

# U2C2 Connection

A monthly newsletter published by the Unitarian Universalist Community Church

**::A Month of Sundays::**

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## December Sunday Services

Our services are held Sundays at 10:30 AM unless otherwise stated (please note our special Christmas Eve services this month).

Sunday, Dec. 6: "Preparing for the Prince of Peace" - Worship Leader: Allison Claire

Advent is the Christian season of preparation for the birth of Jesus who is known among other things as the "Prince of Peace." On this second Sunday of Advent, come explore what it means to prepare ourselves for the birth of peace in our hearts and in our world.

Sunday, Dec. 13: "Festivals of Light" (Annual Pageant)

Get in the holiday spirit this Sunday as our children present their annual pageant. This year, they will honor the various ways the world celebrates the return of the light at this darkest time of the year.

Sunday, Dec. 20: "Yule Celebration" - Worship Leader: Karen Gunderson & Lucy Bunch  
TBD

Thursday, Dec. 24 @ 5 PM: Early Christmas Eve - Worship Leader: Rev. Martha Hodges

Rev. Martha will lead us in a joyful celebration for the entire family. Join us for music (including our unique rendering of "The Twelve Days of Christmas"), stories and the traditional candlelit singing of "Silent Night."

Plan to stay late or come early, as the case may be, so that we can all gather together to enjoy holiday cheer. There will be refreshments and conversation and much wishing each other "Merry Christmas" between the two services from 6-7 PM. Come and bring holiday goodies to share!

Thursday, Dec. 24 @ 7 PM: Late Christmas Eve - Worship Leader: TBD

This traditional Christmas Eve service will feature readings from the Christmas story, carol singing and other music and, of course, candles! Join us for this reminder of what the Christmas holiday is all about.

Sunday, Dec. 27: "Counting Someone Else's Blessings: Envy" - Worship Leader: Rev. Martha Hodges

Take a refreshing break from holiday cheer as Rev. Martha resumes her sermon series on the Seven Deadly Sins. In this age of celebrity and media voyeurism, whom do you envy? Or does your envy play out a bit closer to home? And what's wrong with a little healthy aspiration, anyway?



# ::December Planner::

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Board Mtg 7:15PM	<b>3</b> Daytimers 10AM at church	<b>4</b> Theatre Group 8PM	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> Sunday Service 10:30AM Meet the Minister 9-10AM	<b>7</b> Membership Committee Mtg 7-9PM off-site	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Chalice Circle [RF/GN] 7- 8:30PM	<b>10</b> Daytimers 10AM at church  Church Ops Mtg 7PM at church	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Pageant Rehearsal 2- 4PM ••••• Cookie Party 4- 7PM •••••
<b>13</b> Sunday Service 10:30AM Kid's Book Club 12:30-1:30PM Chalice Circle [SL/JE] 1PM	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Newsletter Deadline	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Daytimers 10AM at church	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Men's Group 9AM Pageant Rehearsal 2- 4PM Sat Supper off-site
<b>20</b> Sunday Service 10:30AM	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Chalice Circle [RF/GN] 7- 8:30PM	<b>24</b> ••••• Early Christmas Eve Service 5 PM Late Christmas Eve Service 7 PM •••••	<b>25</b> Christmas Day 	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> Sunday Service 10:30AM Chalice Circle [SL/JE] 1PM	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Daytimers 10AM at church		
<p><b>Calendar &amp; Schedule</b></p> <p>If you don't see your meeting or event posted here, contact the office at 689-2008 or <a href="mailto:office@u2c2.org">office@u2c2.org</a>.</p>						

Altar	Greeter	Lighter	Usher
12/6 Sybil Lawson	Rose Kohn	Matthias G.F.	Jim Eastman
12/13 Bev Boido	Stephan Lange	Monty N.	Bev Boido
12/20 Georgene Tarble	Jane Thompson	Cheyenne B.	Tonie Darling
12/27 Jenn Richard	Dick Tarble	Alex R.	Tom Rintoul

## The Subversive Message of Christmas

Some of us tire of the sometimes forced gaiety of the season; others of us seek in vain for some meaning that speaks to us in the Christmas story. Still others, struggling with financial worries, may resent the commercials that equate celebration with spending. For all of us, let us consider these words of the Rev. Gary Smith:

