



The Flaming Chalice

THEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE • RADICALLY INCLUSIVE • JUSTICE CENTERED

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church | September 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. Maria Cristina via email or phone (617)895-9267.

22577 Bayview Avenue
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(510)581-2060

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Parish Minister

The Rev. Dr. Maria Cristina
Vlassidis Burgoa

minister@starrking.org

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Jennifer Koney

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Newsletter

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SEPTEMBER 6

Power to the People

Join us for our annual Labor Day Sunday Service as we celebrate with poetry and music the struggle to advance our UU Values in the fight for social justice. SPECIAL PLATE - As our service comes just before voting begins for the Presidential election, the offertory will be donated to the UU THE VOTE campaign.

[UU THE VOTE!](#)

Service led by Bob Britton

SEPTEMBER 13

Water Ceremony

Join us for our annual in-gathering Water Ceremony marking the beginning of a new church year.

If you've ever been by the ocean, lake, river, waterfall, kitchen sink, garden hose, or other source of water that offered you a sense of renewal and reminded you of how precious and beautiful water is, please bring those memories and pictures to share during the service. Our story will be "*We Are Water Protectors*" by Carole Lindstrom. "**Water is the first medicine. It affects and connects us all...**"

SEPTEMBER 20

Protect Juristac

We welcome guest speakers in solidarity with the Amah Mut-sun Tribal Band to learn about a proposed sand and gravel mine that would devastate the sacred people, animal relatives, land, and lake of Juristac. Join us to learn more about Juristac and renew our commitment to nourish meaningful relationships with our indigenous neighbors.

SEPTEMBER 27

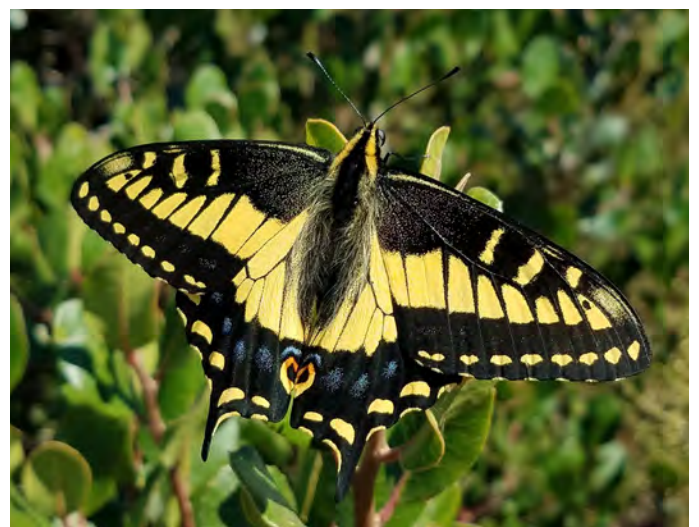
Yom Kippur

On the Jewish Day of Atonement, the holiest of the faith's Holy Days, we gather to reflect and pray. It is an opportunity to examine the heart, take inventory of the times when we have missed the mark, and ask for forgiveness.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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August Highlights



“What I appreciate about the church is the freedom to ponder and pause, to keep working on my ideas until they’re something I feel I can live with, that I value, that lend strength to me, and that I can voice to the rest of the world.” –Evelyn Cormier, member since 1967

Quoted in *An Ordinary Miracle, The 35th Anniversary History of Starr King Unitarian Church of Hayward*, by Neil Chethik

From the Minister

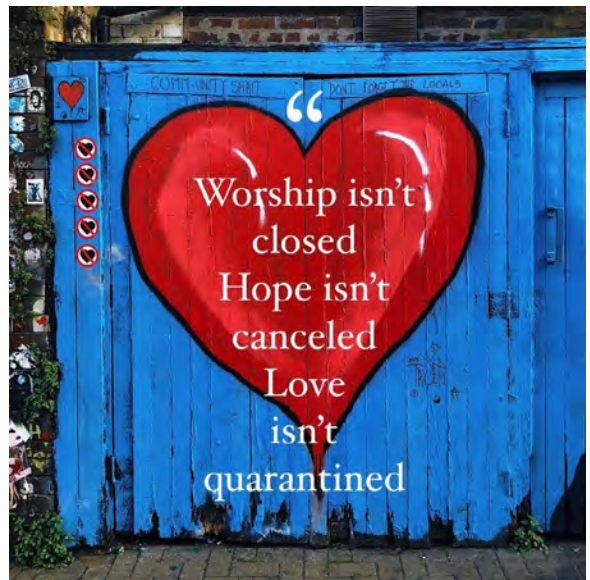
by Rev. Dr. María Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa

Dear Families,

Welcome to Starr King *SoUUiful* Families Ministry!

