



The Flaming Chalice

THEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE • RADICALLY INCLUSIVE • JUSTICE CENTERED

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church | March 2020 Newsletter



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

**Tuesday, Wednesday,
and Thursday**

9:30am – 2:30pm

To meet with the minister
for pastoral care or to discuss
congregation life, please call the
church office for an appointment.

22577 Bayview Avenue

Hayward, CA 94541

510-581-2060

starrking.org

facebook.com/StarrKingChurch

Parish Minister

Rev. Maria Cristina

Vlassidis Burgoa

minister@starrking.org

Office Administrator

Kelli Abatangelo

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Church President

Jennifer Koney

president@starrking.org

Director of Religious Exploration

Allison Prout

dre@starrking.org

DRE Office Hours:

Tuesday–Thursday,

11:30am–2:30pm

Newsletter

newsletter@starrking.org

Sunday Worship, 10:30am

March Theme:

Building Your Own Theology

MARCH 1

Building a Spiritual Community

Unitarian Universalists are people of many paths who come together to make a difference for our world and ourselves. Ours is a shared spiritual journey offering ongoing opportunities for learning and growing together. We gather as a community to care for one another and get to practice our principles by answering the call for social justice.

MARCH 8

Guest Preacher TBA

MARCH 15

Latin American Liberation Theology

Latin America experienced tremendous socio-political changes in the 60's and 70's which gave rise to a new Theology. This new Theology became known as Liberation Theology, calling for the church to side with the poor and the oppressed. It also called for the inclusion of new emerging narratives, particularly feminist voices, challenging the status quo.

MARCH 22

Guest Preacher: Jim Lewis

MARCH 29

Wrestling with Angels

What can we learn from other religious/spiritual traditions? How do we, Unitarian Universalists, understand terms such as “sacrifice,” “salvation,” “sin,” “sacrament,” or “miracle?” Join us as we explore religious language and symbols within the context of our ongoing spiritual growth journey. We will be building a community altar. Please bring your favorite religious/spiritual symbol that helps you draw strength and hope, especially during difficult times.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 1** Sunday Services
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February Highlights



Mardi Gras Canvass Dinner



Congratulations to Jim Lewis
on his Ordination



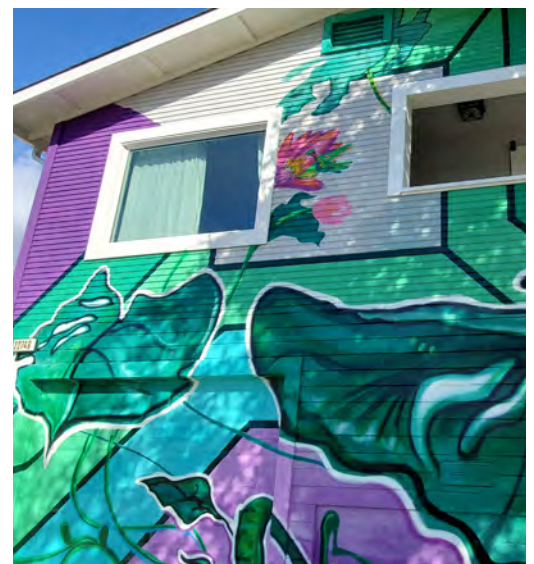
Welcome Inés, Amy, and Ramona
as official Starr King members



Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones, co-author of
*Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on
the Road to Multiculturalism*



Ramona celebrating her 4th birthday with friends at the Starr King playground



Inés, Amy, and Ramona beautiful
new house's mural

Bits from the Board

We're Rolling! Canvass Campaign and Annual Meeting

Let the good times roll... and we do it together!

