



The Flaming Chalice

THEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE • RADICALLY INCLUSIVE • JUSTICE CENTERED

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church | January 2021 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.

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Parish Minister

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Vlassidis Burgoa

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Newsletter

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JANUARY 3

Three Kings Day/Dia de Reyes

The Feast of the Epiphany reminds us to honor all of our life's journeys, particularly the unexpected detours.

Service led by Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa

JANUARY 10

Religious Freedom, Part I

Our Unitarian Universalist faith is an ongoing spiritual journey. As a chosen faith, we anchor ourselves in the principles and values that provide spiritual guidance. As a movement, we have a rich legacy of ancestors whose wisdom and prophetic voices continue to illuminate our path.

Service led by Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa

JANUARY 17

Special Guest: Christina Rivera

Christina currently serves as the Director of Administration and Finance at Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church Unitarian Universalist in Charlottesville, Virginia. Previously, she served as Director of Religious Education at the UU Fellowship of Waynesboro. In 2014 she was elected at General Assembly to serve our wider UU community as a member of the UUA Board of Trustees.

"I believe Unitarian Universalism has the power to help transform our world but only as much as we are willing to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. This work is not easy, it does not come cheap and it does take commitment. We have a duty to achieve our mutual liberation. ¡Sí se puede!"

JANUARY 24

Religious Freedom, Part II

Service led by Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa

JANUARY 31

Taize Prayer Service

A spiritual compass. A simple, meditative form of worship, calling us to dwell deeply on the divine's presence around and within us. Mantra songs, prayerful silence, and short readings guide the focus of the prayer in a candle-lit environment.

Service led by Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa

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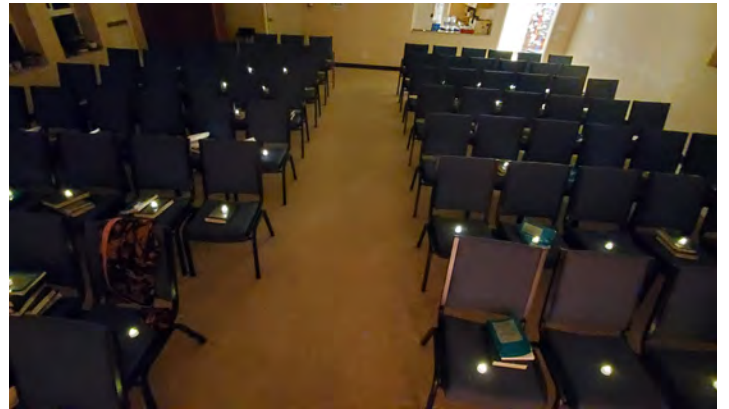
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December Highlights



From the Minister

Journeys of the Heart

The first of January is another day dawning, the sun rising as the sun always rises, the earth moving in its rhythms, with or without our calendars to name a certain day as the day of new beginning, separating the old from the new. So it is: everything is the same, bound into its history as we ourselves are bound. Yet also we stand at a threshold, the new year something truly new, still unformed, leaving a stunning power in our hands: what shall we do with this great gift of time, this year?

– Kathleen McTigue



*Artwork by Puerto Rican artist
Sheila Candelario*

I am at a loss for words to describe 2020.

As I mentioned in my homily last Sunday, I haven't turned the pages on my calendar since February...I was sick for almost the entire month and then the pandemic hit in March. We sheltered in place and experienced social distancing, fear of contagion, financial uncertainty, and grieved for loved ones, friends, our nation, and the world as we watched the number of COVID victims reach hundreds of thousands. Sometimes the days blurred into each other, so instead of the calendar, I relied on our daily church activities not only to mark time, but also to renew my sense of purpose.

When we remember 2020, I hope we don't forget that 2020 also gave us opportunities to grow and deepen our connection as a community. Let us remember how we rallied and continued to offer meaningful Sunday worship services, Pastoral Care, SoUUiful Families Ministry, Wednesday Meditation, Small Group Ministry, beautiful music videos, a monthly newsletter, ongoing garden care and maintenance, book group, social justice action work, a successful service auction, and so much more. Every time we meditated, prayed, learned, sang, cried, and laughed together, we strengthened our connection to our best selves and to each other.

Now, as I slowly and solemnly tear away the pages of the calendar, I can't help being moved to tears as I give thanks for the blessing of being your Minister and being on this shared journey with you. And as I place my open hand on the month of January 2021, I say a prayer filled with hope and anticipation for the days ahead.

