



The Flaming Chalice

THEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE • RADICALLY INCLUSIVE • JUSTICE CENTERED

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church | October 2021 Newsletter



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday 11–4pm;

Wednesday 9:30–3pm;

Thursday 9:30–3pm

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

office@starrking.org

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

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Newsletter

Kelly and Nathan Heigert
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OCTOBER 3

Blessing of the Animals

Join us in person or via zoom for our annual Blessing of the Animals ceremony. You are invited to bring your pets to our outdoor service, or to our zoom service so they can receive a blessing. If your animal companions have crossed over the rainbow bridge, please bring a picture of them.

OCTOBER 10

Indigenous People's Day

Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to fully understand the legacy of colonialism, just as it calls us to respect and learn from indigenous peoples and support their struggles for social justice and religious freedom. Join UUs across the United States in honoring Indigenous Peoples Day and celebrating indigenous resistance.

OCTOBER 17

Book Communion

A good book can shape us and inspire us. Join guest speaker Glen Jacob and friends for our annual book communion. We will talk about our love for books and authors. If you are coming to the sanctuary, please bring book for the altar, and be prepared to bring a different book home. Those at home will also have a chance to share a few words about a favorite book.

OCTOBER 24

Contemplative Service

Join us as we create a space for a simple, meditative service, calling us to dwell deeply on the presence of the divine around us and within us. Taizé Prayer is named for the ecumenical Christian community formed in Taizé, France during World War II.

OCTOBER 31

Day of the Dead

On this day we remember our dearly departed. You are invited to bring pictures, flowers, and mementos to honor their memory. *"At the rising sun and at its going down; We remember them...For as long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us, as We remember them."*

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September Highlights



Starr King currently has 183 followers on Instagram! We share our photos with UU churches, members, and new friends all around the world. A new way of living our 6th principle: building a world community of peace, liberty, and justice." <https://www.instagram.com/starrkinguuc>

Making Room

by Beth Ogilvie

I've been thinking lately about many things: about cultural differences, about hospitality, about connecting across difference. About how to do it, and why. And I've noticed that the path I take as I navigate these things, and the places along the path, are starting to look familiar.

When I'm around people who come from a culture different from my own white European cultural roots, I often notice behaviors that are different from what I'm used to. Some of them make me uncomfortable! Have you ever had an interaction with someone who had a different idea of how close to get during a face-to-face conversation, or what kind of eye contact was appropriate?...How did you feel?

And that's the first stage in the journey: **noticing how I feel**. Noticing that I'm feeling uncomfortable, or annoyed, or perhaps even hurt by what someone else is doing. **Shifting into awareness. Being mindful.**

When I notice I'm feeling uncomfortable, irritated or judgmental, I move into **curiosity**. I start to wonder: Why am I feeling this? What's behind this? Is there a cultural practice, belief, or expectation that is influencing me?

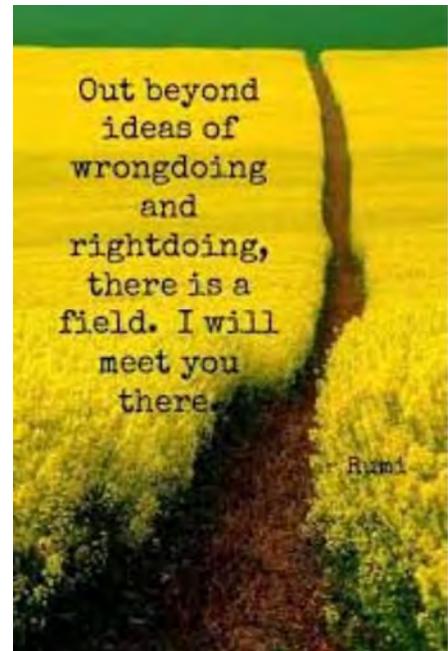
Culture is like an iceberg, with obvious elements above the waterline like language, food, dress, literature and music. Below the waterline are attitudes and beliefs: about leadership, or child-rearing, or courtship, or death, or friendship, or modesty. These "below the waterline" cultural traits can be so ingrained in us we don't even know they're there.

