



STARR KING
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

The Flaming Chalice November 2024 Newsletter

[View
Upcoming
Services](#)

November Worship Services:

Please see our website for an up-to-date listing of upcoming worship services.

October Highlights

Pictures from the Oct. 7 Acorn Festival





From the Minister

Rev. Elizabeth Sollie

For our first sessions, the Creating Theology Together Class participants have been working on their personal theologies. The creators of the class suggest a framework for thinking about some of what might go into a personal theology. The framework consists of a central orienting idea and then four window panes.

The four window panes include;

1. Sin or missing the mark—How do I lose connection to my orienting idea?
2. Salvation or redemption—How do I regain connection with my orienting idea?
3. Community—How do my relationships, especially in my faith community, relate to/support/negate my orienting idea?

4. Purpose and meaning—To what end do I focus on this orienting idea? What is the ultimate purpose of this idea?

If you grew up in a Christian tradition, you might easily see how this framework is influenced by that way of understanding the world. God is the central orienting idea. The Bible has a lot to say about sin (a severing of relationship with God) and salvation (redemption through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ). The community is the body of Christ and the telos—or ultimate purpose-- is to be reconciled with God.

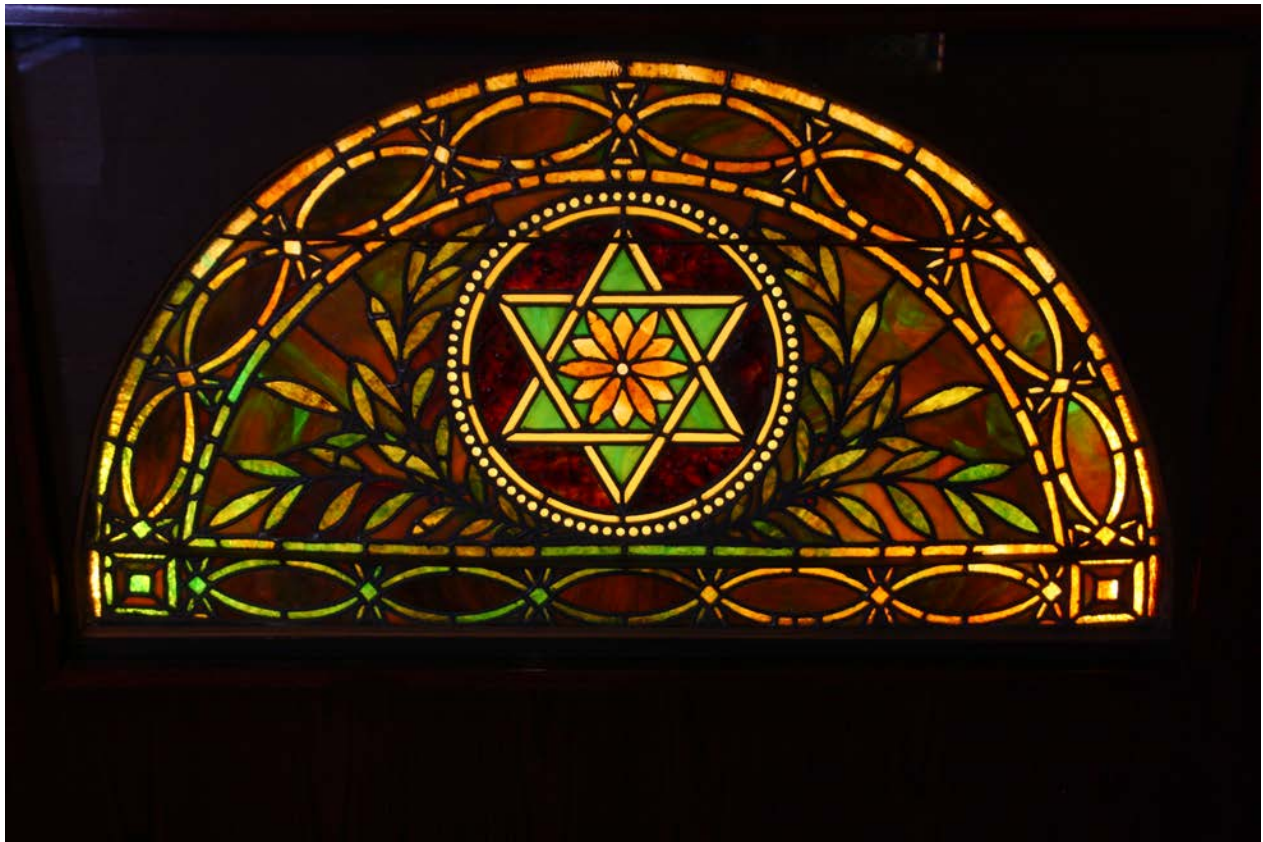
If you have a Buddhist orientation, however, you might say the orienting idea is compassion (you could go several ways). Sin, or missing the mark would be an absence of compassion or excessive attachment and aversion. Salvation is getting in touch with your own Buddha nature. In community you might engage in the Brahmaviharas (the four faces of love), the eightfold path and the four Noble truths for guidance. The telos, or final purpose is enlightenment and release from suffering.