We are so glad that you have chosen to be in community with us. In these times of uncertainty and change, it is especially important to find ways to connect, to share resources, and to ground ourselves spiritually. Together, we can find ways to deal with our new reality and support each other as we meet these extraordinary challenges. We are grateful for our *SoUUiful* Families Ministry Team: Corina Vasaure, Bethany Salway, Lea Casini, Lorie Miller, and Rev. Maria Cristina. We are so excited to bring you a new program that is designed for families coping with COVID-19 restrictions, school, and life changes. It's meant to be simple and allow you to participate at whatever level works for your family.

Beginning in September, we will explore monthly themes such as Renewal, Wisdom, Gratitude, and Joy. These themes will be present in weekly projects led by Lorie Miller and volunteers, as well as in our Sunday Worship Services. We will continue the Thursday Family Story Time and the Youth Book Club led by Bethany Salway. We are working on designing a new website dedicated for our families to connect, share resources, and support each other. It is currently under construction and as soon as it's ready, we'll email you the link. We look forward to our shared journey!



The Future of Faith Formation

Dear Families,

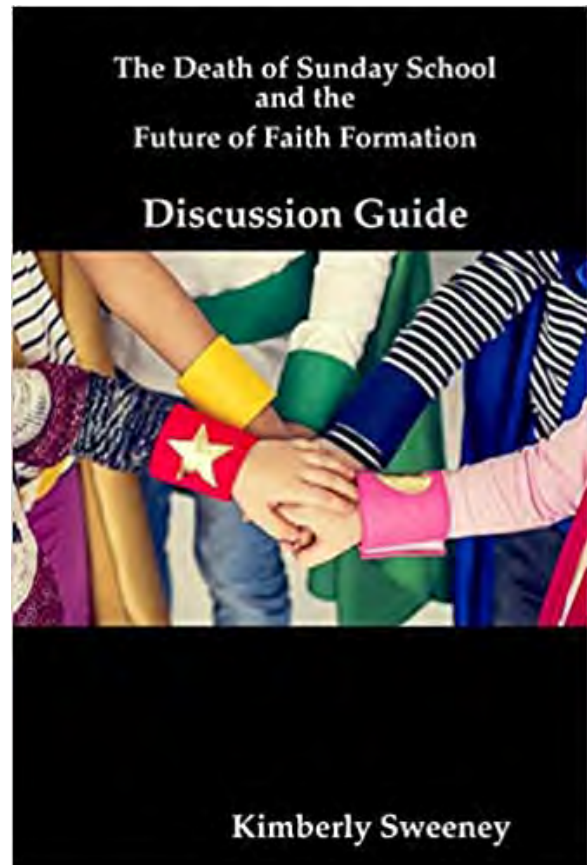
By now most of you have received a copy of Kimberly Sweeney's Discussion Guide about the Future of Faith Formation. If you have not received it, please send an email to Rev. Maria Cristina and we will send you a copy. There is no cost.

Kimberly Sweeney, is a credentialed Religious Educator and independent consultant who worked for seven years as the Lead for Faith Formation and Safe Congregations on the UUA's New England Regional staff team. Sweeney makes a compelling case for the transformation of our approach to the future of Faith Formation as Unitarian Universalists. She offers evidence and research to support these ideas, as well as suggestions for going forward.

We are blessed to have a vibrant, committed, and supportive team of volunteers ready to embark on this new shared journey. The main purpose of this effort is to create resources that respond to current needs, to develop intentionally multicultural learning modules, to provide families more support for spiritual growth beyond Sunday mornings, and offer our children and youth more opportunities to connect, explore, create, and share.

