
Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Santa Rosa

Celebrating Life, Empowering People, Caring for One Another,
Helping to Build a Better World

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Gifts

August 2020

SUNDAY SERVICES ARE CURRENTLY BEING OFFERED ONLINE. A LINK WILL BE EMAILED TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE CONGREGATION. YOU MAY CONTACT THE OFFICE TO RECEIVE THE EMAILED LINK.

August 2

"The Gifts of Jazz"

Service and Musical Leaders: John Ray, Roger Corman, and more!

An uplifting celebration of the extraordinary American musical art form of jazz. Jazz has much to teach us about how to live and listen together, how to roll with changes and new ideas, and, perhaps most importantly, how to swing.

August 9

"The Gifts of Christianity"

Service Leaders: Rev. Chris, Bev Spears, Karen Naumann, Roger Corman

Both Unitarianism and Universalism first grew forth from the giant tree of tradition we call Christianity, and we still try to carry forth and proclaim the very best of that tradition, while avoiding its deeper flaws. Hence our Fourth UU Source, which guides us to "Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves." And, Lord knows, we could use more neighborly love these days... This is the first of two services celebrating just *some* of the theological diversity in the UU tradition.

August 16

"The Gifts of Humanism"

Service Leaders: Rev. Chris, Michael Lerner, Robin Rogers, Roger Corman

Our Fifth Source steers us toward "Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit." We'll consider how humanism has impacted Unitarian Universalism, and what it offers as a path for living a good and meaningful life. This is the second of two services celebrating just *some* of the theological diversity in the UU tradition.

August 23

"The Gifts of Service: Breakfast for our Neighbors"

Service Leaders: Linda Lampson, John Ray, Robert Howseman, Roger Corman, others

August 30

"The Gifts of Art & Creativity"

Service Leaders: Rev. Chris, Sharon McCarty, Paul Gilger

Although the Pandemic has shut down theaters and museums, it has hardly vanquished creativity and the arts. Today we'll celebrate this wonderful quality of being human that, so far, has always gotten us through the dark times. If you've made art, crafts or music, or been creative in any other way over the last few months, we would like to include your work in a slideshow during the service. Be in touch with Sharon, please.

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A Message from Rev. Chris



Hello, Friends!

If your experience is anything like mine, the days are starting to blend together a little bit here in the fog of the Corona-Time. I, at least, have Sundays to look forward to and to give shape to the week, and those with jobs and children have something resembling a schedule, for better or for worse. But for many of us, it feels like one day after another of waiting, stressing, and wondering how long this can last before we lose hope. Or lose our minds! Which, actually, a large portion of this country has already seemingly misplaced...

Yet things keep changing and moving, and even moving forward, if we keep our eyes open to the good and the promising and the possible. This is true not just in the wide world, but right here at UUCSR. Here are some of the latest ways we are “moving forward, never turning back,” as our friends in Emma’s Revolution sing.

STAFF CHANGES

As most of you know by now, a couple of big staff changes are afoot. Director of Jen Freese’s last day is August 7th. I can’t possibly describe what a pleasure it has been to work with Jen, or how meaningful her tenure has been to the congregation. Under Jen’s leadership we instituted the “Wonder Box,” held our first-ever Christmas pageant, and changed and expanded the staff structure in the Religious Education program. We also created the online RE program as we know it now. The good news is that the Freese family isn’t going anywhere – not with Sean as a key member of our Board of Trustees! The *great* news is that the RE Steering Committee and I have found a wonderful candidate to serve as our new DRE. Watch your email for a special announcement, coming as soon as all the details are sorted out.

Administrative Manager Dawn Silveira is also departing with our best wishes. I’m particularly grateful for her help in getting our online services up and running, and for keeping the building safe during our Great Pause. Dawn will serve us until we have completed the upgrade to our new cutting-edge congregational management software. A hiring team for our new Administrative Manager has already been formed, and a new

job description that reflects the challenges of working in the Corona virus has been crafted. We will fill this position as soon as possible.

