November 3rd

WHICH WOLF DO YOU FEED?

What does it mean to be a people of ATTENTION? That’s the Soul Matters question of the month of November, and we’ll begin our exploration today by considering a well-known metaphor of uncertain origin. “A fight between two wolves is going on inside each of us. One is ‘evil,’ the other is ‘good.’ Which wolf will win? The one you feed.” Is it really like that? And what does it mean to feed a wolf?

Service Leaders: Rev. Chris Bell, Lou Gwendolyn
Music by: Sally Jones & other musical UUs, with Roger Corman
Share the Basket: Law Enforcement Chaplaincy Service

November 10th

CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES & CONNECTION IN DIGITAL TIMES

Ever find yourself a tad overwhelmed by social media, email, the online world? Today we explore how "contemplative practices" can help us engage the tech in our midst with more choice, more awareness and help us to develop deeper connections in our lives.

Music by: Sadie Sonntag & the Choir, with Roger Corman
Share the Basket: Borders and Beyond Family Fund

November 17th

FACING HARD TRUTHS

Sometimes there are things to which we don’t want to pay attention, because they are too painful, threatening or sad: Climate change. Racism in America. The likelihood of an earthquake. Addiction in our self or our family. Trauma we have suffered. And though denial does work, in its way, it doesn’t work forever. In fact, as abundant teachings and experiences confirm, the only way out, is through; and the truth will out. Fortunately, the Universe supports the hard work.

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell, Sharon McCarty, Linda Lampson
Music by: Susan Panttaja, Karen Naumann & others with Roger Corman
Share the Basket: The Metta Center for Nonviolence

November 24th

SLOW. IT. DOWN.

Joshua Bell played his violin in the New York City subway once, and only 7 out of 1000+ people stopped to listen for even one moment. People spend an average of only 17 seconds looking at art in a museum. We are forced to endure an endless stream of instant scandals and interpretations on 24-hour cable news. We work ourselves to death. Something ain’t right, and here will uncover some ways to change the dynamic.

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell, Joe Gabaeff
Music by: Sadie Sonntag & the Choir, with Roger Corman
Share the Basket: Breakfast for our Neighbors

December 1st

THE MONTHLY THEME IS AWE

And this service is about ELEPHANTS

And now for something completely different! Not long ago, a member of UUCSR tried to persuade me to do a service about elephants, and why their majesty, intelligence and social behavior deserve our reverence. She really loves elephants, and I was so persuaded! I scheduled the service, and… she promptly moved out of the state. Doh. But we’re going to talk about awe-inspiring elephants today all the same. After all, there are almost always a few in the room.

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell, Veronica Jordan & Jen Freese
Music by: Alan Bell & friends with Roger Corman
Share the Basket: YWCA Safe House

Sunday Services 9:15 & 11 A.M. With Children’s Religious Education at 9:15
The Deeper Structures

Last week, way back before the Kincade fire turned our lives upside down again, the Clergy Caucus of the North Bay Organizing Project had gathered a number of other local clergy and faith-based activists here to begin planning a series of interfaith events to stimulate action to address climate change and protect the environment.

A lot had happened already that week when we met. PG&E had announced its power outages. Donald Trump was trumping it up with his “perfect” phone call and Syria blunders and constant petty meanness. It can all be a lot to carry around in your head and heart. So, as our check-in, I asked the clergy to describe how their communities were handling “the news” or “the state of the world.”

They responded as you might expect. Their folks were often stressed and fearful. Many were desperate to do something, anything. Some were losing faith in humanity, or were full of anger and fight, treating the “other side” with a less-than-Christ-or-Buddha-like kindness and forgiveness. In some cases, the clergy themselves shared these attitudes, but there was also a good amount of “chin up!” energy from my colleagues, and expressions of faith. Thank God.

One response really struck me. Rev. Ben Broadbent from the UCC Community Church in Sebastopol (from which our UU congregation emerged back in the 50’s) said that he was feeling called to spend less time directly addressing the issues of the day, in favor of turning people back toward the “deeper structures” of goodness and growth and love that are so, so much bigger than any person or moment in history.

I have been carrying around that phrase, “the deeper structures,” ever since. It’s singing to me somehow. I want to write it as “The Deeper Structures,” and add it to the list of names for the Great Big Thing.