So a big part of this process is learning to see the invisible and to realize that perhaps my way isn't *the one right way*. This is **cultural humility**.

And...Sometimes I really like my way! It's comfortable and comforting. If different ways are equally valid, why should I give up mine? Have you ever felt that?

When I'm in this state of what I call *stubborn understanding*, I have a choice. I can choose not to move, to stay where I am. That is a valid option. Or I can choose **to make room** for someone else's way of being.

One way to do that is to compromise; to meet in the middle.



Making Room

by Beth Ogilvie (cont.)

Another option, I've found, is to shift into **generosity** and meet the other person with humility and appreciation. To realize their presence is a blessing. To receive this blessing. When they're not guarded by the need to conform to my standards, we have the opportunity to meet in a place of openness and acceptance, as two human beings, two beautiful human beings who have found each other.

I like to imagine a metaphorical empty bowl between us, where there is room for us to meet, to learn about each other, and to create something new and wonderful together. If my wants and needs are filling the space between us, there isn't room for much else to happen.

Sometimes what gets in the way isn't comfort, but my need to make plans and manage things.

A few years ago, at the end of Beloved Conversations we gathered for a meal. I wanted to get organized for the future: decide what to do, create a new organization, identify participants, list action items. Rev. Maria Cristina wanted to go around the circle and say what we were grateful for about BC.

Now I will tell you: I was *really attached* to my plans. But when I shifted into generosity and cultural humility, instead of a business meeting, we connected on a deep heart level. It was a spiritual experience.

This is the journey for me in a nutshell:

1. **Awareness and curiosity.** Noticing how I feel and why.
2. **Practicing cultural humility.** Recognizing when my wants and needs are getting in the way.
3. **Shifting into generosity.** Meeting others with appreciation and seeing them as a blessing.
4. **Opening to a deep human connection** in a sacred space.

I never know exactly how it will turn out, but I love the adventure of it, and more and more now it brings me to that place of deep connection. And this, more than anything, is what makes life worth living for me.

—Beth Ogilvie

Testimony by Karin Lin

First Parish Cambridge Congregant and Church Leader

"Today I want to talk about how I, a lifelong atheist, found God.

Growing up in the Bible Belt, I developed a lot of animosity toward religion. In high school, I organized a successful campaign to remove the prayer from my public school's graduation ceremony. In college I wasted countless hours debating strangers online about the existence of God, and in graduate school I was a founding member of SANE (Students for a Non Religious Ethos).

But it was a tough way to live. Always cringing whenever I heard the word "God," always mistrusting anyone who professed a belief in God.

After 9/11, my husband and I joined a Unitarian Universalist congregation because we were looking for community, nothing more. But as the years passed, I realized that my animosity toward religion had been grounded in fear. Fear of being different. Fear of being misunderstood. Fear of being told I was a bad person. Once I had a safe place to be an atheist, I was able to develop my own understanding of what is meant by the divine, the sacred, and the holy.

Just as my ability to speak Spanish and Chinese has opened many doors for me, so too has my ability to speak and understand the language of reverence widened my horizons. I have a more peaceful relationship with my in-laws, and I'm not scared of my boss at work. The energy that I used to spend fighting religion is now spent fighting oppression and injustice. I'm able to provide spiritual care to immigrants in detention, which has been one of the most heartbreaking and eye-opening experiences of my life. If God is love and love is God, then I have found God many times over.

I still consider myself an atheist, but more often I identify as a Unitarian Universalist -- because my commitment to right relationship, crossing borders, breaking down walls, and building bridges is a far more relevant description of my faith.

The magic of a place like First Parish in Cambridge is that transformations like this happen all the time. When we have a safe place in which we can occupy the multiplicity of our identities, we can widen our circles to reflect the oneness of humanity that we know we all share.

This is the power of love. This is the power of Unitarian Universalism, and this is the power of First Parish in Cambridge."