We celebrated the joy of beloved community with our Mardi Gras party and canvass (pledge) campaign kickoff February 22. **Many thanks to Terri Owen** for chairing this event and to those many hands who made it happen including Mileva Lewis and Diane Meyerson who worked tirelessly to make sure everything was organized and perfect, Reverend Maria Cristina (who brought real flavor and spice to the jambalaya dish and worked for hours over a hot stove as well as making the decorations over-the-top fabulous), **Sheila McClellan** and **Ethel-May Shaw** who worked very long hours in every job that presented itself, and the cast of thousands that cooked (THANKS to the **jambalaya angels**), set up, decorated, cleaned up, publicized, shopped, baked cookies, tended the bar, and all the unseen but valued help to make this event such a success and a celebration.

And tremendous thanks to **Beth Ogilvie** for spearheading our Canvass Campaign with loving devotion and great care— along with support from the Canvass Committee including **Reverend Maria Cristina, Mileva and Keith Lewis, Stephanie Smith, Terri Owen, Rene Castle, Lavon Hodges, and Diana Dickerson**. It's our pledges of support that keep us rolling – and the Canvass Committee who makes it happen.

Thank you for your gifts of service and for your generosity.



As we continue to roll towards the end of our church year, the Board and the Finance Committee are preparing for our

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**Sunday, May 17, 2020
12 noon in the Sanctuary**

This is a voting meeting so church members are encouraged to attend;
all are welcome!

The Board will be presenting the proposed budget for a vote, the congregation will elect new Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee members, and the congregation will discuss and vote on proposed updates to our bylaws after facilitated discussion. Our annual meeting upholds the 5th UU principle:

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

We look forward to your participation.

Those are the bits from your board this month –

In gratitude for our beloved community,

– Jennifer Koney



From the Minister

Spirit of Life,
Fountain of Light,
We have entered a new day.
We give thanks for the goodness of this new day.
We give thanks for the light
and take refuge in this new opportunity
to bear witness to the beauty
of this day...
Our open hearts
echo Jami, the Sufi poet's words:
"...There is a light on your face
which whispers of the divine flame...
as God is my witness...
you have issued from the same...
light is what we are...
love is how we share it..."
Light divine,
to you we bring our suffering,
our sorrows, and pain...
to you we bring our beautiful/imperfect
selves,
an unlit candle,
that our hope may be rekindled with
your loving spark...
Here in the fragile early hours
of this new day may we be wrapped
in your brilliant loving embrace
awakening to new possibilities...
Every morning, your light guides us home,
to our true selves,

even when we hurt,
-especially when we hurt-
Your light fills the heart,
with Grace,
comes dancing into us
pouring into our hearts
liquid light
a million tiny windows
into the soul
shining through the hard night...
May we, who are parched,
drink in your light
and let our own light shine...
From our most common words
and deeds dawns beauty in
everything we do
and in being exactly who we are...
Divine light,
you find us at the crossroads
and illuminate every corner
of the four directions
with clarity of mind and spirit...
Divine light,
you make the mirror of our hearts
shine with beauty
reflecting our best selves
entering a new day
recreated
in your Mercy and Grace...

UU The Vote!

“Hope doesn’t come from calculating whether the good news is winning out over the bad. It is simply a choice to take action”

– Anna Lappe

Action is the Antidote to Despair

Do you often feel anxiety or despair at the state of our nation, our world? Does it seem that the forces of hate have the upper hand? Perhaps you’ve heard the saying, “Action is the antidote to despair*.”



Across the country UU congregations are taking actions to defend our democracy against the forces of hate with a campaign called UU The Vote. Each congregation is encouraged to develop their own campaign plan and members of our Peace & Justice Action Team at Starr King are developing those plans now.

The 2020 national elections are perhaps more important than any other in living memory. Without stopping the harms caused by the rise of authoritarianism and fascism, progressive movements have little chance of any effectiveness for the next generation and beyond. Therefore, these 2020 elections are not another “issue area” competing for resources and volunteer time alongside a dozen others; they are a “movement moment” in themselves, and our ability to bring to bear the experience and fierce commitments of activists, organizers, and people of conscience who care deeply about a wide range of progressive causes will determine the future of the human species and the planet.