“The Deeper Structures” reminds me of some of the language in our UU Sources., like the First, which speaks of “forces that create and uphold life” or the Sixth, which calls us to “live in harmony with the rhythms of nature,” or the Second, which tells us to “confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love.” These words affirm that there are deeper and greater forces, rhythms, powers and structures, to which we can turn and rely upon even in the darkest hour. [https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/sources]

As you know, I completely believe that the events around us sometimes compel direct action from faith communities. UUCSR engages the world through our Advocates for Social Justice, our Diversity Project, and Saturday Breakfast, and through your countless daily good deeds as individuals. We actively try to build the better world.

And yet, as a minister I remain very much more interested, even in these challenging times in cultivating our awareness of and faith in the Deeper Structures. It is that awareness that gives us hope, that contextualizes and energizes our institution-building, that strengthens our faith in ourselves and each other, that reminds us of the long view and the big picture.

Nothing like an inferno to put that faith to the test, right?

A congregant texted me two days ago, saying, “I feel such an overwhelming sense of impotence or insignificance with all this climate drama. First, the personal sense, with my partner’s health scare, and then this unbelievable repeat of the unspeakable tragedy of two years ago. I’m trying to take the 10,000-year-view but it’s certainly difficult in the face of this immediate stress.”

I feel ya, my friend. There are moments when the 10,000-year-view doesn’t cut it. Frequently, it is just NOT POSSIBLE to see the Deeper Structures if we’re running for our lives. Or grieving. Or caught up in fighting each other, or caught up in any of the other obstacles that life and we ourselves put before us.

That is why, when we aren’t running for our lives, it is so useful to cultivate our attention to the Deeper Structures. As a community, we mostly do this by worshipping together. That’s the main reason I want a third Sunday service as soon as possible. Worship is good for people. It’s like growing a savings account of faith.

It also helps to pray, meditate, teach children, get out in the woods or next to the ocean, plant something, create something, have interesting and intimate conversations, lend a hand, make or appreciate music and art, read good books, and give and receive love. Hopefully, we offer each other those things here at UUCSR, too.

One thing I do know is that you will open your homes to each other. I am so proud of how quickly and completely you responded to each other’s needs in this latest crisis. So far as I am aware, no member had to spend a night in an evacuation shelter, although a LOT of you have been without power for a long time. I could be wrong, but I think that everyone who needed a bed, found a bed. The connection and encouragement on social media was also so helpful. Great job, everyone!

Why, just today, someone about to join UUCSR described being evacuated and taken in by one of our members. “I learned so much from them,” she said. “They were so grounded and calm. I know that they have endured a lot of suffering, but they seem to have found a way to accept that. I want to have what they have.”

Me, too. I pray that such kindness and love also flows into and out of me, and into and out of all of us, I pray that the Deeper Structures be found in our hearts and revealed in our actions. And I pray that you may be safe, and recover quickly from all this chaos, and seek the help and care you need to recover from our trauma.

Please, call me if I can be a part of that.
"What you bring your attention to, grows"

The above is a key principle of Appreciative Inquiry, an organizational approach and methodology for systems-change that has been used in schools and other organizations for years. I encountered "AI" about a decade ago in a minister’s training. Like any method or approach I think it has it’s gifts and challenges. Yet, this month, I’ve been musing on that very notion... “what we pay our attention to, grows.” The idea in AI is to look carefully and “appreciatively” at what is going well in a system, to notice where the health, vitality, and energy is, and then, in an organizational system... to do more of that!

This way of thinking can help communities make choices that bring energy forth instead of choices that deplete energy. It can help us as humans look “appreciatively” at our lives, and not think about what is "lacking" or "deficient" but what is perhaps "going well". Then an idea is to bring the quality of our our attention right there, and notice and learn about the key ingredients for what helps life continue to grow and shine.

In light of our monthly theme in worship in November ("Attention") I’ve been thinking positively (appreciatively if you will) about what is "going well" or where the "brightness" or "centered-feeling" or "that which is renewing" is present in my own life. Then... learning from it and trying to do more of that! To be clear, this does not mean failing to engage with the challenges in life, nor not working to heal the real broken-ness in our society. It doesn’t mean not critiquing. Yet it does mean trying to look at the complex pieces and puzzles and remembering to bring attention to: "what is going well?" --- and then considering, what are the key ingredients of that? And then doing more of it!

To tell it a different way, and perhaps more memorably... there is a humorous, proverbial story about a person in a flood that reminds me of the spiritual teachings of appreciative inquiry as applied to our lives. It’s not about being “Pollyanna-ish”. It IS about the profound power of bringing attention to what is going well — even when things are terribly overwhelming.

