

THE BFUU COMMUNICATOR

Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists

December 2020

BFUU
zoom
Worship Service

Donate to BFUU



Sundays at 10:30 AM*

offline? email worshiponline@bfuu.org for links

*except 12/24 at 5PM

December 6: Being Present is EVERYTHING

Rev. Marsh Agobert (he/him)

"May you live in interesting times." This is an old Chinese saying... Well, actually a curse. Whether a saying or a curse is a matter of perspective. Yet, we Can say: We live in interesting times. So that double edge has never been more clear, as our culture comes of age. To the extent that we feel at the mercy of the tremendous tidal pulls of this moment, is the extent to which we are paying attention. If you're not sure if you're getting it (everything) right at this time...you ARE paying attention. Being present is even a challenge for the enlightened. One definition of enlightenment might simply mean that one releases resistance and accepts the challenge.



image: <https://www.flickr.com/people/jimmybrown/>

December 13: Reparations

Baba Jahahara Amen-RA Alkebulan-Ma'at (he/him)

In many ways, Reparations are already being won. Baba Jahahara Amen-RA Alkebulan-Ma'at makes the point that reparations are about much more than a check. So discussing Reparations at this moment, considering the options, respectfully debating our differences, planning our strategies, studying our story of humanity, and more, is a victory! While we are making great strides,

overcoming some of the deepest effects of white terrorist supremacy and black self-hatred might take generations. What is key is that WE get and stay on the Reparations, and Ma'at, paths.

What is critical is that WE continue to make PREPARATIONS . . . FOR REPARATIONS!

December 20: Winter Solstice *BFUU Pagans and Friends*

We will gather to celebrate the Longest Night, the rich and sacred Darkness that allows us to rest and nurtures the seeds of possibility. Maxina Ventura, longtime musician, activist, and priestess in the Reclaiming tradition, will lead us.



December 24: Christmas Eve Service: A Musical Christmas Around the World

★ *Please join us at **5:00 PM** for this special service!*

Santa brings gifts to people around the world while sharing favorite songs he learns on his travels. He ends up in the USA, singing with us the Christmas Carols that we have come to love.



December 27: Our Democracy Going Forward, Act 2

Rev. Dr. Carrie Knowles (she/her)

Rev. Dr. Carrie will again focus on the extraordinary crises our government faces as we approach the coming 25 days to the Inauguration of President-elect Biden—and reflect on how we can live with the unexpected in this time of a surging pandemic.

Clergy & Staff

Reverend Marsh Agobert, *Minister*
 Reverend Dr. Carrie Knowles, *Minister*
 Reverend Tom McAninley, *Community Minister*
 Deborah Hamouris, *Event Space Coordinator*
 Susan Macke, *Office Administrator*
 Ed Keating, *Facilities Manager*
 Shae Jewell, *Sexton*
 Michael Simpkins, Jr., *IT Consultant*

Board of Trustees

Ira X Armstrong, *President*
 Michael Gardner, *Vice President*
 Ben Burch, *Treasurer & Secretary*
 Judith Granada-Dewey
 Margaret Hurlbert
 David Makofsky (*Alternate*)
 Phoebe Sorgen (*Alternate*)

Committees

Aesthetics (Subcommittee of B&G)
 Joanna Foley, *Chair*
 Building & Grounds Committee
 Abbot Foote, *Co-Chair*
 Ben Burch, *Co-Chair*
 Caring Community
 Kathy Riehle, *Chair*
 Committee on Ministry
 Jinky Gardner, Steve Ogden, Kathy Riehle
 Finance Committee
 Ben Burch, *Co-Chair*
 Abbot Foote, *Co-Chair*
 Hospitality Committee
 Kathy Riehle, *Chair*
 Membership Committee
 Doug Chambers, *Chair*
 Music Committee
 Margaret Hurlbert, *Chair*
 Nominating Committee
 Virginia Hollins-Davidson, *Chair*
 Personnel Committee
 Kathy Riehle, *Chair*
 Poetry Committee
 Frances Hillyard, *Chair*
 Gene Herman, *Poet Laureate*
 Religious Education (RE) Committee
 Sharon Colligan, *Convener*
 Social Justice Committee (SJC)
 Phoebe Sorgen, Cynthia Johnson,
 Gene Herman, and David Makofsky,
Co-Chairs
 SJM Task Force (Subcom of SJC)
 Jeff Palmer, *Convener*
 Worship Services Committee
 Joanna Foley, *Chair*
 Sharon Colligan, *Vice-Chair*

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in The Communicator are those of individuals and are not necessarily those of BFUU, its officers, or its trustees.



