



# The Flaming Chalice

THEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE • RADICALLY INCLUSIVE • JUSTICE CENTERED

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church | November 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](mailto: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](http://starrking.org)

[facebook.com/StarrKingChurch](https://facebook.com/StarrKingChurch)

### Parish Minister

The Rev. Dr. María Cristina  
Vlassidis Burgoa

[minister@starrking.org](mailto:minister@starrking.org)

### Board President

Roy Dickerson

[daesworkgd@comcast.net](mailto:daesworkgd@comcast.net)

### Newsletter

Kelly and Nathan Heigert

[newsletter@starrking.org](mailto:newsletter@starrking.org)

## NOVEMBER 7

### Veteran's Day

Rev. Pratima Dharm a war veteran (US Army) will speak on Nov 7th to pay tribute to those who have served in the military on the occasion of Veterans Day and the crucial role of the Beloved Community in healing the battle scars that Soldiers carry deep within their souls.

–Rev. Pratima Dharm, Guest Preacher.

## NOVEMBER 14

### Taize Contemplative Service

Join us for a simple service focusing on Gratitude. The practice of gratitude can help us lean into an abundance mentality rather than scarcity. This in turn helps us nurture our own generosity of spirit. What are you grateful for today?

–Service led by Rev. Dr. María Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa

## NOVEMBER 21

### Thanksgiving

Every Thanksgiving we connect in solidarity with our community partner South Hayward Parish. Led by Terri Owen, we are invited to be grateful for the opportunity to live into our UU values that encourage us to be compassionate and generous.

–Service led by Terri Owen

## NOVEMBER 28

### Hanukkah

The Jewish celebration known as Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the miracle that kept the menorah's candles burning for eight nights. Often called the Festival of Lights, the holiday is celebrated with the lighting of the menorah, traditional foods, games, and gifts. On this day, we are reminded to be grateful for the gifts of faith, family, and community which rekindle hope when we most need it.

–Service led by Rev. Dr. María Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa

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# October Highlights



# From the Minister

## The Miracle of Transformation

Beloveds, as you may have seen on our Facebook page, I have been deeply engaged in the nurturing of monarch butterfly caterpillars. I had read about the scarcity of milkweed plants causing a decline in the monarch butterfly population. But it wasn't until one day when Darryl Ray and I were sitting outside that I got the idea to actually help the monarchs.

Darryl had brought his medicine bag to share with me his spiritual journey that is deeply connected to nature, especially the cultivation of healing herbs. I was engrossed in listening when a butterfly began dancing over Darryl's shoulder and it was so magical! I took it as an invitation to take action and start collecting monarch eggs.



I had never done this before and being a true believer in letting the wisdom of nature take its course, I wasn't so sure I should intervene. But this is exactly what Darryl and I were discussing: the many ways that spirit/the divine/the universe manifests itself to invite us to be co-creators, to recognize that we all have healing powers, and to say "Yes!" to the invitation to become co-conspirators in protecting nature and all beings.

Another facet of this story is that I was going through a difficult time and was feeling like my spirit had been crushed. I was deeply sad and praying for something to shift, for the heaviness in my heart to lift, for joy to return to my life. And my prayers were answered in the form of an almost invisible tiny little egg left by the monarch butterfly that was dancing over Darryl's shoulder. The journey had begun and I had lots to learn!

Thank goodness for the guidance of my dear friend Alison Aguilar Lopez Gutierrez McLeod (Maestra Mariposa), Youtube, and science teachers making videos showing the stages of growth: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly. The best part was the enthusiasm of so many people who cheered me on and contributed milkweed to feed the very hungry caterpillars.

Fast forward: we have released 13 monarch butterflies as of October 25th and we have at least two dozen more getting ready to emerge. I cannot explain in words what this journey has done for my spirit. It has been so healing to dedicate time and practice mindfulness with the caterpillars. It requires patience and the ability to discern whether that little dark speck is a baby caterpillar emerging from the egg, or poop left over from yesterday.