Our Starr King *SoUUiful* Families Ministry is moving towards a more inclusive model of Family Ministry and we need your ideas and participation. Our hope is that in the next month or so, we can gather virtually to have focused discussions and have an opportunity to practice deep listening with our parents. Please look for an email from Rev. Maria Cristina asking you for best days and times to schedule our first gathering. I hope you will join us!

– Rev. Dr. María Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa



Free to be Art Summer Camp

Free To Be Art Summer Camp is coming to an end. I want to acknowledge the team who have made this happen. Every week, the deliverers Ethel-May, Zelma, Lea and Jennifer/Bo made it happen. I really enjoyed connecting with the families who picked up their art bags, Corina, her daughters, Nayeli, Mireya and Rene, her grandchildren, Jake and Jena. I also want a shout out to all the families who participated. I felt the love!! Know that your families are precious.

Good news: the art camp will be coming to an end, but not the connections. We are continuing the deliveries. We are expanding in the fall, beginning 9/3/20. Our weekly program will have a new look, guest speakers, family projects and delivering every week an art or a science project.

Yahooo!! Much gratitude to everyone.

—Lorene Miller



Join a Listening Circle

Do you wish people listened to you more? Wouldn't you appreciate an uninterrupted chance to express yourself while others listened carefully? Beginning in September, join us following a Sunday service for a few minutes of small Listening Circle groups. In these times of "Shelter in Place" you may be yearning for a meaningful way to connect. We at Starr King Church have two active virtual Small Group Ministries. But whether or not you are signed up for Small Group Ministry you may want to connect on a Sunday morning following our service in a more meaningful way than in a group of 50 to 60 people.



A New Way of Connecting

In September join us for a new way of connecting in a focused small group discussion using the principles of "Deep Listening".

Deep Listening

- When you are listening, suspend assumptions. Listen so you can understand the other person.
 - When you are speaking, Speak from your heart.
 - Listen without judgment. When judging you are having a conversation in your own mind, not listening to the speaker. Simply notice when you do this, and return to being present with the speaker.
 - Suspend status. Everyone is an equal partner.
 - Honor confidentiality. Create a safe space for self-expression.
 - Listen for understanding, not to agree with or believe.
 - Honor silence and time for reflection.
 - Ensure that one person speaks at a time. Give each person an opportunity to speak, while knowing that no one is required to speak.
- Do not listen with the intent to reply, but with the intent to understand.

-Bob Britton

Starr King Service Auction

**Week of Monday Oct. 19 – Saturday Oct. 24
Grand Finale Saturday Oct. 24**

You will receive, in the mail, a *Save the Date* magnetic postcard and other material announcing that Starr King UU Church is planning a Service Auction. You may ask how is it possible to conduct a Service Auction in the middle of a pandemic? As it turns out, the auction will be Covid-19 safe by using



online resources. A user-friendly software specifically designed for online auctions was selected. Through it, we will be able to present donated items for both a silent auction and conduct a Grand Finale event which may include an active auction. Every option will be explored to accommodate individuals who prefer limited use of online resources.

What is a Service Auction?

A Service Auction at SKUUC is a fundraising event held every 2 years. The funds raised at Auction, in combination with Member Pledges, make up 95% of SKUUC's income. As you know, our income pays the wages of our staff, determines how many people we hire, maintains our buildings and grounds, and provides for all the other items detailed in our budget. The auction plays a vital role in SKUUC's sustainability.

The Service Auction is also a source of fun, excitement, and camaraderie. This year we won't be able to physically greet you at the door of our church, offer you yummy food & drink, and laugh with you across a table. However, it is our goal to find another way to make this event enjoyable and gratifying for you and financially successful for the SKUUC.

How does an Online Service Auction work?

While we call our event a Service Auction, it includes both goods and services. A goods item might be a gift basket full of chocolate and wine, while a service item could be a dinner for 4 prepared and delivered to your door. Only our imagination will limit the kinds of Covid-19 friendly goods and services that are offered.

All Service Auctions begin with donations. We look to our members to provide these donations. We then put the donations up for a bidding process where the highest bidder wins the prize.

An online auction is a variation of eBay auction. A catalog of donated items will be

Starr King Service Option

available. You can browse through the catalog before bidding. The catalog will be open for bidding for a period of 6 days beginning Monday October 19 and closing Saturday October 24. More detailed information will be available as we get closer to those dates.

