

THE BFUU COMMUNICATOR

Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists

April 2020

Upcoming Worship Services

Services at 10:30 a.m.

Until we can safely meet together in Fellowship Hall, our Worship Services and Meetings are moving to Zoom. **Please see the article on page 5.** Because of uncertainty, the calendar and event listings are not included here. Please check www.bfuu.org, BFUU's Facebook page, and/or your ENews for Worship Service zoom links and Meeting IDs, and updates on other events/classes/meetings.



April 5: Bingeing Netflix? The Algorithm Knew You'd Love It!

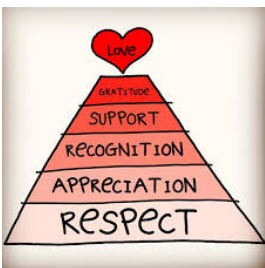
Joe Gabaeff (he/him), Guest Worship Leader

With the proliferation of technology, competition for the eyes and ears of people has never been so high. In fact, we humans now employ technology to hook folks into using more technology, many of us unaware of the forces at play: there is a reason some cannot stop watching Netflix, scrolling Reddit, or clicking on virtual carrot crops on a virtual farm. Today, we explore how refining and optimizing engagement with technology, by using technology, has already led us into societally unexamined territory and will only continue to push us further toward a future locked to the screen.

April 12: Looking for our Resurrection

Jeff Palmer (he/him), Lay Worship Leader

At times of distress and disaster we need a resurrection, an infusion of new life and new possibilities. Two thousand years ago the disciples of Jesus needed a resurrection to turn their disaster into hope. Today we look for our own sense resurrection in unsettled times.



April 19: Gratitude: A Timely Reminder

Rev. Marsh Agobert (he/him), Worship Leader

We've spoken of gratitude before. This is intended to be a return to that subject; among the greatest of all subjects and states of being. It seems particularly important at this point in time when it might be too easy to overlook its magic.

April 26: Faith, Feasting and Fasting

Rev. Dr. Carrie Knowles (she/her), Worship Leader

In the month of Ramadan, our sisters and brothers of the Islamic faith fast every day till evening. This summer on July 30th and again on September 28th, Jews will fast for a day. Christians, Buddhists, Taoists, Jains and Hindus practice fasting. Rev. Dr. Carrie explores the question of how fasting became part of the spiritual life of human beings.



Clergy & Staff

Reverend Marsh Agobert, *Minister*
 Reverend Dr. Carrie Knowles, *Minister*
 Reverend Tom McAninley, *Community Minister*
 Dr. Susan T. Mashiyama, *Music Director*
 Deborah Hamouris, *Event Space Coordinator*
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The Human Capacity to Learn and Adapt

I'm trying to hatch a new plan and I hope you are too.

Virtually every Sunday morning that we're together, I attempt to get you interested in utilizing one of the human species greatest strengths...it may well be its only real leg up in the survival game: our ability to adapt. So far, I have no idea if there are any takers. For example, I've suggested that we give up the game of war in favor of a much less dramatic, yet (I believe) more favorable and less bloody (in the literal sense) expression of service – real communication between real people.

I've suggested in several different ways that instead of criticizing, berating ('they're so stupid to vote against their self-interest'), competing with and disdaining the people of the Heartland, we ask them the age-old therapist's query: "And how does that make you feel?" Ok, I hardly ever ask that question. I have many, more effective paths of approach. But the truth is, I DO ask a lot of questions. Did you know you can stage entire conversations using only questions? That's a worthwhile skill for anyone to develop. Even Social Justice warriors. ESPECIALLY social justice warriors. Why? Because curiosity will help you win.

The one called 45 has helped, but at what cost? Now that we have everyone's attention, what do we plan to do with it? Perhaps we try to convince them that our way is best and that they should drop all that they're trying to express about the quality of their lives and listen to us. Maybe we make them think they're idiots who select against their self-interests and change their minds with that. Is this working to win the hearts and minds of our adversaries, or are we preaching to the choir? (Those last two questions are real questions – I'd like to hear from you on those.)

If we're not convincing those people outside of the Bubble, then what real Move-America-Forward change is inspired? That's another real question – Please reply to revmarsh@bfuu.org. HOW can we win this battle if we don't:

- Take it to those who currently don't vote with us and
- Listen to those who are 'on the fence.'

Cleric's Corner (continued)

- Dissolve the fence, or wall (or whatever we want to call this Great Continental Divide), and become a nation again. Forget “Make America Great Again.” How about “Making an America would be Great” for a change.
- We need to be winning NEW hearts and minds. That’s how democracy works. Whereas complaint and logic DON’T WORK. I can prove it to you, ...logically. I have done these. So I can tell you, it hasn’t worked with you and me either.

