



## Newsletter

***Starr King Unitarian-  
Universalist Church of  
Hayward California***

***November 2016***

# THE FLAMING CHALICE

**Church Office Hours: Tues, Wed, and Thur;  
9:30 AM to 2:30 PM  
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**Parish Minister:**

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**Director of Religious Exploration:**

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2:00 PM**

can no longer remain silent. Our country is in need of a moral revolution of values to champion the sacred values of Love, Justice, and Mercy.

**November 13: Our Chosen Tribes/We Are Family.**

Rev. Maria Cristina

This service is a preface to our Startup Workshop, which immediately follows the service (noon to 4:00 PM).

**November 20: Thanksgiving.**

Rev. Maria Cristina.

Thanksgiving is a historically complicated holiday. As we reflect on the myth of the origin of Thanksgiving, we gather as a community to express gratitude for all the blessings we have received.

**November 27: Building Your Own Theology.**

Lu Middleton and BYOT class members.

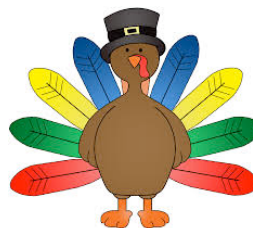
Based on the assumption that everyone is their own theologian, Unitarian Universalism asks us to use our values, life experience, and richness of religion to develop our own personal credos (what we believe). Come hear credos from last spring's BYOT class and possibly (re)consider your own.

**Sunday Worship: 10:30 AM  
November Service Preview**

**November 6: A Moral Revolution of Values.**

Rev. Maria Cristina and Others

Now is the time for a moral revolution of values. We



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## November Birthdays

Colleen Saia has compiled a spreadsheet for all of our birthdays. You can see a complete printout on the welcome table at the back of the Social Hall. Please contact her with any additions or corrections.

Date	Name	Date	Name
2	Lesley Hitchings	11	Jordan Lowell Baker-Blanc
2	Bob Meyerson	14	Hank Wagner
3	Diana Dickerson	20	Bobby Robinson
6	Kathryn LaMar	21	Alyssa Joy Baker-Blanc
8	Bob Rett	30	Susan Blanc
8	James Green		

### Start-up Workshop

- Entire congregation invited.
- Led by Bob Miess(who led a similar workshop when Joy came to us.
- Designed to help Rev. Maria Cristina and the congregation get to know each other, and to clarify what and who we are as a church, where we want to be, and how to get there.
- Questions? Contact Diana Dickerson @ 786-2922 or [daesworkgd@comcast.net](mailto:daesworkgd@comcast.net).



### It's Our Traditional Celebration of Thanksgiving Dinner Thursday, November 24, Around 2 PM

Everyone's invited! All are welcome! Bring guests!

No need for RSVPs or reservations. Signup sheet in Social Hall ensures that we have something besides turkey, and for setup/cleanup

Come early and help with last-minute preparations.

Bring a table game and linger after the feast, or just stick around to visit.

Questions? Suggestions? Contact Donnie Rett at 510-276-0545 or <bdrett146@att.net>

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***From the Minister,  
Rev. Maria Cristina  
Vlassidis Burgoa***

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### **Days of the Dead**

Death: It is said that the very word burns the lips; and yet in some cultures people dance with it, make fun of it, and swallow it whole in the shape of a sugar skull. Ritual helps to hold us together when we fall apart, when we feel that the grief is so deep that we can't imagine a tomorrow or even the next breath. From the Byzantine chants of the Greek Orthodox Funeral Sacraments focusing on the Resurrection, to Buddhist rituals of Samsara, crossing over, practicing breathing into your own death, to the colorful celebration of the Days of the Dead in Mexico and other parts of Latin America, rituals are designed to open us up to another reality; communal mourning rituals place us at the crossroads where we contemplate our own mortality; they can also help us to begin the healing process in the face of profound and indescribable grief.

