



# The Flaming Chalice

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



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## February 4

### *Iowa Sisterhood*

It is likely every UU minister has an Iowa Sisterhood sermon or two, this week we will hear Rev. Sollie's!

## February 11

### *Diyos sa Gugma (God of Love): Building Bridges with the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines (UUCP)*

There are over 2,000 Unitarian Universalists in the Philippines in over 24 congregations. Most of the churches are located in remote rural farming and fishing villages. What can UUs from the Philippines teach us about their unique expression of our shared global liberal religious faith? How can building bridges of mutuality guide American UUs on our path of becoming the anti-racist, multi-cultural, multi-racial church we know our faith calls to be? *Rev. Kevin Mann leads.*

## February 18

### *Have You Read any Good Books Lately?*

"Reading fiction not only develops our imagination and creativity, it gives us the skills to be alone. It gives us the ability to feel empathy for people we've never met, living lives we couldn't possibly experience for ourselves, because the book puts us inside the character's skin." –Ann Patchett

*Rev. Elizabeth Sollie leads.*

## February 25

### *The Story of Us*

Your transition team exploring Starr King's heritage has listened to you through your individual and collective storytelling. Rev. Sollie will share what we heard and some observations. What is the story Starr King tells about itself? *Rev. Elizabeth Sollie leads.*

# WHAT'S INSIDE

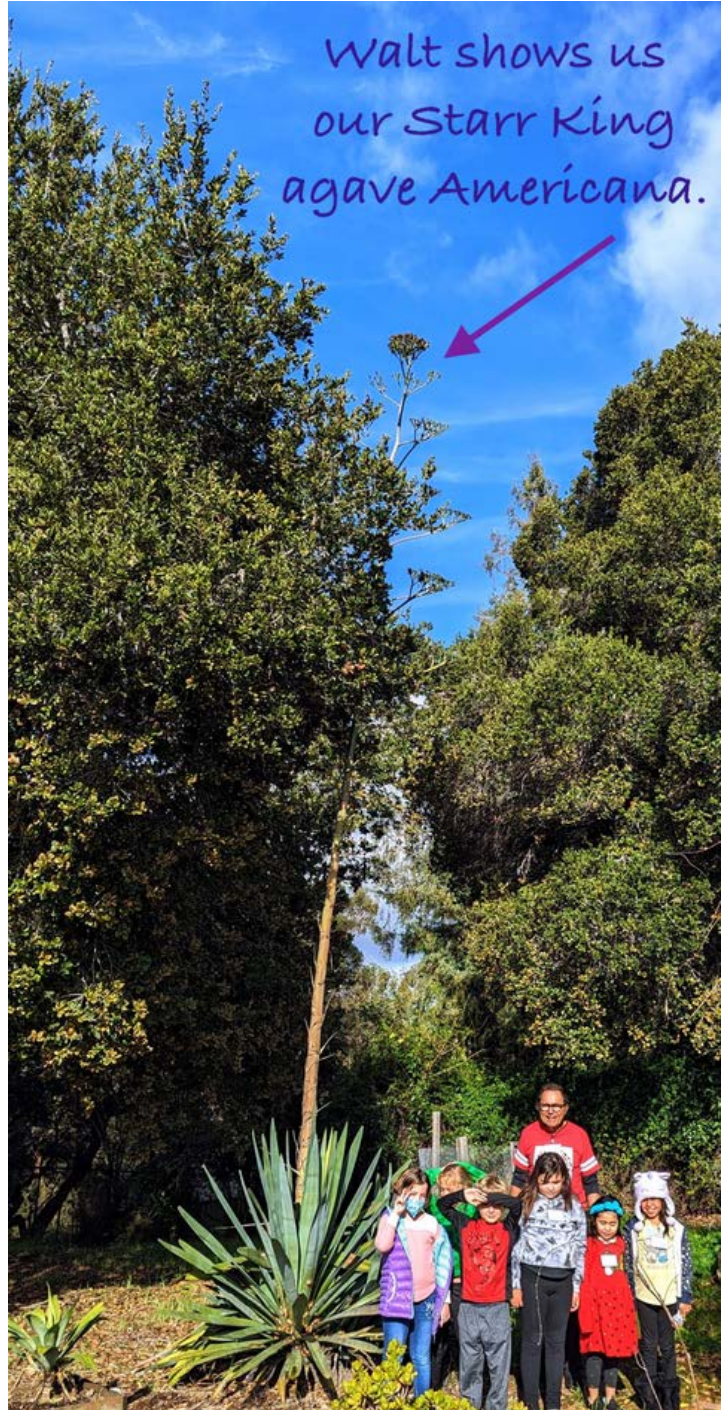
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## January Highlights



