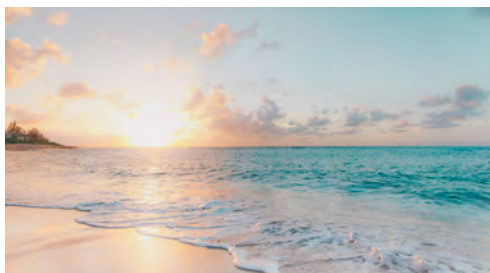




The Flaming Chalice

THEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE • RADICALLY INCLUSIVE • JUSTICE CENTERED

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church | June 2020 Newsletter



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Due to COVID19 shelter in place orders, the church office is closed until further notice.

Kelli is working from home and can still be reached via

office@starrking.org

For pastoral care, please reach out to Rev. María Cristina via email or phone (617)895-9267.

22577 Bayview Avenue
Hayward, CA 94541
(510)581-2060

starrking.org

facebook.com/StarrKingChurch

Parish Minister

Dr. Rev. María Cristina
Vlassidis Burgoa

minister@starrking.org

Office Administrator

Kelli Abatangelo

office@starrking.org

Church President

Jennifer Koney

president@starrking.org

Director of Religious Exploration

Allison Prout

dre@starrking.org

Newsletter

Kelly and Nathan Heigert

newsletter@starrking.org

Please join us every Sunday at 10:30am for worship online using Zoom. We publish the Zoom link for worship in the Announcements email that comes out every Thursday evening. New to Zoom? Go here for more information: starrking.org/zoom. Please reach out to us directly if you need further assistance so we can provide technical support.

During this challenging time we are designing the services week by week, responding to the needs of the moment with imagination and flexibility and love. Please join us each Sunday as we gather together to sing and to reflect, to share our joys and our sorrows, to connect with each other and with something bigger than ourselves. This is the antidote to isolation! Come nourish and replenish heart and soul.

JUNE 7

Blessing of the Animals

Due to current social distancing guidelines, we are unable to hold our regular outdoor service for the blessing of our animal companions. However, this will not prevent us from celebrating our furry/feathered/scaly friends and honoring the memories of those who are no longer with us. On Sunday, June 7, we invite you to bring your pets to our virtual zoom worship service. If they are with us only in spirit, please bring their photographs.

– Rev. María Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa leads

JUNE 14

For the Love of Cats

We will celebrate our UU 7th principle (Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part) by honoring the pet cats that are or have been near and dear to our hearts. We will share your photos and short videos with stories about how your cats have touched your lives, and we will have music from the musical Cats sung by members of the congregation.

– Bob Simoni leads

JUNE 21

Pride Sunday

Each of us has worth and dignity, and that worth includes our gender, sexual orientation, and gender expression. As Unitarian Universalists, we not only open our doors to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, we value diversity of sexuality and gender and see it as a spiritual gift. We create inclusive religious communities and work for LGBTQ2 justice and equity as a core part of who we are. All of who you are is sacred. All of who you are is welcome!

– Rev. María Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa leads

JUNE 28

Celebrating Creativity

Experience the joy of the creative spirit, as members of the congregation share music, poetry and improvisational comedy. Join us for some much needed laughter and positive energy.

– Glen Jacobs leads

Blessing of the Animals 2019

Though this year we're unable to socialize with one another's animal companions in person, we can still enjoy seeing them via Zoom (and looking back on the cute photos from last year).



Bits from the Board

Our Annual Meeting was held for the very first time via Zoom on May 17th and you did GREAT!

Many thanks to our illustrious technical support team – **Beth Ogilvie** and **Kirk Klausmeyer**, in particular – and to the Executive Team – **Mileva Saulo Lewis**, **Marilyn Mosher**, and **Roy Dickerson**, and to the Finance Chair, **Keith Lewis**, for helping to make it a success. And with the heartfelt blessings and the annual summary of church activities from **Rev. Maria Cristina**, we certainly accomplished a lot! Please take the time to read our Annual Report of Board and Committee activities as it details all that your church has been doing.