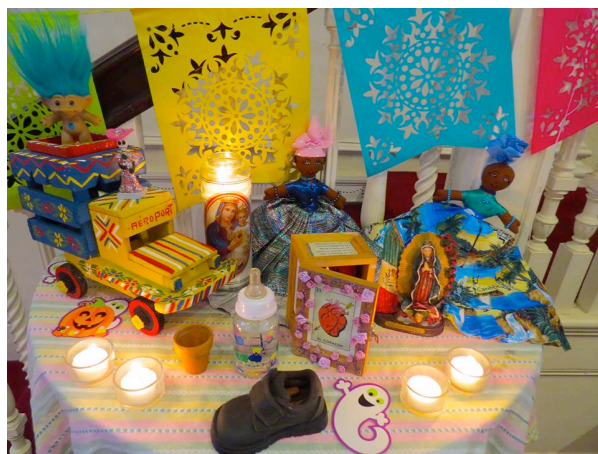
For Mesoamerican peoples, the soul's trajectory had different destinations to regions of mystery,

different levels, and different lengths of time getting there, depending on the cause of death. Most people who died went to *Mictlán*, the underworld. Warriors and women who died during childbirth went to the same heaven in a region in the sky, accompanied on their journey by the sun. After four years, they were transformed into hummingbirds and monarch butterflies. Others went to the paradise of the water gods, where everything was always green and where suffering was unknown. Infants went to a place called *Chichihuahco*, where a giant nursing tree produced abundant milk pods to nurse the babies for eternity. The Aztec solar calendar reflected many religious celebrations and festivals, including many associated with death such as the feast of the little ones and the great feast of the dead. These feasts were known as the offering of flowers, or *Tlaxochimaco*.



After the Spanish colonization, Christian missionaries unsuccessfully tried to eradicate these practices. As a result, they became part of the Catholic calendar and merged with All Souls Day, or the Day of All Hallows. Today, these pre-Hispanic religious rituals of making offerings are alive in the tradition of altar making. The bones of the ancestors are once again fertilized, humankind is renewed, and they reestablish their relationship and

interdependence with the divine. The mixture of the scent of the marigolds, the incense, and the candles lets the spirits of our beloveds know that we remember them and that we have prepared a special offering to honor them. We reflect on the uncertainty and fragility of life as reflected in the candlelight, the blue incense smoke, and the ephemeral nature of the paper flowers and banners adorning the altar.



I began building community altars for the Days of Dead back in the late eighties when our communities were being ravaged by AIDS. There was so much death, so many funerals, so many families who could not find consolation and compassion in the churches that had shunned and discarded their children. We created a communal ritual to honor the memory of their loved ones. We cried together as we made paper flowers, lit candles, shared stories, and placed our loved one's photographs on the altar as we named them and responded "*Presente!*" / "They are here with us!"

I continue to build altars as community ministry. It is a physical and spiritual activity that reaffirms that we are not alone. When things fall apart, we rebuild our lives piece by piece, with the help of family and friends, music, animal companions, prayers, silent meditation, and anything that offers us another chance to transform the deep pit of grief into some semblance of hope. Community is born of life and death, as we celebrate the joys and mourn the losses together.





The ritual celebration of the Days of the Dead, like Unitarian Universalism, is about community building. And although we may not be seen as offering much in terms of comfort in the afterlife, this we know:

- We do not preach about individual salvation.
- We need one another to save each other and this broken hurting world.

- We need one another to heal and find purpose and meaning in our days.

- Our gift to each other is our open/broken heart. Through the cracks we receive the light of others to rekindle our own.

On October 30, we commemorated the Days of the Dead together, and built altars to honor our loved ones. May we find in this ancient Mesoamerican ritual the gift of honoring our loved ones and in the process, the gift of Beloved Community.



### **Special Service on Saturday, November 19!**

#### ***TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE***

Saturday, November 19, 3:00 PM

*Transgender Day of Remembrance* (TDOR) is an annual observance that honors the memory of those whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence. Join us as we gather together as a community to denounce hate and to lovingly lift the names of transgender people killed during this year. Please join us in raising the visibility of transgender and gender non-conforming people. This event includes a film, panel discussion, community meal, and candlelight vigil. All are welcome!