# From the Minister

## The Miracle of Transformation (cont.)

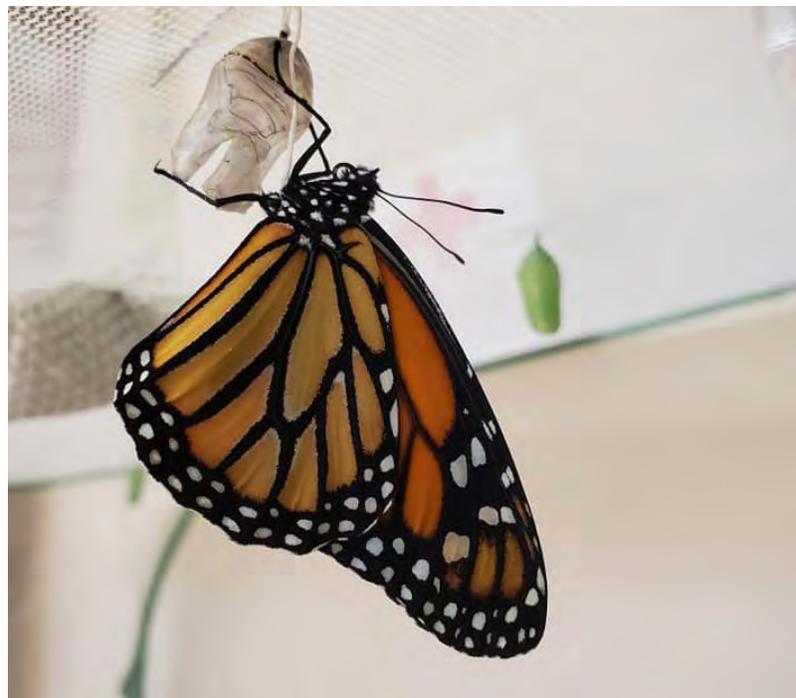
That was the big lesson: being patient, moving slowly, turning the leaves over and over very gently to make sure the tiny caterpillar wasn't hiding in the folds, and looking closely at everything in order to keep the space as clean as possible, getting rid of yesterday's poop and welcoming new life. The process was not perfect and there were some casualties. A couple of aggressive caterpillars knocked down the most vulnerable chrysalides and they ended up in the "Monarch E.R." I'm doing my best to help them heal, but there is a chance that one or two won't make it. Accepting this is also part of the process.

As the caterpillars were experiencing their metamorphosis, there was also a huge transformation happening in my heart. The time spent with the caterpillars was a chance for me to practice mindfulness: to stop worrying, to let go, to focus on the task at hand, to care for this little life right in front of my eyes, and to do my best to help it thrive. As I learned to turn the leaves over and over multiple times, I tried to look at the source of my sadness from different points of view. I learned to discern the difference between being stuck in yesterday's poop and the life-giving attitudes that can help me move forward. I saw myself shedding old skins, changing my own attitude in order to change how I saw others, and transforming slowly, awkwardly, with the help of friends who cheered me on and held me in loving kindness.

This was such a gift! I no longer felt sad and I felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. My heart rejoiced at every tiny sign of progress and that joy was shared with many in our community, especially our children. We will be releasing butterflies on sunny days for the next couple of weeks. You are welcome to join us! Who knows, one might just begin dancing on your shoulder!

With Love and Bendiciones,

*-Rev. Maria Cristina*



# Peace and Justice Action Team

## **Draft Rules Protecting Frontline Communities' Health and Safety Issued**

On Oct. 21, the California Geologic Energy Management Agency (CalGEM) issued a momentous draft rule banning the permitting of oil and gas wells within 3,200 feet of homes, schools, hospitals and detention centers after an almost 2 year wait. Environmental justice groups across the state are celebrating the historic 3,200 ft setback for public health, the most aggressive buffer in the nation, and also are urging Governor Newsom to close the loopholes and phase out neighborhood drilling.

*"Wilmington residents (LA County) have lived with the dangerous health impacts of oil drilling for far too long. The Governor's announcement regarding the CalGEM rulemaking show us that the Newsom administration is listening to us," said Wendy Miranda, Wilmington Community Member, Communities for a Better Environment. "But now we need them to strengthen this rule and make it law. Countless frontline environmental justice communities have been waiting for this rule and we look forward to engaging in the process to ensure that workers and communities are protected as this rule is finalized."*

The public comment period closes Dec. 21 and the final rulemaking is not expected to be in place until 2023. The Peace & Justice Action Team is working with the VISION Coalition (Voices in Solidarity Against Oil in Neighborhoods) and its allies, including 350 Bay Area Action, to strengthen the health and safety protections for frontline communities.

**WE NEED AS MANY PUBLIC COMMENTS AS POSSIBLE BY DEC. 21** to be heard over the thundering voice of Big Oil! Please add your public comments here:

English public comment submission [here](#).

Spanish public comment submission [here](#).

And share with every Californian you know!