(Here’s the story. Maybe you’ve heard it?)

A person was stuck on the roof of their house in the middle of horrendous flood. The person was praying to God for help. Soon someone in a rowboat came by and shouted, "Jump in, I can save you." The stranded person shouted back, "No, it's OK, I'm praying to God and God is going to save me! I have faith!"

So the person in the rowboat paddled by. Then a motorboat came by. The fellow in the motorboat shouted, "Jump in, I can save you." The person stranded on the roof replied: "No thanks, I'm praying to God. God is going to save me! I hope! I am having faith!"

So the motorboat went on. Then a helicopter came by. A pilot shouted down to the person on the roof in the flood: “Grab this rope and I will lift you to safety!” To this the person again replied, "No thanks, I’m praying to God, God is going to save me. I have faith." So the helicopter flew away.

The water from the great flood spills across the rooftop and then, very unfortunately, the person drowns, and the person goes to Heaven. When the person finally gets a chance to discuss the whole situation with God, the person says: "Oh, God, I had faith in you but you didn't save me. You let me drown! Why!" God replies, "Look, I sent you a rowboat, and a motorboat, and a helicopter. Why did you ignore those, hum? What more did you expect?"

Theologically perhaps not completely withstanding (we can discuss a spectrum of interpretations of such a Heaven and such an anthropomorphic depiction of God as appears here in this particular story!) I rather appreciate this story for its truth about how we as humans can sometimes fail to see the beauty, the blessings, the gifts around us. Sometimes, we can forget to look at what is going well and we can forget to train our attention there.

Bringing the power of our attention towards the blessings and good things in our midst (even in very hard times) turns out to often be a helpful thing: it can make us feel more alive and more vital in the moment (which is good!). This story shows that also looking at life this way can actually change the choices we make and thus, perhaps, the very course of our lives in some instances. This month, I hope you might offer yourself opportunities to bring your attention to the simple and profound sparks of goodness close at hand. Maybe from those sparks more power can shine.

May you go appreciatively and courageously into the month.

With much care,

Rev. Dara Olandt
Assistant Minister
President’s Column

**Well, What’d Ya Have to Go and Do That Fer?**!

Rev. Chris, the Board and I have started conversations within the last month laying out our ideas for growing our congregation – and in the process, have stirred up some hornets nests!

First, let me say that I am really glad for ALL the feedback – supportive, critical, positive, concerned – that I’ve gotten. Personally, sometimes it’s hard to hear, as things that run counter to a cherished idea often are, but I just breathe deep and OPEN. And inevitably, I’m glad I did. Because what occurs is that concerns that MUST be addressed, thought through and dealt with – THAT I HADN’T SEEN – are brought forward. And what had been stepped over, not seen, seen through rose-colored glasses, etc. is revealed. And our final direction – no matter what it is – will be so much stronger for it.

So. Why’d we have to go and talk about growth? Well, a couple of important reasons. First, the more uplifting. We’re the best-kept secret in Sonoma County! What we have here at UUCSR is life-changing, life-affirming, engaged with the real world – and can even be life-saving. That’s worth letting people know about! And welcoming people into. I know one concern that some people have is that in expanding, we’ll lose what makes us so unique and vital. I don’t think that will happen – not because it can’t, but because we won’t let it. We’ll find ways to keep what is core to us. I think the Buddhists call it “The Third Way” – a way that isn’t mine, isn’t yours, can’t be seen right now, and is only revealed inside of both parties’ commitment to it working for both. (At least, that’s my understanding of it!)

People truly do need what we provide. How can I be selfish and keep it all to myself? I can’t. It chaps my grits that people don’t think of us when they’re looking for “liberal religion”. We are that, and so much more! I don’t want us to keep our light under a bushel.

Now for the practical. We always need to be growing. Even staying “the same” is contracting, because the Universe is always expanding! Practically, how that plays out in our congregation is that people die. People move away. People just stop coming! So that attrition is always happening.

And even if we do stay the same size, we’ve got problems! Costs are always going up. Health care alone goes up about 10% a year. And that money needs to come from somewhere.