# *From the Minister*

**Rev. Elizabeth Sollie**

Since the last newsletter, most of you have participated in two transition conversations. With the Transition team focused on exploring your heritage you gathered to discuss the timeline of this congregation. The conversation was rich and had broad participation. We only had time to discuss your previous ministers. I am not sure if we surfaced everything we needed to—I would still like to hear about your justice efforts, historical conflicts, the story of the building and grounds, your relationship with money and the times you felt inspired as a congregation. I am weighing the benefits of another conversation against the energy of volunteers and the willingness of the congregation to meet often. I would love to hear from you about how you feel about further conversation in this vein.

I am still processing what I heard. I am sure you are as well. I appreciated the diversity of experience with each minister and am still teasing out the common threads.

It also becomes clearer with time that we need more discussion around what it means to be a beloved community and what it means to be anti-racist. We hope to have that conversation after we have three adult religious education sessions to learn more about productive conflict. Mileva Saulo Lewis is taking the lead on those sessions as she brings a wealth of experience to the subject. It would be great if everyone engaged in the three sessions, so that we have shared tools when we start to honestly talk about challenging topics. Conflict is natural and inevitable and a congregation that can engage in healthy ways is a congregation that can thrive.

With the guidance of your transition team that is focused on eliciting your shared sense of mission and purpose, you met in small groups. We hope you enjoyed getting to know your group better and made some good connections. In this first round, we invited you to think about your shared why. Why does Starr King UU Church exist? In the next round, we will try to take those shared whys and start to flush out the how. How will this congregation live into its shared values in meaningful and nurturing ways.

I notice when I ask questions about the congregation as partners in ministry or your role in your community there are long pauses. I have observed that as we engage in deep conversations, our ability to look at our own ministry and the ministry of the congregation becomes more robust. So, I invite you all to have juicy conversations about your faith with one another. This often leads to a spark that catches and a renewed sense of purpose and enthusiasm. When we share a powerful mission, the health of the congregation becomes vibrant. Good conversation helps us discover that sense of mission. Keep talking!



# Announcements

## Nominating Committee

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

On May 19th at the annual congregational meeting, the Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates for open positions on the [Board of Trustees](#) and the [Nominating Committee](#). This year the open positions are:

- Board Secretary
- Board Member At Large
- 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 Stephanie (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 with 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 & Stephanie Smith, Nominating Committee co-chairs

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Stephanie: [nomcom@starrking.org](mailto:nomcom@starrking.org)

## Peace and Justice Action Team (PJAT)

**Public Safety: What Works Best for our Communities?  
A Faith-Informed Conversation with Chesa Boudin**

**Thursday, February 15, 2024, 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM**

**Register and submit your questions [here](https://bit.ly/boudin-event-registration)  
(<https://bit.ly/boudin-event-registration>)**

- Attend virtually (link to be provided after registration)
- OR
- In person: Montclair Presbyterian Church,  
5701 Thornhill Drive, Oakland



Everyone deserves to feel and be safe in their community. But which approaches by district attorneys work best for our communities? Join us in a conversation with Chesa Boudin, Executive Director, UC Berkeley Criminal Law & Justice Center and former San Francisco District Attorney. When you register, you can also propose questions to ask our speaker.

