



# Newsletter

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

**February 2019**

# THE FLAMING CHALICE

## Sunday Worship, 10:30am

**Church Office Hours  
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday  
9:30am – 2:30pm**

22577 Bayview Avenue  
Hayward, CA 94541  
510-581-2060  
[www.starrking.org](http://www.starrking.org)

**Parish Minister**  
Rev. María Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa  
[minister@starrking.org](mailto:minister@starrking.org)

**Office Administrator**  
Kelli Abatangelo  
[office@starrking.org](mailto:office@starrking.org)

**Church President**  
Will Fitch  
[president@starrking.org](mailto:president@starrking.org)

**Director of Religious Exploration**  
Allison Prout  
[dre@starrking.org](mailto:dre@starrking.org)  
DRE Office Hours:  
Wednesday and Thursday,  
10:30am – 2:30pm

**Newsletter**  
[newsletter@starrking.org](mailto:newsletter@starrking.org)

**February Theme: Trust**

### **February 3: Guest Speaker. "Even Black Holes Emit Heat"**

Does it feel like we've been living in a black hole that sucks compassion and love out of our universe lately? Well, yes! But physics has good news for you! Join us as we explore what astronomy can teach us about finding hope in dire times.

**February 10: Rev. Maria Cristina. Meditation as a process of trusting the basic goodness of who we are.** Join us as we explore and reflect upon the teachings of Buddhist Nun Pema Chodron on the path of loving kindness.

**February 17: Rev. Maria Cristina. The Places That Scare You.** We continue exploring the teachings of Pema Chodron and the spiritual practices that can help us make choices about how we react to the circumstances in our lives. "We can let them harden us and make us increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us and allow our inherent human kindness to shine through."

**February 24. Guest Speaker. A Matter of Trust.** Trust is the foundation for building a strong, engaged relationship, whether it's an intimate, personal, business, or professional relationship. Yet it is not always freely given and received. We will look at what part trust plays in living our UU values and affirming our principles and examine how fear can cause us to withhold trust.



## What's Inside

<p>Sunday Services, 1          Ongoing Activities, 2          Birthdays &amp; Photos from MLK March, 3          From the Minister, 4          Board Report, 5</p>	<p>Adult RE Exploration, 6          South Hayward Parish, 8          RE Reflections, 9          Announcements, 11          Save on Taxes Info, 12</p>
<p>Calendar, 13</p>	



## Ongoing Activities

Adult RE Committee	Meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 11 am to 12 noon in the Conference Room.
Choir Practice	Meets every Sunday from 9 – 10:15am in the Social Hall.
Church Bookstore	Open on the third Sunday of the month, after the service.
Drum Circle	<b>NO DRUM CIRCLE IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH--BACK IN APRIL.</b> Our monthly drum circle will not occur in February or March 2019, because your fearless leader will be occupied elsewhere on those particular First Fridays. However, we should be back in full force in April, so bang on your own till then!
Evening Meditation	Every Wednesday, 7:30 – 8:45pm. Open to all.
Elderberries	Third Wednesday of the month at noon. For self-identified elders. Bring your lunch.
PFLAG Support Group	First Friday of the month 7:30 to 9 pm at 27287 Patrick, Hayward (New Bridges/SHP) and across from Weekes library. Bus #37 goes to the location.
Small Group Ministry	Contact <a href="mailto:sgm@starrking.org">sgm@starrking.org</a> for more information.
SKIT Improv Troupe	Second Thursday of the month, 7:30pm. Open to all.