Join VISION and our environmental justice partners with your public comment to 1) support a 3,200-foot setback for new wells, 2) demand that the setback applies to existing wells, and 3) demand an emergency response to ban all new permits within the setback until the final rule is in effect.

Many thanks and with deep gratitude for your commitment to action.

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# Peace and Justice Action Team

cont.

## **From our Peace & Justice Action Team:**

The UU Ministry for Earth is hosting a powerful documentary about Indigenous climate leaders through November. *The Condor & The Eagle* features their trans-continental journey that deepens the meaning of "climate justice."

The suggested donation to watch is \$1 (on a sliding scale) and available regardless of your ability to donate. For more information and a link to watch *The Condor & The Eagle*:

<https://www.uumfe.org/condor-eagle>

# SoUUlful Family Ministry

## October Highlights

### Starr King SoUUlful Family Ministry

#### In Class

October was a fun filled, exciting month. For our Blessing of the animals, we talked about how our heart feels when we have animals in our lives. Our nature walk, celebrating Indigenous People's Day, resulted in a class effort in making a Dream Catcher. Its hanging outside of our fellowship hall. The children got to share their favorite book during our Book Communion show and tell circle time. For our Contemplation class, we discovered, at times it is good to play calmly and enjoy the moment. Lets not forget our Halloween gathering. We enjoyed a pumpkin patch, played with pumpkin "guts", took turns with a hay ride, and enjoyed special treats. Our most special treat was Starr King's Monarch butterflies. They are so beautiful,

#### Virtual Service

#### Happy Heart Circle Time

We were able to follow along the miracle of the Monarch butterflies. Rev. Maria Cristina's photos put us right there with them! We celebrated Indigenous People's Day with a special original story about "Special Teachers." We learned to be like rain and water our gardens, or to be like a tree and grow big and strong, or to be like a cloud and look up to the sky to dream or to be like rock nestled in the soil and nestle into warm hugs.



# SoUUlful Family Ministry

## October Highlights

We continued our month with appreciating our books and with another original story, "The Wishing Star." All the children were stars in this unique story. For our Contemplation service, we learned that breathing while creating a rainbow can make our hearts feel calm and quiet. Lastly we enjoyed the journey of the Monarch butterfly

### Virtual Service

Our projects this month joined the families with silliness, nature walks, making our own books, painting with shaving cream and creating Jack-O- Lantern faces.

### Expressing Gratitude

We could not do what we do for our children without the help of others. I appreciate all of your support!

Thank you:

Lavon for your double duty, not only do you deliver the weekly art bags, but the special bags as well. And I would like to thank you for your pumpkin donation. It completed our Halloween pumpkin patch.

Ethel-May for your contribution of gorgeous feathers, which are now hanging in our Dream Catcher.

Rev. Maria Cristina your photos of the butterflies were wonderful

Class Volunteers: Glen J., Donnie R., Lea C., Amy P., Bethany S., and Kelly H., thank you all. You are most appreciated.

*-Lorene Miller, SoUUlful 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.**

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Evening Meditation</b>            | Every Wednesday, 7:00–8:30pm on Zoom. Open to all.<br>Contact: Diane Meyerson  |
| <b>Small Group Ministry</b>          | Contact <a href="mailto:sgm@starrking.org">sgm@starrking.org</a> for more information.   |
| <b>Board Meeting</b>                 | First Thursday of the month, 7–9pm on Zoom. Open to all.<br>Contact: Roy Dickerson   |
| <b>Peace and Justice Action Team</b> | 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. |
| <b>Family Storytime</b>              | <b>(On hold)</b> Every Monday 6:30pm on Zoom.<br>Contact: Dr. Rev. María Cristina  |
| <b>Adult RE</b>                      | <b>(On hold)</b> Second Tuesday of the Month from 11–12 noon on Zoom<br>Contact: Mileva Saulo Lewis                                  |
| <b>Choir Practice</b>                | <b>(On hold)</b> Meets every Sunday from 9–10:15am in the Fellowship Hall. Contact: Lea Casini                                       |

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# November Birthdays

**November 2**  
Bob Meyerson

**November 3**  
Diana Dickerson

**November 6**  
Kathryn LaMar

**November 8**  
Bob Rett

**November 10**  
Lorie Miller  
Bob Simoni

**November 11**  
Jordan Lowell Baker-Blanc

**November 14**  
Hank Wagner

**November 21**  
Alyssa Joy Baker-Blanc

**November 30**  
Susan Blanc