

U2C2 Connection

A monthly newsletter published by the UnitarianUniversalist Community Church

::A Month of Sundays::

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March Sunday Services

Our services are held on Sundays at 10:30 AM unless otherwise stated.



Daylight Saving Time begins on March 14 at 2 AM.



Sunday, Mar. 7: "Stewardship Sunday: Hitching Our Wagon to a Star" - Worship Leader: Rev. Martha Hodges and others

Explore the spiritual meanings of generosity in a time of scarcity and share your ideas about the future of UUCC. This service will feature your fellow members' reflections on the meaning of this church and provide an opportunity for you to converse in small groups. Come enjoy the fellowship and celebrate the vision!

Sunday, Mar. 14: "Temper Tantrums and Righteous Indignation" - Worship Leader: Rev. Martha Hodges

Aristotle wrote, "Anyone can become angry. That is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way... that is not easy." Rev. Martha will consider the "deadly sin" of wrath.

Sunday, Mar. 21: "We Are Not Our Own" - Worship Leader: Lucy Bunch

Each week during the service, we sing four different hymns, which means we sing as many as sixteen hymns in one month. This Sunday, our service will be formed around the music and message of one hymn called, "We Are Not Our Own". We will sing, move, share, listen and explore the meaning and significance of this beautiful hymn.

Sunday, Mar. 28: "The Big Squeeze" - Worship Leader: Rev. Martha Hodges

This morning, we will join other UU congregations in celebrating Justice Sunday. Rev. Martha will explore the current condition of the American worker and other questions of economic justice, inspired by Steven Greenhouse's book, *The Big Squeeze*.

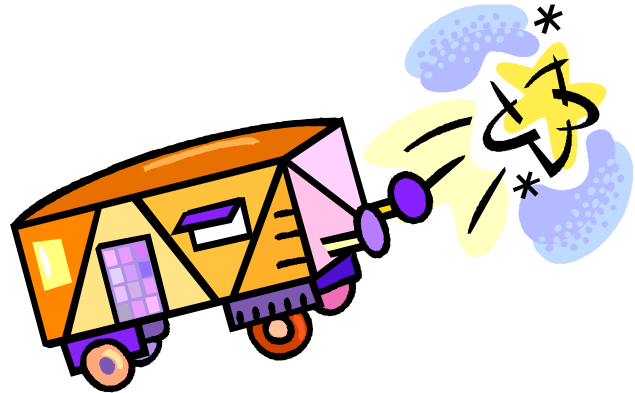
::March Planner::

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4 Daytimers 10AM at church	5	6 OWL Parent/ Child Orientation 3- 6PM
7 Sunday Service 10:30AM Stewardship Sunday	8	9 Board Mtg 7:15PM	10 Chalice Circle 7-8:30PM	11 Daytimers 10AM at church	12 Theatre Group 8PM	13 Men's Group 9AM
14 Sunday Service 10:30AM Easter Choir Rehearsal 9 AM Daylight Saving Time Begins 2 AM	15 Newsletter Deadline Membership Committee Mtg 7-9PM off-site	16	17 St. Patrick's Day 	18 Daytimers 10AM at church	19	20 Sat Supper off-site
21 Sunday Service 10:30AM Easter Choir Rehearsal 9 AM	22	23	24 Chalice Circle 7-8:30PM	25 Daytimers 10AM at church Church Ops Mtg 7PM at church	26	27
28 Sunday Service 10:30AM Easter Choir Rehearsal 9 AM	29	30	31			
<p>Calendar & Schedule</p> <p>If you don't see your meeting or event posted here, contact the office at 689-2008 or office@u2c2.org.</p>						

	Altar	Greeter	Lighter	Usher
3/7	Beverly Boido	Rose Kohn	James	Jim Eastman
3/14	Sybil Lawson	Stephan Lange	Miley	Tom Rintoul
3/21	Georgene Tarble	TBD	Blake	Tonie Darling
3/28	Jenn Richard	Dick Tarble	Mattias	Beverly Boido

Hitching Our Wagon to a Star

How poor a thing is man! But when he leans on a principle, when he is the vehicle of ideas, he borrows their omnipotence.... Hitch your wagon to a star... Work for those interests which the divinities honor and promote -- justice, love, freedom, knowledge, utility.
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson



