



Newsletter

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

December 2017

THE FLAMING CHALICE

Sunday Worship: 10:30 am December Services; Theme: Light

**Church Office Hours: Tues, Wed, &
Thur;
9:30 am to 2:30 pm**

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10:30 am to 2:30 pm

December 3. Love and Shortcuts. Rev. Christian Smith.

December 10. Las Posadas. Rev. Maria Cristina.

A beloved Latin American Christmas tradition invites us to embody our Unitarian Universalist (UU) values. We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person and strive to be a welcoming faith. Los Posadas is evocative of Mary and Joseph's journey seeking shelter from persecution and violence and being told "there's no room at the inn." Historically, UUs have been on the side of those being persecuted. We were part of the underground railroad, the Sharp's efforts to help refugees escape Nazi-occupied Europe during WW II, the Sanctuary movement in the 1980s, and currently, many of our UU congregations are offering physical sanctuary to families being threatened with deportation. Join us as we reaffirm our commitment to oppose Muslim bans and deportations that tear families apart. We open the doors of our heart to welcome all seeking sanctuary.

December 17. Seasons of Light. Rev. Maria Cristina

The Rev. Jacqueline Duhart, Senior Minister at the Oakland UU Church, joins Rev. Maria Cristina in the pulpit for a celebration of light. As we enter into the dark of winter, and amidst the holiday bustle, we pause to reflect on light as a universal symbol of hope and faith. Join us as we light both the chalice and the menorah to remind us of the miracle of community and unconditional love.



December 21 (Thursday). Winter Solstice at 7 pm

Join us for a contemplative evening service offering respite, soothing music, and the comfort of community. Come, come whoever you are! Bring here your heavy heart and put your burdens down. Let us offer each other a space where we can bring our whole selves and practice mindfulness to quiet our minds and nourish our spirits.

December 24. Rev. Maria Cristina at 7 pm

On Christmas Eve, we gather as a community to celebrate the birth of all children, the rebirth of hope, and the miracle of life shared in community. Join us for a beautiful candlelight service with holiday music and the joyful spirit of the season!

December 31. Looking Back. Letting GO. Worship Committee

Join us for a lay led service as we look back on the year gone by and look for signs of hope in the New Year. Featuring a special "letting go" ceremony.



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Wheel of Life



Welcome all the new members:

Jim and Laura Otermat

Barbara Ryan

Bethany Salway

Emily Watkins and Robert Kern

Jessica Ringlein Doerr

Nancy Bonner-Benson



New Member Kathleen Powers with Rev. Maria Cristina

December Birthdays

7-Dec

Mary Lou Schuler

13-Dec

Zelma Nuñez-Borja

13-Dec

Stuart Fink

16-Dec

Henry Sprague

24-Dec

Chris Selig

25-Dec

Holly Robinson

29-Dec

Glen Jacob

31-Dec

Karen Swain



Celebrating Thanksgiving

Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa



"Sanctuary is often something very small not a grandiose gesture, but a small gesture toward alleviating human suffering and preventing humiliation. Sanctuary is a human being, sanctuary is a dream. That is why you are here and that is why I am here. We are here because of one another. We are in truth each other's shelter" Elie Wiesel



On Sunday, December 10, we are invited to participate in a beloved Latin American tradition known as "Las Posadas." Rooted in the spirit of sanctuary and the practice of hospitality, Las Posadas commemorates the perilous journey of Mary and Joseph. According to the biblical narrative, Mary was about to give birth when they were forced by a Roman-mandated registry to leave their home in Nazareth and travel to Judah. Along the way, tired and afraid, they knocked on doors looking for shelter

and were turned away. Shortly after their child was born, they were forced to get on the road again and flee towards Egypt because the king had ordered the slaughter of all male infants.

This is a story of migration, of despots who rule without mercy, of laws that are intended to strip away people's dignity, and most of all, a universal story about ordinary people trying to keep their family safe. It is a story that transcends religious affiliation and asks "Who will find room in their heart for people in need?"