## ***President's Report***

***by Diana  
Dickerson***



Greetings,

It is hard to believe that we are already careening into the holiday season. I feel like time is just slipping through my fingers. I always enjoy the celebrations, but I am now beginning to understand what my mother meant when she groused about all the planning and work that are behind the terrific meals and parties.

For many years Roy and I would sit down after Halloween to plan our big Thanksgiving dinner. My sister, Deborah, would always bring two giant apple pies that she was an expert at making. My cousin, Trish, would bring her crescent rolls that were fresh from her oven. We generally had between 20 and 25 of us tucked in here and there to fit in our house that was under 800 square feet. After dinner Trish and I would do the dishes, no dishwasher at my house, and Deborah would get things wrapped up and distributed among the guests to take home. What fun memories we have of those days.

Now families have spread out around the country, the children are grown and have their own children and some time soon we will have grandchildren, great-grandchildren to me. Old age is sneaking up on me. Where is the energy to do these fabulous meals?

Right here at Starr King! We have been sharing Thanksgiving dinner here with our church family in recent times. If you want to join in, please sign up in fellowship hall. Everyone is welcome and we have many contributions on the table to share. I always wear loose pants. ;-)

I am very grateful for being a member of this church. There are so many terrific people here that I can chat with, get to know better, learn from, and fall in love with. People here even let me sing from time to time. What a great group! See you soon.

In love and fellowship,

*Diana Dickerson*



I have taken the following articles and tips from <[www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)> to inspire you to vote your values this November 8 and remember to keep your children in the loop!!

## **Vote Your Values**

*From Jill Goddard Date: April 15, 2016.* From our founding fathers to women's suffrage to voter registration across all 50 states, Unitarian Universalists have a long history of supporting our democracy. Often times, political debates can create fear and division.

This election season, we encourage you to keep heart and vote your values by putting your Unitarian Universalist principles into practice when deciding which political candidate deserves your vote.

Here are seven questions based on our Seven Principles to ask candidates when choosing who will get your vote in this year's local, state, and national elections:

- Do your policy proposals reflect the inherent worth and dignity of every person?
- If elected, how will your everyday decisions demonstrate justice, equity and compassion in human relations?
- How will you encourage acceptance and growth in one another across party lines?
- What insights have you learned from your own search for truth and meaning that will guide you as a political leader?
- What ideas do you have to improve our democratic process?
- Within our international community, how will you work towards a goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all?
- Acknowledging our interdependence, how will your decisions impact our planet and future generations?

## **Election/Voting Tips for Parents**

Talk with your child about who you will vote for, and why.

Help with voter registration. Go to a rally where your child can witness passionate citizens. Offer people rides to the polls.

Whether or not your candidate wins, when you peacefully demonstrate about issues that concern you, you're teaching your children to have a say.

**Allison**

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## From ARMCA

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Below is a simple yet powerful article on how those of us who are white can face the challenges and benefits of whiteness - and must if we are to address the systemic racism inherent in U.S. culture.

Written by Meck Groot, a dear friend of Rev. Maria Cristina's from the New England Region, the article provides clear ways to assess our congregational commitment to ending racism, and steps we can take to make a difference. The good news is these are things we can do - and we're already doing some of them!

### Navigating Whiteness

by Meck Groot

The Movement for Black Lives has woken many up to the reality that systemic racism did not end with Civil Rights. For a long time, the path considered in dominant groups as acceptable has been "color-blindness" and "color-muteness." As Toni Morrison notes, "the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture." Yet, this time of awakening has many of us longing for honest conversation and meaningful action that address the horrors of racism.



- "Whiteness" in the United States is the set of assumptions, norms, standards, attitudes, laws, definitions, stories, histories, beliefs and behaviors that keep racism in place. It is the conscious and unconscious agreements made by people of European descent to participate in a system that gives them benefits and immunities that people of color cannot count on. This reality is held in place with an elaborate system rewards and punishments.