If you've ever tried to read our beloved Ralph Waldo Emerson, you may agree with me that much of what he wrote is fairly unintelligible. But every American school-child understands what it means to "hitch your wagon to a star." Last month, I had the pleasure of attending the New Century Summit in Berkeley, where over two hundred UUs from around the Pacific Central District met to talk about this "star" - the Unitarian Universalism to which we have each chosen to hitch our wagons. Along with Lucy Bunch, Allison Claire, Karen Gunderson, Alison Navas, and Eric and Julia Walle, I spent a day and a half pondering such matters as how to lead from a vision of the desired future rather than from a stance of present problem solving; empowering the young adults among us; the potentials and limitations of diversity within our congregations; how to provide structures for spiritual deepening within the work of the church; the call to community outreach; the meaning of membership; and many other weighty questions. The theme of the gathering was carrying our faith into the twenty-first century and ensuring that it continues to have something of worth and relevance to offer the world. As might have been predicted, we came away with more challenges than answers, some concrete suggestions of ideas to try, and a feeling of being energized by the passion of so many whose lives have been changed by Unitarian Universalism and who are committed to sharing this gift with the wider world.

My wish is that every one of you might feel excited to be part of this future. Emerson names the principles and ideas of justice, love, freedom, knowledge and utility as the "star" that pulls upward and onward on the wagon of our daily lives, ennobling and empowering us. What do you imagine this star to be? What hope, what vision, what principles provide you with motive and purpose? What is the star of Unitarian Universalism and UUC that draws us forward as a congregation?

We will be talking about this together at our service on March 7. Together, we will think about the value of this community to us and others and about how it can do more and be more. We'll talk about our dreams and what we need to do to make them come true.

We are stewards of this community and of this faith. Our call is to serve each other and our principles and all that we hold sacred. Our call also extends beyond this; it is to make this movement and this church accessible to more seekers and pass them on to future generations, stronger and more responsive to the world's great needs and more focused on our message of love, justice and inclusivity.

How are we to do this? Our first and most urgent task is to meet our immediate financial challenges. We need the time, talent, and, yes, the treasure of every one of us if we are to build a future that allows us to realize our bigger dreams. And these dreams are big - as big as we dare to make them. Can we do it?

Our congregation is not wealthy. Some of us are out of work; some of us live from paycheck to paycheck. Nevertheless, if each of us pledged just 3% of our income, we would probably be able to not only support our congregation, but give generously to the community. And if we could stretch even further to 5%, we could do wonders. Maybe some of us can even tithe, that is, give 10% -- if not right now, then as a goal in the near future. It's all about priorities.

We really can do this if we choose to. I have faith in that star. I hope you do, too.

Religious Education (RE)

Our youth spent the month of February revising Buddhism. This included a visit to the Gehatsu Church of America for a Buddhism for Beginners class offered by Lion's Roar Dharma Center. One of the primary points of emphasis during this month of study was how Buddhism changed as it travelled across Asia. One aspect of this has been a comparison of the different sects and subsects within the religion.

The Littles continue their study of Judaism. For Valentine's Day, a special craft day in the Littles room resulted in all sorts of lovely gifts for special folks in their lives.

The Our Whole Lives (OWL) parent meeting for K-2nd grade was held on February 21. A schedule for the mandatory OWL K-2 Parent/Child Orientation (March 6 from 3-6 PM) and the program's eight sessions was developed during that meeting.

A Middle School Unitarian Universalist Gathering March 26-28, 2009

Are you a 6-9th grader? Would you enjoy meeting other amazing UU middle school youth? At a MUUGs Retreat, you'll be able to meet other youth in small groups for play, fun and just talking. Of course, there will be regular meals, snacks, a movie, youth worship and large group activities. The leaders at the retreat will be youth, young adults, and adults who particularly enjoy working with middle school youth.

This PCD-UUA event is being hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Santa Cruz County. There is a \$50 registration fee for participation. Julia Walle will be the UUCU youth advisor for this retreat. If you are interested in participating, please contact Candy Wood.

::President's Message:: by Allison Claire, UUCU President

Leadership Update

With the approval of the Nominating Committee and Board of Trustees, John Sugar and Allison Claire have traded positions on the Board. For the rest of the church year, Allison will be acting as president and John as vice president. We are grateful to John Sugar for his service and appreciate his willingness to continue to give his time. Thank you, too, to Allison Claire for taking on the office of president during this critical chapter in our congregation's story. And thanks to all our Board members for their dedication.