REALM

Speaking of cutting-edge congregational management software, please keep your eyes on your email for announcements related to REALM. Over the next month we will be converting all of our membership, pledging and other records to this outstanding cloud-based system, and we will need everyone's participation. You will be asked to update and complete an online profile, confirm your pledge, and upload a picture. That photo directory everyone is longing for will then be at our fingertips with the Realm app. Yes, UUCSR will have an app. Welcome to the future!

POSTCARD PROJECT

This congregation is filled with people who have a deep commitment to social justice and societal transformation as part of their religious path. The Advocates for Social Justice, Borders & Beyond, and the Diversity Project are combining forces to create a project that each and every member and friend can participate in, namely the writing of postcards to encourage people in hotly contested races to resist the forces of disenfranchisement, and to vote in November. Stay tuned for an announcement and instructions in an upcoming worship service.

NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

I so appreciate the feedback that the neighborhood groups have offered on how to improve the online worship experience and how to try to keep people connected. You have been heard. Of all the concerns, the need to improve our channels of communication, our social media presence, and our website will be a top priority for me in the new "church year."

Many of you have expressed the fear that some among us might drift away and get lost during the pandemic. That is a legitimate fear, yet the congregation continues to attract newcomers and to grow. Indeed, we have welcomed four new members since the quarantine, although their official new member ceremony is obviously going to have to wait awhile. Sigh.

BIG THANKS TO YOU!

Lots of folks are working to keep the spirit of community at UUCSR. I particularly want to thank the Neighborhood Group facilitators, all our incredible musicians, and the worship associates. Here are just some of the people who deserve a special shout-out right now.

Thanks to President Natalie Brundred, for leading a great Board retreat, for her indefatigable positivity and her willingness to push us forward no matter what's happening in the world around us. And so, too, to the Board for sharing that positivity and vision.

Thanks to Paula Hammett, for spearheading the transition to Realm and for chairing the Lay Chaplains, and thanks to the chaplains for calling everybody in the congregation.

Thanks to Jane DeYoung, for stepping up to serve as Treasurer in a difficult time.

Thanks to Linda Stabler, for guiding us through two sudden hiring processes.

Thanks to Michael Bingham, for video production.

Thanks to all our Saturday Breakfast captains and volunteers, for continuing our tradition of direct service to people in need.

Thanks to John Mason, for leading the Neighborhood Groups, and thanks to Barbara Kezur for leading our UU Parenting group.

Thanks to the Diversity Project, for giving shape to UUCSR's response to racial injustice. Thanks to Erin Howseman, who has stepped down after five years of chairing our Stewardship Team through times of bold experimentation and growth, along with her husband Robert. They did so even while losing their home in the Tubbs fire, and Robert still found inspiration to write original UU music along the way, too. What a pair! Finally, thanks to everyone who has picked up the phone, delivered some soup, or has offered a hand to a fellow member in one way or another. You are the strands of our web, and that web *shall not* break. (Picture Gandalf here.)

UNTIL NEXT TIME

As always, I am praying for your safety and your health. I am praying for strong, compassionate leaders to guide us through the pandemic and the rebuilding of our nation, and for a quick road to a vaccine. I am praying for the day we get to sing "Spirit of Life" in the Sanctuary together again. I know that by the grace of Providence, and the power of the human spirit, everything is going to be OK. A landslide in November would surely help my spirit, though. I am praying for that, too.

In the meantime, the plan is to keep listening to my favorite music and finding ways to be creative, meditating and praying, calling folks, and finding ways to cause some "good trouble" if I can. I hope you'll join me in that project, and I look forward to seeing you in a Zoom room soon!

With love, Rev. Chris

Your President's Message



Where Do We Go From Here?

Welcome to a brand new congregational year! As I write this, we just had our first ever Zoom Board retreat – 3 hours on Friday, 6 hours on Saturday (!), and 2 hours on Sunday – followed by 2½ hours of regular monthly Board meeting! But it really worked. We had some deep conversations, and set our course for the year.