Think about it. In a real blood-war, as you win, you begin to outnumber your enemy because you kill them, and they don’t get to oppose you again. When you CRUSH them, hopefully, they will go away. But WAIT! Nope, they didn’t go away because the South is still working to ‘rise again.’

Update: Millennials didn’t vote, in record numbers. !?. Follow that with heavy drinking and partying during the onset of the Coronavirus. I think there’s a depressed and somewhat cynical underlying mood in this generation. They may need us.

So far as I’m concerned, this completely defeats the perspective held by many economists that a single vote makes no difference in a national election. Now we can see, there is no such thing as a single vote. Ask me about this if it doesn’t immediately make sense.

So I’m in the process of updating the strategy of the ’50s to a current-day approach, and I need your help. If you want to move the marches and rallies to the next level, come talk to this spring’s small group ministry. Let’s do this to increase our effectiveness, to make use of the brief moments of law between the normal violence.

As a species, we didn’t get this far because we have better claws or longer sharper teeth. We didn’t get here because we’re faster or more durable than the other animals on the veldt. We got here because we can communicate better, plan well, co-operate, and adapt.

To become part of this spring’s small group ministry:

Send an Email to revmarsh@bfuu.org, with “T3” in the subject field, or Text me at (707) 557-5707

Now, for those of you who’ve made it this far, here are some real words of wisdom for you:

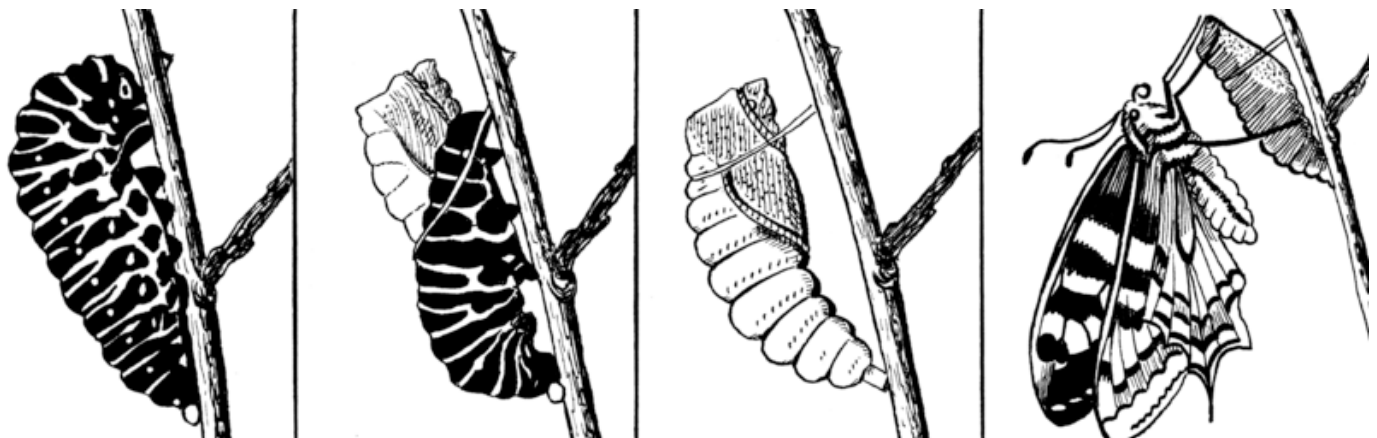
Hidden Brain: Facts Aren’t Enough: The Psychology Of False Beliefs - 07/22/19

Freakonomics: How to Change Your Mind (Rebroadcast) - 11/27/19

Freakonomics: Does Hollywood Still Have a Princess Problem? - 10/23/19

Hidden Brain: Zipcode Destiny: The Persistent Power Of Place And Education – 12/09/19

Rev. Marsh



President's Corner



Song for the month: Come Sing A Song With Me

Reading for the month: We Need Each other (Thanks to Joanna Foley) We Need One Another, by George Odell

Meditation for the month: Thich Nhat Hahn How to Be Present

Dear Beloved BFUU,

As I write, I have just received the Executive Order from the State of California that the Stay-At-Home orders have been expanded to include all of California.

Many of you have already seen this. Some of you may not have. All of us are wondering what it means.

According to my partner, it doesn't really change anything for those of us already under Stay-At-Home orders. But when I got the news I immediately had an urge to get out the door and start running... somewhere. I am a person who doesn't like to be told what to do, or what not to do.

And though the circumstances haven't really changed, the order changes our liberty. It changes the place where I get to respond from a place of community responsibility to having to comply with state authority. (Blog - Ahjamu Umi's: "The Truth Challenge") I wasn't really built for that. And in these times it will be even more important than ever to remember our UU principles and sources.