This whole idea started when Rev. Chris totaled up all the things various committee chairs, congregational leaders and staff have told him they ALREADY NEED. Not pie-in-the-sky, visionary wants, but real needs right now. Things that our not having hurts our congregation’s ability to take care of our own and fulfill our mission. As we know from last year’s Initiative, we can’t expect our current members to raise their pledges by a lot more. (Thank you again for stepping up to the plate in the wonderful way you did!) So we need to get the money to be able to meet those needs from other sources. The Glaser Center Committee is working as hard as they can to increase rentals, but we’re finding that’s not the answer. The only place we can meet our financial needs is from new members.

These needs are mostly NOT for new staff! Yes, some is, but not all. We’re very clear that additional staff is not going to solve all our problems. We are, and will continue to be, a primarily volunteer-run organization – and that’s just as it should be. However, some things, such as communications and marketing, are such big jobs that we have repeatedly burned out every volunteer who has stepped in to help. We’re at the point where we need a professional to provide their expertise – to do it right, efficiently and effectively, with as little cost and effort possible.

Our “old timer” volunteers are by and large retiring. They’ve given so much for so long, and their work is deeply appreciated. And they deserve their “glorious retirement”! But the world has changed. No matter how much we ask, new volunteers are not stepping in to fill the gaps as they open. Life is ever busier, more complex and stressful. People are doing what they can, and to run certain aspects of this congregation, it’s just not enough.

And that’s just SOME of why we need to look at growing. Actually, what we’ve been talking about isn’t a plan for growth, it’s a plan for our future needs. It’s a plan for what we need to be sustainable. I want UUCSR to be here today, tomorrow, 5 years from now, and 50 years from now. If we just keep going the way we have, it won’t be – and that would break my heart. And yours, too.

As I said at the beginning of this, I really do welcome your feedback, input, concerns, questions, etc. – all of it. I may have to breathe deep and OPEN, but you can count on that I will. No one is going to do something to anyone. We’re in this together, or we’re not in it at all. That’s the way we do things ’round here, and this ain’t gonna be any different.

The future’s being fired at us point blank. I want us to meet the challenge – and THRIVE.

In love and partnership,

- Natalie Brundred,
  President, Board of Trustees
Can I Have Your Attention?

November’s theme is Attention, and there are so many wonderful ways that we can explore this concept in religious education and at home with our children and youth. In November’s Soulful Home packet for families, religious educator Teresa Honey Youngblood explains that attention is “a tool that we can use, share, give, and receive with increasing grace, wisdom, and growing power.”

To give a loved one your attention is a gift of time and care, and in a world filled with packed schedules, quick dinners, and rushing from one thing to the next, a few moments of undivided attention can feel like a very rare gift. Equally rare, however, is getting our children and youth’s attention with all that is out there to distract them!

I hope you are able to take a look at Soulful Home this month and try out some of the activities they offer. I am particularly looking forward to At the Table Discussion Questions (Who pays better attention? Adults or kids? Would you rather be the center of a group’s attention, or be among the crowd of observers?), playing attention games like Spot It!, and remembering this month’s mantra, “Where my attention goes, my energy flows.” If you would like to receive Soulful Home each month, please contact me at dre@uusantarosa.org.

Here’s a look at what children and youth will be doing during Religious Education this month:

**Chalice Children Room (ages 3-5)**
Preschool age children will explore attitude this month in the form of prayer, helping and gratitude. They will learn the song, “If You’re Thankful and You Know It,” make cheerios prayer beads, and read *The Thankful Book* by Todd Parr. On November 24, Chalice Children will join the older children for Art & Soul Sunday, a relaxed day of crafting together with staff teacher Era Capone and arts volunteer leader, Erin Howseman.

**Multi-Age RE (ages 6 and up)**
Elementary age children will focus on three practices this month. They are Attention to Inner Self: The Practice of Prayer, Attention to the Needs of Others: The Practice of Helping, and Turning Attention to the Now: The Practice of Mindfulness. Throughout the month, we will take a Sound Walk with partners, learn about the Four Pebble Meditation by Thich Nhat Hahn, make glittery mindfulness jars, and think about ways we can help others.

**Middle and High School Youth Groups**
Youth will enjoy pizza and deep conversation, as always, but we will spend time this month playing with attention and thinking about gratitude, as well. We will play attention and focus games, and also take an attention walk with a Mary Oliver poem that involves noticing things. At the end of the month, we will begin the craft project of making cinnamon ornaments.