## February Birthdays

Feb 4 Kelli Abatangelo  
 Feb 5 René L. Castle  
 Feb 8 Ellery Medilla  
 Feb 8 Andy Hansen  
 Feb 12 Kirk Klausmeyer  
 Feb 12 Suzanne Quijano  
 Feb 13 Bill DeSmidt

Feb 19  
 Feb 19  
 Feb 20  
 Feb 21  
 Feb 23  
 Feb 24

Meredith Schuler  
 Alison Corson  
 Lea Casini  
 Nancy Harrison  
 Byron Schatz  
 Eric Gable



## From the Minister



Beloveds,

It had been about 15 years since I had been able to travel to my homeland, Chile. In 2003 I was there for the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the military coup. That was a heartbreaking journey and I spent most of my time in marches, cemeteries, and a museum dedicated to the memory of the disappeared. A new monument had been erected and I spent hours trying to find the names of my friends and family members just to run my fingers over the rough rock they were carved on...

But this time the trip was about supporting my mother in finding a nursing home for my uncle who has Alzheimer's. This was a different kind of heartbreak. And as difficult as this was, I was glad to be there and hopefully be a source of strength and hope. I reached out to my friends and with their help, we found a wonderful place where my uncle is now getting excellent care. My mom is happy to remain nearby so she can visit him as often as she wants and to volunteer in the garden.

One of the highlights of this trip was reconnecting with friends and reminiscing about our teen age years. Those were scary times when we lived in fear. Our refuge was the youth church choir which allowed us to escape the harsh realities of living under martial law. How wonderful to share memories, to look at old pictures, to laugh together after all these years, and to make new memories! How healing to be able to walk those streets without fear. What a blessing to greet the elders and to meet the new generations and hold my friend's grand babies in my arms!

I greet the New Year with a heart filled with gratitude and joy. Deep gratitude for everyone who has supported my mother and I, and joy to call this Beloved Community, Starr King UU Church, my new home.

May we be granted plenty of opportunities to care for each other and be each other's refuge during scary and difficult times. May we take time to connect with friends and share our stories. May we find joy in our shared journey and celebrate making new memories together!

Below are some pictures of Mama Lily and I, my uncle Ivan, and my friends. Enjoy!

With Much Love,  
Rev. Maria Cristina



## Board Report

A New Year is underway; the board is trying to make sense of what that means, should mean, and what to do about it. I hope that doesn't sound like we are lost or befuddled, but rather that we are inquisitive and open to recalibration of the church's trajectory. The topics we cover in board meetings cover the care and feeding of the physical and spiritual church as well as everything in between; our mission is to make sure we are aligned with our congregation's desires, best interests, and pocket book.

The board and church committees are actively reevaluating our mission statement, best practices for religious education, the budget and a wide range of other details. We work to see what activities would most interest the congregation and provide support to those efforts. In the arts we have the annual trip to Ashland coming up, and our church-produced mystery theater is under construction. The winter storms are upon us, and the maintenance work done on our buildings last year was a cost-effective way to protect our structures. Church activities occur in the evening, and staff is often on the premises alone. We are mindful of their safety, so a security system has been installed, and we are looking at ways to improve the lighting for our parking lot.

These are some of the measures we are involved with to provide the best possible church experience, but we need your help. First, we need your input and feedback; consider how the church is meeting (or not meeting) your needs and talk to board members about your concerns. Better yet, come to a board meeting and get a first-hand look at your community leadership; your insights are incredibly valuable to us. Not only your insights but your time and energy are the muscle that make the church what it is. Our services, grounds, community outreach, and other activities depend on our committees and volunteers to do this important work.

Lastly, I would like to remind you that Canvass Sunday is coming up and that everything we do requires money, and unfortunately more each year. We are cognizant that the "well" is limited and try to limit our expenses, but we want our home to be nicely maintained, safe, and our staff to be adequately compensated. Some of us may have been hurt by the government shutdown, experienced financial setbacks, or have other sorts of difficulties; your welfare is the church's welfare and we know that a lot is asked of you. Please take some time over the next few weeks and consider how much the church community gives you back for what you put in and whether you can do a little more to support the things we all believe in.