But I was built for integrity. I was built for love. (Message from the Council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers: – SisterHearts). I was built for community. I will continue to honor the self-quarantine, and will carefully watch the state and make sure that as few liberties are lost in the course of securing safety. Many of you were built the same, and I ask you to breathe deeply and act inside of principle.

May we be safe. May we be well. May we know joy. May we be free.

Please note that many of our church gatherings will be moving to the virtual world. Our IT consultant will be helping with that, and individual members will be helping to get equipment and capacity to folks who don't yet have that technology. Many things will be available via our FB page.

Kathy Riehle and the Caring and Membership Committees are helping folks to form small groups to check on each other daily. Please reach out, and make sure you are calling someone at BFUU every day to check on them.

We need each other. And when we can't see each other in person, let us care for each other in all the ways we have access to.

Let us care for one another and for our earth.

In Beloved Community,

Ira X



BFUU's alter paraphernalia can travel when needed! Here in Joanna Foley's home as a sacred element in the 3/22 Zoom service.

BFUU Is Moving to Zoom!



Worship Service February 23 - Back: James, Andy, Virginia, Cindy, Lea; Front: Doug, Rev. Marsh, Dr. Susan, Clovice, Tom

**From Live
to YouTube
to Zoom:
BFUU
Worship
Services
Are Here
for You!**



Worship Service March 15 - above left, Laila Ibrahim, who safely called in from home; above right: the BFUU Choir - from left to right: Tom, Caylin, Dr. Susan, Margaret, Guest Singer Cyndy Webster, Jeff, Barbara

Our Worship Services and Meetings (including the upcoming Congregational Meeting) are moving to Zoom. Our first Sunday service by Zoom on March 22, 2020 was a big success with about 50 participants who Zoomed in to see and hear the service live, which is actually about the normal attendance we would expect for a service on location at the Fellowship Hall. It was quite an achievement for our tech-challenged congregants, so kudos to all who bravely forged a new frontier for them and learned to Zoom; and also many thanks to those who lent a tech-savvy helping hand to pull congregants into the 21st century-- including Christine L., Caylin, and Michael Simpkins Jr, our patient IT consultant.

The Worship Team, who spoke and performed music all from their own homes included our beloved Rev. Dr. Carrie, who gave a mindful and heartfelt sermon about the coronavirus, and millennial Paikela Melcher who stepped into the WA role with aplomb. Other fabulous team members who contributed music, words, and ideas were James Blanchard, Doug Chambers, Margaret Hurlbert, Andy Jamieson, Jeff Palmer, and Tom Rudderow. Dr. Susan was the main organizer/coordinator of the Zoom service after WSC chair Joanna Foley and other congregants expressed their desire to stay connected socially and spiritually during this challenging time and for the WSC to continue its charge of providing worship services. Joanna was the other ringleader with her usual combination of hard work, writing skills, and masterful diplomacy in balancing different people's personalities. Thanks also to board president Ira X Armstrong for their support and ideas, and to Susan Macke in the office for all her help. There were many expressions of gratitude and appreciation for the virtual service, and folks chatted excitedly afterwards in the "Zoom room," happy to be able to see each others' faces and hear each other once again.

Zoom is a great way to stay connected and collaborate while we are under order to shelter in place due to the coronavirus threat. We hope that all who want to can join in, so let us know if we can help by contacting one of the Susans – Dr. Susan T. Mashiya at music@bfuu.org or Susan Macke at office@bfuu.org or 510-841-4824 ext. 1 and leave a message – if you have questions or would like a walk through. We'll connect you with one of our volunteers or with Michael Simpkins Jr.

Pro tip: Mute your microphone or phone unless or until you are supposed to speak to the group (otherwise, we will hear any sound that occurs in the background.)

You don't need an account to join a meeting, but anyone can get a free account if you want to start your own meetings! Free accounts allow up to 100 people to join a meeting that is up to 40 min long; meetings with just one or two people don't have time limits. Check it out at zoom.us



First BFUU Choir Meeting by Zoom, 2020 March 18

The BFUU Choir's first meeting by Zoom on March 18, 2020 clockwise from top left: Janet, Dr. Susan, Andy, Margaret, Frances, Melissa, Tom, James; center: Caylin

Musical Notes from Dr. Susan “Excerpts From Harlem Voices”



The past month certainly has been eventful! Much of February was crowded with preparations and activity around

producing a very special Sunday service on Feb. 23, 2020 where we presented a number of “Excerpts From Harlem Voices,” a musical written by Clovice Lewis. The musical is set in the 1920s and is Mr. Lewis’ answer to the current resurgence of racial tensions in the United States. Most of us know Clovice as an eloquent speaker and talented cellist who has spoken at BFUU several times as guest Worship Leader. But before this, few knew he was also a professional composer and a professor of computer music at UC Santa Barbara. Currently, he is starting off on his “second career” by studying as a seminarian at Starr King School for the Ministry here in Berkeley.

