



The Flaming Chalice

THEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE • RADICALLY INCLUSIVE • JUSTICE CENTERED

Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church | February 2023 Newsletter



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FEBRUARY 5

Gate A-4

Reflections on the poem "Gate A-4," by Arab-American Naomi Shihab Nye, touching on the questions such as: Who are we called to care for? When do we answer the call to serve? Where might we be surprised by grace? Join us for this intergenerational service led by Lorie Miller and Lavon Hodges.

FEBRUARY 12

The Interdependent Web of Values

Values, like beings, do not exist in isolation. They are inextricably intertwined. In this service we'll explore the connections among our recently identified church values, the existing UU principles, and the draft Article 2 of the UUA bylaws. Values define and enrich each other in profound ways.

Ben Ogilvie leads.

FEBRUARY 19

The Anthropocene: A 'Return to Eden' or 'The End Times'?

The clock is ticking on the fate of the Earth as we know it, set in motion by our own doing. Geologists suggest naming this current era "The Anthropocene Period." As steward/partners of creation, can we 'get back to the garden' in time? The Rev. Ben Meyers will lead a service encompassing our Unitarian Universalist principles to explore a path forward... laughing along the way. All are worthy, all are welcome.

FEBRUARY 26

Love in Community

Community is our highest value here at Starr King. What does it mean to you?

Reverend Ruth Rinehart leads.

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January Highlights



From the Minister

Rev. Ruth Rinehart

Hello Starr King! How beautifully you are emerging, from pandemic to endemic. How beautifully you are engaging in powerful conversations with each other about what this community means to you, and your vision for its future. In January, the Cottage Meetings and the Congregational Conversation looked at what the unifying values here at Starr King.

This word cloud represents those values that 41 of you discussed in small groups. Community is at the top. Part of your work, in the coming season is to delve more deeply into what that word “community” means to you. We will find ways for you to comment on this.



How you view community is also very much a part of February conversations: How Will We Support Religious Education? While the conversation is primarily focused on children, youth and families, of course religious education is for adults as well. I encourage you to sign up for one of the five cottage meetings scheduled. They need a minimum of three people (other than the facilitator/s) in order to “make.” Please keep that in mind as you are choosing which one to sign up for. Click here for the SignUp Genius platform, which allows you to see who else has already signed up for the meetings.

Take a deep breath. Right now. Close your eyes for just a moment, while you breathe comfortably, deeply if that feels good to you. I talk about our bodies a good bit – every day is the right day – now – to pay attention to your body, to appreciate your body, to care for your body, to learn from your body, to move your body – in ways small and

From the Minister

Rev. Ruth Rinehart (cont.)

large. Closing your eyes and breathing mindfully – it gives you a needed rest from any stress you are carrying, any worry or anxiety. I think often of how parts of our body work endlessly for us – hands, arms, legs, feet – today I am thinking of eyes and lungs. Breathing is a miracle, and so are our eyes. Most of you reading this will be reading it with your eyes, and just closing them for a moment – three breaths – gives them a needed rest. If there is someone reading this without sight, through adaptive technology, I welcome hearing from you, and whether this brief exercise of closing your eyes is meaningful.

As I head out to two weeks of travel outside the country, I am hopeful that we will have our new Office Administrator start work right after I get back. I will be back on Sunday the 19th, for the Congregational Conversation on religious education. A colleague will be preaching that day, and I don't know whether I'll be at the church in person, or zooming in due to covid considerations after being in Cambodia and Mexico. I remain grateful for the Zoom Inclusion Group of this congregation, and the ability to make that decision based on the health of the congregation and still participate.

As the waxing moon grows larger each day this week, I am aware of the California abundance of life, the lush green we see these days, as well as the beauty and love found within Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church. You are important. You are full of life! May you find many blessings this month. I'll see you in a few weeks!

–Rev. Ruth (*she/her/hers*)

minister@starrking.org

(720) 290-5715

Announcements

Nominating Committee

Are you interested in serving the church in a meaningful way?

On May 28 at the annual congregational meeting, the Nominating Committee presents a slate of candidates for open positions on the [Board of Trustees](#) and the [Nominating Committee](#). This year the open positions are:

- Vice President / President Elect
- At-large Board Member
- Nominating Committee Member

If you're interested in any of these positions, if you feel called to serve our congregation in this important way, please click the links above to review the job descriptions, then fill out this [brief form](#). Serving the church this way is an opportunity to connect more deeply with our beloved community, and help guide our congregation ever closer to our shared values.

You can also [use the form to recommend someone else](#) you feel would be a good leader for our church.

If you have any questions, or you would like to receive these materials in another format, such as PDF (or paper!) please reach out to Darryl or Ben. Our contact info is below. We welcome your interest!