Thank you to the tech and support team!



Kirk Klausmeyer, Roy Dickerson, Keith and Mileva Lewis, Stephanie Smith, Rene and Rene' Castle, Beth Ogilvie, Kelli Abatangelo, and Marilyn Mosher

By the time you are reading this, you should have the final results of our voting to accept the proposed budget and the slates of candidates for the Board and the Nominating Committee. Because of the extenuating circumstances of having an annual meeting online, the Board also authorized mail-in ballots and several people took advantage of that opportunity.

All this is to say that your Board has been doing a lot more than a little “Bit” this past year and I extend our congregation’s deep gratitude to our current Board:

Mary Swain, Zelma Nunez-Borja, Roy Dickerson, Lavon Hodges, Marilyn Mosher, Jennifer Koney, Natalie Forrest (not in this photo), **Donnie Rett, Ethel-May Shaw, and Mileva Saulo Lewis** for your service. Extra thanks to **Marilyn Mosher, Lavon Hodges, and Donnie Rett** who are concluding their service on our Board.

**Those are the bits from your board this month –
In gratitude for our beloved community**

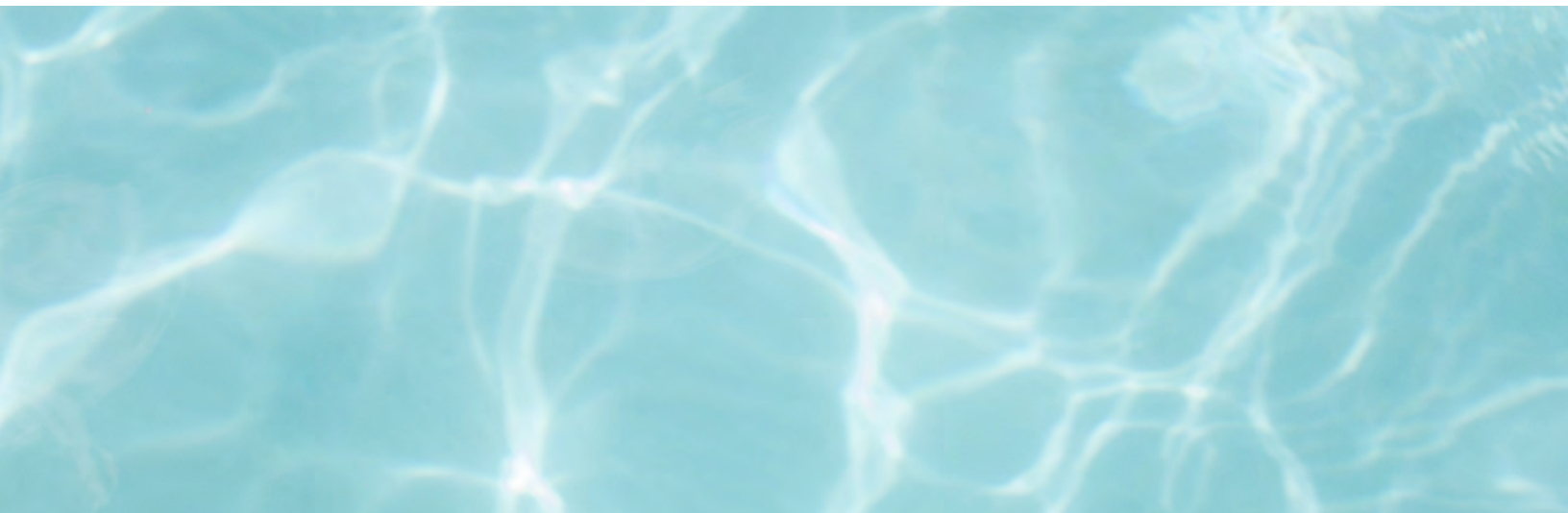
– Jennifer Koney



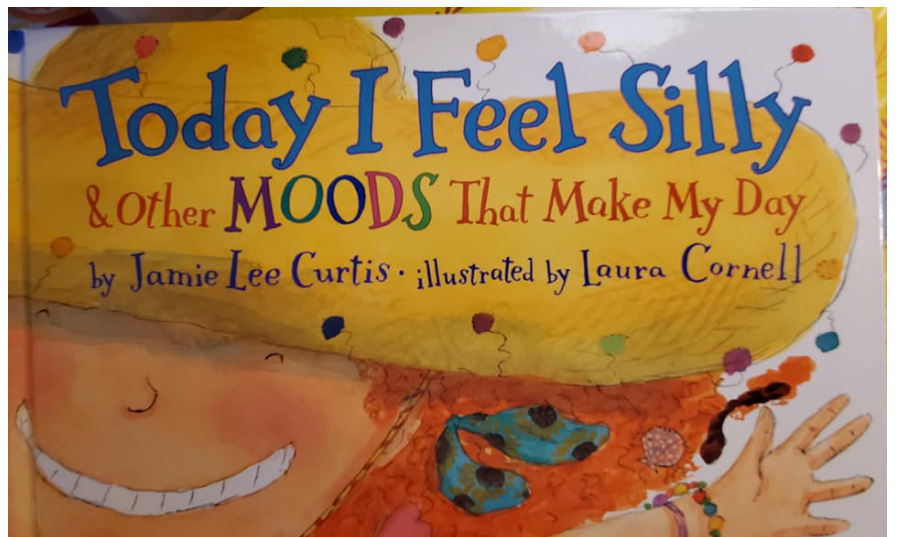
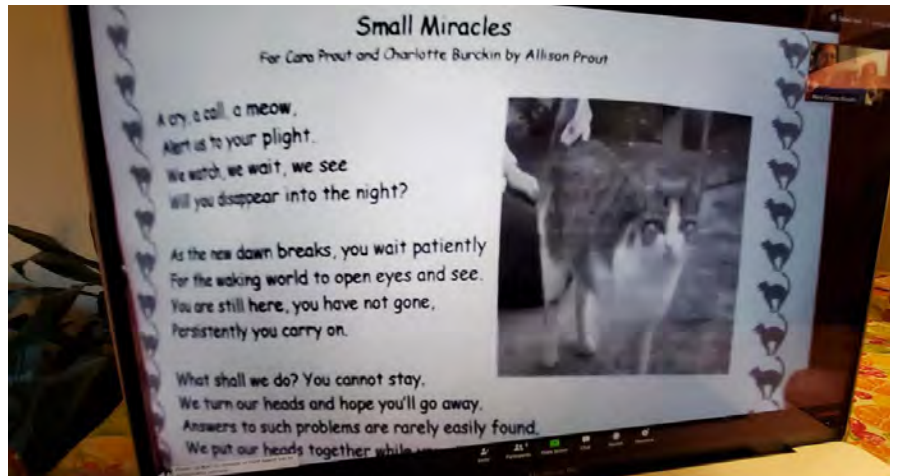
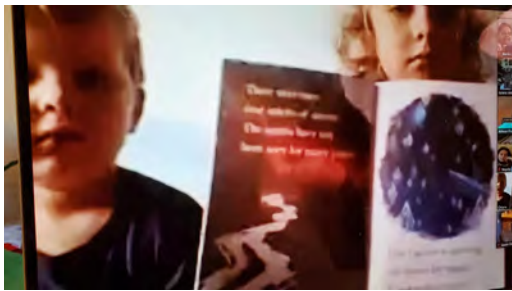
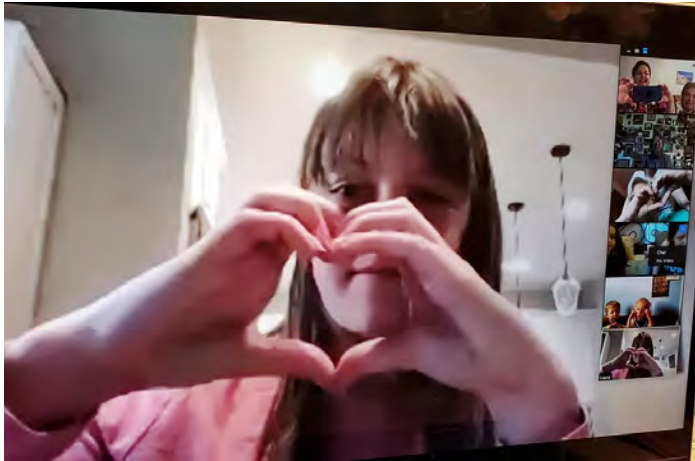
Church Emailing Lists Simplified