Perhaps you have love as your central orienting idea. Missing the mark is anything that goes against love. Redemption is restoring relationship. Our ultimate purpose is to live in right relationship within the interdependent web and to create more love. Stephen Prothero, in his book *God is Not One*, organizes the major world religions by their central challenge and adherents' response to that challenge. The UU minister, Kelly Dignan posits that for Unitarian Universalists the central problem is disconnection and the response is connection and wholeness through covenant.

Process Theology might say the central organizing idea is the universe becoming through relationship. Religious Naturalism might suggest the central organizing idea is the interdependence of all of the natural world/cosmos. There are lots of ways to think about your central organizing idea. What most essentially informs how you live in this world?

In class, we talked about what we were taught as children about the central organizing idea. Many of us have rejected what we were taught as children and replaced it with something else. Some of us have not articulated that something else, maybe not even to ourselves. So, I'd like

to extend this invitation beyond the class. What is your central orienting idea and how does it inform your thoughts about missing the mark, redemption (or restoring covenant), community or relationships, and the meaning and purpose of your life? What else does your central organizing idea inform about the way you live?



Notes From the Board

Updating Our Vision

About five years ago, our current vision – *Theologically Diverse, Radically Inclusive, and Justice Centered* – was provisionally approved by the board for use on a postcard inviting the neighbors to attend our special events in December. We liked this vision so we kept it. Two years ago we had cottage meetings to identify our shared values, and came up with Community, Love, and Spirituality as the top three.

Now we're launching an outreach initiative, and we believe that updating the vision to be more in line with our stated congregational values will

also appeal more to the kind of people we want to attract. We want to try this new vision on for a while and see how we like it.

Our new vision: Spiritually Alive, Lovingly Inclusive, and Justice Centered

“Theologically Diverse” is absolutely true, and even 20 or 30 years ago it was a big draw for UU churches. When there was pressure to attend church, finding one that offered freedom from religious dogma was a gift. But with that pressure gone, people who want religious freedom today just stay home. People looking for a church now, studies show, are hungry for spiritual connection and inspiration, and spirituality is one of our top three values. “Spiritually Alive” speaks to that.

“Radically Inclusive” might be a good goal for us in the future, but what does it really mean? We can all picture “Lovingly Inclusive,” and it brings in our top values of Community and Love.

We like the changes a lot. We like them because they are both descriptive (this is who we are) and aspirational (how can we do them better?)

We recognize the importance of congregational input and self-determination, and hope we can have a congregational visioning & missioning process later this year, perhaps in the spring. In the meantime, we think this change will help our outreach initiative, as well as how we see ourselves, and we ask your support in this. Try it on! How does it feel? Asking ourselves questions like “How can we be more lovingly inclusive?” might be transformative for us.

The Board welcomes your input! Pls send feedback to secretary@starrking.org.






gratitude

[gra-ti-tude] noun.

the positive state of being grateful; an overwhelming feeling of appreciation and thankfulness, and the desire to return kindness to others.



Mileva Saulo Lewis, President

On behalf of the Board I want to thank all of you for who you are, what you give, and how you enrich each of our lives. Your presence, in this time of transition not only for our spiritual community, but for our nation, is a balm to “our weary souls.”

We are so grateful for your participation in the gathering held by the Ministerial Search Team, the Creating Theology Together (CTT) sessions, and for your generosity during our Fall Service Auction. All of these events demonstrate that we love our community and are living, more fully, into building our desired future.

The Board’s Common Read: In order to increase our ability to have conversations about uncomfortable topics we are reading Dr. Nancy Dome’s book, *Let’s Talk About Race (and other hard things)*. Last month we explored the differences in not only our communication styles and

barriers that impede meaningful communication. We also realized each style has strengths and challenge and to be more mindful as what style is most appropriate in a given situation. In November, we will learn more about a technique developed by Dr. Dome to address the “ouch” moments we encounter. In many ways, it is similar to what we learned in our Healthy Conflict series; it’s a tool called the RIR Protocol which is a bigger part of Compassionate Dialogue™. It is a strategy to encourage to engage other. Simply put: R = Recognize it; I = Interrupt it, R = Repair it

Blending of the “Futures Team” and the Membership Team

We approved the formation of the Membership and Growth Team naming Ben Ogilvie and Keith Lewis as coordinators and include Tanya Webster, Director of Religious Education and the Rev. Elizabeth Sollie.