Want to know the Board's goals for the year? Here they are:

1. Roll out Realm (our new church management software system), including educating the congregation, building engagement, and integrating it into all appropriate aspects of congregational life.
2. Strengthen our administration and communications. Hire a great Administrative Manager. Re-examine all our committees and committee structure.
3. Take action on racial justice, diversity, equity and inclusion. Create opportunities for learning about and overcoming implicit bias, white privilege and systemic racism. Work with HR, COSM, Nominating, and Stewardship, to have an impact on hiring, Board membership, resolving issues in the congregation, and financial planning.
4. Create the most appropriate method of stewardship in the congregation, led by functioning committees.
5. Support & strengthen our online community in ways that foster multiple paths to hope, connection, and engagement.

6. Create guidelines to re-open the congregation to in-person gatherings, and explore ways to support our families, children and youth, under best practices and guidelines for health and safety.

In creating these goals, our guiding principle was our commitment to our congregation and community thriving, connecting, strengthening and growing. We are all so passionate about our community, and want to see it as vital and nurturing as possible. These goals, both practical and reflective, point us firmly in that direction. When we're able to fully open up our building again, we're going to be ready to hit the ground running – and fly!

In love and partnership,

Natalie

What Your Board Is Up To



In our Board meeting, we discussed our hiring processes for a Director of Religious Education and an Administrative Manager. Chris and Jen had met with the RE Steering Committee to determine the best way to structure the position in this time of “virtual everything”, and had a very viable candidate in mind. We have a hiring committee for the Administrative Manager position and are updating the job description.

Paula Hammett showed us some of the features of Realm. It's amazing! You'll be getting communications from us soon telling you what you need to do to set yourself up in the program. Please make sure you fill out your profile and put your picture in as soon as you can.

The Board decided that we want to have at least one Board member at every Coffee Hour, to provide answers to your questions and a way for you to provide feedback to the Board.

August's Board meeting will be Thursday, August 20th at 6:30 on Zoom. I'll send you a reminder early that week so you can attend if you'd like to. You're always welcome!

Natalie Brundred
President

Religious Education and Family Ministry



A Fond Farewell

I am both sad and hopeful as I prepare to resign from my position as your Director of Religious Education in early August. I have loved my time with our families as DRE and had planned on staying with UUCSR as a religious educator for many more years, so my departure brings me sorrow and a sense of loss. I am also hopeful, however, for I know - perhaps more than most - that times of loss and challenge can bring about some of the most beautiful new growth.

As you may have heard, I will be stepping down as DRE to stay at home full-time with my children, Owen and Rory. As a result of the pandemic, their school schedule will include a great deal of distance learning and time spent at home, and we have no other childcare options at this time. Many parents and caregivers across the country are faced with tough decisions like this right now as we approach the beginning of the school year, and I am grateful that I have this option available to me - a luxury that many do not. That said, I am also deeply saddened to leave a position I have loved so very much.

There will be no online religious education during the month of August for children so as to provide some space for the RE Steering Committee, RE staff, and Reverend Chris to consider the best next steps for the program. At the request of our teens, Youth Group will continue to meet on Sundays at 11:00 am, led by Reverend Chris and Kayli Bland, our RE Program Assistant.

During this month of transition, I highly recommend that families utilize the online program, *Creating Sabbath Space*, developed by Soul Matters, to explore at-home family worship. In September, the RE program will offer an extension of this program called *Chalice Home*, a monthly at-home worship curriculum that families of all ages can utilize throughout the year. Please contact Kayli at kblanduucsr@gmail.com if you would like to receive this or the *Creating Sabbath Space* packets.

I am comforted to say that, although I will be stepping back to provide space for the new RE team to flourish in the upcoming year, UUCSR very much remains my spiritual home. My family will continue to be active members in our congregation and religious education community, and I will look forward to the time when I can see all of you face to-face when we return to worship in our beloved building again.

Treasurer's Monthly Ledger

UUCSR Treasurer's Report - August 2020



Dear Fellow UUCSRs—

I am happy to report that we have finished our 2019-20 fiscal year on budget!

This has been largely due to the continued stewardship you have all provided our congregation during these times of upheaval and uncertainty, with Pledges and Gifts combined bringing us close to our projections. Expenses have been kept to a minimum thanks to careful management. In addition, staff members volunteered to forego merit increases to help deliver a balanced budget for our current fiscal year, 20-21.

We received \$64,000 from the Payment Protection Program, which allowed us to keep our staff on board during the early months of the pandemic closure, and freed up sufficient funds to pay our membership dues to UUA.