What's in a Name or Good Riddance

My immediate family consists of three people, and usually one or two cats. In our first umpteen years, we had a set of rituals we would have to enact a few times each year. At those times, we would have to change the family's makeup for two or three months, and then come to rest in a new

configuration of the family until; lather, rinse, repeat – we'd enact the cycle again.

Son, Nathan, had to move between the Bay Area, his mom and I, and Nashville and his Bio-Father and one or another Step-Mother. Apparently, according to n8 (his current moniker), the transition moving from East to West was a little easier than heading back East at the end of the term. It was certainly hard on his mother and me to have to let him go each season. We developed a game which, at some level, for a while, we had no idea we were playing. Eventually, we realized we had created a game. We came to call this game: "Good Riddance!" Here's how the game goes and how we came to name it.

In the final week of our time together, with his impending departure looming, first n8 and then his mom and finally I would become increasingly irritated with each other. On the day of departure, we'd each be on edge. By the time we'd put him on the plane, there would be moments of tension accompanied by a bit of fussing and then release as the aircraft lifted off. In those days, you could go to the gate and watch the ground crews lose your loved one's luggage as you helplessly watched from the giant terminal windows. But that state lasted for only a precious few moments before we'd quickly realize we were already sadly missing each other as Michele and I headed to the parking lot, dabbing our tears.

Eventually, the therapist and Treatment Coordinator figured out that this was, in fact, a game. It was a game we played to make our parting easier. Someone, usually the Boy, would begin to get fussy, and a fight would ensue about something completely insignificant (not our experience at the time, of course.) One affront would lead to another until these would escalate into

Cleric's Corner (continued)

something that seemed meaningful, until the moment he'd walk onto the plane. For a brief moment, each of us could conjure the feeling "Good Riddance! He's, they're (whatever) Gone!" The sense of "glad he's gone, that fussing was getting on my last nerve" only lasted a moment, and, eventually, it became clear that this was a game to camouflage the pain of our separation.

By the time n8 was 8, we knew what we were doing. We realized that it was easier to leave in a mood of "I hate you! You're a jerk and don't love me!" It seemed to make things easier. But it didn't work nearly as well once we realized the truth. After that, we could easily spot the game, anyone of us, and that would shut the game down in an instant. We accepted the vulnerable feelings of separation, longing, and loss. Now, on paper, that might seem to be worse than the push-away game, but in reality, the honest feelings (authenticity) were far better. We learned to acknowledge our feeling's truth and depth, so our little family drew closer through the years. n8's other family may not have fared quite as well over those years.

As time progressed, we have enacted our later model separations with the mixture of feelings they deserve. We know now that sometimes it's time to move on. That might mean going off to university or moving to another country for several years. It's given us a chance to grow closer through these separations and the subsequent growth that happens in the interim. We're a close family who understands each other in multi-dimensional ways: as parents and children and people with various skillsets, strengths, and vulnerabilities, as adults and professionals and, and, and. We're not merely parents and child, although that's in here too. We love each other deeply and have come to understand how to accept each other as who we are, which is not any single, simple, or even dominant set of identities. And I'd say that's because our love for each other sees beyond the myriad of labels and identities we each seem to be. We live in a more real place. We watch the fluidity of our relationships and identities change rapidly during any conversation, Mah Jong game, or undertaking.

One last thing. In our early days, when Nathan (his identity at the time) had barely turned four, he asked me if he could call me Daddy. Being a good egalitarian and liberal, I sought to honor his relationship with his Bio-Father, so I answered, "No. Your Dad lives in Nashville." Before any more could be said, suddenly, Nathan burst into screams and tears. He bit my arm so hard that it left an impression in my flesh for months that hurt like the dickens. To this day, I record it as the worst disagreement he and I have ever had. It took me a long time to work out what had happened that day. I'd never experienced so primal a cry in such a gut-wrenching fashion.

So I realize how hard it can be to arrive at the proper moniker at the same moment. I get how important that can be. And I know how hard it is to name a stable and accurate identity between any two individuals. Sometimes it's awkward. Sometimes it's painful. Sometimes it changes and signals a moment at which a young person grows and that relationship changes. And sometimes it comes about as a way to say I've grown up (am growing up), and it's time for me to leave home but not you. Good Riddance! I've outgrown you. And I'll miss you.

Hopefully, we have the wisdom to weather such moments gracefully, and if we don't, rest assured we're all in the process of earning it.