Time of Great Opportunity

Beloved Friends,

There is truth to the cliché that times of great challenge are also times of great opportunity. Now is that time for UUCU. Our recent financial struggles have forced us to articulate what we can and cannot compromise. We have learned the hard way that full-time professional ministry is central to the life of this church and to our ability to live out our ministry in the world. At the January congregational meeting and in the cottage meetings that followed, we reaffirmed our love of this community and our commitments to full-time professional ministry, religious education programming for our children, Sunday morning worship together, and "Fair

Share" participation in the Unitarian Universalist Association and its Pacific Central District. These are the priorities you want the Board to honor. Voice after voice repeated that we can and must move forward to realize our long-deferred dream of a permanent home to provide a stable foundation for our ministry to each other and the broader community of which we are a part.

[continued on page 5]



The economic downturn that has challenged our church budget has also created a huge opportunity for us: a buyer's market for real estate. The Next Home Task Force believes that church buildings within the means of a congregation our size will come on the market in the next couple of years. Can we position ourselves to take advantage of this historic opportunity? Given our numbers, there is no reason why not.

The cottage meetings revealed a level of energy and enthusiasm for this prospect that gladdens my soul. They also reflected the overwhelming opinion that we should stay in our present location for at least the next church year. Despite this year's budget crisis, we will be able to do that -- and simultaneously demonstrate our ability to sustain mortgage payments in the future -- if each of us undertakes the same radical reassessment that the Board is undertaking on behalf of the congregation as a whole: how do we structure our finances to reflect our fundamental values?

As individuals and families, we will find that we have little additional money to give to the church (or to charitable and social justice causes more broadly) if those contributions are limited to what's left over after all the bills are paid and discretionary income is otherwise allocated. But what if we treated our support for our religious community in the same way that financial advisors tell us we should treat retirement savings? What if we all set aside a fixed percentage of our income at the front end, before budgeting monthly living expenses?

Last summer when the UUCC budget shocked all of us with its draconian cuts, and Celia called to ask for supplemental pledges, I said "We cannot possibly do more." I was quite sincere. I was feeling the pressure of supporting a family on one income, and juggling debt with the monthly bills. But I was asking myself the wrong question. I was asking, "Can I squeeze out more at the end of the month?" Now I'm asking, "If we set aside 5% of our income for the church, how do we structure a monthly budget?" It turns out that this approach will not cause financial hardship. I want my income to support the things I believe in which includes a life lived deeply in community with you, a church that is actively engaged in its surrounding local and world communities, and a lifestyle for my family that is rich in culture, spirit, play, and (yes) comfort without promoting consumerism. My UU faith is central to who I am and how I live. It shouldn't get the leftovers.

That's why I am accepting the challenge of consultant Mike Durall, thrown down at the PCD's New Century Summit, to reach the 5% to 10% giving level as soon as possible. If all of us did this, we would have the church of our dreams. Personal finance experts say that middle-class families of all incomes can give at this level without any negative impact on their standard of living. Social scientists tell us that once basic needs are met, higher incomes do not correlate with increased happiness. Living one's principles, on the other hand, increases joy and reduces anxiety -- including financial anxiety.

The bottom line is, we have to fund the church we want. A church is its members. We are not spectators here, or consumers of a product that others provide on Sunday mornings. This isn't public radio, where you give if you want to and reap the benefits regardless. We are it, folks. UUCC is what we create when we pool our resources to serve our faith. Now is the time for every UUCC member to really think about what that membership means. For me, it means a commitment to you and your family -- to be here for you when you are in need, to join you on Sunday mornings to sing and laugh and cry and pray together, to share my ideas and listen to yours. It means providing for the basic needs of our communal life so that we will have greater resources and energy for the work of love and justice outside our walls.

If we are going to "be the change we want to see in the world," it is time for us be the church that all of us want. Now is the time.

Yours in faith,
Allison Claire

First Sunday Collections

Our "First Sunday" collections for February and March are designated for meeting UCC's "Fair Share" commitments to UUA and PCD. We collected \$73 on February 7, and through February 14, twenty (or 35%) of the fifty-eight UCC "pledging units" have contributed \$3,773. The total of \$3,846 puts us just about halfway to our goal of \$7,742 (\$5,488 for UUA and \$2,254 for PCD).