We ended the year with approximately \$30,000 Net Income, and this will be allocated to our 20-21 budget as planned: \$21,000 to operations with nearly \$9,000 allocated to contingency.

The implementation of the REALM software program has already improved our ability to forecast pledges...this is vital, as pledges are the major source of income for our Congregation. They give us our ability to meet the goals of our Mission: Celebrating Life, Empowering People, Caring for One Another, and Helping to Build a Better World.

At this writing, the July financials are not completed, but a preliminary overview looks like we will be on budget for the first month of this fiscal year...thanks to the contributions and hard work of our Congregational family.

With love,

Jane DeYoung, Treasurer

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Adult Education



ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

All the following are zoom classes.

Invitation/links will be sent to the focus list prior to the class.

James Alexander: A criminal justice presentation about the life of James Alexander who spent 28 years in prison and was transformed by his participation in the Quaker Alternatives To Violence program. The focus will be his prison experience, his re-entry into society and his work as a drug and alcohol counselor. It is set for **August 3 from 6-7:30pm**. His story about his prison experience, "Courage In The Face of Cruelty" is available at bookstores.

Getting To Know UU: Led by Rev. Chris, this series for newcomers about the Unitarian Universalist faith continues **Wednesdays, 7/7 and 7/14 at 7pm**.

Sources: Once monthly, Rev. Chris will present classes on words and deeds of prophetic figures in Unitarian Universalism. First class is **Saturday, July 18, 10am**.

Zoom Class: Jim Masters will teach a class on the ins and outs of setting up and using Zoom including how to create and host sessions. **Thursday, July 16 at 6:30**.

Upcoming Events

China: A two-class powerpoint presentation about the lingering impact of the Mccartney expedition of 1790's on relations between Europe and China and, secondly, on the vogue for Chinese thought and products from early to mid-19th century. Date and time to be determined.

Polar Bears, Black Boys & Prairie Fringed Orchids: This reading of a drama by Vincent Terrell Durham about white fragility and the Black Lives Matter movement will be available for viewing by participants. This will be followed by a separate Q&R session by the producer, Aldo Billingslea. Subsequent donations to the Black theater artist project are welcome. Date and time to be determined.

Administrator's Minute



Hello Wonderful People!

Thank you so much for all of your kind words and heart felt messages and cards. I have enjoyed working here at UUCSR. I am not sure what is next for me but I do know life is an adventure and I love adventures!

In my last few weeks, I am assisting Paula Hammett with the final stages of implementation of our new software Realm. I know you all will be very happy with this easy to use and stay connected with each other software.

Please take care !

Warmly,
Dawn Silveira

Lay Chaplains Message



Your Lay Chaplains are one part of UUCSR's pastoral care team, which includes the ministers and the Caring Connections Committee.

We are here to listen to the important things going on in your life—your joys, your sorrows, the things for which you might want to light a candle to commemorate during the service.

We're also here if you just need someone to talk to—you're concerned, lonely, want someone to listen as you work through a difficult situation.

Call us. Your Lay Chaplains are: Paula Hammett, Lucia Milburn, Barbara Kezur, Bruce Hope, Tamara Murrell, Mary Lill Lee, and Al Liner. We are in the UUCSR directory, or email laychaplains@uusantarosa.org and we will get back to you.

We are also going through the directory, name by name, to call everyone just to check in. We look forward to talking with you!

If you have something to share in Milestones, please send it to laychaplains@uusantarosa.org no later than Thursdays at noon. Let us know if you want it included in the online service or just in the weekly compilation and Milestones Book.

You're also invited to join the Lay Chaplains for Tea and Chat, an online meeting via Zoom, on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 3pm. Watch for the invitation on the Focus list which will contain the link to the meeting.

Let us know how we can be there for you.
Be safe and be well.

Musical Notes



Musical Notes

"Don't worry that it's not good enough for anyone else to hear. Just sing... sing a song!" --Joe Raposo, Sesame Street; The Carpenters, Now And Then; 1973

There's prob'ly a little bit of *Sesame Street* in all of us. There's a little bit of *The Carpenters* in a lot of us, too. The message in the song "Sing" written by Joe Raposo and popularized by The Carpenters, is: You're okay.