**Thank You**

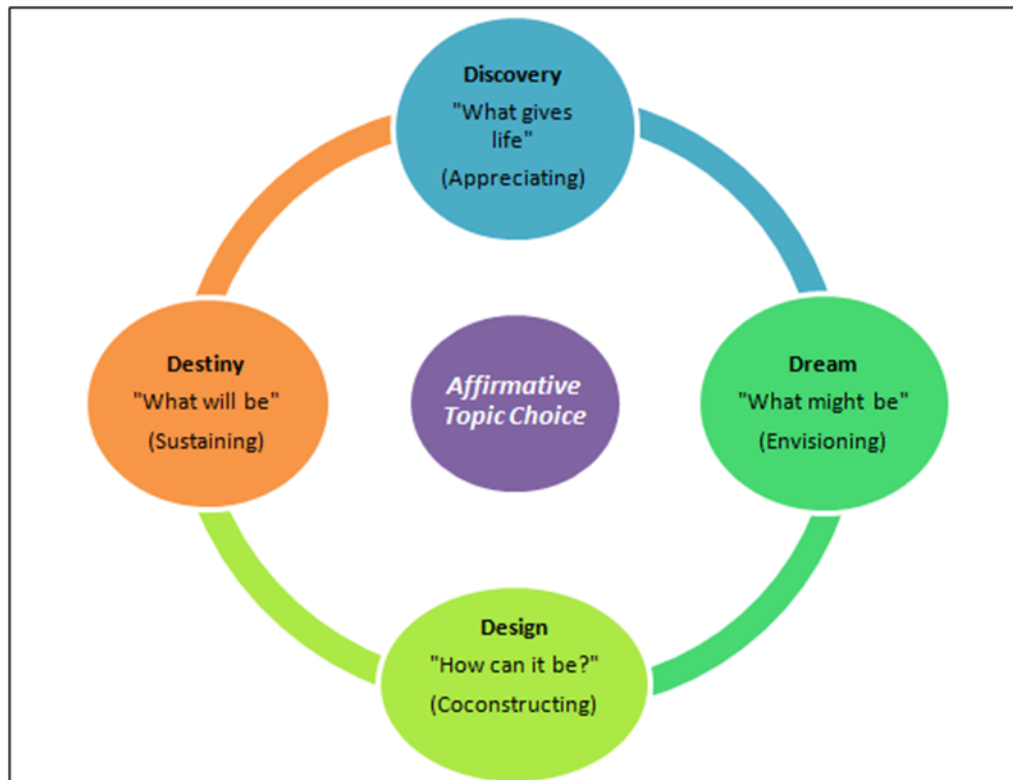
**The Board of Trustees**



# Adult Religious Exploration

## Envisioning Our Future – Beginning a Conversation and a Journey

Sunday, February 17, 2019, from 12 Noon to 4 pm in the Sanctuary



In mid-September the Rev. Maria Cristina, Jennifer Koney and Keith Lewis spoke from the pulpit about Mission, Vision and Covenant. We learned that our mission statement was written more than ten years ago and that it is accepted practice for churches to re-examine their mission statement at least every five years and more importantly when there is a change of minister. In the fall of 2018 Mileva Saulo Lewis introduced the Board of Trustees and Committee on Ministry to the Appreciative Inquiry Process and it was approved as the method by which we would envision our future as a congregation. This visioning process will guide us to determine our desired future.

You are invited to participate in a creative process to envision our future. In small groups we will share stories of our own experience of “Discovering and Valuing “The Best of What is- What gives life” at Starr King and identify the values that we hold as Unitarian Universalists. This is called the Discover/Inquire Phase of a four stage process that we will engage in over next several months. Phase Two **Dream/Imagine** will ask those present to name three wishes that would transform Starr King to live, more fully into our Unitarian Values. In other words, “What might be”? These questions are the first two parts of a visioning process called Appreciative Inquiry often known as **AI**. This forward looking process was developed in 1987 by Cooperrider and Whitney<sup>1</sup> and is the model of choice for both spiritual and secular organizations to envision their future including the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).<sup>2</sup>