Other Actions:

- **Visibility Project:** Working with the recommendation from Mary Lou Schuler’s membership team the Board approved the purchase of numerous items to enhance our visibility at community events such as a fitted tablecloth with our logo, a canopy, assorted materials and racks for display.
- **Update our website** as it is the most common way in which people search for a spiritual community beginning with statement such as: Starr King UU Church is:
 1. A warm and inclusive faith community serving Hayward and the East Bay
 2. A thriving spiritual community, welcoming people of all faiths or none, united by our belief in the power of love in action
 3. New Vision: Spiritually Alive, Lovingly Inclusive, and Justice Centered
 4. An LGBTQ+ friendly community working for justice in Hayward and the East Bay since the 1950’s
- Approved our including a separate “fund-a-need” to defray costs for membership outreach/growth and inclusion.
- **Flying the American Flag:** We agreed that the American Flag would be displayed on the Sunday nearest Memorial Day, Flag Day,

4th of July and Veteran's Day and we reviewed the accepted rules for flying the flag.

- Approved updates to the UUA Retirement plan
- Approved looking for a Dental Plan as required by the minister's contract
- Reviewed draft proposal to increase church/room rental rates
- Reviewed one bid to replace steps leading to the cottages; seeking a second



Search Committee

World Café Workshop Update No. One

Starting this week, we make available the summary and detail for one of the five questions you answered in the Workshop held on October 6. One at a time, over the next four weeks, additional summaries and their detail will be featured in an email and on the Engagement Board. Please look for them.

Week One: Describe how you define good preaching and worship.

We received over 85 responses to this question from in-person participants and Zoomies. You can imagine the challenge of organizing and summarizing them into a meaningful 1-2 page document. There was a wide range of opinions. Our goal was to capture the essence and intention of the responses.

Thank you again for participating in the World Café Workshop. Your input was valued.

Click on these links to read the take full documents:

[Summary Preaching and Worship](#)

[Detail Preaching and Worship](#)

Announcements

Castro Valley Light Parade

Thursday, November 7, 5:15–7pm PST

Kick off the holiday season and represent Unitarian Universalists! Starr King will again be taking part in the annual lighted parade in down

Castro Valley as members of the [Eden Area Interfaith Council](#), a consortium of religious groups in our area that promotes respect for all faiths. The event runs from 3pm-9pm, and the parade starts at 5:30pm. Please meet up no later than 5:15pm.



