



Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

March 2021 – Vol. 80, Issue 3

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Stewardship

Care – Compassion – Community

Supporting and Sustaining UUCB



Now is the time. Now is your opportunity to support and sustain UUCB. UUCB is our spiritual community, where we are never alone, all belong and we find care, comfort and community. Share your gratitude for UUCB and give till it feels right at [Make My 2021-2022 Pledge - Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley \(uucb.org\)](#).

On March 7, we officially launch our Stewardship Campaign for the fiscal year July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Our pledges help the church secure the financial resources needed to be the welcoming presence in our lives and a safe place for us to gather. This year more than ever, we have felt the importance of the church in upended lives, health challenges and financial stresses.

Our commitment sustains and supports the church as our spiritual community in inspiring spiritual growth, and encouraging lives of integrity, joy, and service.

Our Mosaic Tree of Life and the words care, compassion and community represent the theme for this Stewardship campaign. The individual leaves of the Mosaic Tree represent how our diversity, created and shared for a common purpose, creates an object of beauty, a visual testimony to how our diverse individual spiritual searches for lives of integrity, love and service can be voluntarily shaped into our beloved community. Our minister's sermons and Sunday services are a respectful sanctuary for seekers, a place of calm and renewal. Weekly demands are paused, space is opened for a more loving and joyful way and gentle challenges are offered to explore new possibilities in our lives.

Next fiscal year has significant financial challenges. In addition to trying to recover our rental income, we will need new financial resources to make our space safe for us to gather, such as an estimated \$100K for advance air filtration systems.

When we start our search for a settled minister, strong and generous pledge commitments will be an important indicator of our financial health and congregational commitment. This will help the search committee recruit our best settled ministerial candidates.

Thank you in advance for your generosity. If you have been among the fortunate who have done well this year, we invite you be more generous in your pledge. For those who have had a challenging year and will not be able to give all they'd like, we invite you to give what you can, reflecting your value for UUCB. Submit your pledge at [Make My 2021-2022 Pledge - Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley \(uucb.org\)](#) or call the office for a pledge form.

Stewardship Committee: Michael Armstrong and Patrick Cullinane, Co-Chairs, Lynne Cahoon, Don Klose, Lenore Ralston, Deborah Schmidt, Helen Toy, Grace Ulp, and David Roberts, Board Liaison. Committee members welcome your thoughts at stewardship@uucb.org.

Worship Services in March

Sundays at 11am on [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube Live](#)

Theme for March: Commitment

Service descriptions will be posted on uucb.org on the first week of March.

March 7 – Rev. Michelle Collins, preaching. Lee Maranto, Worship Associate.

March 14 – Rev. Michelle Collins, preaching. Cynthia Asprodites, Worship Associate.

March 21 – Jeanne Foster, preaching. Karen Elliott, Worship Associate.

March 28 – Rev. Michelle Collins, preaching. Deborah Schmidt, Worship Associate.

Virtual Coffee Hour immediately following worship on Sundays

After worship we invite you to switch over to Zoom for a time to connect “face to face.” The link to Virtual Coffee Hour is listed below, but we will also share it in the comments on the Facebook Live feed during worship.

Click [here](#) to join us:

Meeting ID: 332 046 821

Password: 810131

or

Dial

669 900 6833

Vespers in March

Wednesdays 6:00pm Social Time, 6:20 pm Start Time

Zoom

Join us for our mid-week online vespers services. The 30-minute Wednesday evening service will provide a time for us to gather together to experience moments of reflection, prayer and song, grounded in our UU faith. The March 17 vespers service will be offered by Worship Associates Sarah Ward and Bob Adams.

Click [this link](#) to join us
Meeting ID: 830 5378 2422
Passcode: chalice

Good Neighbor for March:

[Read-Aloud Volunteer Program](#) is a relationship-based program that fosters in children the joy and love of learning through reading and story-telling. Their goal is to build a structure of volunteers to support and improve reading outcomes for children in under-resourced communities in Richmond, CA and surrounding areas.