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**We’re Painting the Youth Room! Want to help?**
Nov. 9 from 9-11 am and Nov. 10, 11:00 am
We will be giving the Youth Room a fresh coat of paint on November 10. Here is how you can help:

- We need to borrow painting materials like drop cloths, rollers, brushes, etc. if you have any lying around (please write your name on anything you loan us so we can return it to you).
- Come on Saturday, November 9 between 9-11 am to help prep the room.
- Come any time after 11:00 am on Sunday, November 10 to help paint for any length of time. MUUGs will be painting from 11:00-12:15, HUUGs will paint from 12:30-2:30, and any help during those times is appreciated! Childcare will be available on Sunday during painting.
What Your Board Is Up To

The Board unanimously approved UUCSR’s signing the “United in Kindness” Declaration of Unity, promoted by the Interfaith Council of Sonoma County. The Declaration calls on us to affirm our county’s diverse social fabric and to reject hateful speech, bullying, discrimination, and violence.

The Glaser Center Committee will research how restricting rentals to non-profit organizations would affect net rental income. This change would be consistent with UUCSR’s mission and reduce our property tax liability.

A group of members presented their feedback regarding Rev. Chris’s and the Board’s plans for growing the congregation. They expressed concerns about financing, volunteer vs. paid staff and UUCSR’s relationship with the UUA. They were particularly concerned that the democratic process be followed in making this decision, with many opportunities for congregational input, review and discussion.

Following this input, the Board realized that the October 27th Town Hall must explain the Board’s basis and rationale for developing a plan for growth now, while ensuring full congregational participation in all key decisions as we move through this process. The Board reaffirmed that EVERYTHING is on the table, and NOTHING has been – or will be – determined without congregational input. This is not a decision that will be made by or undertaken by the Board alone, but by the congregation as a whole.

Full Board meeting minutes are posted on our website and on the bulletin boards in the Social Hall and Work Room. The next Board meeting is Thursday, November 21 at 6:30 pm in the Board Room. You’re invited to attend, and are welcome to speak during Open Mic.

-Natalie Brundred,
President, Board of Trustees

The Lay Chaplains

As part of your pastoral care team, we have a beautiful white stole to help identify ourselves to the Congregation on Sundays. Look for the person wearing the dove and heart: Paula Hammett, Lucia Milburn, Barbara Kezur, Susan Bartholome, Shirley White, Bruce Hope, Al Liner or Gretchen Paradis.

We’re here to listen to the important things going on in your life—your joys, your sorrows, the things for which we light the candles. Talk to us before or after the service, or you can leave a message at the UUCSR office, and they will forward it to us.
Advocates for Social Justice, continues its ongoing projects in our regular 2nd Monday meetings at 10 am—12 pm, as usual. The Diversity Project moves ahead with the Banner Project (those wonderful lifelike photos of congregants and their personal poems on the wall outside the sanctuary); a new set will appear soon showing the surprising diversity of UUCSR. Hot Topics will, as always, work with congregants to designate recipients of our weekly Share the Offering. Watch for news on that!

Climate Action Project groups provide an open “Climate Hope” discussion about this most critical issue facing all of humanity. Anyone interested in learning more and doing more, please contact Elaine (elaine.wellin@sonoma.edu). We could use your support on all our projects, including this year’s Adrienne Swenson Award committee in which we present a $1,000 scholarship to a promising graduating high school senior social activist. And the Film Project offers films based on congregants’ responses to our spring survey. This year, on one Sunday most months, we’ll be seeing more on the environmental, social, and economic consequences of climate change—so we can all keep up with new science and promising ideas and actions worldwide.

And again, do think about becoming an Advocate—we need you and your thoughtful support in any of these vital areas.

We are COSM, the Committee on Shared Ministry. The current committee consists of Bob Anderson (chair), Alan Bell, Susan Bartholome, Frances Corman, Kitty Wells and Rev. Chris. COSM is charged with ensuring the health of the congregation by encouraging communication within the congregation, providing conflict resolution when needed as well as supporting the minister.

This committee is also tasked with the yearly evaluation of the minister that is submitted to the Board of Trustees. To conduct the evaluation process COSM members interview staff, Board members, some committee chiefs, a randomly selected sample of the congregation AND whomever wants to submit input to any of us. Any such additional input would have to be received by one of the COSM members by Nov 7, 2019 in order to be considered in this year’s evaluation process. Of course, all communications with COSM are confidential. Remember, COSM is here for both the minister and YOU, the congregation.
Greetings and Gratitude from Your Stewardship Team

I am not a morning person. My preferred routine up until noon is to grump around reading newspapers and drinking coffee and, NO PEOPLE. So it’s often hard for me to get myself into the shower and into semi-respectable clothes and down the street to the Glaser Center on Sunday morning. But every time, without fail, I am glad that I do it. I’m grateful for the fellowship and the various reflections and homilies and oh, my, the music. And the coffee.