Stephen Patterson, a Biblical scholar, says that the language used by the early Christian church to describe Jesus was “rather common. Titles like Son of God, Messiah, Lord, Savior,” he says, were given to political figures all the time. The Roman Emperor was called the Son of God, “the god of power, privilege, influence and wealth... But to confess that Jesus was the Son of God was to make a quite different claim. “Christians,” Patterson says, “claimed to recognize God not in the power and might of empire, but in a subversive Jewish voice that claimed God’s reign for the destitute, uttered blessings on the hungry, and called together prostitutes, lepers, the disabled and the unclean from the margins of humanity to share at the table a heavenly banquet prepared for them now. That Jewish voice,” Patterson says, “is the voice of Jesus.”

Let us remember who and what Christmas celebrates. Gaiety, a deeper joy, spiritual uplift, and, yes, the urge to be generous are all legitimate aspects of Christmas. But as Patterson reminds us, this holiday celebrates a message that was – and is, for those with ears to hear -- politically and socially subversive. Blessings on the hungry, welcome to the marginalized. We are all equal in that “Kingdom of God” that awaits here on Earth if we choose to make it so. This most Christian of messages is our Universalist heritage speaking to us as well.

When shopping fatigue and dismay over overspending threaten to overwhelm us, may we remember the subversive voice of the Rabbi from Galilee. Let us celebrate his radical ideas this season by looking into our own hearts. May we find there, not pity, but compassion; not charity, but respect; not resentment, but a passion for equality; not resignation at the injustices of life, but the will to change the world, beginning with ourselves. May we find in ourselves the vision of a world made one that Jesus preached. We will find the courage to act upon that vision, one step at a time, one step after the other, again and again and yet again.

### Getting to Know You

If you are fairly new to UUCC (or just want to get to know the minister better), you are invited to a “Meet the Minister” continental breakfast before church on December 6. Come at 9:00 AM for coffee and informal conversation. Please let Rev. Martha know if you will be joining us so that we can plan accordingly. Her e-mail is [minister@u2c2.org](mailto:minister@u2c2.org).

### Farewell to Edie O’Laughlin

We wish Edie happiness as she embarks on the next chapter of her life in Washington. Edie, thank you for all you have brought to this community. We will miss you, but know we will stay in touch!



## Religious Education (RE) Update

The fall harvest has come and gone already. The youth enjoyed a day of Halloween oriented crafts and games on November first. It was quite the treat for the congregation to see everyone in costume.

Our youth have been studying Buddhism in the Neighboring Faiths curriculum this past month, although the lesson was a bit shorter due to the Halloween party. Our Middles and Juniors visited the Buddhist Church of Sacramento for their Sunday service on November 15th. This was a special occasion as it was the annual memorial service held for the founder of the sect Shinran. This sect practices Pure Land or Shin Buddhism, which is slightly different from some of the other sects of Buddhism. Our youth enjoyed the experience. There were many similarities with Unitarian Universalist thoughts and practices. You may want to engage our youth in conversation about their experience and thoughts on this visit.

Our Juniors are still meeting out back under a screen tent. The RE Committee and Director of RE could sure use some consistent help with setup and takedown of the tent and other supplies. There is a sign-up sheet for this very purpose that is available for those willing and able to support RE in this manner.

Our Middle School Unitarian Universalist Group (MUUGs), which is designed as a more social way for our 6th – 8th grade youth to interact, will be meeting quarterly. The next outing is being planned for December, details to follow. If anyone has ideas for a social justice activity that would be appropriate for this age group, submit them to me, Candy Wood.

The high schoolers are going to start meeting for social outings starting in December. For more information about this activity, please contact me.

With the year-end holidays upon us, Children's RE will be staying 'home' in order to prepare and present a holiday presentation and participate in other activities such as the holiday party. We will resume the Neighboring Faiths curriculum again in January.

Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a positive, comprehensive, and age appropriate educational program that promotes sexual health and is informed by the guidelines of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). The curriculum is based on four primary goals: provide accurate, developmentally appropriate information; increase self-esteem and understand relationships with and responsibilities toward others; develop interpersonal skills including communication, decision making, and problem solving; and teach responsibility for personal health and safety. This curriculum is based upon the philosophy that parents and religious communities can form a meaningful partnership for positive and responsible sexuality education. This 8 session curriculum will be offered to our kindergarten through 2nd graders beginning in January. A parent meeting will be scheduled in December to provide more information about this opportunity for our families. If you are interested in participating in this class, please let me know.