Special Events and Announcements

- **UUCB's very own Susan T. Mashiyama was selected to be the 2021 UUA General Assembly Choir Director!** Susan has shared her singing and wonderful harp music in our worship and vespers services, she has led ukulele jams for our youth, and she is helping to lead the choir while Bryan Baker is on sabbatical. Her main role will be to direct two or three GA Virtual Choir music videos and to help select music for the GA Sunday worship service and Closing Ceremony. UUCB is Susan's sponsoring congregation for the UUA Musicians Leadership Certification Program in which she is enrolled to learn more about leading music in UU settings and about UU history and principles. Congratulations Susan!
- **Beth Pollard is the Board's listening presence for the month of March.** She may be reached at: beth.poll@sbcglobal.net or 510-812-6284.

Schweitzer Award Recipients

The Schweitzer Medal is awarded each year to up to two members who are a supporter of Unitarian Universalist churches for at least fifteen years and of our church for five years; who have participated in a number of church functions above and beyond the normal call of duty; who have been church leaders; and who have participated in outreach activities.

UUCB postponed its 2020 May Schweitzer ceremony in hopes of presenting the two awards in person. Not wanting to wait any longer, those **Schweitzer Medals were presented during the worship service on February 21 to the 2020 extraordinary recipients, Deborah Schmidt and Barbara Cullinane.**

Kerry Simpson presented the award to Deborah Schmidt ([click here to read it](#)), and Beth Pollard made the presentation to Barbara Cullinane ([click here to read it](#)).

Please congratulate our honorees when you see them virtually or in person!



Barbara Cullinane

[Click here to read Beth Pollard's presentation](#)

Deborah Schmidt

[Click here to read Kerry Simpson's presentation](#)

Flaming Chalice Award Recipients

Each year, up to four Flaming Chalice awards are presented at the February congregational meeting *“in recognition of extraordinary service to our church community for at least five years, having been a supporter of the church, and having been active in one or more principal activities of the church during that time.”*

At the February 14 congregational meeting, Flaming Chalice Awards were presented to Victoria Bowen, Kathryn Jay, Ariel Smith-Iyer, and Helen Toy.

Each recipient was presented with the award by another member, giving the congregation a glimpse into the extraordinary service contributed by these deserving awardees.

Click each name below to read each presentation:



[Ariel Smith-Iyer](#)

[Presenter – Christina Creveling](#)



[Helen Toy](#)

[Presenter – Beth Jerde](#)



Victoria Bowen

Presenter – Lonnie Moseley



Kathryn Jay

Presenter – Ladie Malek

Humanist Connections

Sundays, 1:00 pm, Zoom

A discussion group to explore our humanity, values, ideas. *“A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” (Fourth principle of Unitarian Universalism.)*

March 7 – Our Perceptions vs. Reality. Presented by Gail Morrison.

March 14 – Topic Selection and Short Topic Discussion with Ray Westergard.

March 21 – Surveillance Capitalism. Presented by Marcia Bates.

March 28 – Tools That We Make and That Make Us. Presented by Paul Ulbrich.

For additional information and to receive Zoom link at start of meeting contact Marcia Bates, mjbates@ucla.edu. *Group managers: Susan Singh, Ray Westergard, Al Kueffner, Lee Lawrence, Kris Homme, Anne Fitzmaurice.*

Personal Theology

Sundays 9:20-10:30am, Zoom

The theme for UUCB for March is ‘Commitment’ Personal Theology is excited to present two sessions that highlight the importance of commitment in our lives. Please see The Week Ahead or the UUCB calendar for the Zoom Link. We hope to see you there.

March 7 – Rev. Dr. Dorsey O. Blake, *Returning Home*

When interviewed by Lerone Bennett for an article in Ebony Magazine about Dr. Howard Thurman, Mrs. Sue Bailey Thurman stated: “He leads you home!” Dr. Blake will explore what Mrs. Thurman meant by this and how its meaning has impacted his personal theology and journey within the American Empire.