Progressive people of faith can take up a meaningful role in election years without being partisan by shaping the public discourse with a values-based framing, rooted in our theology and principles. As UUs specifically, our deepest beliefs in interdependence, democracy, human worth and dignity across difference, the richness of pluralism and diversity, and the inborn right of all peoples to access self-determination and agency are a life-giving, life-saving, life-sustaining alternative to the narratives and policies of domination, supremacy, exceptionalism, and exploitation that are on the rise. [UU The Vote Launch Guide](#)

In February our Starr King Peace & Justice Action Team voted unanimously to participate in our own UU The Vote campaign as advocated by the Unitarian Universalist Association. Our committee is making plans for non-partisan work for the November election including:

- a voter registration drive
- get out the vote efforts

We are seeking community partners such as

- The League of Women Voters and
- The NAACP Hayward South County

All around us is evidence of those in despair taking action that saved their lives and those of others.

* Original quote by Joan Baez



After her daughter was killed in a car accident involving a drunk driver Candy Lightner founded Mothers Against Drunk Driving in 1980. In the midst of her grief she turned her despair to action and started a very successful political movement that has undoubtedly saved thousands of lives.

Perhaps you believe that as a religious organization we cannot engage in the political process without jeopardizing our standing as a tax-exempt organization that can collect donations and pledges that are generally tax deductible. The truth is that, just as Mothers Against Drunk Driving has been very successful in advancing their values and lobbying for political change while remaining a non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax deductible organization, so can we as a religious congregation advocate and even lobby for our values as long as we refrain from participating in political campaign activity for a particular candidate or group of candidates.



The Real Rules

The Real Rules - IRS Rules for Religious Organizations

The IRS rules on the tax status on advocacy and lobbying by religious congregations can be summarized in three parts:

Issue Advocacy: Without limit, religious congregations and their representatives may engage in issue advocacy including educating and mobilizing their members and the public in support of their values. For example, forums and film showings decrying fracking of fossil fuels for its irreversible environmental damage such as sponsored by our own Peace & Justice Action Team. Such advocacy cannot be tied to so-called political campaign activity, such as endorsement or opposition to any particular candidate, political party or group of candidates. **Advocating for our values in the political arena is totally acceptable under IRS regulations.**

Lobbying: Within limits, congregations and their representatives may engage in lobbying, defined as advocating for or against specific pieces of legislation. This includes proposed local, state and national legislation such as voter initiatives, state or congressional bills. The "limits" are not defined by the IRS, but courts have held that anything representing less than 5% of all activities, including total amount of congregational money, staff and volunteer time is within limits. Considering our entire budget, multiple committees, staff and volunteer hours we have considerable allowance for this type of lobbying efforts. Again, such advocacy cannot be tied to endorsement or opposition to any particular candidate, political party or group of candidates.

Individual Activity by Religious Leaders: The political campaign activity prohibition cannot infringe on the right of religious leaders from speaking as individuals on important issues of public policy in the public arena. This may even include partisan statements or endorsement of electoral candidates or political organizations if it is clear that the religious leader is not

speaking for the religious organization. On the other hand, religious leaders should not make partisan statements that could be tied to political campaign activity in official church publications or at church functions.

Blue State, Red State or Purple State?

Why should we be involved in a UU The Vote campaign in California which is decidedly not a “swing state”?

We live in California and issues important to us and our community will be on the ballot. We can shape the outcome by ensuring that our neighbors are registered and turn out to vote in record numbers.

Undoubtedly, some members of Starr King may choose to organize or participate in political campaign activity in swing states on their own time. Congregants may even solicit others in the congregation to do so. Some may choose to participate in post card writing or phone banking that advocates for a particular candidate or group of candidates either locally or in other states. All is permitted free speech activity. What would jeopardize our tax status is advocating, organizing or advertising for partisan political campaign activity in church publications or by church officials at church functions.