::The Green Corner::

Creating a Healthy Lawn

Welcome to the Green Corner, a column contributed by Candy Wood of the UCC 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. We will "Spring" into this edition by looking at suggestions from the Environmental Protection Agency for creating a healthy lawn. Here are some tips to follow:



- Develop healthy soil. Make sure your soil has the right pH balance, key nutrients, and good texture. You can buy easy-to-use soil analysis kits at hardware stores or contact your local County Cooperative Extension Service for a soil analysis.
- Choose the right grass for your climate. If your area gets very little rain, don't plant a type of grass that needs a lot of water. Select grass seed that is well suited to your climate and other growing conditions such as the amount of sunlight and rain your lawn receives. Over-seed your lawn each Fall by spreading seeds on top of the lawn. A thicker lawn helps to crowd out weeds. Your local County Cooperative Extension Service can advise you on which grasses grow best in your area.
- Longer is better. Make sure the lawn mower blades are sharp. Grass that is slightly long makes a strong, healthy lawn with few pest problems. Weeds have a hard time taking root and growing when grass is around 2½ to 3½ inches for most types of grass.
- Water early. It is time to water if footprint impressions stay in the lawn and do not spring back. Water early in the morning and only for short periods for time so the soil may absorb the water. Longer grass has stronger roots and retains water better.
- Correct thatch buildup. Thatch is a layer of dead plant materials between the grass blades and the soil. When thatch gets too thick, deeper than ¾ of an inch, water and nutrients are prevented from getting into the soil and reaching the roots of the grass. Overusing synthetic fertilizer can create a heavy layer of thatch, and some kinds of grass are prone to thatch buildup.
- Recycle grass. Don't pick up the grass clippings after you mow. Clippings will return nutrients and moisture to the soil. Consider buying a mulching lawn mower. This will cut finer grass clippings and blow them into the lawn.
- Let your lawn breathe. Once a year, remove small plugs of earth to allow air and water to aerate the grass roots.
- Invite a few weeds and insects into your garden. Think of your lawn as a small piece of nature where pests have their place. Nature provides its own pest control in the form of birds, or insects which feed on other insects that we consider nuisances.
- Use manual tools. Tools that don't require electric or gasoline engines are especially handy for small yards or small jobs. There are hand tools available that will meet a wide variety of lawn and garden needs like lightweight, quiet, easy-to-use reel push mowers that generate no emissions.

Stay tuned for more tips in the next edition.

A Service Not to Be Missed

You are cordially urged to come to church March 7! In light of our recent exciting conversations about the future of UUCC, we are holding our Stewardship Campaign early this year. We have some momentous decisions before us, so don't miss out on this special day. We'll draw inspiration from each other's visions of our shared future, raise our voices in song, and enjoy brunch munchies supplied by our very own Board members.



Drivers Needed

We occasionally get a call from someone who would like to attend our church, but cannot get here because they have no transportation. Some of us who usually drive ourselves may not be able to in the short term due to car troubles or medical issues. Still others may not feel safe driving at night and so have to miss evening gatherings. If you are willing to help someone get to a church service or event from time to time, please let Rev. Martha know. She will plot your location and give you a call when a need arises in your area. On a side note, also consider carpooling to help reduce carbon emissions!

Do You Like to Sing?

Loren Richmond is organizing a choir to sing at our Easter service! You don't have to be a great singer to participate as long as you can sing in tune and attend three rehearsals (March 14, 21 and 28 at 9 AM). Let Loren know right away if you want to join. We look forward to hearing your "joyful noise!"

Calling all Artists

Our UUCC banner is getting a bit shabby and we would love to have a gorgeous new one to represent our church in the Banner Parade at the General Assembly in June. We are soliciting design ideas from all you artistic types out there. What image and colors would truly represent this congregation and all that makes it unique?

The finished product will be 51" x 32" and will need to be double-sided, that is, it will be seen from both front and back. For official instructions, go to <http://www.uua.org/documents/gaoffice/bannerspecs.pdf>. For inspiration, see a video of last year's Banner Parade by clicking on http://www.uua.org/videos/index.php?movie=ga2009/0906_plenary_1.mp4. As you'll see, some are quite basic and others are fabulous works of art.