Dorsey Odell Blake has served as Presiding Minister of The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples (San Francisco) since 1994. Fellowship Church was co-founded in 1944, as the nation’s first intentionally interracial, interfaith congregation by Dr. Howard Thurman. Dr. Blake also serves as Faculty Associate at Pacific School of Religion as well as a faculty member of the Proctor Institute, Children's Defense Fund. Additionally, he is a member of the Advisory Board of Ethics in Tech and a Director of the Gus Newport Project.

Dr. Blake has extensive field ministry experience with interfaith groups addressing justice and peace issues, including: California People of Faith Against the Death Penalty, The Interfaith Alliance for Prison Reform, Genesis, The San Francisco Interfaith Council, and Religious Witness with Homeless People. He has spoken to small audiences and a rally that drew over 200,000 people. In 2000, he traveled to Morocco with an interfaith delegation of Muslims, Jews, and Christians in a quest to promote interfaith respect and cooperation. Dr. Blake has conducted workshops locally and nationally, including one with Roshmahon Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. He also hosted Ramchandra Gandhi, another grandson. He has had an audience with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and served on an interfaith panel responding to his teachings.

March 21 – Rev. Dr. Phil and Mrs. JoAnn Lawson, *Commitment*

Rev. Phil and JoAnn Lawson are well known to those in the spiritual community of Richmond, CA. Rev. Lawson is Minister Emeritus of Easter Hill United Methodist church in Richmond and has served other churches in the East Bay as well as Kansas City. He has taught at Starr King School for the Ministry and received an honorary doctorate from Starr King School as well. He has worked on such issues as civil rights, the Vietnam war, homelessness and immigration, to name a few. Rev. Lawson and Mrs. JoAnn Lawson will each present their personal theological journeys followed by a joint discussion of their journey together.

Worship Associates

Openings for New Worship Associates!

Our wonderful Sunday worship services are created each week by a team consisting of our ministers, music-making staff and many dedicated volunteers. One way to join this team and contribute directly to the services is by becoming a **Worship Associate**. At this time, we have openings for 1-3 Worship Associate positions.

UUCB Worship Associates (WAs) are lay worship leaders. WAs serve for a 3-year term, meeting together with Rev. Michelle once per month, with each WA committing to a Sunday service about every 6-8 weeks.

The work typically involves focused attention and preparation the week before “your” Sunday: During the pandemic, it involves video recording your own 5-6 Service Elements, such as the Welcome and Chalice Lighting; shepherding the other Elements of the service for successful submission to our video broadcasting team; and (optionally) video recording a personal 3-5 minute Reflection, known as Sources of Our Faith, which shares with the congregation an aspect of your own journey that ties in with the worship theme of that Sunday. [For in-person worship, the work would involve a kind of stage-manager/M.C. role, where we would help to prepare the chancel and sanctuary for worship, coordinate the various teams and guests and, during the service, give a Reflection, lead responsive recitations, etc.]

In addition to our “Sunday” duties, Worship Associates help to hold space for reflection about worship at UUCB. In conjunction with the minister, we discuss and consider aspects of our worship service, including process and liturgy. We discuss what is working or not working, any feedback from the congregation, how to be more welcoming and inclusive, and how we can continually “Widen the Circle” and consider the voices that may not be currently being heard in worship.

If you have been thinking you might be interested in this role – or if this is a new and intriguing possibility to you – please contact Rev. Michelle to talk more about it. There’s so much collective wisdom within our congregation! – it enriches us all to hear each other’s voice. In particular, we are interested in having folks from our underrepresented and marginalized communities serve in this role. Your voice is very much needed, so please come and join us. **(You’re more than welcome to contact any of the current or recent WAs to ask questions;** please use **our group email address below** and feel free to direct your questions to anyone you choose.)

If you have no experience video recording, **this is not an impediment** – we were all inexperienced last May! **You do not have to be high tech to apply.** We are a team; we can help you and teach you – you will not be thrown to the wolves! In fact, in addition to the Worship Associates, we have a wonderful and dedicated team of volunteers who help with the technical aspect of the worship.