When, as happens to us all, I am overwhelmed by personal grief, on Sunday morning with our congregation I can let it wash over me instead of fighting it. When the cruelty and suffering that seem to fill up the landscape makes me feel defeated, I learn about and participate in efforts to alleviate those evils. Sometimes I even get transported by joy! I see a whole lot of other people who also seem to be pretty glad they’re there. Grateful, perhaps, as I am, for our congregation, and willing to express that gratitude by pledging as generously as we can to support the holy work of love that we have committed ourselves to and that often is one of the most difficult tasks we as fallible humans face.

Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving. Thanks for giving.

Thanks for giving more, if you can.

With warm, grumpy blessings,

Carol Daeley
For some time now, UUCSR Ops Team and especially our sexton Peter Wilson, have been advancing better trash management at UUCSR; reducing garbage, capturing more recyclables and compostables. Peter and others learned in talks with Recology how to revision our trash handling. Already, UUCSR was able to reduce the number of cans of weekly garbage and thus reduce the monthly garbage pick-up bill. For the church, recycle and compost pick-up are free. Our garbage collection fee is linked to the number of garbage cans collected weekly.

Since tissues and napkins are compostable, there now are compost cans in each bathroom to capture these. There has been a noticeable increase in attentiveness to "what goes where" by office staff and volunteers. Saturday morning breakfast, which necessarily uses single use bowls and cups, purchases fully compostable bowls. The plastic utensils that are used at the breakfast are sanitized and re-used. (Unfortunately, disposable cups for coffee with their waxy lining to prevent leakage, though they look like paper, cannot be composted: they go in the trash). Our waste cans no longer have a plastic liner. When they are emptied they get rinsed clean outside.

At this point we have the basic structure in place for further reducing our garbage. Now it comes down to people-power: bringing finer awareness to the process, each of us. You can help by focusing on these areas:

1. Recycle: all milk and juice cartons recycle. Leave plastic spouts on. Recology even suggests to put the cap ON the cartons.
2. Plastics: the "recycle triangle" that you see on plastic items has a number in the center. **Only numbers 1 and 2 are recyclable.** Higher numbers are garbage. Clear clam shell for food take-out and cookies are usually number 1. When you squeeze the plastic it makes a "cracking" sound.
3. Plastic film: all plastic film (thin sheets of plastic and plastic bags) is trash, even if it is labeled "recyclable" or "compostable". Recology machinery cannot handle the film in their recycle or compost stream.
4. Cups: **all paper cups are trash.** They are lined with a waxy substance that does not compose properly in Recology’s current composting system.
5. Cups: always best to use reusable cups and plan time to wash up after events. If needing single-use cups: number 1 plastic cups for cold drinks can be recycled. All cups for warm drinks need to go into the trash.
6. Committees: plan to use washable items if offering snacks and drink. EcoDesk's cabinet in the work office has large serving bowls, small individual bowls and glass pitchers for use by any committee. Please clean and return to cabinet after event.
7. **Sunday Social hour:** all waste from social hour can be compostable, if we pay attention to what we bring in. Some brands wrap tea bags individually in cellophane, plastic or mylar-like material. Some cookies are individually wrapped. We can observe more closely when we shop, and choose brands/items that are wrapped in compostables. And remember: napkins and tissues go in the green bin.

Certainly, the need is for manufacturing to use less and compostable packaging materials. Initiatives are moving through various state congresses. Cities are passing ordinances to help this change come about. Yet as individual user, I can contribute by being more deliberate in what I buy. I frequently laugh at my own actions: I shop out of habit and return home with plastic packaging I had not consciously noticed before. I find that shifting my habits takes willingness, attention, and a good dose of humor. Will you join us in bringing special attention to your trash habits this month? Shall we reduce UUCSR’s weekly garbage by one more can? Bring your suggestions to EcoDesk, or email me at reneevalentino@gmail.com. :)
CUUPs asks the question, *What’s in a Name?’*

The 6th Source of Unitarian Universalism: *Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.*

There’s a curious story about the adoption of Unitarian Universalism’s 6th Source. As it was originally written, there was much discussion, but few would vote to approve it. Finally in 1995, Minister Paul L’Herrou suggested changing just one word. What was that one word? Pagan. Pagan was changed to “earth-centered”. With the change of that one word, 99% voted for approval.