Nominating Committee Vision

We (the NomCom) endeavor to nominate individuals for church leadership who embrace the following vision:

- 1. We (the congregation) are relational and spiritual as well as practical.** Our meetings are spiritually uplifting and deeply nourishing as well as supportive of our community in practical ways.
- 2. We have strong partnerships among the minister, the board, and the congregation.** These working relationships are invigorating and mutually rewarding, and strengthen our shared ministry.
- 3. We have compassion with accountability.** We recognize that living our values fully requires attention and feedback and frequent adjustments to how we are together. We embrace the redemptive process of listening, owning our wrongs, apologizing and repair, understanding that this leads to grace* and true community.
- 4. We plan for future generations.** Our decision making looks beyond the present to when the children of the church are grown, and when their children are grown, to the kind of church we want for them.

Announcements

(cont.)

*Grace: The state of living in alignment with our values. When we are “missing the mark” in some way, we fall out of grace. The redemptive process restores us to grace.

– Darryl Ray & Ben Ogilvie, Nominating Committee co-chairs

Darryl: dalbertray@yahoo.com, (510) 612-8358

Ben: ben@betho.us, (510) 363-0612

Peace and Justice Action Team

Our next Peace and Justice Action Team (PJAT) meeting will be at noon after our Sunday church service on February 12th.

If you would like to receive PJAT Action Alerts or updates via e-mail let you can contact Darryl or Ben through PJAT’s email: dalbertray@yahoo.com or beth@bethos.us

Congregational Conversations & Cottage Meetings

February’s theme: Religious Education

Cottage Meetings in February

Thursday, February 2, 10:30am-12pm with Marilyn at Starr King

Saturday, February 4, 10:30am-12pm with Amy via Zoom

Tuesday, February 7, 6:30-8pm with Darryl at Starr King

Saturday, February 11, 10:30am-12pm with Liz at Starr King

Tuesday, February 14th, 11:00am-12:30pm with Nathan at Starr King

Cottage meetings are conversations with 3-8 other members, small enough for generative conversations in this interim time. This is important work for the future of the church. [Sign Up for Cottage Meetings](#)

Congregational Conversation in February:

February 19, 12-1:30pm after Sunday worship service

Everyone is invited to join the Starr King community to discuss important issues facing this congregation in our search for a new settled minister.

A Statement from Nathan Heigert

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. –1 Corinthians 13:11

Find something you love to do, and you'll never have to work a day in your life.
–Anonymous

I've quoted two lines above that come to mind when I think of my current situation. Usually both adages are accepted as conventional wisdom; one about the needs of maturing, the other advice about how to be fulfilled in work. What if those two sentiments conflict, though?

Truly, taking a job at Lego seems akin to picking back up childish ways. After nearly twenty years without them, two factors rekindled my childhood enthusiasm for the colorful plastic bricks: the birth of my son Oliver and the downtime that quarantine afforded (some) for hobbies.

As Oliver started toddling, I made a point of resurfacing my childhood Lego collection in anticipation of passing them on to him. But until he was old enough to play with them safely, he would have to start out with the baby-friendly Duplos, so I gave myself permission to “practice” on the real things until he was ready.

At first this reunion had more utilitarian purposes. I would plan remodeling ideas for the house by building a scale version of it in Lego that I could rearrange as needed to explore different ideas. Later, as I followed the 50th anniversary of the moon landing, I purchased a Lego version of the Saturn V rocket that helped wrap my head around the amazing engineering that went into that program. That same set would soon ignite my imagination, as I recombined those same pieces to start making custom models.



Millennium Falcon made with Saturn V Rocket parts

A Statement from Nathan Heigert

(cont.)

My career had mostly focused on storyboards for video, so I already needed to think spatially in three dimensions to visualize how characters and props in a specific location could be arranged and what camera angle to use to form the right composition for a shot. With Lego I think similarly, though instead of imagining something's depth and breadth I can literally form it. As a creative person that also has appreciation for organized systems, including things like puzzles and Ikea furniture, I would consider myself well suited for the medium. So I continued building throughout the pandemic in my spare time.



Model of Waterfall City from Dinotopia

By the time Covid started receding and the world opened back up, I found that I had amassed a portfolio of work in Lego. This helped me to land a freelance position with a Canadian company that made custom commissions in Lego, and my first assignment was designing a set for the mother of an adult son with autism, based on one of his favorite comic books. It was fun to work in the medium professionally, and it felt good to make something that brought so much joy to someone else.

Through the freelance custom designer position, I became aware of an opening at The Lego Group itself. Since I already had a portfolio of work, which now included commission-based designs, I was able to rather easily put together an application, which I sent off without much expectation of hearing back.

Apparently, though, Lego had seen a business boom throughout the pandemic and was making record sales, largely off of adults like myself, and because of travel restrictions hampering hiring they were becoming understaffed. As I soon discovered, timing and opportunity worked in my favor, and after an interview process that lasted several

A Statement from Nathan Heigert

(cont.)

months I was offered the job at the end of November. As the possibility that this would happen became more real, Kelly and I both began to imagine actually doing it, and we both agreed it was something we truly wanted. Moving to a small town in Denmark is a huge change, but a welcome one, as we'll be afforded a unique and special new life and a great new place to raise Oliver.