Rev. Marsh

Community Voices



Barbara Chan
Ardys DeLu
Carole Holtz
Cynthia Johnson
Kathy Riehle



Worship Service Team October 25 top: Joanna, Paikea, Elinor & Steve, Sharon; 2nd row: Frances, Kathy & Doug, Rev. Dr. Carrie Knowles, Eva; 3rd row: Andy, Barbara, Edward, Margaret, Melissa



by Mike Gardner

A rare opportunity to view two planets virtually on top of one another occurs on December 21. Jupiter and Saturn will be low in the southwest part of the sky about 45 minutes after sunset. If you have a clear view of the western horizon, you will see the two planets virtually as one. So grab a pair of binoculars, or a small telescope and direct it toward the two planets. They will be six arc minutes apart, much less than 1°. A few days before and after December 21 the two planets will still be very close together.

The last time these two planets were this close was almost 400 years ago, and this unusual pairing will not happen again for nearly 800 years. So this is the time to get out and enjoy an unusual and beautiful event our skies have to offer. Have fun.

Help Wanted: Recording Secretary

The BFUU Board seeks a wonderful, skilled, caring person to take and manage minutes for Board and Congregational meetings.

Google docs savvy - some cat herding involved! If you or anyone you know might be interested, please see the complete [Recording Secretary Job Description](#).



Susan & Andy Got Married!



by Susan Macke, BFUU Office Administrator

I just want to share the happy news that my long-time boyfriend Andy and I got married in November. We've been like an old married couple for well over a decade, and now it's all official.

I broke the news to my family with, "I know we're so young, and this is so sudden, but our love can't wait!" They invariably laughed and joked back with me. One friend shared her great relief that we would no longer be living in sin. 😊 I'm so lucky to be surrounded by smart, funny, loving people at home as well as at work.

The civil ceremony was online and included just the two of us with the officiant. As a long-time couple, we were a bit blasé going into it, but we felt the gravity and joy of the moment. Luckily our families and friends (including you, I hope!) forgive us for not planning to have any further events around this. Kids these days! 😊

Poetry Corner



The Con is Gone
 Deep dish swamp slime
 Clocked out just in time
 Hey scumbag
 You're fired
 The past four years
 Made us quite tired
 The Con is Gone
 With his fascist racist tropes
 Rather see you dangling from
 The end of a rope
 No NO
 That's a proud boy thang
 Sleepy Joe
 Hiawatha Liz
 Crooked Hillary
 Takes one to know one
 Oh yeah "Honest" Don
 Slinging agitation axes
 Why you continuously hiding your taxes
 You are through you damn cluck
 Were only in it for the bucks
 The Con is Gone
 Miss you madly...no...no
 Will miss you gladly
 See you soon
 Wearing black and white stripes
 With your sorry ass behind federal prison bars
 Better yet
 Deport you to
 Robben Island.

Gene B. Herman - Poet Laureate/BFUU



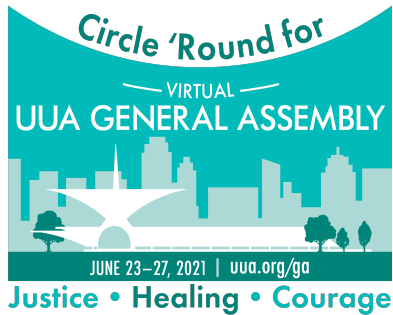
Fire has torn away
 forests
 stolen breath
 Hearts ache
 Lungs cry out

From ghosts of trees
 ghostly birds
 call us

We shake the soot from
 our wings
 and continue flying

Frances Hillyard
 BFUU Poet Laureate Emerita

UUA General Assembly



General Assembly (GA) 100% Virtual Event! June 23-27, 2021

It's time again for people who are interested in attending the upcoming GA meeting next year to let the Board of Trustees (BOT) know that they are interested. December 1st is the opening date to apply for the least expensive attendance tickets. If you are interested, please contact the BOT as soon as possible.

BFUU can usually sponsor registration for two (2) delegates, who attend and report back to the Board and Congregation. Additional attendees should be aware that financial support for registration as well as a payment plan are available through the UUA.

GA registrants receive access to the 2021 Online Participation Portal, including live, simulive, and on-demand video content, the virtual exhibit hall, chat features, support, and mobile app.