From the Minister

January 6th marks the Feast of the Epiphany, or Three Kings Day/Dia de Reyes. It is a celebration of the journey, actually the detour, that brought the Three Kings to Bethlehem. A celebration of faith, resiliency, and courage to change direction and follow a star. In Latin America, on the eve of January 5th, children place a box filled with grass and a bowl of water under their beds to entice the camels carrying the magi to stop at their homes and leave them little presents under the Christmas tree.

On January 6th the families gather together for a meal featuring the traditional “Rosca de Reyes” a giant king cake that has a tiny baby Jesus figure hidden inside. Whoever gets the baby must host next year’s Three Kings party. We also write petitions on a piece of paper and share testimonies of the blessings received during the year. It is a beautiful celebration with music, prayer, games, and gifts.

Last year our Starr King families gathered at the Middleton’s home and celebrated Three Kings. It was a wonderful event and I got the baby! This means that we’ll host the next Three Kings party at church when it’s safe to do so. In the meantime, let us welcome the New Year with Gratitude, Hope, and Joy. Wishing you and yours a Healthy and Happy New Year,

–Rev. Maria Cristina

*Look to this day
for it is life
the very life of life.
In its brief course lie all
the realities and truths of existence:
the joy of growth
the splendor of action
the glory of power.
For yesterday is but a memory
And tomorrow is only a vision.
But today well lived
makes every yesterday a memory of
happiness
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.
–Sanskrit Proverb*



Artwork by Sheila Candelario

SoUUful Family Ministry

December Highlights

We celebrated the month of December with an abundance of joy. My heart is singing, drumming and ringing with all the love we all have shared. The holiday spirit truly lives in our families. Peek a Boo, Barky, Valerie and myself all wish you the very best New Year!!

I want to express gratitude for our SoUUful Family Ministry team:

- Lavon and Lea for being there every week to deliver the art bags to the children.
- Rene and Beth for being so patient and responsive to my tech needs.
- Rev. Maria Cristina for being my guiding light in this new and wonderful journey
- Mama Lily for her on going support and for her child-like spirit.
- And most of all, all of you for opening up your hearts to our SoUUful Family Ministry.

A special thank you

Thank you Santa and Head Elf for taking time out from your VERY busy schedule to acknowledge our special and unique Starr King children.

Take care,

-Lorene Miller



Widening the Circle Initiative

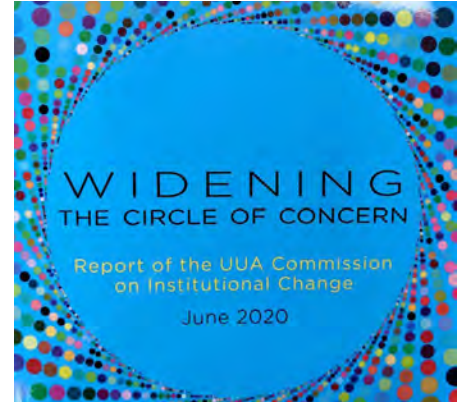
To Launch on January 17, 2021

We are pleased to report that the Widening the Circle Initiative Team will co-sponsor our Sunday church services on January 17th and February 28th with Ms. Christina Rivera and Rev. Leslie Takahashi as guest preachers respectively. The guest preachers will speak about the experiences that lead to the Widening the Circle of Concern project and the Institutional Commission on Change's process and report of 2020.

Until December 2018, Ms. Rivera served as UUA Secretary and Trustee. After she reported racist hiring practices within the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), she and her family received threats and she was forced to resign her position. The UUA Board of Trustees stated:

Never in our lives did we imagine we would need to address this type of behavior, and it breaks our hearts that we do. As one of the first religious educators, and the first Boricua Chicana religious professional, to serve on the UUA Board, Christina has been a diligent secretary and board member. Her commitment to healthy youth ministry, good board practices/policies, and justice for all will live on in our work for years to come.

Rev. Leslie Takahashi is the author of *The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism and the Journey from Calgary*. She served as Chair of the Commission on Institutional Change that produced the Widening of the Circle of Concern – Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change released in June 2020. Rev. Leslie is known to many of us as she is the lead minister at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Church in Walnut Creek and her partnership with us in leading the Beloved Conversations workshops in which many of us have participated.