The question is, why?

Clearly, even some UU’s had notions about the word “Pagan”. The word makes some people uncomfortable. For others its meaning is much more diabolical. Even my own dear aunt and uncle felt the need to warn me that if I continued on this path I was destined for Hell, a place I gratefully don’t believe in.

Here are some more misconceptions about Paganism:

- **Pagans worship Satan.** Why would the members of one religion worship the bad guy of another religion?
- **Pagans cast spells and curse people.** Pagans believe in a law that decrees “Harm None”. Any bad we give out will come back on us.
- **Pagans all dress in Goth.** I prefer jeans and T shirt.
- **Pagans practice animal sacrifice.** We love animals. We have a nature-based religion that respects all living things; all life is sacred. That 'eye of newt and toe of frog' stuff is nonsense.
- **Pagans dance around in the nude all the time.** Not around here.
- **All Pagans have wild, ritualized sex.** We wish.

As fellow Unitarian Universalist Margot Adler explained: “We are not evil. We don’t harm or seduce people. We are not dangerous. We are ordinary people like you. We have families, jobs, hopes, and dreams. We are not a cult. This religion is not a joke. We are not what you think we are from looking at T.V. We are real. We laugh, we cry. We are serious. We have a sense of humor. You don’t have to be afraid of us. We don’t want to convert you. And please don’t try to convert us. Just give us the same right we give you—to live in peace. We are much more similar to you than you think.”

But…..if it makes you feel better to call us “earth-based”, we welcome that too.

Blessed Be, *Loretta Smith*
UPCOMING ADULT R.E.: ”RELIGIOUS EDUCATION” SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

Click [https://tinyurl.com/UUCSR-ARE](https://tinyurl.com/UUCSR-ARE) For More Info

Adult RE is guided by UU Principles and rooted in Unitarian Universalism sources, and our Congregation’s mission and vision. The Adult RE Team strengthens community and facilitates spiritual growth by offering classes, activities, and programs. **Members of the A.R.E. Committee:** Nadine Carroll, Carol Daeley, Helga Lemke, Phil Harriman, Sarita Hazen, John Speck, Clare Whitfield and Rev. Chris Bell.

**Cakes for the Queen of Heaven:** This series examines pre Judeo - Christian cultures that may have worshiped the female as divine. The concepts of equality and reverence for the female in a religious setting are eye-opening to many participants. **Part I is finished. Stay tuned for Part II, January 11th - February 15, Saturdays 2-4 pm. Fee $25** (though no one will be turned away for lack of funds).

**Music and Meaning in the Movies:** Do you like movies? Of course you do. Do you like music? Who doesn’t? Alan Bell’s class combines two of your favorite things. It’s about how music does more than just intensify emotions in a film. It’s about how music actually makes meaning. Class includes dozens of clips starting from the silent film era thr modern times. **Mondays 6:30 - 8:00. 11/4.**

**What Me, Human?:** Rev. Chris will lead a class on humanism which stresses the potential value and goodness of human beings, emphasizes common human needs, and seeks solely rational ways of solving human problems. **Wednesdays: 11/13, and 11/20, 6:30-8:30pm. Books have been ordered as background for class: $13 each, available at RE table or at class.**
Administrator’s Minute

A lot of new things are happening here lately! We have a new front door locking system. Our new system locks with a magnet. We still have a front door key access and a fob key access but the mechanics are stronger.

Other new things: the monthly newsletter has gone digital! I will make a few paper copies available at the welcome table on Sunday and a few in the usual spot near the workroom door. I am happy to mail out paper copies to those who do not have a computer.

Thank you, John Jaffrey, for having the ivy cut off of the side of our building! It looks great! Thank you, Jim Wolf, for moving the Pride flag, BLM and MeToo banners to hang in the main office windows so that there is a clear view of from the sidewalk into the building. Now all passer byes can read our wonderful mission!

The Diversity Panels are returning! They will be back on the wall in the Narthex in November.

The month of November has 3 holidays; Veteran’s Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving. The building will be closed and no staff available. Please enjoy your holiday!

If you are looking for a way to be of service to your congregation, here is your chance to commit regularly to a volunteer position that is empty… Desk Angel, Saturday Breakfast, Maintenance Team, Finance Committee, Endowment Committee, New Membership Committee, Stewardship Committee, and Ushers, to name a few. Send me an email and I would be happy to connect you to the chair of the committee you are committing to.