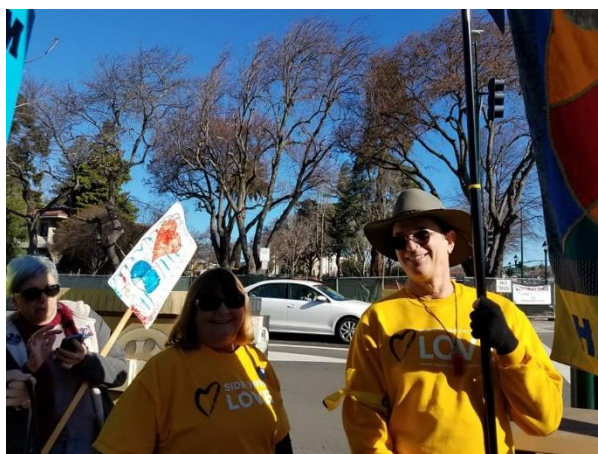
Appreciative Inquiry is built on the following beliefs:

- ✓ All the wisdom and skills needed to assess the past and present and to envision the future we want to create are in the room;
- ✓ People respond more to the positive than to the negative and will work toward what they have helped create;
- ✓ There are many "right" pathways to reach a given point or end result;
- ✓ None of us has all the answers; we need each other's perspective of reality to get a better understanding of the whole, and
- ✓ The future doesn't just happen. It results in large part from what we do or don't do today and every day.
- ✓ Each one of us
  - Can make a difference;
  - Learn from each other;
  - Pool our perceptions, and
  - Agree to take charge of our future

The results of these sessions will be compiled and reviewed by a Project Team and presented to the congregation in early March. This will lead us to Phase Three – Design – Co-Design “what should be,” how will we work together to design this future and then the final Phase, Deliver – Co-Innovating – What will be our commitments and action planning to bring our desired future to life. Finally, the project team will review our current mission statement to determine if what we’ve learned resonates with our mission statement and if it needs to be revised. The Project Team will work with the Board of Trustees and the Committee on Ministry to determine the need for a vision statement and/or a covenant of shared ministry.

<sup>1</sup>Cooperrider, D.L. & Whitney, W. (2005) *Appreciative inquiry: A positive revolution in change*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

<sup>2</sup>UUA <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/ga/appreciative-inquiry>



## SOUTH HAYWARD PARISH – FEBRUARY THOUGHTS.

February is a strange month – one day it's spring and the next day the temperature plunges and we are reminded that it's still winter. It's also a month for Valentines. On frigid nights we are warned to cover our plants against the cold. On those same cold nights, some of our neighbors will seek shelter at the South Hayward Parish (SHP) Warming Shelter.

In our cozy homes we take our many comforts for granted. For folks living on the street, our winter warming shelter offers a warm safe haven. Guests enjoy a warm safe bed, a hot dinner and breakfast in the morning.

### SEND A FEBRUARY VALENTINE!

SKUU will be starting a *quarterly collection* in support of SHP. Our first collection will be Sunday, February 10. To help with the Warming Shelter and the Food Pantry, we will be collecting the following on that Sunday:

- **SOCKS** – tube socks are excellent, but any warm new socks will do. This is the most often requested need in the winter. Warm dry socks are a blessing.
- **TUNA** - this is a very useful protein staple for the pantry. A good back-up supply of tuna ensures that every Pantry day will have protein on offer.

