way, an instinctive suspicion of pleasure.

But I know that the most powerful and courageous love for this world, the capacity to transform injustice through committed presence, is fueled not by righteous ideology but by joy. True joy—or as Ross Gay, our poet philosopher for this summer season, would name it, delight—is actually a primary source of knowing the shape of justice. Delight is our bodily awareness of goodness, truth and beauty. Delight grounds us in what is worth fighting for, keeps us from being consumed by all we would resist.

In one of the essays from his *Book of Delights*, Gay shares what he noticed when he carried a tomato plant through an airport and onto a plane. Here's a spiritual assignment for the summer if you'd like one: read the very short essay [Tomato on Board](#), then do your own experiment. Carry a little tomato plant with you in public. Or find a way to give a gift like Gay's friend Michael gave him, one that playfully draws the receiver into an unexpected delight. Or maybe read the whole *Book of Delights*, or its sequel, *The Book of (More) Delights*, or Gay's *Inciting Joy*, and find another seed for your practice of joy this summer. Let's share a practice this summer of trusting the leadership of delight, leaning into a faith that joy can guide us through the hardest times.

Delightfully yours,
Rev. Marcus Liefert



June Services

Sundays 11 am

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

June 1

Flower Communion

New Member Ingathering

June 8

Topic TBD

June 15

Wrestling with Jacob

June 22

This Is an Uprising

June 29

Topic TBD

Coffee & Community

Starts at 10 am in the Atrium

Lunch

In the Social Hall following the service

Sunday Programming

Youth and Children's Choir Rehearsal

Sundays at 10 am. Last rehearsal will be on June 8, and will resume again in August.

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 (3rd Sunday is in person, no Zoom)

Jun 1 – Topic Selection for next month and Short Topic Discussion. Ray Westergard.

June 8 – Don Anderson will discuss "The other social class of Karl Marx"

June 15 (In Person) – Ray Westergard will discuss "The history and current views of the word 'WOKE'". No Zoom.

June 22 – Paul Ulbrich will discuss "How does Dunning-Kruger explain everything?"

June 29 – Paul Ulbrich will discuss "Negotiating relationships in old age"

Special Events

June 1 @ 5 pm

Pride Month celebration potluck

June 1 @ 3 pm

Immigrant Solidarity event at BFUU

June 8

Right of Return Pilgrimage
Blessing Bags Assemble

June 14

No Kings Day March

Good Neighbor June

Groundwork Richmond

Website:

groundworkrichmond.org

Mission: to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships which empower people, businesses and organizations to promote environmental, economic and social well-being.

Weekly Events uucb.org/weekahead

Mondays

9 am Write for Your Life

9 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 (1=1st Sunday, 2=2nd Sunday, etc.)

9:30 am Parents Discussion Group (1/3)

1 pm Working to Overcome White Supremacy (2)

1 pm Immigrant Support Group (1)

Monday

11 am Textile & Art (2)

5 pm Climate Justice Committee (4)

Tuesday

10:15 Prep/Serve Lunch at GRIP (4)

7 pm World Peace Committee (3)

Wednesday

7:15 pm Board of Trustees (1)

7 pm Social Justice Council (2)

7 pm Program Council (3)

Thursday

10 am Thank You Circle (3)

Friday

11 am Textile & Art (4)

Saturday

9 am Work Party (3)

1 pm POCC People of Color Caucus (3)

2 pm Death Café (quarterly)

4 pm Parents' Night Out (3, except summers)

6:30 pm Youth Social Event (3, except summers)

Announcements

Board Listening Presence

Helen Toy helen_toy@yahoo.com

Pride Celebration Potluck

June 1 from 5-7 pm



Right of Return Pilgrimage

June 8, 7 am – 7 pm



No Kings Day March and Rally

June 14 at noon



Social Justice Council

Four ongoing Sponsored Projects will continue the work of justice-making throughout the upcoming year, responding with love to the needs of our congregation and the increased threats facing so many in our broader communities and world. The next meeting of the Social Justice Council will be Wednesday, June 14 at 7:00 by Zoom. Agenda and link will be sent out by email.