*Cosponsors include the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails, Congregation Beth El, Kehilla Community Synagogue, Lakeshore Ave Baptist Church, Montclair Presbyterian Church, Plymouth UCC-The Jazz & Justice Church, Skyline Community Church, St. Columba Catholic Church, the Temple Sinai Criminal Justice Workgroup, NorCal Bend the Arc Jewish Action, and Faith in Action East Bay.*

# *Announcements*

## Healthy Conflict Classes

**Feb. 15th, March 21st, April 18th 6:00 PM**

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9291456582>

Conflict is natural and inevitable, but most of us were taught to avoid it at all costs. This makes healthy conflict difficult. Being able to have healthy conflicts, however, is a skill set congregations need if they are to thrive. To that end, we are offering a series of classes on how to have healthy conflicts. Mileva Saulo Lewis will lead and Rev. Sollie will assist. Our hope is that everyone in the congregation will participate and our capstone project will be a cottage meeting about how we want to move forward with our anti-racism work. There will be a Zoom option, but you are strongly encouraged to attend in person if that is possible.

**Thursday, February 15th at 6:00 PM** - Self Awareness - We'll begin at the beginning and examine your experiences with conflict and your predominant conflict style and the impact of unresolved conflicts.

**Thursday, March 21st at 6:00 PM** - Different Styles for Different Situations. We'll explore the advantages and disadvantages of each style and practice listening skills to get at the "heart of the matter."

**Thursday, April 18th at 6:00 PM** - Healthy Conflict Engagement - We'll use role playing to practice an initial conversation when you believe a conflict exists.

# ***Around the Starr King Hearth***

Religious Education (now called Faith Engagement by the UUA) is rolling along at Starr King. We are enjoying the new families who have been visiting; It's wonderful to make new friends. You're invited to check out the new bulletin board in the front hall where you can learn about upcoming events and view photos of our families.

It's exciting that we are working with two RE age groups on Sunday mornings. The pre-K 'Chalice Children' have a small nook where they play, do a short preschool chalice circle, and read a book together. The elementary school-aged 'Explorers' are working on a curriculum called The Age of Reason. For over 20 years, UUs around the nation have celebrated children in elementary school with a special milestone marking their spiritual and ethical development towards becoming Unitarian Universalists.

As part of the new Age of Reason program and Celebration of UU Beginnings, our Starr King children are learning about the UU Principles & Values, interviewing lay leaders and staff about our community, and sharing their own developing beliefs and hopes. On March 17, there will be a worship service recognizing the children who completed the program. This special milestone, called the Celebration of UU Beginnings, honors the start of a hopefully lifelong journey in Unitarian Universalism.

A special thanks to just some of the people who make RE shine for the kids; Lea, who has helped co-teach Age of Reason sessions; Wayne, Diane, and Darryl who visited our class recently to tell us about the Starr King grounds, the meditation group, and the pastoral care team. A shout out to Amy and Laurie for working with the wee ones, Bethany for meeting with our youth, and a big thank you to all the families for their assistance, cheerful attendance, and participation in inter-generational activities like the recent Illumination worship service.

We are truly blessed by our community at Starr King. I am reminded of the well-known UU Affirmation the Explorers are learning for their milestone ceremony:

Love is the spirit of this church, the search for Truth is its sacrament, and Service is its prayer. To dwell together in peace, to seek knowledge in freedom, to serve human need to the end that all souls thrive and grow into harmony with their sacred. Thus, do we covenant with one another.

Yours in faith,

*Tanya Webster*  
*Director of RE*

# 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

<b>Evening Meditation</b>	Every Wednesday 7:00-8:30 pm, on Zoom. Open to all. Visitors welcome. Contact: Diane Meyerson
<b>Board Meeting</b>	First Tuesday of the month, 4:00–5:30 pm on Zoom. Open to all. Contact: Mileva Saulo Lewis
<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>Starr King Singers</b>	Sundays before the service from 9:30-10:00 a.m.
<b>Starr King Choir</b>	Every Monday 7:00-8:00 pm. Contact: Linli Wang at <a href="mailto:music@starrking.org">music@starrking.org</a>
<b>Small Group Ministry</b>	Contact: Terry Hunt ( <a href="mailto:hunt.terence@gmail.com">hunt.terence@gmail.com</a> ) or Mileva Saulo Lewis ( <a href="mailto:milevalewis@comcast.net">milevalewis@comcast.net</a> )
<b>Adult RE</b>	Check our website for upcoming opportunities: <a href="https://starrking.org/adult-programs">https://starrking.org/adult-programs</a>