The Grand Finale will be held on Saturday 24 October and may include an active auction.

How do I donate?

For your use, a donation form was included in the mailing with the SAVE the DATE magnet. A photograph and description of the item(s) are required. If you have questions about an appropriate donation or how to fill out the form, you may contact Terri Owen towen4321@gmail.com or Diane Meyerson dianemeyerson@gmail.com.

The form or the information as outlined by the form may be sent to Terri Owen by either email or snail mail. If using email, please indicate "Service Auction" in the subject line.

Make a Donation, but then don't forget to bid! We all need to participate for our auction to be a success!

Email: towen4321@gmail.com

Snail Mail: **SKUUC Service Auction**
c/o Terri Owen
5240 Crane Ave
CV, 94546

Starr King members are a resourceful and creative group. With your enthusiasm, we will find another way to make the Starr King Service Auction fun and successful.

*-Your Starr King Service Auction Committee,
Diane Meyerson, Mileva Lewis, Roy Dickerson, Terri Owen, Allison Prout, Bob Simoni, Rene Castle & René Castle*

Bits from Your Board

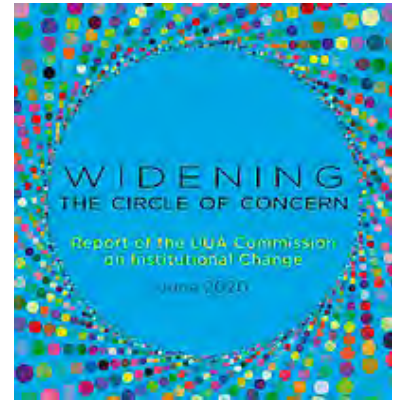
Widening the Circle Initiative

Shared Ministry in Action

–Mileva Saulo Lewis, EdD, RN

A Personal and Professional Reflection

While we were discussing the *Widening the Circle Initiative* at the Board of Trustees meeting on 5 August, I reflected on a song from my late teenage years and mentioned parts of it that night. Before I describe *The Initiative*, permit me a short digression to that song in its entirety and other thoughts that I had that night.



I heard these words when I was sixteen. They were from *South Pacific*; my first Broadway show in 1954.

*You've got to be taught to hate and fear
You've got to be taught from year to year
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear
You've got to be carefully taught*

*You've got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made
And people whose skin is a different shade
You've got to be carefully taught*

*You've got to be taught before it's too late
Before you are six, or seven, or eight
To hate all the people your relatives hate*

You've got to be carefully taught

–Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein, *South Pacific*, 1949

Bits from Your Board

Widening the Circle Initiative

My first impressions were that they were sad and just didn't seem right – *before you are six or seven or eight* – really? That's not what I was taught in Sunday School. One year later when my nursing career began as a student. I did not know the word racism. I didn't know what a white supremacist culture was even though those values, as I have come to know them, were embedded in the hierarchical structures of the hospitals in which I studied and later would work. The doctors were predominately men; the Board of Directors of the Hospital were white men. Affluent white patients were in private rooms and served afternoon tea! In my senior year, I remember confronting a white doctor as I was caring for black teen age boy suffering from the excruciating pain of a Sickle Cell Crisis. He was being denied pain medication because the doctor said he was a heroin addict with no evidence to show. I wondered if I would be dismissed from school? I was not. As I moved in my professional career, again and again, I saw discrimination by gender and race. For example:

Gender and Race Disparities in Research:

- In 1932, Black men in Tuskegee, AL, were offered free medical exams, food and burial insurance and were told that they were being treated for “bad blood.” Those with Syphilis were left untreated so that the long range impact of this venereal disease could be studied. A study that was supposed to last six months continued to 1972. Penicillin, recognized as the treatment of choice for Syphilis in 1945, was denied these black men;
- Henrietta Lacks in 1951 was treated at for cervical cancer with radiation therapy. It was noted that her cancer cells, rather than dying, were doubling every 20-24 hours. These "HeLa" cells played a crucial role in learning how viruses work and in the development of the polio vaccine. Ms. Lacks died on 4 October 1951; her family never benefitted from the donations of these cancer cells and the life-saving role they played. They were all lied to, deceived, and treated as disposable persons.
- All of the studies done on the cardinal signs and symptoms of a heart attack and treatments of heart disease had been done on men, mainly white men. This totally ignores the impact of estrogen and the fact that women present with different symptoms; symptoms that are usually ignored by their doctors. Of note: The NIH recognized this biological uniqueness and in 1987 established the Office of Research on Women's Health spearheaded by the American Nurses Association.