Christina Rivera




Rev. Leslie Takahashi

Widening the Circle Initiative

We are hoping that both of these services will help to expand our awareness of how white supremacy behaviors have impacted our UU Religious Professionals of color so that we can be a part of the change to right these injustices. Many of us have noted the statue of St. Francis in our garden and the words in the prayer attributed to him...where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; to be understood as to understand. Please join us on this journey toward healing and wholeness within our own church and the wider UU community.

On behalf of the Widening the Circle Team:

Mileva Saulo Lewis, Coordinator and members Bob Britton, Keith Lewis, Claudia McDonagh and Beth Ogilvie with assistance from Jennifer Koney and the Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa.



The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Bits from Your Board

Celebrating American Activists for Racial Justice

Rosa Louise McCauley Parks

1913-2005

The First Lady of Civil Right

“It was 65 years ago when Parks was arrested for refusing a bus driver’s instructions to give up her seat to a white passenger. She later recalled that her refusal wasn’t because she was physically tired, but that she was tired of giving in.

Rosa Louise McCauley Parks was an American activist in the civil rights movement best known for her pivotal role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Born Feb. 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, AL, Parks was married in 1932 to Raymond Parks, a barber and active member of the NAACP. Parks became actively involved in civil rights issues through the NAACP in 1943 and served as the Montgomery chapter youth leader and secretary to the President. Both of Parks’ grandparents were formerly enslaved and strong advocates for racial equality.

On December 1, 1955, Parks boarded the Cleveland Avenue bus for home after a long day’s work at a Montgomery department store. She took a seat in the first several rows designated for “colored” passengers as required by Montgomery city segregation codes. African American passengers had to get on the bus at the front to pay their fare and then get off and re-board the bus at the back door. As the bus became more and more full, several white passengers were standing in the aisle. The bus driver stopped the bus and moved the sign separating the section between white and Black passengers back one row, asking four Black passengers to give up their seats. Three other Black passengers on the bus complied, but Parks refused and remained seated. The driver called the police and had her arrested.

Members of the African American community were asked to stay off city buses on Mon. Dec. 5, 1955 – the day of Parks’ trial – to protest her arrest. The Montgomery Bus Boycott, as it came to be known, was a huge success, lasting 381 days and ending with a Supreme Court ruling declaring segregation on public transit systems to be unconstitutional.”

(Excerpts taken from biography.com)



Protect Juristac

Unitarian Universalists Supporting Indigenous Rights & Activism

Hosted by UU Justice Ministry of California

Sunday, January 10, 2021

1:30-2:30pm Pacific

by Beth Ogilvie

Please join us on Sunday, January 10, at 1:30 for a program led by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones and Colleen Cabot of First Unitarian Church of San Jose and me. The first part of the program centers the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, located just south of Gilroy, and their sacred grounds of Juristac which are threatened by a planned open pit sand and gravel mine. The Amah Mutsun have called for support to prevent the desecration of yet another native sacred site. This is the same program shown at our church on Sept 20. If you missed it, this is another chance to see it.

The second part of the program is an invitation for non-natives to start a conversation about our intentions in building meaningful and accountable relationships with indigenous communities. During this initial stage, we hope to get to know each other and share our experiences in doing this kind of work. It's an invitation to plant seeds so that eventually we can create a brave and safe community space where we can learn together, build trust, and address difficult issues such as the effects of the colonization process. I hope you'll join us!

[Register here](#) to get the zoom link and learn more.

– Beth Ogilvie



Ongoing Activities

All in-person activities done virtually or on hold until further notice.
Please check the website at starrking.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, 7:00–8:30pm on Zoom. Open to all. Contact: Diane Meyerson
Small Group Ministry	Contact sgm@starrking.org for more information.
Board Meeting	First Thursday of the month, 7–9pm on Zoom. Open to all. Contact: Jennifer Koney
Family Storytime	Every Monday 6:30pm on Zoom. Contact: Dr. Rev. María Cristina
Peace and Justice Action Team	Second Sunday of the month following Worship
Adult RE	(On hold) 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



January Birthdays

December 13 Guadalupe Perez-Middleton	January 10 Jacqueline Black	January 17 Sandy Simoni	January 24 Mileva Saulo-Lewis
January 2 Justin Ward	January 11 Walt Korus	January 18 Sophiana Carrell	January 25 Debbie Frederick
January 5 Sherman Lewis	January 16 Beverly Powell Ethel-May Shaw	January 19 Allison Prout	January 26 Ginny Delaney
January 7 Roy Dickerson Steve Blake		January 20 Emily Watkins	January 30 Ben Matthews