Cyndy Greenleaf, socialjustice@uucb.org

Blessing Bags

Our last assemble of Blessings Bags is Sunday, June 8th in the Social Hall. We welcome the donations people make of toiletries — especially toothpaste — socks, and snacks. The blessings bags contain water, snacks, toiletries, and good energy! We have worked and shared with SOS (Safe Organized Spaces), Albany Thrives, the Berkeley Unified School District, and GRIP. Thanks to the UUCB youth who have assembled bags in the past! Please come by and take a bag or two to have ready in your car when you encounter an unhoused person to share these with.

Beth Jerde, socialjustice@uucb.org

Climate Justice Committee

We invite you to join with the CJC as we research and prioritize project ideas for the next year. Which projects would you like to participate in? Which projects do you think other members of our congregation would like to be part of? Can you help us fill a critical need for a few folks to work on helping our congregation and communities adapt to climate change and help make our communities resilient? We invite you to share your ideas about how we can help everyone contribute to a healthy climate and to environmental justice. We're working with the

UUA Green Sanctuary program and hope to become recognized as a Green Sanctuary congregation soon! We meet the 4th Monday of the month on Zoom at 5pm until 6:30. Contact Sheila Tarbet, CJC Chair, for more information. socialjustice@uucb.org

WOWS

WOWS (Working to Overcome White Supremacy) met on May 11th and discussed the Human Library that we plan to hold in the fall. In a Human Library, the "Books" are people, each representing themselves as members of groups about whom assumptions get made. "Readers" "check out" the books and have conversations with them, asking questions about biases that people typically hold about the Books' identities. WOWS' next meeting will be on Sunday, June 8th, 1:30-3 pm on Zoom. Julia Rogers and Julie Winkelstein, co-chairs. For more information, email wows@uucb.org.

Immigration Support 2025

The Immigration Support 2025 Project will have cards and addresses available at the tables in the social hall so congregants can write to detained people to help keep up their spirits. The group will also have lists of other actions congregants can take to help support the immigrant community.

On June 8th there will be a Right of Return Pilgrimage - an interfaith action to collectively make a 22-mile circuit in the name of refugees and immigrants. Contact [Susan Blair](#) if you plan to meet up with the UUCB contingent for a short part of the walk.

Cyndy Greenleaf, Francey Liefert, Jen McDougall, socialjustice@uucb.org

Buildings and Grounds

The Buildings and Grounds Committee has been working to improve and upgrade various components of the campus this year. Some of the larger projects are listed here, with funding source.

- The added **Exit Signs** in the main building are completed. The building is now in compliance with the fire department egress signage recommendations (24-25 UUCB Budget - B & G Maintenance).
- The **Atrium Door Repairs** are still underway. All doors to the Sanctuary and the Fireside Room are essentially complete. The doors from the Atrium to the Social Hall require some additional work and repairs, and we hope to have them completed this summer (Endowment Fund Projects).
- The repair contract for the **Sanctuary Truss Crack** is awarded and will be under construction in the next months (Ladd Griffith Fund).
- The **Chancel Condensation Repair Study** has been funded, and staff will initiate the work soon (Ladd Griffith Fund).
- The tall unstable social hall **book cabinets** have been replaced with a new, more stable cabinet. The tall ones are awaiting disposal (24-25 UUCB Budget - B & G Maintenance).
- Warranty repairs on the **Private Sewer Lateral** contract were completed in May. The contractor also repaired the sidewalk near the north parking lot at no cost. (Endowment Fund Project – no cost/warranty).
- Maintenance work is ongoing in the **School Buildings** with frequent plumbing and electrical repairs (24-25 UUCB Budget - B & G Maintenance).

- The temporary **Kensington Fire Department** buildings are being removed. Once KFD repairs the parking lot, it will become available for parking again (no cost).
- The **Long Range Facilities Planning** is ongoing, with updates as new information becomes available (no funding is currently available for significant projects).
- **HVAC and Electrical Upgrades** are badly needed. Some preliminary design work is completed and we continue to investigate an “All Electric Campus”. (No funding available).
- **Landscaping upgrades** continue with pruning Interior trees, pruning trees to open views, and removal of numerous dead trees (24-25 UUCB Budget - B & G Maintenance).
- The **Aesthetics Subcommittee** continues to improve the Atrium experience, including flow, ambiance, decorations and safety. The committee is trying to fund improved lighting in the Social Hall (no funding available).