Now more than ever, this narrative resonates with our current circumstances as a nation. We are living in a time of constant fear, in a climate that encourages hatred and rejection, the enactment of Muslim bans, and horrific anti-immigrant rhetoric from the White House resulting in families being torn apart. Yet, we are also living in a time of growing national



resistance. As Unitarian Universalists, we are witnessing more and more of our congregations joining the Sanctuary movement and standing on the side of love. The celebration of Las Posadas brings communities together to celebrate and practice acceptance, hospitality, and solidarity.



This December 10, we invite you to join us in re-creating Mary and Joseph's journey. We will gather at church at 5 pm for a candlelight procession around the neighborhood. We will walk together singing Christmas carols and the traditional songs of Las Posadas. If

for any reason you cannot join the procession, you are invited to join us at the church for the annual Holiday party beginning at 6 pm. We will share a community meal and there will be games for children of all ages. This Christmas at Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church in Hayward, resistance will take the shape of children dressed in shepherd's costumes singing: "*Paz, queremos paz y libertad en este mundo!*" "Peace, we want peace and liberty in this world!"

Resistance will be our community walking together in solidarity with all immigrants and refugees, embodying both the suffering and the hope, and reaffirming our Unitarian Universalist principles as we sing: "In the name of heaven, we ask for shelter. We are tired, we cannot walk any more... Grant us compassion...Please, open the doors of your heart..." and a choir responding "Come in, come in blessed pilgrims! Our home is humble, but we offer it to you with all our hearts!" Resistance will be sitting at the welcome table, sharing a meal and sharing our stories. Resistance will be lifting our voices singing of peace, liberty, and love.



Beloveds, may this Holiday Season bring us closer together as we continue to build the Beloved Community without borders.

With Love and Blessings, Rev. Maria Cristina.



A Puerto Rican Las Posadas

Report from the Board of Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church (SKUUC); December 2017



The holidays are almost upon us, but the board is still at work.

We have been busy with the grounds.

- Bob Britton has been instrumental in having some trees trimmed at our southern perimeter.
- Working with Walt Korus and Dave Middleton, the playground has a fresh covering of wood mulch.
- Preparations are being made to remove Ornea Cottage.
- There are other repairs that the Board is reviewing as well.
- A group is looking at establishing an ongoing maintenance budget to account for long term routine maintenance.

We are going to have a regular “Hospitality Hour” budget to relieve the burden on the volunteers who donate their time, energy and cheer to making the hour after service so enjoyable. If you are so included, the kitchen could always use a friendly face and helping hands. Please contact Lavon Hodges for more information.

There is an ongoing discussion about whether the Mission Statement can be improved. There have been many excellent points stated on both sides of the issue, and the conversation is certain to lead us to a better understanding of who we are and what we stand for as a congregation. The most discussed aspect of the Mission Statement was how **and** if we can make the document represent a church striving for greater inclusiveness. If you haven’t read the text on the weekly order of service recently, please review it and let a board member know what you think about the matter. The Mission Statement should be our “rudder” as we move forward in daily routines and long term goals. It may be perfect, in need of a gentle nudge or requiring a complete overhaul.

Plans are in development for our future Beloved Conversations discussion group. Organized by Jennifer Koney, the group will be discussing white racial literacy. It is recommended that those interested in participating read the book, “What Does it Mean to be White?” by Robin DiAngelo. Future sessions will be offered in December and January, with the exact meeting dates to be announced. You can sign up for the sessions at the table in the back of the Fellowship Hall.