## ::President's Message::by John Sugar, UJCC President



### As the Holidays Descend

December is upon us, which often seems like the shortest month of the year as the holidays descend, ready or not.

While we will be celebrating holidays this month, the Board will be preparing for January and the Congregational meeting on the 24th. The meeting will be an opportunity for the congregation and Board to discuss where our congregation is financially and in terms of future goals. At our July congregational meeting, facilitated by Karen Gunderson and Doug McDougall, we discussed how our congregation should adjust its budget to live within its current income. The January meeting will give us a chance to review where we are and begin discussion of where we want to put our energy and focus. There will be several areas for us to discuss.

A number of Board members have raised questions regarding how our congregation can better express itself as a force for social good. We expect to discuss goals for social justice efforts and how best to involve our congregation in the larger community surrounding us.

The New Home Task Force has begun work. We want to discuss the direction that the Board has given them -- that reinstating our minister's full-time salary is our top priority. As they look at potential future locations, the Board has asked that they stay within a monthly rent or mortgage payment that allows us to pay Rev. Martha her full-time salary. While this direction puts some limits on where we could go, it reflects the interests of the congregation expressed last summer. We will discuss how this effort is going.

The January meeting following the Sunday service will include a lunch catered by Susan Lange. This will help us maintain a productive mood for these discussions.

I hope to see you there. In the meantime, I hope that you have a meaningful and happy holiday season.

## ::Treasurer's Report::by Eric Walle, UJCC Treasurer

### First Sunday Offering

Our "First Sunday" collections for November, December and January are being donated to Loaves & Fishes. In November, your generosity provided \$338.00 that will support a variety of programs serving the hungry and homeless. For more information, please visit <http://www.sacloaves.org/programs/>.

### Action Auction Update & Thanks

Thank you to one and all for a fun and successful Action Auction! The initial proceeds totaled nearly \$7200.00, and we can reasonably expect to break through the \$7700.00 mark once all of the payments come in. At that point, we will have exceeded last year's total by a solid ten percent.

Special thanks from all of us to Merry Walle and Terry DeCrescenzo for organizing this fabulous event; Ken DeCrescenzo and all the others who provided the delicious food; emcee, Tom Rintoul, and Lucy Bunch for handling the live auction; those who set up and cleaned up, processed the payments, and managed the raffle tables and the kids' activities; and everyone who donated items, and, of course, bid on them!

## Online Publications You Should Know About

*Interconnections* is a monthly online publication of the UUA full of news and suggestions for congregational leaders and others who want to be informed about life in our churches. It's full of ideas and highly recommended! You can sign up to receive it at <http://www.uua.org/publications/interconnections/21424.shtml>. And don't miss *PCD Currents*, the weekly mailing produced by our District Executive, Cilla Raughley. Cilla shares news from around the District and highlights important information about what UUs are doing in the region and beyond. Go to <http://www.pcd-uua.org/> and click on the subscribe button at bottom of page to start receiving PCD Currents by email. Both of these publications remind us that we are connected to a larger movement that we can learn from and share strengths.



## Become a Chalice Lighter

Chalice Lighters is a program in which members of UU congregations agree to donate a small amount (as little as \$10) to their Districts when they are called to do so three times a year. The purpose of the Chalice Lighters program is to fund projects for growth in UU congregations around the District. UUCC has received two such Chalice Lighter grants in recent years. One grant funded the improvement of our website; the other paid for local advertising during the nationwide UUA marketing effort. In order to receive such a grant, a certain percentage of a congregation's membership must be contributors. Let's make sure that UUCC is eligible for future grants while supporting the growth of our sister congregations around the Pacific Central District! For more information, read what Cilla Raughley has said in PCD Currents:



"Chalice Lighters is such a remarkable way to help one another, allowing us to **\*\*easily\*\*** get things done that would otherwise be very difficult, if not beyond our reach entirely — in fact, if just one out of every two of us would participate in Chalice Lighter Calls, we'd be raising over \$100,000 a year, all of which would be going right back to our congregations in support of membership growth. Imagine that!

Secondly, we're going green! At last we are able to accept Chalice Lighter contributions using PayPal, the Internet's popular secured system for shopping online. Those who already have PayPal accounts can testify to how easy it is to set up a free account with them. We're still accepting good ol' bank checks though! Just be sure to send them to PCD's new address at 4100 Redwood Road #344, Oakland, CA 94619-2363.