We use a web service called Constant Contact for our church emailings - like this one. We have had a multiplicity of different lists - weekly bulletin, monthly newsletter, children's RE, and so on. But it was too complex, and a number of people have missed the worship link recently because of not being on exactly the right list. So now we just have two, one for **Church Communications** and one for **Family Ministry**. We will use the Church Communications list for the Announcements and Worship Info (i.e. this one), the monthly newsletter link, minister's updates, and important church communications like the notice of the annual meeting. We'll use the Family Ministry list for children's RE weekly updates and other related messages. If you would like to subscribe or unsubscribe from any of these lists, it's easy! Go to starking.org, scroll down to the footer, and click "Join our mailing list." You can also unsubscribe by clicking the link in the footer of the email.

– Beth Ogilvie



RE Reflections - Family Storytime



A Reflection on Our Memorial Day Service



It was a pleasure to hear Capt. Rebecca Rich's homily this Memorial Day service, and to further discuss her experience during the following coffee hour. As a liberal congregation, I believe us Unitarian Universalists must walk a fine line between honoring those that serve and skepticism of the use of military force, but it's important to hear multiple perspectives when navigating a complex world, and I was very interested in what Capt. Rich had to say. In the intervening time since, and especially since the events in Minneapolis following the officer-involved death of George Floyd and the subsequent unrest, I have reflected more on our nation's use of force as it applies not just overseas but to our own people.

This is to say that while honoring the sacrifices of Capt. Rich, the soldiers whose stories she shared, and members of our military broadly, it's as important as ever to question the morality of our government's exporting of violence overseas, and to question its justification for doing so. I actually do believe that in certain situations the right to self-defense justifies the use of force, and Memorial Day remains an important opportunity to honor those such as the soldiers and sailors who fought in WWII to defeat fascism. It's also the case that, far from ensuring our protection, the military is incapable of countering the broader dangers that threaten our safety, from climate change to disease, and in fact the virus responsible for the current pandemic is snuffing out some of the very last veterans of that war.

Nevertheless, our national priorities still favor the military, both in budget over underfunded social services and honoring those who serve in it over the endless nameless individuals who keep our country running by picking our food, stocking our shelves, and doing myriad other thankless tasks. The quarantine implemented over the Coronavirus crisis has begun to shed new light on these workers who are the backbone of our economy, but for how long?

For me, my ideology on use of force has been closely tied to my UU upbringing, but not without being touched by our national milieu. I was attending service at the North Shore Unitarian Church in Deerfield, Illinois when a member announced to the congregation that the bombardment of Afghanistan following the September 11 attacks had begun. The collective response was a sorrowful gasp, and yet I thought to myself it was justified, not knowing that two decades later the children of those

troops would still be occupying that country. I briefly entertained the idea of enlisting to be a part of my generation's trial by fire, but my middle-class fast track towards college and my own personal lack of physical courage made that thought short-lived.

Our church was part of the wave of mass protests that opposed President Bush's march to war, this time against Iraq, and I'm proud to have marched through downtown Chicago as part of that opposition. And yet the curiosity in my mind, shaped by Hollywood films of the time such as "Saving Private Ryan" and "Band of Brothers" that served as a hagiography of the soldiers who embarked on a crusade against tyranny, led me to follow the progress of the initial invasion with intense interest, wondering whether such noble stories were at that very time unfolding, before the brutality of a "Shock and Awe" campaign was followed by the brutality of a prolonged quagmire, devoid of the WMDs that were used as a *casus belli*.