Saturday November 11, 2023

Happy Hour @ 3PM | Parade @ 5:30PM

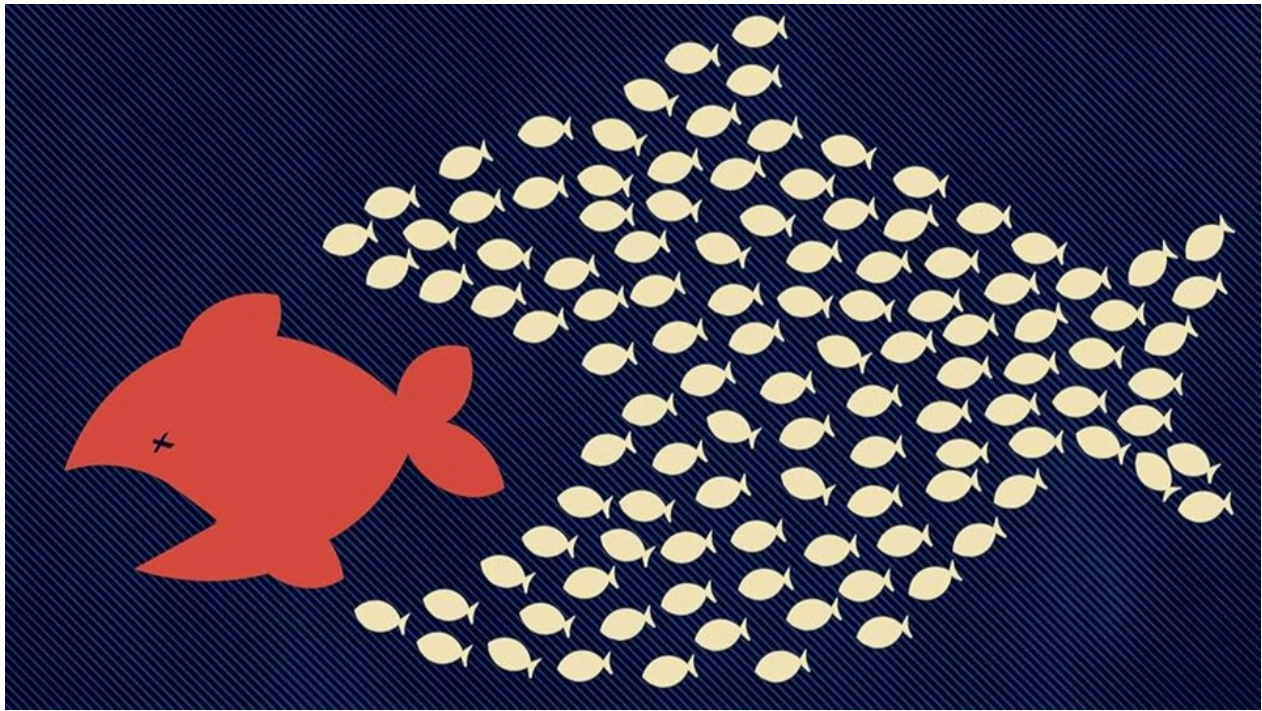


Overcoming Capitalism: Talk & Book Signing with Tom Wetzel

Friday, November 22 | 6-7pm PST

We are thrilled to host with talk with Q&A and book signing with Tom Wetzel, author of *Overcoming Capitalism, Strategy for the Working Class in the 21st Century*. He writes, "We live in a capitalist society. But what are its core features? How could we possibly replace it? I'll provide some brief answers to these questions."

After the talk Tom will field questions and then sign books. Our favorite independent bookseller, Renee Rettig of Books on B in Hayward, will be there to sell the books. The event is free.



Autumn Abundance Auction

Generosity · Community · Love

How did the auction turn out?

First, thanks to all who supported the auction: our mighty Auction Team, creative donors, and enthusiastic bidders! Your generosity and love are what makes the Starr King community special.

You all made it happen! We raised 123% of our goal - that's \$18,473. Of that total, \$5390 will go to helping our church grow, which was our special "Fund-a-Need" drive this year.

There are still experiences and items left to claim. Hikes, poetry, crafts, and fun gatherings! Help with Google, rides, and grocery shopping. And there were some great items left on the table too. Jewelry, art, and one heavy-duty massager you might need for all the election stress!

To claim any of these offers, please contact René (renesqrd@gmail.com) or see her after church this Sunday where all these offers will be on display.



Anti-Racist Anti Oppression Resources

A series from our Board's ARAOMC (anti-racism anti-oppression multiculturalism) subcommittee and church members.

Watch Origin!

If you haven't yet watched [Origin](#), Grace Wengermarsh's recommendation from last month, do! You can rent it for a few bucks on Prime Video. It brings history to life in a powerful way, ties it to current events, and offers fresh insights. It will grab you and it will change you (in a good way).

Study these two key sermons

Rev Sollie's sermons [Shame in the Days of Awe](#) and [Draw the Circle Wide](#), are a valuable contribution to our anti racism anti oppression initiative. If you missed them, they're well worth catching up on. If you'd rather read than watch, here they are: [Read Shame in the Days of Awe](#). [Read Draw the Circle Wide](#).