**BRING YOUR VALENTINE GIFT OF SOCKS/AND OR TUNA TO CHURCH ON FEBRUARY 10.**  
**SEND A VALENTINE GIFT OF LOVE TO YOUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED.**

Like to volunteer at the Warming Shelter? This winter we need the following volunteers:

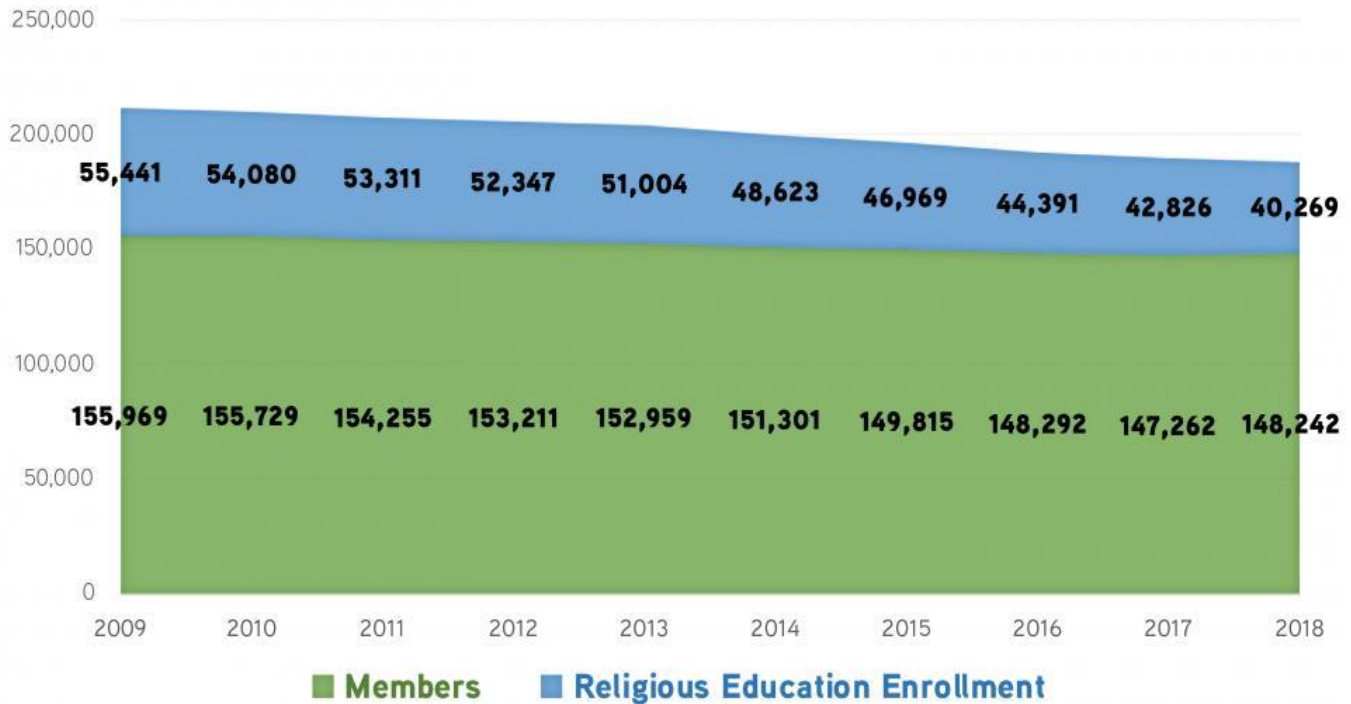
- Check-in: volunteer to check folks into the Shelter
- Dinner: volunteer to provide a simple hot meal for those staying the night.
- Breakfast: volunteer to provide a simple breakfast in the morning
- Laundry: volunteer to take bedding home for laundering.



## RE Reflections

### **UUA membership rises for first time since 2008** *But children's enrollment in religious education continues to drop.*

Christopher L. Walton | 11/5/2018 | UU World Magazine, Winter 2018



Annual membership and religious education enrollment figures reported by U.S. congregations in the UUA, 2009–2018.

For the first time since 2008, U.S. congregations in the Unitarian Universalist Association reported a membership increase in 2018. Although the decline each year from 2009 through 2017 was slight, and the increase in 2018 was only 980 members, the UUA is doing better than many similar religious groups in the United States.

Unfortunately, another trend in the congregational data continues to worry UU leaders. Religious education enrollment, which began dropping in 2002 even as membership was rising, continues to fall, with no sign of slowing down.