Join Us

The Starr King Peace & Justice Action Team meets the 2nd Sunday of each month – Next month on **Sunday March 8 at 12:15** following the worship service. This will be a chance to take action to relieve despair.

“For Unitarian Universalists, this is faithful, moral action because democracy and the right of all people to have a voice and a vote are at the very heart of our Seven Principles. This work is about the inherent worth and dignity of every person; it is about restoring right relationship with the planet; it is about our commitment to justice and equity for all people. We are called to courageously embody the deepest values of our faith with our hearts, bodies, and spirits while building toward an abundant future in which all are free and flourishing.”

–Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, President Unitarian Universalist Association

– Bob Britton



Adult Religious Exploration

Born to UUism – New to UUism

Part One: March 15, 2020 – 12:15 pm to 2 pm – Sanctuary

Part Two: March 29, 2020 – 12:15 pm to 2 pm – Sanctuary

These sessions will be led by our own Rev. Dr. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa and will focus on our faith's origins, its theology, origins of worship, and the balancing of the body and mind. We will explore those who have been prophetic and those of the modern era. Attention will be given as well to the *New UU* history, cultural diversity, *Black Free Thinkers*, *Worship that Works*, and *Theological Diversity*. Each session will be highly interactive with meditation, readings, videos, singing, UUA website resources, and time for reflection and sharing. Please join us! The date of the second session will be announced in March.

The Adult Religious Exploration Committee meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 11 am to 12 noon. Please join us and make your ideas known to anyone on the Committee:

Nancy Bonner-Benson, Diane Meyerson, Kathryn Lamar, Ethel-May Shaw, Shelia McClellan, The Rev. Dr. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa, and Mileva Saulo Lewis.

– Mileva Saulo Lewis

RE Reflections

We are planning our quarterly Family Gathering and would like your input. Please fill-out this survey so we know your preferences:

[SKUUC Family Gathering Survey, March 2020](#)

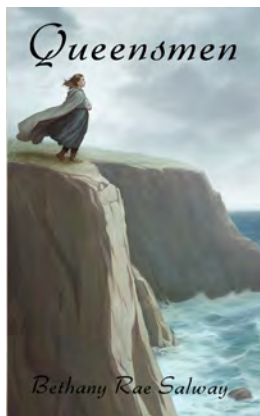


Community Announcements

Coming Soon! I've been a massage therapist for 13 years and truly love creating healing sessions for people who want to feel better. I'm currently working part time at Equinox San Ramon, which leaves Tuesdays and Wednesdays for massage and bodywork appointments, which will be held at the on-site cottage that is currently under construction (I could use some help if anyone has experience installing linoleum! 917-531-4535). My approach is informed by the Rosen Method – a gentle, contact-full way to engage and track embodied awareness as a way to relax, clarify and connect – which I started practicing in 2011 while living in New York. Please get in touch with any questions you may have!

mendingmoments.com

– Amy Pete



I am excited to announce that I have written a book! My first novel, *Queensmen*, is published and up for sale. It's a Robin Hood-esque fantasy novel—full of disguises, political intrigue, and a touch of romance.

You can buy a printed copy at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com). For an e-pub, buy from [Smashwords](https://www.smashwords.com). For Kindle users, use Amazon.

Visit my website for more details about the book, and to read the first chapter free of charge.

bethanyraesalway.com

– Bethany Salway

A note of gratitude for your healing prayers and get well wishes. I was down with the flu for almost two weeks. I'm so glad to report that I am feeling much better and back to my regular schedule.

With Much Love,

– Rev. Maria Cristina



Circle Supper

Saturday March 21st

5:30–8:30 PM – Starr King UU Church

Join Our Next Circle Supper on Saturday, March 21st!