If you are interested in contributing to UUCB worship through the work of the Worship Associate Committee, **we hope you will contact Rev. Michelle, minister@uucb.org or 301-675-5314.**

Thanks very much for considering this, and warm regards from the Worship Associate team – worshipassociates@uucb.org:

Bob Adams
Cynthia Asprodites
Andrea Brown
Karen Elliott
Lee Maranto
Deborah Schmidt
Sarah Ward
Melissa Rosales (former WA)

and

Bill Brown, our newest WA, who is happy to be contacted but does not yet have WA experience to share.

Opening Task Force

The Opening Task Force (OTF) has shared draft reopening protocols with congregational leaders for their review and comment. The Task Force is grateful for member Lisa Maynard for her research and drafting the initial set of protocols.

By the time you read this column, feedback from the congregational leaders should have been received and reviewed by the Task Force. The draft protocols will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for their review and comment.

The church remains in Reopening Phase 0, closed to all but essential staff and schools. Each opening phase will have its own set of protocols. Here are the other phases:

- **Phase 1:** Closed to all but limited staff, schools, and authorized outdoor activity such as landscape maintenance (not gatherings).
- **Phase 2:** Open to small group rentals, outdoor programs/gatherings
- **Phase 3:** Open to small church meetings and programs
- **Phase 4:** Reopen Sunday, services only indoors, limited capacity
- **Phase 5:** Reopen remaining Sunday programming, limited capacity
- **Phase 6:** Post vaccine, expand capacity
- **Phase 7:** New Normal

When we have decided on our initial set of opening protocols and the time is right for starting reopening, the Task Force is considering congregational town hall meeting as we move into each stage. The purpose of the meetings would be to discuss the reopening protocol and answer questions about the protocol and procedures staff will be developing to implement the protocol.

The Task Force is also considering developing guidelines on what to expect and how best to return to the church campus. In addition, we are looking at the development of a short video on how best we can safely greet each other when we return.

As these efforts are ready for congregational review, they will be placed in the OTF section on the church's website.

Pastoral Care Need?

Please remember that if you or a UUCB congregant you know is sick, hospitalized, recovering, grieving or otherwise in need of attention and support, please email Pastoral Care at pastoralcare@uucb.org

Stewardship Campaign Impact

The pandemic has placed unanticipated and costly items on the current and future budgets of the church. Staff are preparing a list of those items so Stewardship can share with you the additional challenges we need to address in our deliberations about our financial commitment to UUCB.

We hope all will receive their vaccine soon. Thank you for your support and for your opinions. At any time, feel free to contact the Opening Task Force at planning@uucb.org

OTF (Opening Task Force) Members: Patrick Cullinane (Chair), Sheldon Jones, Greg Lemieux, Lisa Maynard, Rev. Catherine Boyle, Tess O'Riva, ED, and Rev. Michelle Collins.

Family Ministry

Rev. Catherine Boyle, Director of Family Ministry

Last month, Perseverance the tiny rover found its way across the stars and successfully landed on Mars! Now, this little robot wouldn't have been able to roll forward three feet without the commitment of the teams of thousands of human beings. Perseverance's achievement is a reminder of what a group of committed people can do –not only change the world, but transform for the better!



Commitment is our theme for March in the Congregation and we are committing to transforming the world through our values and principles. The Mission of the

Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley (UUCB) is to create a loving community, inspire spiritual growth, and encourage lives of integrity, joy, and service. We begin that commitment with the youngest members of our church. The Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley is looking forward to our faith's future by investing in our youth. We have great energy and vision for reimagining our high school and young adult programming mid and post-pandemic and we are now making that vision into reality. The Pandemic currently is both a challenge and an opportunity for UUCB. Due to the pandemic, we have to put the breaks on the Reimagining RE suggestions recommended by the R3 Group because of shutdowns and safety regulations. As we prepare for life after Covid, we hold these lessons we have learned from Covid in our mind to serve our children and youth in the congregation to reimagine religious education not just for the present but for the future.

That is why I am happy to say that UUCB Family Ministry is the recipient of 2021 Spring Chalice Lighters Grant!