One last thought: in this season of Thanksgiving, while many of us enjoy finding ways to express our gratitude for the gifts of our faith, I am sending my thanks to all of you, for all of you — those who are among our Chalice Lighters, and those who will consider if this is a good step for you to take, regardless of what you may decide. We all give in so many ways! Let us enter into the winter season knowing we are all a part of something much bigger than just ourselves, rejoicing in the many ways we support one another and contribute to the world."

To learn more about the Chalice Lighters program, go to <http://www.pcd-uua.org/chalice-lighters/lighters.htm>.



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### Have a Green Holiday Season

Welcome to the Green Corner, a column introduced by the UUCC Carbon Ring Group with the goal of fostering ecological education and offering tips and tools to diminish the negative human impact on the precious resources of the Earth. In this edition, we will look at ways to have a green holiday season.

Do your online and catalog shopping early. Shopping early lets you request ground shipping. Ground is more efficient than overnight, uses less fuel and helps reduce the pollution that causes global warming. It's good for the environment and your pocketbook.

Buy a live, potted tree. After the holidays, you can plant it outside or donate it to a local school or park. Or buy a small potted tree that you can keep in its pot and use again next year. If you use a cut tree, go to [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com) to find a tree recycler in our area.

Use energy-efficient LED lights. Holiday lights use a lot of energy, especially when left on 24/7. So, when you're ready to decorate, start by replacing your old lights with LED bulbs. They are small, solid lightbulbs which are extremely energy-efficient. New LED bulbs are grouped in clusters with diffuser lenses which have broadened the applications for LED use in the home. Then only use the lights when you are going to enjoy them — in the evening. Another green idea: Try solar LEDs — they use no electricity at all.

Look for the Energy Star label when buying electronics or appliances as gifts. They're more energy-efficient than conventional models. Also, look for an Energy Guide yellow sticker to check the energy use rating. The higher the number, the more energy-efficient.

Use less paper and recycle. Send e-cards to friends, reuse last year's wrapping paper and save this year's unused paper. And remember to recycle all those cans, bottles and cardboard boxes.

You don't have to choose between enjoying this time of year and being environmentally aware. As you can see, there are many simple steps that you and your family can take if you are dreaming of a "green" holiday season.

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## ::Special Events::

### Celebrate the Holidays with UUCC

**When:** Saturday, December 12, 4-7 PM

**What:** It's a party! Exchange holiday cookies, trim our tree, sing carols, play games, make ornaments, and rejoice!

**Who:** Everyone! Our party is for all ages. Bring the children, parents, friends and relatives.

**Where:** At UUCC, of course!

**Why:** To have fun and get in the holiday spirit, decorate our space, sing songs and save on your cookie baking! (Bring approximately 5 dozen of your favorite cookies if you'd like to participate in the cookie exchange.)

**What to bring:** Hors d'oeuvres or other snacks to share, tree ornaments, games, and high spirits!



### Guest at Your Table

Be sure to pick up your Guest at Your Table boxes. We will collect them at the Christmas Eve service. Proceeds go to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC).

### PFLAG Meetings

The Sacramento Chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is now offering a monthly meeting in Elk Grove. PFLAG is a support group which promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, their families and friends through support, education and advocacy. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month from 7-9 PM at Elk Grove United Methodist Church, 8986 Elk Grove Blvd (in Old Town). There is no cost to attend.

## ::Ongoing Activities::

### Daytimers Group

The Daytimers Group meets each Thursday from 10 AM-12 PM at church. Anyone may join our lively discussion group. If you are interested in participating, contact Rev. Martha Hodges at 689-2073 or [minister@u2c2.org](mailto:minister@u2c2.org).

### Kid's Book Club

Our next meeting will be held on December 13 at 12:30 PM after church. If you have any questions, please contact the Newmans.

### Saturday Supper

The Saturday Supper is a potluck dinner held on the third Saturday of each month. Our next potluck will be held on December 19. We divide up into small groups of 6-12 and share a meal in someone's home. At each dinner, we ask a question and take turns answering, if we choose. It's okay to participate without ever hosting and it is okay to come occasionally. Participants are with a different group of people each month. We would love to have you join us. Thank you to our hosts for November: Terri Riley and Richard Leimbach. Please contact Terri Riley if you are interested in coming to our December potluck.