Circle Suppers are small group, pot-luck style dinners held at a host's house, and a great way to get to know new members and deepen friendships. If you would like to participate, please sign up using the sign-up sheet located in Fellowship Hall. A week before the Circle Supper, the hosts will call participants to discuss the menu and what dishes are needed.

For more information, please contact: Ruth and Bill



Winter Warming Shelters Cooking

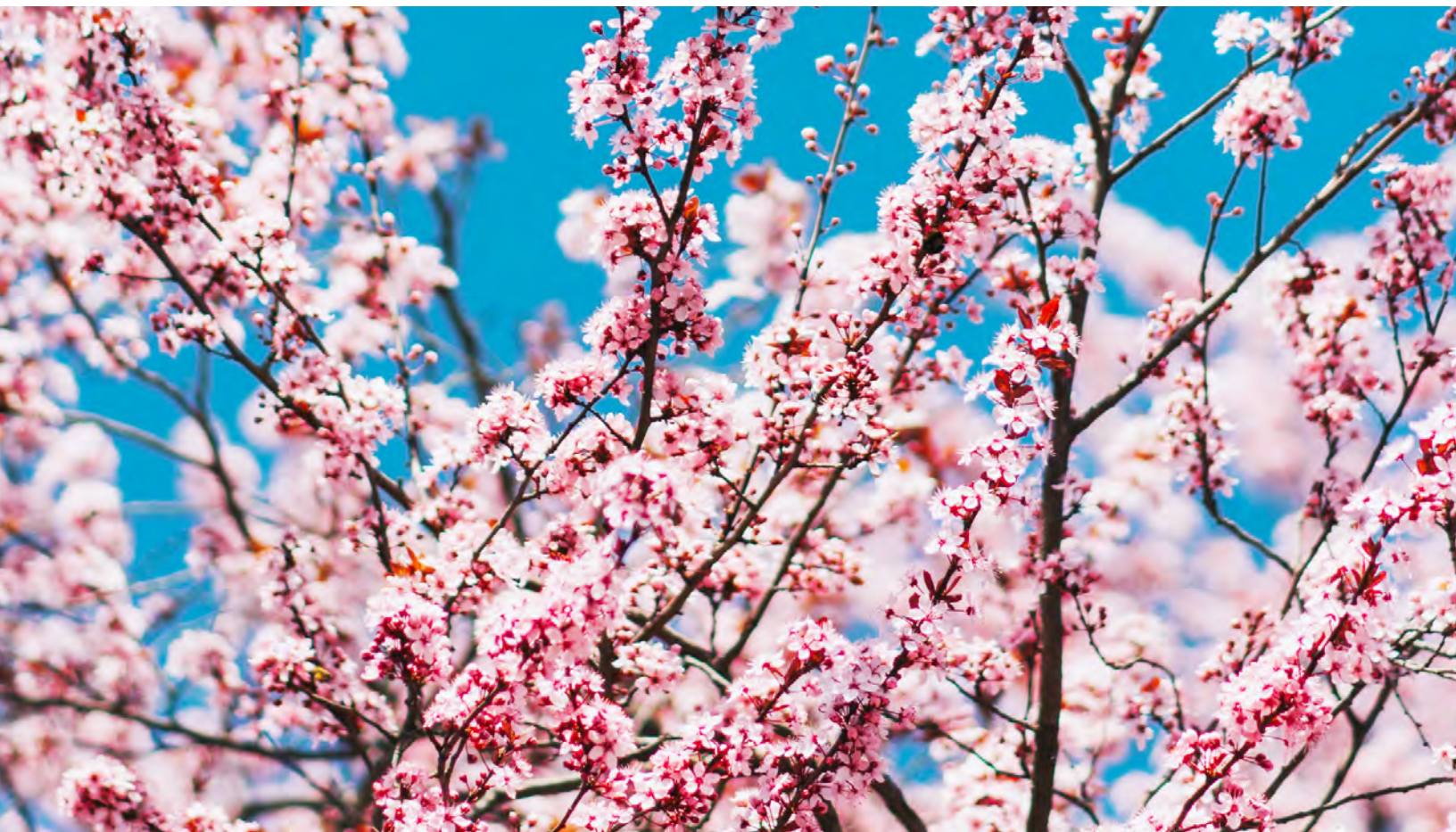
Starr King is participating in a communal cooking project for the local winter warming shelters. The shelters, South Hayward Parish and First Presbyterian, are open until April 30th. They are in need for warm hearty meals.