The pandemic is shifting religious education and how youth is engaging with spirituality and religion in the digital age. Commitment to religious education ensures the lessons UUCB learned go to the creation of new programming for high school youth at UUCB in terms of a UU History Pilgrimage around the crucial areas of Unitarian and Universalist history in the Bay Area, along with fun and bonding along the way. The Chalice Lighters' fund will be used to establish a care package program with local universities to foster and build connection with the faith of the present and the faith of the future simultaneously.

We hope this encourages you to recommit your pledge whether it be time, talent or treasure as a member of UUCB to ensure this and other lifelong religious education and experiences are implemented for the youngest members of our church to the oldest. We need you so we can survive. Thank you for your generosity.

In love,

Rev. Catherine Boyle

From the Board of Trustees

Beth Pollard, President

Stark branches turning into buds turning into blossoms and leaves...there is newness, growth, and change unfolding before our eyes. How will we experience this Spring differently than years past? What are the seeds we will choose to plant, how will we nurture their growth? And how will we spread the bounty because of what we now feel more deeply about fear, isolation, and inequity?

At UUCB, our seasonal shift from winter to spring brings a change in the leadership of who will guide us to our new possibilities. We thank Jack Duggan, Kathryn Jay,

and Logan Stump-Vernon for shouldering responsibilities of decision-making and accountability while guiding us through good times and bad over these past six years. We thank departing Treasurer Larry Nagel for his above-and-beyond finance work this past year. And we thank Kerry Simpson for her Board presidency these past two years, and for wisely luring Kathryn to serve as Acting President these past six months while Kerry was with family.

The re-birth of the Board of Trustees this Spring gratefully brings Ariel Smith-Iyer, Bill Brown, and Randall Hudson to join Cordell Sloan (re-elected), Helen Tinsley-Jones (Board Vice-President), Dave Roberts, Elaine Miller, Kerry Simpson, and myself, along with continuing Secretary Ann Harlow, and new Interim Treasurer Jessica Rider.

There is a wonder and curiosity embedded into the unfolding of a new Spring – especially this year - as we anticipate but cannot accurately predict what will emerge and when, and its effect on our lives and community. But I do believe that when we open ourselves to seeing anew, hearing afresh, and thinking aloud with others, the world is even more colorful, vibrant, and textured than we can imagine alone.

And so UUCB enters a season of the wonder and curiosity of creating ourselves anew. What does our next ministry chapter look like? How will we expand our welcoming, hospitality, empathy, and inclusion to widen our circle of concern? Can we create support for a financially sustainable path through our Care, Compassion, and Community Stewardship pledges? How can UUCB learn and grow from our COVID experience? These are among the questions awaiting our new leadership and our community as a whole.

Beth Pollard

Board President

What The Chalice Circle Experience Has Meant For Me

Natalie Campbell

Chalice Leadership Team

When my family moved to El Cerrito in 2017, we needed to find a UU church to attend. UUCB, right around the corner from our home, was an obvious choice, and I started attending services right away. But I had a hard time making real connections with people during the coffee hour. At my previous UU congregation in Fremont, CA, I had been a member of a chalice circle for three years, and a facilitator for four years. I found that chalice circles were a wonderful way of connecting with people. We discussed topics that mattered. We talked about our hopes and fears, and I

made connections with people in those chalice circles that I still hold close to my heart, over a decade later.

At UUCB, I decided to join a chalice circle again, to better get to know this wonderful community. After a few years, I moved from participant to chalice circle facilitator and then in 2020 - boom - the pandemic hit, and we were left reeling. Slowly, slowly ... chalice circles were able to pick themselves up and figure out what to do. Along with the rest of the world, we discovered Zoom, and started meeting online. As time passed, we realized that chalice circles that met on Zoom were surprisingly satisfying. They weren't for everyone, but many people were pleasantly surprised to discover that they were a pretty great option! Everyone still got their chance to speak. People shared their stories, everyone listened, people were able to feel heard. We were able to connect while sheltering in place - at a time when all of us felt so disconnected.