-Ben Ogilvie

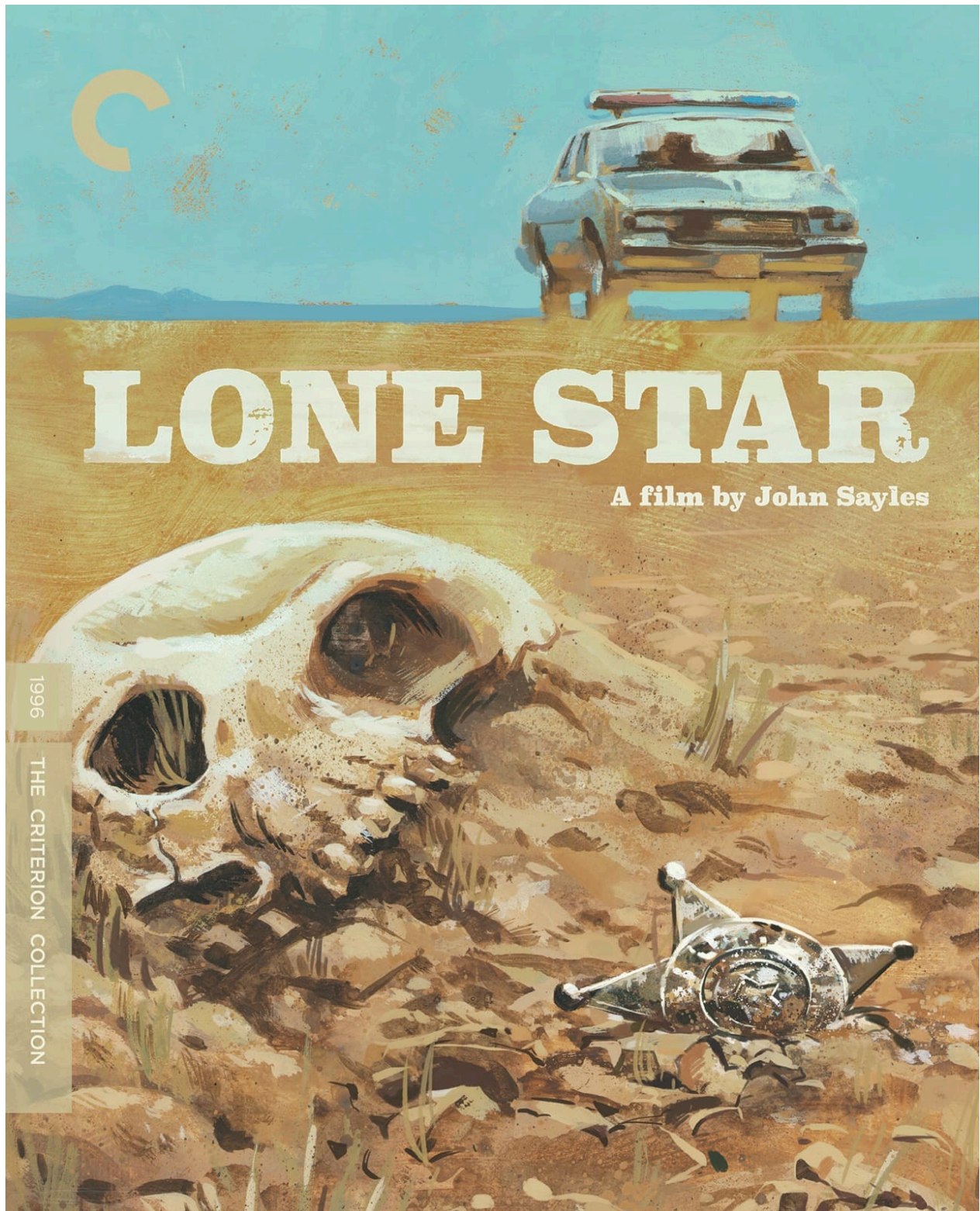
Lone Star

Lone Star is director Jon Sayles' masterpiece film rated in the top 10 westerns ever filmed by the American Film Institute (AFI). It takes place in a contemporary Texas border town and deals with Mexican and Anglo friction (Who writes the history), Black and White mistrust as well as inter generational conflict. It is all wrapped in a murder mystery committed a generation before. And flowing through it all is a long delayed but simmering love story. Nominated for an Oscar for the best original screen play and recipient of several other awards for acting for Chris Cooper and Elisabeth Peña it is one of my absolute favorite

American Whitelash: A Changing Nation and the Cost of Progress

Barack Obama's election served to fan the flames of the long simmering coals of racism. Donald Trump both was aided and propelled by this bloodstained rage. The author provides both historical analysis and first hand stories that show how this vicious cycle he describes in his new book *American Whitelash: A Changing Nation and the Cost of Progress* is becoming more dangerous as the Federal government fails to intervene. This book helped me to understand the history and depth of the white racism and how it was allowed to grow.

-Keith Lewis



Ongoing Activities

Children & Youth

Children meet every Sunday from 10:30-11:30am in person. Youth meet Wednesdays 7:00-8:00pm on Zoom. Contact: [Tanya Webster](#)

Evening Meditation

On vacation for August. Starting on September 4th: every Wednesday 7-8:30 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 7:15-8:15 pm. Contact: [Linli Wang](#)

Adult RE

Check our website for upcoming opportunities:
<https://starrking.org/adult-programs>

Visit Church Center

View Our Calendar

[Contact Us!](#)

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[Leave us a Review](#)



Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church is a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association and a certified Welcoming Congregation. We welcome every part of your identity, background, and experiences.

Interim Minister
Rev. Elizabeth Sollie
minister@starrking.org

Board President
Mileva Saulo Lewis
president@starrking.org

Director of Religious
Education
Tanya Webster
dre@starrking.org

Office Administrator
office@starrking.org

Newsletter
Kelly and Nathan Heigert
newsletter@starrking.org



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