U.S. congregations lost 7,727 members since 2009, and our religious education programs shrank by 15,172 children—a drop of 27.37 percent, more than five times the rate of membership decline.

## Why, if membership remains relatively stable, is the number of children formally connected to our congregations falling so dramatically?

In part, the enrollment decline parallels a drop in the birthrate as Baby Boomers stopped giving birth in the mid-1990s. Parents born between 1965 and 1981 are part of a much smaller age cohort, Generation X; most children in many UU congregations now have Gen X parents. And millennials, the generation that is projected to outnumber Baby Boomers in 2019, are delaying having children longer than earlier generations.

But even as millennials have children of their own, they may not bring their kids to church. A [2014 study](#) revealed that one-third of millennials are not affiliated with any religious community.

Church attendance may be losing out to competing demands on children's time from sports or other activities, but surveys show [declining rates of participation](#) in those activities, too, except among upper-income families.

And our basic model may no longer work. In a 2017 paper published by the UUA's New England Region called "[The Death of Sunday School and the Future of Faith Formation](#)," Kim Sweeney argues that the classroom model no longer serves the faith formation needs of children, parents, or other adults. We need new models, she says: "Paying attention to the shifting needs of our families and children, releasing ourselves from the rigid structures of our past, and boldly experimenting to contribute to the evolution of faith formation may just be the spiritual task of our time."



# Announcements

**Memorial Service for Nancy Schluntz on February 2 at 10 am:** The memorial service for Nancy Schluntz, former director of FESCO, will be Saturday, February 2, at 10 am at First United Methodist Church at B and 2nd Street.

**Next Circle Supper is Saturday, February 2, 2019.** Please see sign-up sheets on back table for details. For those new to Circle Suppers, this is a great way to socialize with new and current members at Starr King; a Host is assigned and people bring potluck items.

**Honoring Mary Oliver: Join us on Friday, February 8 at 7 pm:** Join us in the sanctuary on Friday, February 8 at 7 pm where we will gather to read our favorite Mary Oliver Poems by candle light. For more information, please contact Rev. Maria Cristina.

**March 3 is Canvass Sunday.** Please attend and stay for brunch after service!

**Ashland Trip, April 5 to 7, 2019: Save the Date!!!** Our annual trip to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland will be the weekend of April 5 to 7, 2019. Mark your calendars for fun! Details on the trip will follow.

**Save the Date: Family Emergency Shelter (FESCO) 2019 Shelter Shuffle Fundraiser Happens on May 4.** We are so excited to announce that our annual shuffle will be held on May 4, 2019. The FESCO Shuffle is the single best way to get the word out about FESCO and raise money to end family homelessness in Alameda County. Registration for walkers and teams will open February 1! If you own a business, contact us at 530-220-2603 to learn about sponsorship opportunities.

**Small Group Ministry Openings:** Would you like to join our Small Group Ministry Program? The Wednesday Evening Group, which meets on the first and third Wednesday evening of the month at 7:15 at the church, has room for 2 to 3 more people. We ask only that you make attendance and participation in the group a priority. Our sessions last 1.5 to 2 hours, during which we learn about and share our views about broad, philosophical, or spiritual topics that interest us (usually, one topic will be the "Monthly Theme" for worship and RE, and the other will be of our own choosing). Please contact Kathryn LaMar and/or Rene Castle if you are interested.

**Are you thinking about becoming a Member?** Those of you who are frequent attendees but have not yet become official members are invited to reach out to Rev. Maria Cristina or Bob Simoni, the chair of the Hospitality & Membership Committee, to find out more about the privileges and responsibilities of becoming a member at Starr King. Once the decision to join is made, it's just a matter of signing the Membership Book.