Your submission will be assigned a number to avoid selection bias and a design will be chosen by a panel made up of Board members and the Decor Committee. Design samples may be submitted on paper, poster board, fabric, or as a computer graphic (.pdf, .jpg, .gif), and are due to Rev. Martha by April 1.

UU Service Committee

Our participation in the Guest at Your Table and Holiday Card Sale programs yielded a total of \$551 for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). Sybil Lawson conducted the card sale which brought in \$130 of the total. Thanks to the Lange, Newman, Osborne/Rintoul, Tarble, Julia Walle, Claire/McKown, Darling/Schmidt, and Fergus families for their participation.

Filmmaking Talent

Several members of the congregation asked Beverly Boido to share her son's Doc School group documentary on the Sacramento County Animal Shelter. You can view it at <http://documentaryfoundation.org/>. Oliver's group won for best editing and their film will be shown at the Sacramento Film Festival if they can get permission for the music they used.

::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 Jim Eastman.

Theatre Group

We will see "A Flea in her Ear" on Friday, March 12, 8:00 PM at City Theatre on the Sacramento City College campus, 3835 Freeport Avenue and 12th Avenue. Submit reservations (\$13 & \$10) to Frieda Fergus by Sunday, March 7. This is NOT a closed group. We welcome newcomers!

Saturday Supper

The Saturday Supper is a potluck dinner normally held the third Saturday of each month. Our next potluck will be held on March 20. We divide up into small groups of 6-12 people 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 in March. Thank you to our hosts for February: Stephen Bakken & De Brewer, and Gene & Bill Anderson. Please contact Terri Riley if you are interested in coming to our March potluck.

Chalice Circle

Chalice Circle meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at the church at 7:00 PM. We invite you to attend a meeting or two to see if it is a fit for you. Chalice Circle is an opportunity to deepen relationships with others in our church community and to explore your own spiritual path. If you have any questions, please contact Gayle Newman, Jim Eastman or Rev. Martha Hodges.

Men's Group

The Men's Group will be meeting on second Saturdays for breakfast at 9 AM at church. Please contact Patrick Cody if interested.

::Other UU Events::



A Night of Celebration

Come and meet the new UUA President, Rev. Peter Morales, on March 5 from 7-10 PM at the First UU Society of San Francisco! Mingle with other UULM supporters. Dance to music by the Backyard Shenanigans. Tickets (\$40 each) are now available for purchase at www.uulmca.org. Proceeds will go to the UU Legislative Ministry of California.

Plan Now for GA 2010

Think Spring! By June, temperatures in Minneapolis will be in the perfect upper 70s or low 80s, and the town will be buzzing as thousands of Unitarians Universalists gather for General Assembly (GA) 2010. Online registration opens March 1. The costs of GA can be significantly trimmed by getting Early Bird registration discounts, first choice for housing and airfare bargains! For more details, visit <http://www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/>.



WhaleCoast Alaska

Four Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience their eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer in its 14th year! See the REAL Alaska with UU homestays in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Sitka. UUs host events and lead tours. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Observe wildlife such as bears, moose, caribou, whales, sea otters and bald eagles. Visit Denali National Park. Dave Frey, a 29-year Alaska resident, leads the programs. Don't delay, the program usually fills by March 10. For more information, see the website at www.whalecoastak.org.

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

Pacific Central District (PCD):

www.pcd-uua.org

Telephone: (510) 601-1437

Unitarian Universalist Association:

www.uua.org

Telephone: (617) 742-2100

UU Legislative Ministry:

www.uulmca.org

Telephone: (916) 441-0018

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee:

www.uusc.org

Telephone: (617) 868-7102

Sacyouth - Faith-Based Activities for Youth:

www.sacyouth.com

South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership (SSIP)

Emergency Food Closet:

www.ssipfoodcloset.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 by the 15th of each month.

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

Leadership

Minister:

Rev. Martha Hodges, 689-2073 or
minister@u2c2.org

Director of Religious Education:

Paula Braxton/Candy Wood 689-2008
or office@u2c2.org

Board of Trustees:

President: Allison Claire

Vice President: John Sugar

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

Beliefs Within Our Faith

Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religion that encompasses many faith traditions. Unitarian Universalists include people who identify as Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Pagans, Atheists, Agnostics, Humanists, and others. As there is no official Unitarian Universalist creed, Unitarian Universalists are free to search for truth on many paths.



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY CHURCH
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