In service, **Will Fitch, Jennifer Koney, Roy Dickerson, Bob Britton, Frank Burton, Mary Lou Schuler, Kirk Klausmeyer, Marilyn Mosher, Sherry Thomas, Heidi Green, and Rev. Maria Cristina**



Rev. Maria Cristina celebrating Final Fellowship with Jo Murdach on November 18

Light Brings Comfort & Hope in the Season of Darkness By Allison Prout



I have been thinking about what light, particularly candle light, means to me. I find myself drawn to and mesmerized by flames and fire. For me, a flame signifies sacredness and hope. Lighting a candle always makes an occasion feel special and watching the candle or fire light brings me a sense of peacefulness, awe and comfort.

For Unitarian Universalists the flaming chalice is the symbol of our Faith. Often a chalice is lit and special words are spoken at the beginning of worship, a ritual intended to create a sacred space and community. UUs today have many different interpretations of the flaming chalice, including the light of reason, the warmth of community, and the flame of hope.

December, in the northern hemisphere, is a season of darkness and cold. When the days are short and nights are long, we tend to want to retreat into the comfort and warmth of our homes, eat comfort food, snuggle under blankets, light fires. It is a time for rest, introspection and self-care. In the long days of darkness, light calls to us, with the promise of peace, serenity & hope.

All around the world there are festivals of light. The lights shine for all that is good in our lives. They honor wisdom, faith, love and hope for brighter days. Lights used in celebration have a special glow. They warm our hearts and calm our fears.

Diwali – In India, thousands of lights shine welcoming Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and good fortune.

Hannukah – celebrates a miracle of light. When priests returned to rededicate their temple in Jerusalem, they found only enough oil to light the flame for one night, but miraculously it burned for eight days!

Luciadagen – in Sweden on Luciadagen, the oldest girl in each family dresses up as Lucia, the martyr, wearing a wreath of candles on her head.

Christmas – lights shine in shop windows and on tree branches. In Mexico and Latin America luminarias light the procession of Las Posadas.

Kwanzaa – candles represent the principles of helping one another, sharing wealth, purpose, creativity and faith.

In this season of darkness I offer you this blessing by Lindsay Bates:

To face the world's shadows, a chalice of light.
To face the world's coldness, a chalice of warmth.
To face the world's terrors, a chalice of courage.
To face the world's turmoil, a chalice of peace.
May its glow fill our spirits, our hearts, and our lives.



Allison Prout

STARR KING SERVICE DEDICATED TO THE WORK OF SOUTH HAYWARD PARISH

The service of Sunday, November 19 focused on the work of South Hayward Parish (SHP). The program was presented by SKUU members Terri Owen and Lavon Hodges with the help of SHP Board member Daryl Berman and former SHP Executive Director Sue Merrill.

The group used a “Worshipful Power Point” to explain the three main programs: Fighting Hunger; Supporting the Homeless; and Fighting for Social Justice. Terri Owen stressed the importance of Starr King’s very long participation with SHP (since 1975). This is how the values of SKUU are made real in our local community.

The SKUU congregation responded with great generosity. Not only did we donate a very substantial mountain of food to stock the pantry, but the cash donations were the highest ever for the SHP Special Plate -- **\$3,101 !!!**

Our contributions will go a long way to ensure that our two principles of supporting the inherent worth and dignity of every person; and finding justice, equity and compassion in human relations continue to be made manifest in our local community. The importance on this work was reflected in the great generosity of our Starr King family at this time of Thanksgiving. Thank you.

Terri Owen, SHP Board terriowen_07@yahoo.com



Lavon Hodges uses the Power Point to talk about support for the homeless.

Sue Merrill explains how the Food Pantry feeds hundreds of people every week.



Glen Jacob and Stuart Fink



Announcements

Las Posadas, December 10 at 5 pm

We will gather to celebrate a beloved Latin American Christmas tradition known as Las Posadas. We will process by candlelight to nearby homes singing carols and we will celebrate at the church with a community feast and activities for the entire family. During Las Posadas, we will recreate Mary and Joseph's perilous journey fleeing persecution, violence, and seeking shelter. In re-enacting this journey, we express our solidarity with all immigrants and refugees and reaffirm our commitment to Peace and Justice for all. [Join us! Free event! Piñata and games for children of all ages.](#)

Raise Money for Starr King by Registering for eScrip and shopping locally.