Access to Care Inequities by Race:

Bits from Your Board

Widening the Circle Initiative

- Black women who lack health care access have higher rates of low birth weight infants and infant mortality;
- Referrals for mammograms are delayed while black women have a higher incidence of breast cancer;
- Black men are not as often referred for life-saving open heart surgery, and
- There continue to be higher rates of Diabetes, Heart Disease and Kidney disease among black Americans.

What was I witnessing? What were my patients of color experiencing? Racism? Misogyny? White privilege? Discrimination? Systemic racism? White supremacy culture? Unconscious bias? Implicit bias? By what name shall these events be called in our time? What are we witnessing in 2020?

Widening the Circle Initiative Endorsed by the Board of Trustees

The convergence of events within our country and our faith: COVID-19; the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Eric Garner, Michael, Brown, and Ahmaud Arbery, to name a few, and in our own UU faith, Black Lives UU (BLUU); All are demanding that we step up and speak out.

The UUA Board recognized this need and in 2017 took the following action:

At the New Orleans General Assembly in 2017, the UUA Board of Trustees announced and chartered the Commission on Institutional Change. The charge given was to conduct an audit of the power structures and analyze systemic racism and white supremacy culture within the Unitarian Universalist Association (Widening the Circle of Concern, Jun 2020, pg. xvii).

Widening the Circle of Concern, is the Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change as the response to that charge. Released in June, 2020, it is an urgent call to all UUs to addresses white supremacy and the need for dramatic change within the UUA, UU churches, and society at large. Its depth and breadth draws not only from trends demanding change but also from the moving, painful, descriptions of how people of color within the UUA including the clergy have experienced white supremacy culture.

The Report is easily available in a variety of formats:

- Free PDF: https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/widening_the_circle-text

Bits from Your Board

Widening the Circle Initiative

[with covers.pdf](#)

- Hard copy for \$16.00 + shipping from the UUA Bookstore.
- <https://www.uuabookstore.org/Widening-the-Circle-of-Concern-P18686.aspx>
- Amazon an a eBook: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08BTFL1Y8/ref=sr_1_1?dc_hild=1&keywords=widening+the+circle+of+concern&qid=1593089218&s=digital-text&sr=1-1

The *Widening the Circle* Initiative at Starr King builds on the Envisioning Process and the subsequent Vision, Values and Priorities adopted by this Congregation. It provides stories to make these issues real and it offers solutions and actions for us to consider.

In the spirit of Shared Ministry, The Adult Religious Exploration Committee will coordinate this Initiative, with the Board, Committee on Ministry, our Minister, the Envisioning Team and the Peace and Justice Action Team.

The Board's goal is to use the *Widening the Circle of Concern* Report as a blueprint for study, reflection, and action. We recognize that language is powerful and that perceptions vary with the use and acceptance of terms such as white privilege, systemic racism or white supremacy culture. The Board of Trustees is clear: This not about guilt, blame, or shame. It is about having the courage to begin this journey to overcome systemic racism within a framework whose foundation is love and justice.

Ongoing Activities

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

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|---|---|
| Drum Circle | First Friday of the month, 7–9pm on Zoom. For adults and mature kids. Contact: Kathryn LaMar |
| Evening Meditation | Every Wednesday, 7:00–8:30pm 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: Dr. Rev. María Cristina |
| 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 |



September Birthdays

September 2

Mary Lasack

September 3

Andrew Lasack-Chappel

September 8

Michelle Lovett-Fink

September 9

Ruth Hultman-DeSmidt

September 11

Marilyn Mosher

September 14

Kirk Smith

September 15

Terri Owen

September 17

Mary Ann Davis

September 18

Rev. María Cristina Vlassidis
Burgoa

September 20

Carey Sanchez-Para
Katie Green

September 28

Allison Fink

September 29

Donnie Rett