Renewing the Atrium

As reported in the April Beacon, the Aesthetics Committee, a subcommittee under Buildings and Grounds, has been considering how best to move forward with a renewal of the Atrium space. We have had much deliberation and a fair amount of feedback about what people would like to see changed—or not—and our plan is evolving. Currently, our proposal is to remove wall hangings and kiosks over the summer. This will give the congregation time to reflect on the natural space and consider what we might want to add or retain. In the meantime, the current wall hangings will be repositioned in other common places, such as the Social Hall and the Fireside Room. Our guiding principles are to ensure that the space is welcoming to all who enter *and to*

communicate who we are as a faith and as a congregation. This is consistent with our theology: Ours is a faith that evolves. We are not fixed in time. Our visual presentation should reflect who we are and the values we uphold. Our experimentation with the “Atrium Shuffle” last fall met with generally positive feedback. Consulting with Rev. Marcus and working with relevant committees, the Atrium Task Force came up with a plan that has resulted in improved flow and ease of movement on Sunday mornings. And what a success the coffee corner has been!

While our plan for the Atrium is evolving, there is one new thing to look out for: The staff is planning to install an electronic bulletin board in the office window. This will highlight information about UUCB and upcoming events for both members and visitors.

Now we ask for your patience as we work through a process that encourages feedback and helps us discern what will make our Atrium a welcoming space for new and long-time members alike.

From the Board of Trustees

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

UUCB Leadership Retreat Summary

A Leadership Retreat, the first in many years, was held on May 2 and 3, bringing together about 70 UUCB members for a weekend of connection, visioning, and collaboration.

We began Friday evening at UUCB with outdoor community-building activities led by Rev. Marcus. These exercises helped us form new connections and loosen up—both mentally and physically—in preparation for Saturday’s creative visioning process.

Saturday’s program included a workshop on leadership styles, led by Patricia St. Onge, a member of the Lakota tribe, and one of the founders of [1000 Grandmothers](#). She introduced a framework from Native American tradition that identifies four leadership archetypes:

- **The Eagle** – the creative visionary
- **The Deer** – empathetic and attuned to others’ feelings
- **The Bear** – grounded in tradition and data-driven decision-making
- **The Buffalo** – action-oriented and determined to get things done

Participants self-identified with one of these archetypes, then explored their strengths, challenges, and how they relate to the other types. Patty emphasized that self-awareness is key to adapting our leadership styles and that projects are most successful when all four types are present and respected.

After lunch, we broke into smaller groups to explore several “Big Ideas” that had emerged from the fall visioning exercises. These included:

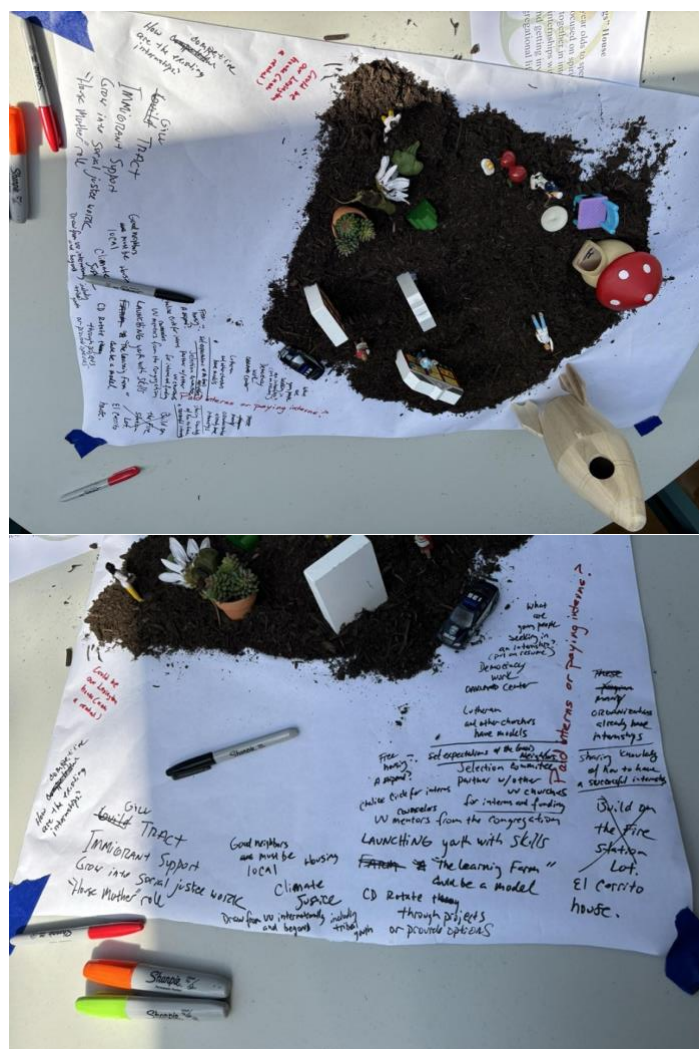
- **A Collective Outdoor Art Project** – installation of outdoor art on the UUCB campus honoring the UU seven values
- **An Elder Corps (Cœur)** – a community to support and advocate for good neighbors and partners when issues of concern are brought to city councils, school boards, county supervisors, etc.
- **A Community of All Ages** – an expansion of RE to all ages in ways that transform community life
- **An Urban Retreat Center** – creating a dedicated overnight space for reflection and renewal
- **Roots and Wings** – a program for 18- to 25-year-olds supporting nonprofit work
- **“What If?”** – an open-ended idea that grew into a vision for expanding UUCB’s global connections