In retrospect it's evident to me that, following the end of the Cold War and the aging of the Greatest Generation, the cultural zeitgeist was reaching back to tell their stories as part of a collective longing for a challenge with such moral clarity, and the September 11 attacks became the perfect outlet for acting out on that suppressed impulse. Today we remain living with the consequences of our disproportionate response. It's important to remain on guard of such muddled thinking that can lead us to tell ourselves that what we're doing is right without enough consideration for the harm that our actions can cause, and recognize it when bad-faith actors exploit such public sentiments to further their interests.

Even being liberal is not enough to inoculate one's self from such jingoistic impulses. Under President Obama, I found myself at various times willing to trust the government's antagonism towards places like Libya, Syria, Iran, and its use of drones in Yemen and other adjacent countries, which have contributed to as much suffering as that unleashed on Iraq and Afghanistan. While the rise of ISIS reifies the existence of true evil in the world, invariably one has to acknowledge its existence was only possible due to the Iraq war and the failure to repair that country afterwards. It's a rude awakening when the power we willingly entrust to the President we're comfortable with is then put in the hands of someone like Donald Trump.

We are in the midst of moral crisis in our country in regards to both the violence we export to the rest of the world and the violence we inflict upon our own people. It's my personal belief that the accelerating phenomenon of mass gun violence and

excessive force by police is directly instigated by our government's conditioning of us to accept violence as a valid response to conflict, what with its overseas militarism over the past half-century or more. I see the link between that militarism and the effect it has on militarizing our own police, not just through the osmosis of ideas, but directly through the equipping of our police forces with the very weapons and



Dave Grossman still from YouTube video of military training

tactics used in war. Right now the country is on fire, and I don't see how it gets resolved without addressing the roots of the cause.

This brings me back to how the events happening in Minneapolis and across the country brought to my attention Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, a veteran whose books *On Combat* and *On Killing* Capt. Rich had recommended to help explain her position on use of deadly force in the military, and his relationship to the use of deadly force in policing in America.

Apparently Grossman is also known for his "Bullet Proof Warrior" seminars delivered to law enforcement agencies, which he does up to 200 times a year, which validate the use of deadly force and encourage a "warrior mindset" in the officers that attend. Besides a few clips I have seen, I am not too familiar with the messaging of these seminars and the books themselves, but they appear to, rather than contemplating the spiritual trauma of killing, instead attribute a moral righteousness to the act which I find disturbing. I can't speak directly to the effect that these seminars have on the officers who attend, but anecdotally it seems the officer who was responsible for the death of Philando Castile in 2016 had attended one of them, and who knows how many other officers involved in such deaths had their mentality similarly shaped by these and whatever other aggressive training programs exist. A profile from the New Yorker on Grossman's seminars can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETf7NJOMS6Y>

Times like these can leave one feeling helpless about what to do to try and make things right, but at the very least I'm learning that allies to the cause of oppressed people must speak up when they see racism and injustice, even when it's uncomfortable. I respect Capt. Rich, and while I took it that these books must be a venerable study on a difficult subject, given what I've learned, I feel I must give caution to anyone who might be interested in the books she recommended, as I would imagine this added context would probably put their contents in a different light. Being vigilant against injustice requires constant self-analysis and realization when one's thoughts or actions are in conflict with their values, and I continue to personally reevaluate my own instincts. As always, I hope for a peaceful world and for the country to come together to oppose violence in all forms.