So back to those quotes at the top. I'm astronomically lucky enough to get a job doing what I truly love, working in Lego, but what about putting aside childish ways? Rather than accepting the pejorative childish descriptor, I prefer instead to see it as childlike, embracing wonder and imagination as a positive thing in life.



Model of the Castle of Grim

Millennials like me have consistently made known their enthusiasm for nostalgia, and marketing forces have capitalized on and to an extent perpetuated that even further. Thus every movie and show now is apparently either a sequel or a prequel or a reboot of something from the 70's, 80's, or 90's, for better or for worse. For me, though, I'm still at heart fascinated with these little interlocking bricks, and I'm ready to admit to myself and others that it's what I love. And how can that be wrong?

—Nathan

Postscript: As we settle into our new, distant lives, we will naturally have a different relationship with Starr King, and I've begun transferring some of my responsibilities to others that I'll be unable to continue. Nevertheless, we intend to attend services when possible over Zoom, as well as continuing to edit the monthly newsletter. I'm grateful for the best wishes our family has received and thank everyone for accommodating us in this transition.

As a parting gift, we'd like to give a copy of [my graphic novel](#) to every household at Starr King. Please stop by the church office beginning this Sunday to receive one.

SoUllful Family Ministry

January Highlights

Sharing a thought...

Tooth Fairy

Liz Nelson, Ramona and myself were discussing the Tooth Fairy's generosity. When I was a child I received a dime, Liz got a quarter and Ramona, a dollar. We all chuckled about the differences in the amounts. Ramona spoke up with her explanation, "Well Tooth Fairies all come from different places, where some have more money than others." She thought we received what they could afford. I am thinking several things here...the value of a gift is not in dollars and cents, but instead it is in the giving! And perhaps it is also, the beginning of understanding the disparities of our wealth distribution in this country. Wise words from a 7-year-old person.

Circle Time

Multi Generation service

The children started off the month with thoughts of change and transformation. The beautiful Monarch butterfly guided us through that process.

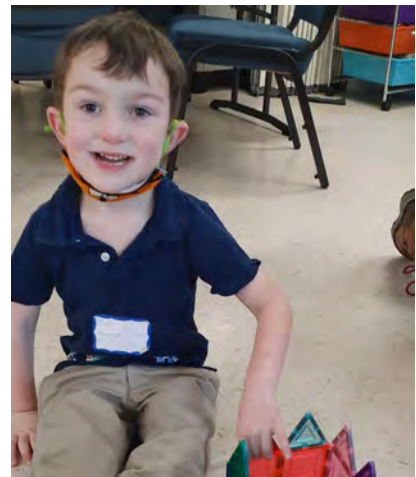
Classroom Circle

What a better way to connect us as a community than home made soup! The children collaborated their skills of dicing vegetables, opening up cans, stirring the soup, setting the table and of course eating the soup. We continued the connection with the web we weave with our friends at church. As the circle discussed how we connect, a web of yarn was wrapped around the children, so they could physically feel the connection. And lastly the children baked "Friendship Cookies", asking themselves "How does it feel to be baking friendship cookies" and "who will they share them with?"

Family Ministry Event

A field trip to Coyote Hills

The children and their families are planning to spend their Sunday, February 12 visiting the Indigenous Gardens at the park and learning about the Ohlones People and their connection to the land. For details, please see Joanna Zinsli.



SoUllful Family Ministry

January Highlights (cont.)

Gratitude

A special gratitude for Jeffrey Melcher for all his hard work in assisting this church in developing a thriving Family Ministry. Thank you. I have stated this before, and is worth repeating, I am so grateful for the volunteers who commit a Sunday to our children. Glen Jacob, thank you for your "Story for All Ages." It was nice to get back to some past traditions. Lea C, Laurie M, Mary Lou S, Corina V, Nayela, Mireya and Diane M, thank you for stepping up to the challenge of teaching our children,

Here is [the link](#) to Jeffrey's report regarding the future of our Family Ministry.

—Lorie Miller



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 will 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 Starr King activities.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Evening Meditation | Every Wednesday 7:00-8:30 pm, on Zoom. Open to all. Visitors welcome. Contact: Diane Meyerson |
| Board Meeting | First Tuesday of the month, 3:30–5:00 pm 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. |
| Starr King Singers | Sundays before the service from 9:30-10:00 a.m. |
| Starr King Choir | Every Monday 7:00-8:00 pm. Contact: Linli Wang at music@starrking.org |
| Adult RE | (On hold) Contact: Mileva Saulo Lewis at milevalewis@comcast.net |
| Small Group Ministry | Contact minister@starrking.org for more information. |

We would love to celebrate your Birthday in The Chalice. If your special day is not already listed, please let us know the day and month of your Birthday. Send information to ddmeyerson@gmail.com.



February Birthdays

February 5
René L. Castle

February 6
Frank Howell

February 7
Oliver Heigert

February 12
Kirk Klausmeyer

February 13
Bill DeSmidt

February 19
Alison Corson

February 20
Lea Casini