Circle 'Round for Justice • Healing • Courage is the theme for General Assembly 2021. General Assembly is a time to circle 'round in community. We circle 'round in care and healing; for liberation and justice; and for love and courage. We share stories of the work happening at our Association. and in our congregations. We study ways to implement and live into our mission. UUA GA 2021 will incorporate recommendations from the Commission on Institution Change report, "Widening the Circle of Concern" and dialogue with the Article II Commission about our Principles and Purposes. Through programs and workshops, professional and lay leaders will learn and develop skills to equip them with tools to continue the mission of our faith. Featured speakers will delve into theological analysis, work around organizing for liberation, and the ways we tend our spiritual resilience. Honoring the myriad of communities within Unitarian Universalism, there will be more time for networking, meetups and caucusing over the span of our 5-days together. Finally, we will preserve our connection to Milwaukee and the MidAmerica Region through special programming and activities. Get ready to Circle 'Round...

Regular Committee Meetings (via Zoom through Shelter In Place)

Aesthetics (subcom. of B&G)

Meets as needed

contact [Joanna Foley](#)

Buildings & Grounds (B&G)

Meets once per month,

contact [Ben and Abbot](#)

Caring

4th Sunday at 12:30 PM

contact [Kathy Riehle](#)

Committee on Ministry

meets as needed

contact [Kathy, Jinky, and Steve](#)

Finance

Meets as needed

contact [Ben and Abbot](#)

Hospitality

4th Sunday at 12:30 PM

contact [Kathy Riehle](#)

Membership

4th Sunday at 12:30 PM

contact [Doug Chambers](#)

Music

2nd Monday 2:00 PM

contact [Margaret Hurlbert](#)

Nominating

meets as needed

contact [Virginia Hollins-Davidson](#)

Personnel

3rd Thursdays 2:30 PM

Contact [Kathy Riehle](#)

Poetry

Meets as needed

contact [Frances Hillyard](#)

Religious Education

Meets as needed

contact [Sharon Colligan](#)

Social Justice Ministry

1st Sunday 12:30 PM

contact [Jeff Palmer](#)

Social Justice (SJC)

3rd Sunday noonish - after service

contact [Phoebe, Gene, and David](#)

Worship Services

2nd Tuesday at 10:00 AM

contact [Joanna and Sharon](#)

Fellowship Calendar December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Please Plan Ahead: Some of the links here send an email to the meeting organizer. The direct links have ¹ after the link. If you send an email, please allow a few days for them to reply.		1 11:00 am Elders Circle ^{*1} Reflection & Connection [*]	2 3:15 pm Choir Practice ^{*1}	3 2:00 pm COM Meeting ^{*1}	4	5 1 pm Worship Service Rehearsal [*]
6 10:30 am Worship Service ^{*1} 12:30 pm SJM Mtg ^{*1}	7 2:00 pm MusCom Meeting	8 10 am Worship Svcs Committee Mtg [*] Reflection & Reflection & Connection [*]	9 3:15 pm Choir Practice ^{*1}	10 7 pm BFUU Men's Group [*]	11	12 1 pm Worship Service Rehearsal [*]
13 10:30 am Worship Service ^{*1}	14	15 Reflection & Connection [*]	16 3:15 pm Choir Practice ^{*1}	17 2:30 pm Personnel Committee [*] 7 pm BFUU Board of Trustees Mtg ^{*1}	18	19 1 pm Worship Service Rehearsal [*]
20 10:30 am Worship Service ^{*1} Noonish - after service SJC Meeting ^{*1} Communicator Deadline	21	22 Reflection & Connection [*]	23 3:15 pm Choir Practice ^{*1}	24 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Service ^{*1}	25  Christmas Day Holiday	26 1 pm Worship Service Rehearsal [*]
27 10:30 am Worship Service ^{*1} 12:30 pm HMC- Hospitality. Membership and Caring-Cttees Mtgs ^{*1}	28	29 Reflection & Connection [*]	30 3:15 pm Choir Practice ^{*1}	31	If you have questions, please email office@bfuu.org or call the office at 510-841-4824 ext. 1.	

* denotes Fellowship event ¹ denotes meeting link

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 CLOSED - We are working from home

BFUU OFFICE STAFF

Deborah Hamouris - Event Space Coordinator

Phone: 510-841-4824, ext. 3

Working Days: Tue, Wed & Fri

Email: rooms@bfuu.org

Susan Macke - Office Coordinator

Phone: 510-841-4824, ext. 1

Working Days: Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri

Email: office@bfuu.org

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR October *COMMUNICATOR*: December 20

Please email newsletter@bfuu.org with submissions.

Address Correction Requested

Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists

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Berkeley, CA 94709

Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists

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