As Spring moved into Summer, during a season when chalice circles would normally go on hiatus, we decided to rise to the challenge and offer MORE chalice circles! I was put in charge of organizing the circles and getting people to sign up. And boy, did they sign up! We had ten groups serving over 80 people over the Summer of 2020. And many of those same people signed up to continue on with a circle into the Fall and Spring. During this time of challenge and uncertainty, UUCB Chalice Circles have managed to create a sense of community and connection.

And so here we are, heading into the season of stewardship. We are being asked to think about why UUCB is important to us; why we support this congregation. For me, the reason is clear. My UUCB chalice circles have been essential to my UU journey. I feel so thankful to have had the care, compassion and community that chalice circles offered. Without the sense of connection, I might have felt lost. But seeing the friendly faces of my chalice circle group mates every other week kept me going, and gave me purpose during this crazy pandemic, and for that, I will be eternally grateful.

Partner Church Committee

Stephanie Ann Blythe

We at Partner Church are always asking for your donations of time, talent, AND treasure. We back away from asking for treasure during UUCB's annual Stewardship campaign, and while the church is closed the time and talent portion is on something of a hiatus too. So now we are going to ask you for something different: YOUR MEMORIES!



As you know, Dorothy Herzberg is writing a history of UUCB, and she has been asking the Transylvanian Partner Church Committee for dates and information about the committee origins and our pilgrimages to Homoródújfalú. Some of our pilgrims

have donated photo albums, art work and other memorabilia of their Transylvanian travel, but so many more of you may be holding memories and reflections that call out to be shared with others. It wouldn't be right to suddenly flood Dorothy with everyone's remembrances, but you could flood Anne and me with them. We would be able to put them in contexts and timeframes that Dorothy can weave into her work.

Let's go back to the 2006 pilgrimage to Transylvania. On a cold, drizzly Sunday in Homoródújfalú I was being treated to sizzling sausages in the village center while others were getting a local history lesson on a hill overlooking the village and surrounding valley. Remains of a World War I artillery position are slowly eroding away on that hilltop. The young people in the village are taught the art, dances, and traditions of the Székeley people from whom they are descended. But these are things that could be easily lost as their teachers pass from the scene. Our memories are just as fragile. I have many hours of video shot by Rev. Chris Holton-Jablonski from the 2006 pilgrimage. Those videos can only be presented as long as I maintain legacy software that will still play them. I think you get the idea.

The rest is up to you! Contact Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net and share with us what you saw, heard, felt, tasted, smelled, and just thought about during your time in that enchanted land.

Social Justice Council

The Social Justice Council (SJC) is accepting applications for new or existing Sponsored Projects for the 2021/22 church year. Anyone from UUCB may fill out an application for a Sponsored Project to receive resources and support from the council to carry out social justice ideas and attain a goal. If approved, the Project will be announced to the Congregation. If you have a Project that you would like to submit and have at least 2 other people to work with you, please contact the SJC for an application at socialjustice@uucb.org. Applications are due on March 31.

The Literature, Film & Drama Contingent of the Social Justice Council celebrated Black History Month with a discussion of Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent, an extraordinary history lesson wonderfully-crafted by Isabel Wilkerson. In preparation for next month, we are reading The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek, by Kim Richardson. All are welcome to join us on March 7 at 12:30: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84257017624>

UUCB's Good Neighbor program under the auspices of the SJC, is an integral part of our congregation's culture of giving. Each month, on the first Sunday of the month, we invite a representative from a local nonprofit to come and speak about what their organization does. This past year, of course, many of the groups had to send in videos instead of standing at the pulpit. Nevertheless, we were still able to

learn about the ways in which each of the nonprofits assist people in our community.

Last year, in 2020, the Social Justice Council welcomed twelve different organizations. They were: College is Real (for first time college students); Regina's Door Studio/Dreamcatchers (for sex trafficked girls and women); East Bay Center for the Blind; Women's Cancer Resource Center; Crisis Support Services of Alameda County; YEAH- Youth Engagement Advocacy Housing; Youth Spirit Artworks (tiny house project); Emeryville Citizens Assistance Program ; Diverse Housing Working Group ; GRIP; Operation Dignity (unhoused veterans); and Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity (refugee rights). We earned a combined total of \$16,709.48 for those non profits!