Are you a crafty person or a baker? There will be a Craft Fair on December 8th in the Founders Room. If you are interested in reserving a table to sell your goods, please see Bertha Jean at the front desk on Tuesday or Wednesday morning. She will reserve a table for you and provide all of the details. A minimum of 25% of each vendor’s sales go to UUCSR!

Dawn Silveira Administrative Manager

SHARE-THE-BASKET
2019 Recipients

Due to recent events, accounting information regarding recipients of our Share The Basket program could not be provided for this edition of the UU Update. Further information will be available in next month’s edition.
**Treasurer's Monthly Ledger**

September completes the first quarter of our Fiscal Year. For the month of September, we are showing a deficit of ($9,000) from Combined Operations and the Glaser Center. Revenue totals $33,200 and expenses were $43,800, excluding transfers and capital gains. Pledges are down by ($2,800) and Glaser Center rental income is off ($6,100) compared to budget.

Year-to-date for the first 3 months of Combined Operations and Glaser Center are showing a deficit of ($6,500). Typically the beginning of the year is slow to take off. Revenue for the quarter is down ($9,800) for Pledges and ($15,300) from Glaser Center rental income. Expenses are well below their budget, lessening the impact of revenue losses.

Our budget for 2019-20 Fiscal Year is taking some hits from unexpected quarters. Here are the major concerns to challenge our initial assumptions:

1. **Current Projected Pledges** as of 9/30 versus Projected Pledges at the start of the Fiscal Year on 7/1 are down about 2%, or $9,800. There are five factors that affect pledges during the year: Members leaving the area, Members passing away, Members decreasing pledges, New member pledges and increases to pledges from existing Members. These factors are in constant flux and difficult to predict.

2. The assessor’s office is requesting a $7,000 increase for **Property Taxes** on the building. We are in the process of appealing this increase. Apparently, UUCSR requested a decrease in Property Tax in 2008 following the collapse of the economy, and the Assessor’s office is re-assessing our property’s value. They also want to increase our taxes going forward even more.

3. An unexpected sudden decrease in **Glaser Center revenue** is predicting a 60% decline from the original budget, potentially wiping out most of our profit for the year. Included in erasing our profits will be the property tax increases. The Glaser Center Committee is looking into this, but so far have no explanation for the decline.

The Finance Committee is looking into all of these changes.

**PLEASE NOTE PROTOCOL:** If you have questions about Congregation finances, the finance committee is better versed in financial details and can answer most questions. We will always bring concerns to the Board.

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**Musical Notes**

"Music is the great uniter. An incredible force. Something that people who differ on everything and anything else can have in common." — Sarah Dessen, author.

How typical of Unitarian Universalists, who come from all walks of life, all religions, all beliefs... how elegantly we come together in our enjoyment and performance of, and participation in, music. Whether it's a rousing joyous round, a rhythmic chant, a soaring hymn, or a quiet contemplative offertory, we are one when the music plays.

October's theme was Belonging and one of the many things that makes us feel like we belong together is the music we enjoy each Sunday. First we heard Alan and Eric sing the ironic "I Am A Rock" by Simon & Garfunkel, conveying a message which is the opposite of the actual lyrics: no one is a rock, no one is an island! The next Sunday, the anniversary of the 2017 fires, Sadie sang "Rise Up" for the prelude, then the choir performed "I Dreamed of Rain". After that, on the 20th, Robin's group brought us first a chant, then "Caravan" by Van Morrison, and finally "What A Blessing." As of this writing, we expect to hear the choir reprise last year's performance of "In Paradisum" by Kehoe on the last Sunday of October.

In November our theme is Attention. We expect to hear "Show Us How To Love", "In Flander's Fields", "I Can See Clearly Now", and more. Pay attention to this space next month for an update.

Would you like to be a part of the planning, or presenting of music? Talk to a Music Coordinator (musicians@uusantarosa.org), or our Choir Director Sadie Sonntag (choir@uusantarosa.org) - or look for a special nametag with a treble clef (♩) on it any Sunday.

*In Unity, Randy Jones*
**UUCSR Members abide by this Covenant**

We pledge to seek unity in our diversity, to welcome and respect divergent opinions and beliefs, to listen to one another with open hearts and minds, to acknowledge our shortcomings and be quick to forgive them in others, and to keep our focus on our Mission. Our Mission is celebrating life, empowering people, caring for one another, and helping to build a better world.