– Nathan Heigert



Anti-Racism Resources

In the midst of racial injustice coming more to light for many of us, the need for activism and true allyship is more evident than ever. Below are resources of how to help financially as well as how to further educate yourself as an ally fighting for racial justice. Please go here for a more exhaustive list of media recommendations (many of mine were taken from here):

bit.ly/ANTIRACISMRESOURCES

– Kelly Heigert

Donate

Black Lives UU blacklivesuu.com/donate

ACLU aclu.org

NAACP naacp.org

Campaign Zero joincampaignzero.org

Black Visions Collective blackvisionsmn.org

North Star Health Collective northstarhealthcollective.org

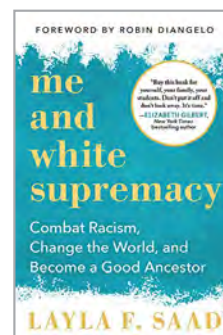
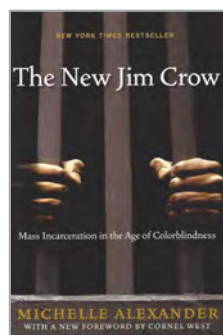
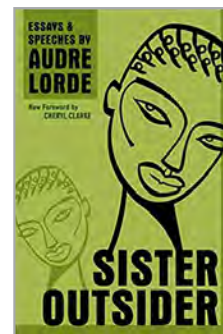
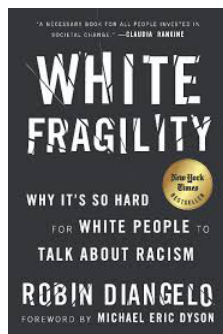
Brooklyn Bail Fund brooklynbailfund.org

Black Mamas Bail Out nationalbailout.org/black-mamas-bail-out

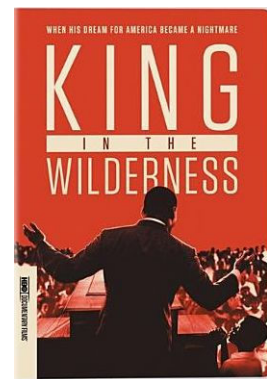
Minnesota Freedom Fund minnesotafreedomfund.org

Reclaim the Block reclaimtheblock.org

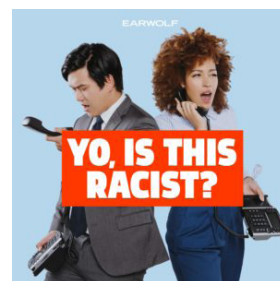
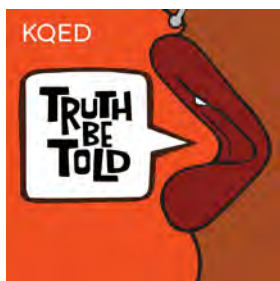
Books (click on image for Goodreads description)



Movies and shows (click on image for Wikipedia page)



Podcasts (click on tile for show page)



Ongoing Activities

All in-person activities done virtually or on hold until further notice.
Please check the website at starring.org for updates.

Drum Circle	First Friday of the month, 7–9pm on Zoom. For adults and mature kids. Contact: Kathryn LaMar
Evening Meditation	Every Wednesday, 7:30–8:45pm on Zoom. Open to all. Contact: Diane Meyerson
Small Group Ministry	Contact sgm@starring.org for more information.
Board Meeting	First Thursday of the month, 7–9pm in Fellowship Hall. Open to all. Contact: Jennifer Koney
Family Storytime	Every Thursday 7pm on Zoom. Contact: Allison Prout
Adult RE	Second Tuesday of the Month from 11–12 noon on Zoom Contact: Mileva Saulo Lewis
Book Group+: Trans Inclusion for Congregations	(On hold) Meets every 1st and 3rd Monday at 7:15pm in the sanctuary. Contact: Beth Ogilvie
Choir Practice	(On hold) Meets every Sunday from 9–10:15am in the Fellowship Hall. Contact: Lea Casini
Church Bookstore	(On hold) Open on the third Sunday of the month, after the service. Contact: Evelyn Cormier



June Birthdays

JUNE 1

Robin Fink

JUNE 5

Rene G. Castle

JUNE 9

Amy Kinnear
Bethany Salway

JUNE 11

Colleen Dino

JUNE 18

Diane Meyerson

JUNE 24

David Baker
Keith Lewis

JUNE 26

Drake Otermat

JUNE 28

Jim Lewis

JUNE 30

Claudia McDonagh