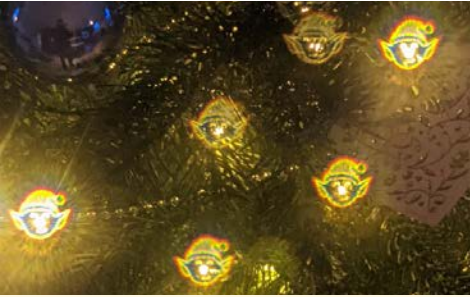




The Flaming Chalice

THEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE • RADICALLY INCLUSIVE • JUSTICE CENTERED
Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church | January 2024 Newsletter



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January 7

Evolving Truth, Enduring Meaning

Why is Unitarian Universalism creedless? To what question is love the answer? How can we know that love is the answer? Join us for the questions, musings, poetry, and current answers from one UU contemplating truth and meaning. *Rene Castle leads.*

January 14

Substitutionary Atonement and Asymmetrical Risk

Say what? *Rev. Elizabeth Sollie leads.*

January 21

Illumination (Multi-Gen)

Join us to celebrate the ways Unitarian Universalism illuminates our journeys and brightens our world. Together, we will reflect on UU values that are important to us and take the opportunity to refocus our hope and commitment to advance these values in the coming year. Join Tanya Webster, Director of Religious Education, our youth and families, and Rev. Sollie for this special worship.

January 28

Religious Naturalism

Rev. Sollie is an RNUU--a Religious Naturalist Unitarian Universalist. Maybe you are too? Join us to explore this theology. *Rev. Elizabeth Sollie leads.*

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December Highlights



From the Minister

Rev. Elizabeth Sollie

It takes about six months for a new minister to enter a system. I know most of your names now and a little bit about you. I know how you conduct business. I know something about what you hold lightly and what creates anxiety. I know a little bit about what you cherish and where you get stubborn. It is good to be up to speed.

Now that I am a little bit caught up with you, I am pleased that it seems to coincide with the two transition teams getting well underway. The Past team will hold an all-congregation meeting after the service on January 21st. My experience is that most people are loathe to participate in telling the story of the past since you already did it on this anniversary or that and with this minister or that, but that once we get into it, we find there is always more to learn and insights bubble up. This congregation, like all congregations, carries some wounds and these meetings can help name those wounds which is the first step to reconciliation. This congregation, like all congregations, carries some strengths and it is so important to tell that story too. Also, I hope everyone will attend, because it is hard to tell a shared story with missing voices.

The future team has set up small groups sessions we are really excited about. I think you are going to enjoy the conversation and get to know people in some new ways. Be sure to get signed up—important bonding is going on here and you don't want to be left out.

I also look forward to your discussions about article two of the UUA bylaws. We all love our seven principles and I am hearing some excitement about the proposed changes as people get used to the notion.

I have been so grateful for all the ways this congregation has been showing up this fall. The Peace and Justice Team helped bring about justice in the world in concrete victories on the side of love. The worship team and friends have been trying on new things behind the scenes and in the pulpit. The Family Ministry team put on an awesome Christmas party and have been working with our DRE, Tanya to shift and grow our Religious Exploration program. Our Human resources team has rounded out a full staff this fall and created some new policies about paid leave. The proof of their good work can be seen in Linli, Tanya, Emily and Patrick—an awesome staff! The Board has been attending to their fiduciary, strategic and generative duties all while learning what that even means—thoughtfully expanding their understanding of leadership. The Caring Team is broadening their mission. The grounds team has created and maintains a little slice of Eden right outside our doors and some quiet folks keep fixing and repairing our buildings. I love that people in other states and other countries help keep this congregation humming along. And so many individuals have said yes to a need over and over. I am grateful to be amongst such lovely humans.



Announcements

How to Write Letters to the Editor
A free 1-hour Zoom Workshop,
Wednesday, January 17, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
[Pre-registration Link](#)

Learn to write letters to the editor that are likely to be published. Policymakers, and many others, read opinion letters, and the effort is well worth your time.



You'll find out what editors are looking for; how to submit letters; and successful writing formulas.

We'll encourage you to write about progressive reforms to the Alameda County criminal system; however, you may choose to write about any topic.

Held by the Economic Justice Committee of Kehilla Community Synagogue, and the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails (www.icjjalamedacounty.org).

Questions? Contact lizkatznow@gmail.com

Bits from Your Board

Board appoints Mary Lou Schuler

The Board of Trustees at its December 5th meeting appointed Mary Lou Schuler to fulfill the remaining first term (January 2024 to 30 June 2024), of former Board member Lorie Miller. Many of us know Mary Lou in her capacity as song leader and member of the choir. Recently, she served as a member of the Nominating Committee, a position which she will vacate now that she is on the Board. Thank you Mary Lou for saying, “yes to serving in this leadership role.”



Board sets Goals for the Next Year

We believe that it’s important to be intentional with our time and talent and treasure and not leaving to “happenstance” what work gets done by the Board. Therefore, after reviewing all of the input gathered from church leaders in early fall and as a result of the recent congregational read, *Unlocking the Power of Covenant*, the Board is committed to the following goals:

- Create a congregational covenant that lays out who we are in relationship to each other, our church community and our faith.
- Take a leadership role in dismantling systems of oppression through education and advocacy.
- Be faithful stewards of our assets; Financial; buildings and grounds, and the safety and security of our people and property.