We get 3% of your total purchases at grocery stores like Lucky, Food Maxx and Save Mart, as well as many local restaurants, such as Black Angus on Hesperian and Ghazni (the Afghani restaurant near A St and 2nd Street in Hayward). To create an account at <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: <https://www.luckysupermarkets.com/rewards/my-rewards#Account>. When you use the related phone number when you make your purchase, we get credit.

SHP Winter Shelter Opens this Month

The Winter Warming Shelter at South Hayward Parish (SHP) will be opening December 1 and will stay open until April 30. SHP opened the shelter when Hayward homeless resident Joe White died from exposure on the streets of Hayward on a bitterly cold night in 2013. Joe was one of 7 homeless people who died on exposure that winter in the Bay Area.

The shelter is open on days of severe weather: 70% chance of rain or temperature below 40%. The shelter offers safety from the cold and rain; a warm dinner and breakfast in the morning. There is security on site all night. The shelter is open to both adult men and women.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: We do not know precisely when the shelter will be open. You can sign up to be on call for a particular day of the week, and you will be contacted.

- Volunteer to do intake on shelter nights
- Volunteer to prepare a dinner
- Volunteer to do laundry
- Volunteer for breakfast
- As always – cash donations

Terri Owen, SHP Board. terriowen_07@yahoo.com



Starr King School for the Ministry warmly invites you to attend its 6th annual Symposium at the First Unitarian Church of Oakland on January 13, 2018 at 685 14th Street in Oakland.

This year's event, "Spiritual Communities without Walls," will have the Rev. Meg Riley of the Church of the Larger Fellowship as our teacher. Together we will explore the uses of technology for building extended faith-based community in the context of the 21st century "media revolution" and our rapidly changing world. Please join us for this day of study, dialogue, food, art, music, community-building, service, and celebration of the Spirit of Life, as we cultivate multi-religious, counter-oppressive, just and sustainable communities.

Guest Minister Introductions

December 3: The Rev. Christian Schmidt serves, with his wife, Kristin, as senior co-ministers of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley. He grew up in Texas, and has served churches in Massachusetts, New Jersey, and now California. He has two young sons, CJ and John, and lives in Pinole.

December 17: Pastor Jacqueline Duhart is a 2008 graduate of Starr King School for the Ministry. She identifies as African descent, lesbian and her preferred pronoun is she. She is a mother, advocate hiker and gardener, justice activist and she shares the sacred journey of being human with her life partner Cynthia. Her favorite spiritual practices are dance/sacred movement and sitting meditation. She is the granddaughter of Maggie Clay and the daughter of Zeller Kimble and Charles Duhart. She is the eldest sibling of five children. Last and very important she is jazzed about being the guest minister at Starr King UU Church in Hayward and partnering with Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis.

New Member Information

Nancy Bonner-Benson: I'm from Ohio where I first learned about UU when I was 14 from a very cool family I babysat for. The dad was a (for real) rocket scientist, the mom a teacher. I recently moved to Castro Valley from Santa Rosa where I worked for 20+ years at Sonoma State University and Kaiser hospital (the one evacuated during the fires). I go to Santa Rosa two days a week, continuing a cancer support group where we focus on yoga and art therapies, which are two of my favorite things. My dog (I love animals) is our mascot. I am a swimmer and a camper. My children and I lived in a tent our first one and a half years in California. Now we have up-graded our camping to an Airstream trailer. I am so very thankful to have found this UU community

Barbara Ryan: I was originally from Louisiana, but I have lived in Castro Valley for a long time. I have attended several Thanksgiving Unitarian camps with my family at deBenneville Pines and felt right at home with everyone there. When I lost my husband Mike, I wanted to find a warm, supportive community to join. My niece Laura, an active UU member, helped me find this wonderful church. I enjoy birding, nature, gardening, puzzles, reading, traveling. I have a cat, Lovebug, who also enjoys the garden and nature and, thankfully, only watching birds, not eating them!