•••••

### Theatre Group

We will see "Peter Pan: a British Panto" on Friday, December 4 at Sacramento City College, 3835 Freeport Blvd. (Turn off Freeport at 12th Ave. for theater parking.) Two members of our church family are in the cast, Doug Lawson and Meagan O'Laughlin. Let's make this a UUCC evening! Call Frieda Fergus for reservations (\$15 and \$12) or if you decide at the last minute, do come anyway -- chances for seating without reservation are good.

## Mission

The ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church is to foster open minds, caring hearts, helping hands, and growing spirits in a congregation of all ages. By living and sharing Unitarian Universalist values, our spiritual and intentionally diverse community seeks to bring compassion and justice to the world.

UUC is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the Pacific Central District (PCD) of the UUA.

## Membership

Would you like to be a formal member of this congregation? We would love to have you as a member!

If you would like membership information or if you feel ready to sign our membership book, you may talk to Rev. Martha Hodges or Laura Osborne.

Membership requirements are:

- 1) you must be at least 16 years old
- 2) you accept our principles and purposes
- 3) you make and fulfill a commitment to an annual contribution of record through a pledge of money and/or services.

We are a wonderful congregation and we will welcome you with open arms.

## Affiliates

All Unitarian Universalist affiliates in California's mountain and valley areas:

[www.uuvalleysierra.org](http://www.uuvalleysierra.org)

Pacific Central District (PCD):

[www.pcd-uua.org](http://www.pcd-uua.org)

Telephone: (510) 601-1437

Unitarian Universalist Association:

[www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)

Telephone: (617) 742-2100

UU Legislative Ministry:

[www.uulmca.org](http://www.uulmca.org)

Telephone: (916) 441-0018

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee:

[www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org)

Telephone: (617) 868-7102

Sacyouth - Faith-Based Activities for Youth:

[www.sacyouth.com](http://www.sacyouth.com)

South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership (SSIP)

Emergency Food Closet:

[www.ssiptfoodcloset.org](http://www.ssiptfoodcloset.org)

Telephone: (916) 428-5290

## Contacts

### Newsletter

U2C2 Connection Editor:

Newsletter contributions should be mailed to the UUC church address, phoned in to 689-2008, faxed to 689-2282 or emailed to [office@u2c2.org](mailto:office@u2c2.org) by the 15th of each month.

Editorial Advisor - newsletter:

Nancy Flagg 689-2008

### Website

Website Administrator:

UUC office 689-2008 or [office@u2c2.org](mailto:office@u2c2.org)

Editorial Advisor - website:

Nancy Flagg 689-2008

### Administration

Administrative Support:

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Email: [office@u2c2.org](mailto:office@u2c2.org)

Office Hours: Tue/Thur/Sat 8am-1pm

Minister's Hours: By appointment only (minister's sabbath on Tuesday)

### Leadership

Minister:

Rev. Martha Hodges, 689-2073

[minister@u2c2.org](mailto:minister@u2c2.org)

Director of Religious Education:

Paula Braxton/Candy Wood 689-

2008, [office@u2c2.org](mailto:office@u2c2.org)

Board of Trustees:

*President:* John Sugar

*Vice President:* Allison Claire

*Secretary:* Richard Leimbach

*Treasurer:* Eric Walle

*At-Large Members:* Alison Navas,

Patrick Cody, Sonia Duffoo

*Endowment Trust:* Terri Riley,

Terry Chekon, Patrick Cody

Committees:

*Church Operations:* Terri Riley

*Committee on Ministry:* Celia Buckley, Tamara Faber,

Jim Eastman

*Finance:* John Sugar

*Membership:* Rev. Martha Hodges

*Religious Education:* Gayle Newman

*Stewardship:* Jim Skow, Ernie Tomassilli

*Worship:* Jim Skow

*Justice Coordinating Team:* to be determined

Openers/Closers Supervisor:

Rev. Martha Hodges



## About the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) represents the interests of more than one thousand Unitarian Universalist congregations, on a continental scale. The UUA grew out of the consolidation, in 1961, of two religious denominations: the Universalists, organized in 1793, and the Unitarians, organized in 1825.



**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
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Sacramento, CA 95828

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**U2C2 Connection**

December 2009