Everyone in the United States navigates this system, whether we are people of color or white and whether we notice it or not. *How* we navigate it is different depending on where we are pinned to the color line. For people of color, awareness of how the system works and what they must do to navigate it can literally mean the difference between life and death. White people learn early that resisting whiteness results in silencing and social ostracism - forms of punishment that feel threatening to our wellbeing. At the same time, there are many benefits and immunities for white people willing to accept the status quo. The temptation to participate in the system is so compelling we create elaborate stories about how and why we deserve the rewards of a racist system and how people of color do not.

All of this impacts congregations in historically-white religious traditions, particularly if they are committed to racial justice and multicultural ministry. Just talking about whiteness typically brings up so much anxiety, shame, guilt, and other feelings of discomfort in white people, the conversation tends to get shut down. One of the first steps to addressing racial injustice therefore is to break the taboo against making whiteness evident and to "get comfortable" talking about "white space," "white fragility," "white supremacy culture," and "white privilege." A willingness to talk about these in racially-mixed or all-white groups is an indicator of a congregation's commitment to racially-just multicultural ministry. Other indicators of this commitment include:





- The presence in a congregation of a group of people dedicated to inspiring, supporting and equipping the congregation to engage in racially-just multicultural ministries. Whatever they are called -- Transformation Team, Diversity Committee, Multicultural Ministries Task Force -- at their best, these groups consider both the political and the spiritual challenges of this ministry and work in covenantal partnership with congregational staff, elected leadership and volunteers.
- Programs that give congregants opportunities to explore issues of race, racism and racial justice through religious education, small group ministry, book discussions, guest speakers, social action, etc.
- Cultural expressions through artwork, books, music, language, worship and leadership style that reflect non-dominant ancestral heritages. Would people who do not identify as white, easily recognize that this space is or could be theirs also?
- Congregational demographics may or may not demonstrate commitment. Given a history of segregation across the country, every congregation finds itself in communities that are more or less white. We cannot assume the same demographics in rural New Hampshire as in suburban Massachusetts or downtown Worcester. Thus, the racial makeup of the congregation and the networks its members are part of may or may not reflect its commitment.
- Partnerships with groups led by and serving communities of color. Many UU congregations have or seek relationships and connections with religious, political, social and cultural groups that represent a culture different from their own.
- Intercultural competence: the ability to know when cultural difference matters and when it does not. Overlooking meaningful differences and assuming "we're all the same" can create an unwelcoming environment for people outside of the dominant group. At the same time, behaving as if every difference matters can do the same thing. Knowing when a difference matters is a skill and congregations committed to racially-just multicultural ministries support honing that skill

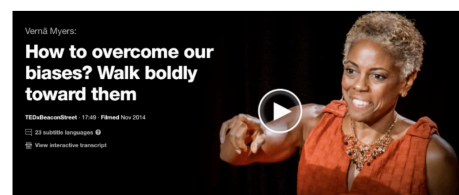
## Resources for Navigating Whiteness

**Multicultural Welcome: A Resource for Greeters** - This 15 page guide from the UUA's Multicultural Growth Office offers a wealth of resources for growing your congregation's capacity for welcome and inclusion. It includes theological grounding for the work, definitions, tips and techniques, ideas for making behavior change in your congregation, and much more.



**How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race** - In this entertaining and thoughtful TEDx Talk, Jay Smooth, helps us consider how to move away from a "tonsils" approach to thinking and talking about racism to a "dental hygiene" approach.

**How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them** - A TEDx Talk with Vernā Myers. "We can stop these types of incidents...these Fergusons...from happening by looking within and being willing to change ourselves." Invites us to do three things to stop these things from happening.



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# What's Up With FESCO?

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By Kathryn LaMar

Did you know that SKUUC is a long-time supporter of the Family and Emergency Services Coalition, commonly known as FESCO? We might even be a founding member, but I haven't yet been able to find out if our records go back that far.

FESCO was founded in 1986., to serve low/ex-tremely low income homeless families with food, housing, supportive services, and community resources to move to self-sufficiency. All of our programs are located in Hayward. It took me a while to realize that each program consists of a separate facility, along with its attendant services. Of major programs, we have four:

**Les Marquis House** is a 21-bed facility providing safe, warm housing and food; case management, life-skills classes (including parenting); employment training and search support, children's activities, and linkage to independent housing, benefits acquisition, and services like healthcare for up to 60 days.