– Karin Lin, First Parish Cambridge Congregant and Church Leader



Peace and Justice Action Team

Meeting Agenda: 9/12/21

I. Welcome All!

II. Our changing leadership

III. Team Structure – Discussion For Consideration:

a. Climate Justice

b. Indigenous Solidarity

c. Community Partnerships

IV. Communications - Internal and beyond PJAT

V. Meeting Format and Time

VI. ACTION AREAS

a. Updates

b. Discussion

c. Anti-racism Aspect

d. ACTIONS Recommended: i) PJAT; ii) congregation; iii) beyond our walls

VII. Reflections and closing

Full minutes from the latest PJAT meeting can be found here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/12SyU2dQnJ8ZyGhy88hgYfmcqqr7GOy59RWpFF0mnMK0/edit>



View of sanctuary during worship rehearsal, Saturday, Sept 18. The projector wouldn't come on, so Rene G Castle had to go up and take a look. Amy Pete, worship associate, is at the podium.

SoUUlful Family Ministry

September Highlights

SoUUlful Family Ministry

We continue to provide both virtual and in person services. The weekly Family Project bags continue to be delivered to the participating families. I am pleased to be now including visiting grandchildren and have been expanding our virtual out reach to extended family member's children.

Happy Heart Circle Time

The children begun Sept with growing hope. Bob Britton's service inspired us to grow and nourish hope. We planted a plant and nourished it with soil, water and sun. We named it Baby Hope and each week we invite it to our circle for a "hug."

For our Water Ceremony, the children created their own water alter, discussing how water is important to us. We drink it, wash dishes, swim and bath in water. Plus water makes things pretty. Bubble play and our water table were the main attractions for that Sunday!

For Yom Kippur, Monkey and Dog helped us to learn to say sorry to others and to discover that our heart feels better when we say, "sorry". We all at times, have regretted doing something, like how Dog took Monkey's color crayon. To be honest, and love ourselves is the best way to resolve a regret.

Compassion and Courage is all about asking ourselves, "What would you do?" The children explored different scenarios, i.e. if a puppy was thirsty... if a friend was sad....

Courage is believing in yourself to be kind and compassionate.



SoUUlful Family Ministry

September Highlights

This month's last virtual circle was all about celebrating the beginnings of our Starr King's "Very hungry Caterpillars." The children are following Rev. Maria Cristina's Monarch Butterfly adventures. We are watching closely. Her photographs are wonderful.

SoUUI Family Projects

Each week, the families received a project, either a game or art. This month we made games for the family to play, a shuffle board, a ball toss and catching some silliness. The children also created a jelly fish and a twisty ssssssnake.

Gratitude

Thank you Lavon for delivering our weekly family project bags

Thank you to our classroom volunteers:

- Lea Casini
- Nathan Heigert
- Laurie Mathews
- Donnie Rett
- Roy Dickerson

We could not do what we do for our children without your help. So much gratitude for all your love and time!!!

-Lorene Miller, SoUUIful Family Ministry Coordinator



Ongoing Activities

Starr King welcomes all church interest groups and committees to meet in-person at the church either inside or outside the facility. If your group has been meeting by Zoom, it may continue to do so, by discretion of the group. All groups meeting in-person on the Church grounds should continue to observe COVID safety protocols by:

- Wearing masks
- Practicing social distancing
- Refraining from serving and sharing refreshments

We applaud your continued participation in SKUUC activities.

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: Roy Dickerson
Peace and Justice Action Team	Second Sunday of the month after worship (after a 15-20 minute break) in a hybrid model via Zoom using the same link as the service.
Family Storytime	(On hold) Every Monday 6:30pm on Zoom. Contact: Dr. Rev. María Cristina
Adult RE	(On hold) Second Tuesday of the Month from 11–12 noon on Zoom Contact: Mileva Saulo Lewis
Choir Practice	(On hold) Meets every Sunday from 9–10:15am in the Fellowship Hall. Contact: Lea Casini



October Birthdays

October 1
Carl Fink

October 3
David Longfellow

October 16
Kelly Heigert
Sheila McClellan

October 23
Erik Walter