Jessica Ringlein Doerr: I have been married for 28 years to Jim. We have two adult children, Sara and Joe, and one dog, Kaya. I have been a Hayward resident for almost 20 years and work at Sun Gallery as Children's Program Manager and Fremont Hills as an activities assistant; also am a part time Nanny. I enjoy gardening, yoga, and nature.

Bethany Salway: I'm a desert rat from Nevada. I'm a musician, mother, entomologist, gamer, and a computer programmer. I also climb trees.

Emily Watkins and Robert Kern: We grew up close to Washington, D.C. and have known each other since middle school. We have been married for six years and in that time have moved from Austin, Texas to Cambridge, England and now Hayward, California. At some point we realized that many of our "cool" friends were UUs, so we decided to join the hippest congregation around!

Robert is a scientific software developer interested in ancient cultures, physics, and ethical atheism. You can spot him in the crowd, as he's always wearing black! Robert is also one of Starr King's sound engineers responsible for getting our services posted as podcasts on the website.

Emily loves nature and working with kids, so she was happy to recently find work at a local outdoor school. She also enjoys writing and editing, so much that she is co-editor of The Flaming Chalice. In her spare time, Emily writes her own newsletter about seasonal change, hikes around the East Bay, and reads every book in sight.



New Member Ceremony on November 12

Church Calendar for December 2017

For details about these activities, go to www.starring.org/calendar, and hover your cursor over an event.

December 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 * 10 am Safety Committee * 7 pm Drumming Circle	2
3 * 10:30 am Worship Service * 11:40 am Visitor's Circle	4 * 6:30 pm Rainbow Group LGBT NA	5	6 * 7:15 pm SGM Evenings * 7:30 pm Evening Meditation	7 * 7 pm Board of Trustee's	8	9
10 * 10:30 am Worship Service * 5:30 pm Las Posadas	11 * 6:30 pm Rainbow Group LGBT NA	12 * 11 am Adult RE	13 * 12 noon Staff Meeting * 12 noon SGM Daytime * 3 pm Pastoral Care Committee * 7:30 pm Evening Meditation	14 * 7:30 pm SKIT	15	16
17 * 10:30 am Worship Service * 12 noon Church Bookstore Open * 12:15 pm Peace and Justice Action Team	18 * 6:30 pm Rainbow Group LGBT NA	19	20 * 12 noon Elders Meeting * 7 pm RE Council * 7:15 pm SGM Evenings * 7:30 pm Evening Meditation	21 * 7 pm Winter Solstice Service	22	23
24 * 10:30 am Worship Service * 6 pm Choir Practice * 7 pm Evening Worship Service	25 * Closed for Christmas Holiday * 6:30 pm Rainbow Group LGBT NA	26 * Office Closed for Christmas Holiday	27 * Office Closed for Christmas Holiday * 12:00 pm SGM Daytime * 7:30 pm Evening Meditation	28 * Office Closed for Christmas Holiday	29 * Office Closed for Christmas Holiday	30
31 * 10:30 am Worship Service * 1:50 pm Choir Practice						

Starr King UU Church Ongoing Activities	
Activity	Event Schedule
Church Bookstore	Open on the third Sunday of the month, after the service.
Choir Practice	Meets every Sunday from 9:15 am to 10:15 am in the social hall.
Drum Circle (none in October)	Meets on the first Friday of the month, from 7 to 9 pm, in the Sanctuary. Open to all adults and mature children.
Evening Meditation	Meets every Wednesday, from 7:30 to 8:45 pm. Open to all.
Starr King Elderberries	Meets on the third Wednesday at noon. Bring your lunch. Open to all self-identified elders.
SKIT (Starr King Improv Troupe)	Meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm. Open to all.