**Banyan House** provides transitional housing for six months to eight homeless families who need extra time to gain employment or attend school/vocational training. Each family has one or two private bedrooms and bath; there are shared community/dining spaces, a community computer room, and outdoor recreation space. Families pay 30% of their adjusted gross income toward rent while residing at Banyan House.

**Third Street Apartments** is a four-unit permanent housing project, which provides permanent low-cost rental housing and supportive services. Families pay 30% of their income toward rent.

**The Greg Smith Center** is an administrative and service facility that provides homeless prevention services, mental health counseling, parenting classes,

tutoring and enrichment activities for children and youth, and services for our alumni.

Services provided by all of FESCO's programs include McKinley linkages program, shelter + care, mental health counseling, children's services, and homeless prevention/alumni services.

One FESCO event most of you are familiar with is the annual fund-raising Shuffle, held at the San Leandro Marina, where you and your family can walk to your heart's desire. This is usually held on the first Saturday in May—registration is online, so start looking a few months ahead. This year's Shuffle raised about \$65,000! Another event is the annual Back-pack drive, which took place in August—FESCO provided about 115 backpacks to FESCO children, with some left over for future residents.

As SKUUC's representative to FESCO, I sit on the Coalition Board (made up of representatives from the participating congregations from Hayward, Castro Valley, and San Leandro, plus a number of community business representatives); we approve the budget (about \$1.2 million), and monitor how FESCO is doing in the community. I also serve on a Long-Term Sustainability Task Force, which is trying to decide how FESCO can move forward in today's challenging environment. Stay tuned!

FESCO has a volunteer coordinator (Stephanie), who can help you if you want to get further involved. Last year, SKUUC's Victoria Quijano served as a Girl Scout Ambassador to FESCO. She created and facilitated eight life-skills workshops, and at the end of the project provided 50 aprons and 50 pillow cases to the residents of Les Marquis House. Looking for a project for this year? Let Stephanie know!



## Church Calendar For November, 2016

For details about any of these activities, go to [starrking.org/calendar](http://starrking.org/calendar), and let your curser hover over a particular event.

= Prev		November 2016					Next =
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
		1 * 10:30 am Safety Committee	2 * 7:00 pm Evening Meditation	3 * 7:00 pm Board of Trustees Meeting	4 * 7:00 pm Drumming Circle	5	
6 * 9:00 am Choir Rehearsals * 10:30 am Worship Service * 11:40 am First Sunday Visitors Circle * 12:15 pm World Religions Classes	7	8 * 11:00 am Adult RE	9 * 12:00 pm Staff Meeting * 3:00 pm Pastoral Care Committee * 7:00 pm Committee Council * 7:30 pm Evening Meditation	10 * 4:00 pm Leadership Webinar * 7:00 pm PAJAT and ARMCA Meeting * 7:30 pm SKIT	11	12	
13 * 9:00 am Choir Rehearsals * 10:30 am Worship Service * 11:45 am Startup Workshop * 12:15 pm World Religions Classes	14	15 * 10:30 am Safety Committee	16 * 12:00 pm Elder Meeting * 7:00 pm RE Council * 7:30 pm Evening Meditation	17 * 7:00 pm Worship Committee	18	19 * 3:00 pm Transgender Day of Remembrance * 5:30 pm Candlelight service for TDOR * 6:30 pm Potluck Supper TDOR	
20 * 9:00 am Choir Rehearsals * 10:30 am Worship Service * 12:00 pm Hospitality and Membership * 12:00 pm Church Bookstore Open * 1:30 pm EAIC Gun Violence Panel	21	22 * 1:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	23 * 12:00 pm Staff Meeting * 7:00 pm Evening Meditation	24 * 8:00 am Thanksgiving Day	25	26	
27 * 9:00 am Choir Rehearsals * 10:30 am Worship Service	28	29	30 * 7:00 pm Evening Meditation				

Calendar developed and supported by Kieran O'Shea