In December of 2020, the Social Justice Committee had a very inspirational zoom meeting, as we heard from seventeen organizations competing for the chance to come and speak at UUCB in 2021. After a vote, twelve of them were selected for this year. They are (in the order they will be participating throughout the year): Social Justice Sewing Academy; Collaborising (Richmond based for the unhoused); Read Aloud Volunteer Program; Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (for the physically disabled); The Berkeley Food Pantry; Ya- NEEMA (fighting gun violence); Lavender Seniors of the East Bay; Diablo Valley College START program for foster youth; Developing Indigenous Resources, Greater Richmond Interfaith Program; Sangorea Te' Land Trust (rights for indigenous people); Emeryville Citizen's Assistance Program.

If you have a local non profit that you would like to nominate for UUCB's 2022 Good Neighbor program, please let us know! We are happy to invite new organizations to come and speak. Just contact Natalie Campbell at nataliehcampbell@yahoo.com

From the Treasurer

Jessica K. Rider

Jessica Rider is, in no particular order, a resident of Kensington, graduate of Cal (MPP and PhD) and Georgia Tech (B.S./B.I.E.), economist/data nerd, policy analyst for the federal government, mom of three (14, 10, and 5 years old, respectively), wife of one very kind-hearted man, lapsed Southerner, Californian by choice, spiritual seeker, avid home cook & baker, gardener, and reader. The main things she misses in this pandemic are hugging her friends and throwing parties. Unsurprisingly, she is both an extrovert and often very tired. Her pronouns are she/her/hers. Jessica and her family joined UUCB in Spring 2019.



From the Executive Director

Tess Snook O'Riva, Executive Director



My children play a game with their friends called “Would You Rather.” It’s essentially a choice between two really hard and/or terrible choices. Would you rather break your arm or your leg? Would you rather eat something that looks bad but you don’t know what it is or something you know what it is but it’s gone rotten? Would you rather have a hot needle in the eye or be buried up to your neck in a hill of fire ants?

Sometimes the budget process feels like this. Not in the way that all the choices are bad, but having to *force* a choice between priorities is really hard. Actually looking in the mirror and stating the Prime Directive...that can be really emotionally painful and call our values into question.

And that is what the Board of Trustees is grappling with right now. We have started the budget process a little differently this year. Instead of me listing the projects we need/want to do and all the fixed expenses, we are going at it from a mission-based perspective. As Kathryn Jay said, “Our budget is our mission in action.” So where are our priorities?

This is not an easy question. We are UUs. We want to do all the things. Support racial justice, reduce climate change, care for our congregants, close the income disparity gap, improve our communities, take care of our spiritual house, etc. They are all important. But what if we had to choose? What if we HAD to prioritize one thing over another?

The Board is going there. They are asking the hard questions to arrive at a common understanding of the lens through which all decisions will be made. What does that look like in practice? It is not a re-stating of our mission or values. It is a commitment to ensuring that all decisions are weighed against our main priorities for this year.

- If we say that our main campus is Social Justice HQ, it reframes deferred maintenance projects and influences rental priorities and facility usage.
- If supporting the existing needs of our congregation is Priority 1, then in-reach and engagement would take precedence over outreach and marketing.
- If the goal is to grow revenue, it affects how we invest and what we are willing to do to cut costs and raise money.

We would never rent to a hate group, even if they offered us \$10,000 a day. But rarely are choices that clean-cut. Forcing the discussion around tough choices guides the day-to-day work of staff, influences purchasing decisions, and puts what we do into perspective. It’s a necessary exercise, if a painful one.

We acknowledge that this will be a process every year because the needs of the world and our community will and must change. We will create a safe space and

structure to commit to a direction and do our best to move towards an end goal. And we do all this because we know that if we continue to treat everything as the priority, then nothing is.

The good news is that there is no wrong choice. As long as we hold each other in Covenant, we will move forward. What we do is important, and we make a difference – in ALL the things.



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