There is a planning meeting March 1st after the service to coordinate volunteers (cooking, delivery and serving). Options: cooking at home or using the church kitchen. **If interested contact Lorie Miller or Anne Harader.**



Ongoing Activities

Book Group+: Mistakes and Miracles	Meets every 1st and 3rd Monday at 7:15pm in the sanctuary.
Choir Practice	Meets every Sunday from 9–10:15am in the Fellowship Hall
Church Bookstore	Open on the third Sunday of the month, after the service
Drum Circle	First Friday of the month, 7–9pm, in the Sanctuary. For adults and mature kids.
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.
Small Group Ministry	Contact sgm@starrking.org for more information.
Board Meeting	First Thursday of the month, 7–9pm in Fellowship Hall. Open to all.
Adult RE	Second Tuesday of the Month from 11–12 noon in Conference Room.



Starr King Church Calendar

Mar 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 • 10:30 AM Sunday Worship Service • 12:15 PM Planning Session for Warming Shelters	2 • 6:30 PM Rainbow NA Meeting • 7:15 PM BookGroup+	3	4 • 7:30 PM Evening Meditation	5 • 9:30 AM PCD • 12:00 PM LREDA • 7:00 PM Winter Retreat • 7:00 PM Board of Trustees	6 • 7:00 PM Drumming Circle	7 • 12:00 PM Financial Literacy Workshop
8 • 10:30 AM Sunday Worship Service • 12:15 PM Peace & Justice Action Team	9 • 6:30 PM Rainbow NA Meeting	10 • 7:00 PM Worship Committee	11 • 12:00 PM SGM Afternoons • 12:00 PM Staff Meeting • 3:00 PM Pastoral Care Committee	12 • 10:00 AM RE Council	13	14
15 • 10:30 AM Sunday Worship Service • 12:15 PM Adult RE Spirituality - A Personal Journey	16 • 6:30 PM Rainbow NA Meeting • 7:15 PM BookGroup+	17	18 • 7:30 PM Evening Meditation	19	20	21 • 6:30 PM Circle Supper
22 • 10:30 AM Sunday Worship Service	23 • 6:30 PM Rainbow NA Meeting	24	25 • 12:00 PM SGM Afternoons • 7:15 PM SGM Evenings • 7:30 PM Evening Meditation	26	27	28
29 • 10:30 AM Sunday Worship Service • 12:15 PM Adult RE	30 • 6:30 PM Rainbow NA Meeting	31	1 • 7:30 PM Evening Meditation	2 • 10:00 AM RE Council • 7:00 PM Board of Trustees	3 • 7:00 PM Drumming Circle	



March Birthdays

MARCH 1
Liana Klausmeyer

MARCH 2
Joey Murdach

MARCH 4
Collin Carrell

MARCH 8
Bill Hitchings

MARCH 9
Nathan Heigert

MARCH 10
Audrey LePell

MARCH 11
Ray Oducayan

MARCH 12
Rebecca Parr
Darryl Ray

MARCH 13
Margarita Jacob

MARCH 14
Sara Wagner

MARCH 16
Renee Ray

MARCH 17
Ruth Kuftin

MARCH 19
Greg Kuftin

MARCH 22
Karen Cook
Kelsie Kramer Stone

MARCH 24
Susan Dawkins Clark
Cara Prout

MARCH 26
Sherry Thomas
Maya Para

MARCH 28
Brian Johnson