We are also aware that to keep faith with our fiduciary role, the trust that you, the Congregation has placed in us, we will ask ourselves, is the project and all subsequent actions:

- Consistent with our values: Is it loving? Is it generous? Is it equitable? Is it inclusive?
- Is it prudent: That is, is it wise? Is this the appropriate time? Do we have the financial and human resources to undertake the project? Is there risk and if so, is it still worth doing and how do we minimize the risk?

Ad Hoc Safety Team

Rene Castle, Allison Prout and Mileva Saulo Lewis met at the end of November as an Ad Hoc Safety Team. Our primary goal is to safe guard the well-being of people and property. To that end, we will review all policies and procedures dealing with:

- Disruptive Behavior
- Health and well-being of people and property
- Fire Safety and Prevention

Bits from Your Board

(cont.)

Personnel Decisions:

- We approved the hiring of Patrick Brooks as media tech. Welcome Patrick!
- We approved time off (vacation, holidays, sick leave) and benefits (health care, retirement) policies for all staff.

NEXT MONTH – Getting Involved – Take a suggestion or concern to the right person or committee

Rev. Sollie in her report to the Board wonders about how things get done here. This is a reasonable question to ask, because she's a "newbie" trying to figure it out. However, what if she were a visitor or a new member who is curious about how to get involved in church activities? How do they do that? Indeed! We realize that coming back from COVID, we've been fairly informal about how things get done. So, stay tuned for more information about the ways in which you can be involved and a "who to go to" if you have a suggestion or concern.



General Assembly

A Profound UU Experience

By Ben Ogilvie

If you haven't been to General Assembly yet, you've missed a treat. At GA we get to join thousands of other UUs, meeting, connecting, worshipping, witnessing, learning, and doing the business of our Association, the UUA. I love it! I've been to 3 in person and 3 virtually. The UUA says:

General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles.

Please join us [online](#) Wednesday, June 20 through Sunday, June 23, 2024 for this 4-day immersive experience where we participate in inspirational worship services and informative workshops, reconvene with friends and colleagues, and explore our virtual exhibit hall. GA is an unforgettable experience for the thousands of UUs who participate. You'll leave with renewed energy and innovative ideas to share with your congregation and community-at-large!

Registration is available at [UUA.org/GA](https://uua.org/ga). Register before March 1 for the lowest rate. Rates will increase on March 1 and again on May 15. [Note: It is possible to be a delegate for free with a "business-only" registration. That gives access to the delegate platform but nothing else.]

Programming. GA will offer dozens of outstanding programming selections (workshops, panel discussions, worship services, and other presentations) over the course of five days. Programs will provide attendees with concrete and usable tools to further the work, and the balance needed to explore multiple identity-based and theological perspectives. The theme for General Assembly 2024 is "Love Unites, Stories Ignite."

Like Unitarian Universalism, GA offers a wealth of theological diversity. A variety of worship choices are offered throughout GA. The Service of the Living Tradition is where we commemorate fellowshiped and credentialed religious leaders, those who have died, those who have completed active service, and welcome those who have received fellowship or credentialed status in the past year. Sunday Morning Worship at GA is a powerful, communal worship experience and is the largest annual gathering of UUs in Worship.

Financial Support. The UUA is committed to the goal of making GA accessible to as many attendees as possible. Go to [UUA.org/GA](https://uua.org/ga) to learn about scholarships to support delegates – particularly those from marginalized groups - and volunteer opportunities (work in exchange for registration).



General Assembly

A Profound UU Experience (cont.)

A church our size gets 2 delegates. Our minister is a delegate as well. Delegates get to vote. That's important every year, but it's especially important this year because the assembly will vote on the proposed change to Article II of the UUA bylaws, to update our principles and sources for the first time since the 1980s. The UUA says:

The votes that GA delegates cast have a huge impact on Unitarian Universalism. They determine our elected leaders, amend the bylaws and rules that govern our Association, and shape the justice work that we do as a movement. If you are interested in serving as a delegate from your congregation, talk to your minister or your congregation's governing body.

Accessibility. *The UUA is committed to addressing the inclusion of all people, whatever their abilities might be, in all GA activities. In 2024, we hope that rather than convening geographically, UU constituent groups will create online networking opportunities and meet-ups, centering the inclusion of those for whom travel to in-person meetings is not possible or practical.*

There's a wealth of information about the 2024 General Assembly on the [UUA website](#). Please check it out and think about attending GA this year! If you think you might like to be a delegate, let Mileva know. If you have questions, ask me!



**VIRTUAL
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

JUNE 20 - 23, 2024



Ongoing Activities

- Masks are optional.
- Eating & drinking are permitted in the Fellowship Hall
- Singing without masks is permitted
- Encourage gathering in all indoor and outdoor settings.

We will continue to provide:

- Virtual worship as an option as well as for meetings
- KN95 mask for your use

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, 4:00–5:30 pm on Zoom. Open to all. Contact: Mileva Saulo Lewis
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
Small Group Ministry	Contact: Terry Hunt (hunt.terence@gmail.com) or Mileva Saulo Lewis (milevalewis@comcast.net)
Adult RE	Check our website for upcoming opportunities: https://starrking.org/adult-programs