Joanna Foley, Chair of the Worship Services Committee (WSC) initially told me about the proposed project this way:

“Susan, Clovice has accepted our invitation to produce his new musical at BFUU for a Sunday service,” Joanna said excitedly, bubbling over with joy. “Isn’t it just wonderful?!”

“Um...” I remember answering, “What does that mean? Does that mean he is going to bring his musicians and they will perform the musical, or are we supposed to produce and perform this musical all ourselves?”

Well, well. It turned out that our tiny little music program led by its tiny little Music Director was expected to

direct, learn, and produce a version of his musical ourselves at BFUU for one of our regular Sunday services—quite a Herculean task and in a very short time frame. I think I almost choked on my mug of matcha tea. Looking over the sheet music and listening to the digital tracks Clovice had produced made it clear to me that his beautiful music was extremely complex and technically difficult. Life is full of interesting challenges and chapters! In the past, we’ve had special musical Sundays, but the guests had always brought all of the musicians themselves and had invested months or years in preparing the music that they performed.

After some discussion and negotiation, we all decided to present a more feasible number of six original pieces that would include both digital accompaniment and some live instrumentation. We dove into the project. Volunteer singers and musicians both from within and beyond the BFUU community were recruited, and I learned all the vocal parts so I could help teach and coach the performers, and also coordinated and scheduled. It was an intensely busy, but amazingly rewarding experience to collaborate with everyone, and a growing experience for us all. Kudos to all who rose to the task, putting in many hours of practice, and learning difficult music, sometimes with a lack of experience with sheet music which is much harder with this music. I was particularly pleased that a viola player agreed to perform live music on a song that Clovice had written specifically in praise of the viola, an often overlooked instrument.

Luckily, we are blessed with many musically gifted congregants, and have good connections to community musicians. The Sunday service on 2/23 finally arrived and

after the flurry of last minute rehearsals, we arrived, dressed in 1920’s fashion, and the service began. Guest singer Cindy Webster started it off with a beautiful rendition of “The Night They Burned Rosewood” that was Clovice’s emotional tribute to the terrible Rosewood massacre. Clovice then gave an Introduction to his musical, telling us how some think that traumatic experiences are actually etched indelibly in our DNA, and how in writing the songs he often felt he was personally remembering harrowing experiences of racial injustice rather than just telling about them from having read stories about them. He put the story into context and explained that he felt it was in alignment with his hope for a colorblind world that it was acceptable to him that a singer of any race could sing his songs. Then he guided us through the musical journey of social justice and love.

The service was especially well attended and congregants included friends from Starr King and UUCB. The singers and musicians in addition to Clovice (vocals, cello) were: Lea Andersen (viola), James Blanchard, Doug Chambers, Virginia Hollins-Davidson, Andy Jamieson (piano), Tom Luce, Cindy Webster, and Dr. Susan.



Community Voices

All photos on this page were taken before the shelter in place order. May we stay connected in spirit and heart and soon return to our Fellowship Hall.



Ben Burch

Wyndy Knox Carr

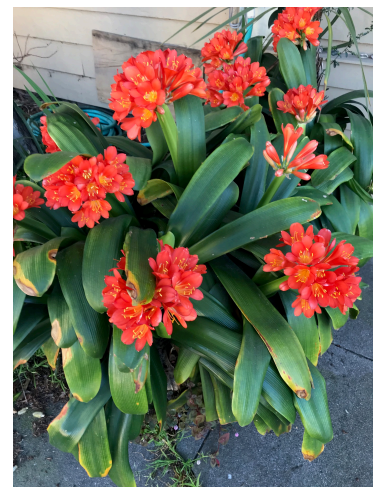
Jean Marie Stine

Walking through the BFUU garden

brought to you by

Gene Herman
(cauliflower photo
above left)

and Joanna Foley
(Chalice Mosaic above, leafy
greens to the left, and
flowers to the right.)



Elayne and Joanna working on the foyer improvement project. What a wonderful warm welcome we'll have!

Rev. Marsh (standing) spoke to a group of high school students from Capistrano Valley Christian School, with their Director of Student Activities and Spiritual Formation, Aaron Bond (center front)

Spiritual Growth and Social Justice in the Heart of Berkeley

Building character, enriching spirits, promoting community, and serving humankind through spiritual growth and social action.

BFUU OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

BFUU OFFICE STAFF

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR May *COMMUNICATOR*: April 20

Please email newsletter@bfuu.org with submissions.

Address Correction Requested

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