## **Raise Money for Starr King; Register for eScrip and Shop Locally**

We get 3% of your total purchases at: Lucky, Food Maxx, and Save Mart. To create an account at [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) choose "Starr King Unitarian Church" as the non-profit to receive benefits, and enter the phone number(s) you have linked with your Lucky Rewards account. If you don't have a Lucky Rewards account, create it here: [www.luckysupermarkets.com/rewards/my-rewards#Account](http://www.luckysupermarkets.com/rewards/my-rewards#Account). Then anytime you use that phone number when you make your purchase at Lucky, Starr King will get credit.

**Summary :** If you are over 70 1/2 and taking mandatory minimum distributions from an IRA, you can **donate to the church with pre-tax dollars** by making a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). This is better than a deduction because it reduces your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). That not only reduces your taxes, it helps with those percentages used to calculate thresholds for various other deductions. The secret is to have the company that holds your IRA make the check out to the church. They can mail it to you (so you can check it and make a copy before passing it on to the church) or they can mail it to the church directly. You can give up to \$100,000 per year this way.

"Donating from an IRA gives you a tax benefit equal to -- and in almost all cases better than -- what you would have gotten had you taken the donation as an itemized deduction.

"This type of transfer, called a qualified charitable distribution or QCD, reduces your adjusted gross income (AGI). 'Lots of other tax benefits, credits and deductions are based on AGI,' said financial expert Ed Slott, a CPA and author of several books on retirement. 'Reducing your AGI may reduce your Medicare premium surcharge, the amount of Social Security that's taxable, and it could increase your medical deduction.' Itemized deductions reduce your taxable income, but not your adjusted gross income, so they don't have those same benefits.

"This type of donation, also called an IRA charitable rollover, counts toward the required minimum distribution that people older than 70 1/2 must take from their regular (not Roth) IRAs each year, as long as they make the donation by year end. But it's not limited to your required distribution. Each person older than 70 1/2 can donate a total of \$100,000 per year to one or more charities this way."

"Robert Peterson, a retired Santa Clara University law professor, says 'That's probably the way I'm going to do my giving going forward because I can't think of any reason not to. Most people are slightly annoyed about having to take a required distribution because it's taxable. When you make a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA, it's almost like the government is giving you a matching gift.'"



**Tax time details/hint:** The 1099-R from your IRA holder will not separate QCDs from taxable withdrawals, so your total withdrawal amount will appear in box 2a. Your taxable amount will be the figure in box 2a minus the total of your QCDs from this account for the calendar year.

# Starr King Church Calendar

For details about these activities, go to [www.starrking.org/calendar](http://www.starrking.org/calendar) and hover your cursor over an event.

February 2019						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 * Drumming Circle Canceled	2
3 * 10:30 am Worship Service	4 * 6:30 pm Rainbow Group LGBT NA * 7:15 pm White Racial Literacy Group	5	6 * 7:30 pm Small Group Ministry Evenings * 7:30 pm Evening Meditation	7 * 7 pm Board of Trustee Meeting	8 * 7 pm Honoring Mary Oliver	9
10 * 9 am Choir Practice * 10:30 am Worship Service * noon Peace and Justice Team	11 * 6:30 pm Rainbow Group LGBT NA	12 * 11 am Adult RE * 6:30 pm Beloved Conversations	13 * 12 noon SGM afternoons * 3 pm Pastoral Care Committee * 7:30 pm Evening Meditation	14 * 7:30 pm SKIT	15 * 9 am Safety Committee	16
17 * 10:30 am Worship Service * noon Adult RE; Visioning, Part One * noon Church Bookstore Open	18 * 6:30 pm Rainbow Group LGBT NA * 7:15 pm White Racial Literacy Group	19	20 * 7:30 pm SGM Evenings * 7:30 pm Evening Meditation	21	22	23
24 * 10:30 am Worship Service * noon AREC Session	25 * 6:30 pm Rainbow Group LGBT NA	26 * 1 pm Executive Committee	27 * 12 noon SGM afternoon * 7:30 pm Evening Meditation	28		