Using soil and figurines, participants imagined these ideas taking shape, grounding their visions with tangible symbols. They also documented their thoughts, questions, and practical considerations, laying the groundwork for future planning and action.

Another highlight was spending time at the Mount Diablo Unitarian church and grounds, which are spacious and welcoming. We enjoyed viewing the resident turkeys.

The 2025 Leadership Retreat was a success, and we encourage those of you who were unable to attend to consider attending the next one!

Kristen Jensen



Partner Church

While Anne's arrival in Homorodujfalu was delayed a few days last year, Stephanie Ann was able to get acquainted with our translator on a one-to-one basis. Bence Birtalan would be entering seminary in a few days, and it was wonderful to learn how he had come to his calling to ministry. Now, at the conclusion of his first year he seems to have found a calling to youth ministry. He is working this summer with ODFIE, the Ferenc David youth organization of the Hungarian Unitarian Church. Bence says he is "over the moon" with excitement with this new direction. He thinks he might also study psychology to further his "usefulness."

It is personal interactions like this that make Partner Church so rewarding. As UUs enter a new era of global partnership, we may be focusing less on location, and our traditional partnerships, and more on spreading our personal relationships to people of Unitarian values anywhere in the world. Some UUs might find traveling to Transylvania daunting. But hey, how about India or Bolivia? What's to stop you from going there? We always have apps like Zoom or WhatsApp to shrink the distance.

Hopefully, you're getting the idea of what partnership can mean and want to join us in our explorations. Maybe one of you is considering entering the ministry. What if you had someone like Bence, halfway around the world, to share in your mutual pursuits. The possibilities are endless. Feel free to let us know what could bring you closer to UUs in any corner of the world. Contact [Stephanie Ann Blytheor Anne Greenwood](#). We're all ears.

Freestone Oversight Committee

The Freestone Oversight Committee (FOC) is comprised of Beth Pollard (Board Rep and Co-chair), Tom Tripp (Co-chair), David Wemmer (Freestone Committee Rep), Bob Moore (Freestone Committee Rep), Susan Lankford, and Larry Nagel. The Board of Trustees called a special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, April 27, 2025. The motion for the meeting was: A. Extend the date for completion of the first milestone, raising at least \$250,000, to September 30, 2025. B. All subsequent milestone dates shall be extended in accordance with their original durations following the first milestone.

- The motion passed by a vote of 77 for and 74 against.
- The passed motion thus extends each of the milestone dates in the March 26, 2023 Resolution for ten months. The Freestone Committee will continue efforts to find water on Freestone lots 1 and 2, raise the \$250,000 required for the first milestone, and fulfill the other milestones. If the Board of Trustees determines that any of the extended milestones are not met, the Board is authorized and directed to initiate the sale of the entire Freestone property.
- The next step is to drill the second well. This was originally scheduled for May 5 -7, but the ground is still too moist and soft. The Freestone Committee will meet with the drilling company in another week to reassess the ground condition, and if the soil is still not firm enough the Freestone Committee may have to consider bringing in some rock or road base material as needed to gain access. The date of drilling the well is still to be determined, but it is hoped that we will have results by the June Board meeting.

If you have any questions, please e-mail us at FOC@UUCB.org.

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 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: uucb.org

PHONE: 510-525-0302

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.

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Kay Fairwell and David Rosales (Board Liaisons)

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