Pop star Brandy Norwood used to go to church in Mississippi with her dad, a gospel singer and choir director. She once said, "Watching what people's voices did to audiences, I wanted to see if my voice could do that." Those of us who sing (listening to an accompaniment on headphones and singing into a mic all by ourselves) know what music can do. It moves us and I'm sure it moves you, the audience, too.

Sally Jones's rendition of our own "Gone Too Soon", words by Andy Levine, music by Robert Howseman, moved people here in Santa Rosa and all across the country. The widow of my high school buddy listened from Iowa. One of our singers listened from Florida where she is helping her aunt recover from surgery.

And one of the cool things about singing along with the singers in our virtual services is, you don't have to worry your song isn't good enough for anyone else to hear!

If you'd like to find out more about the music ministry at UUCSR email a Music Coordinator (musicians@uusantarosa.org) or the Choir Director (choir@uusantarosa.org).

Stay safe and keep singing.

--Randy Jones

Stewardship

"It was the worst of times, it was the best of times..."

Yes, that's backwards. In the original*, it leads with "the best."

But, in this case, it seems more appropriate to lead with "the worst," because it often—though certainly not always—

brings out the best in us. The coronavirus has descended

upon the world, followed by the massive outrage over police-on-Black violence. If ever there was a time for the best in us to come out, this is it.



And in the case of UUCSR, it definitely has. Our leadership continues to create on-line worship experiences that provide spiritual nourishment for hundreds of members and non-members alike. Our staff and service committees continue to function brilliantly under often stressful conditions. Our outreach moves ahead with services like the Saturday Breakfast (or perhaps more accurately, Lunch). Our congregation is working to engage in meaningful work to In short, our congregational community is doing what we profess—all together now—"celebrating life, empowering people, caring for one another, and helping to build a better world."

The financial part of all this comes from our collective generosity, since our congregation receives virtually no outside funding. Many of you have made special donations since the beginning of the pandemic, and we say a heartfelt “thank you”. Each of us has to navigate this weird time as best we can; as we do, let us care for each other and our congregation. Let the worst continue to bring out the best in us.

**A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, as if you didn't know

Alan Bell, Stewardship Team

Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagan's Reflection

Our Wonderful Congregation



Lately, as we found ourselves in a circumstance that kept us isolated and indoors, it seems many of us had the urge to grow a garden, go to the beach, or go for a walk. We're being drawn to nature, to our connection to the earth. Children know this instinctively. They are earth worshipers at heart. Just give them a puddle or a patch of dirt.

Growing a garden and watching how quickly nature fills a barren, unremarkable piece of land with plants, or observing a tree, or the stars, or the power of the ocean can reset our brain. Watching the changing of the seasons and feeling the cycle of life, we are drawn to these things because we know intuitively nature brings us closer to our source. It also connects us to our ancient ancestors whose very survival depended on their connection to the earth and observation of the seasons.

We appreciate the congregation embracing and participating in CUUPs sponsored events like the Ancestor Remembrance in October, and Yule celebration in December. Thanks to you and Rev. Chris we have been given the opportunity to structure our beliefs into rituals during services, and even offer a class on Goddesses.

We Pagan Unitarians recognize that many in our congregation are sympathetic to the Pagan path, whether they realize it or not. If you walk on this earth gently, living in a way that respects and nourishes it, you understand the Pagan way. You may not need to participate in a group like CUUPs. This isn't necessary to walk an earth based path.

So as we are all drawn to nature during this strange, isolating time, to be healed and nurtured, know that we Pagans understand and appreciate your love of our Mother Earth. Blessed Be!

Loretta Smith

Upcoming at UUCSR: Groups and Special Events

COSM

We are COSM, the Committee on Shared Ministry. The current committee consists of Bob Anderson (chair), Susan Bartholome, Frances Corman, Kitty Wells, Maria Praetzellis and Rev. Chris. We are 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 also participates in the yearly evaluation of the minister that we complete and submit to the Board of Trustees each February. We are here for both the minister and YOU, the congregation. So, talk with us! All communications with COSM are confidential. Feel welcome to call any of the COSM members. Our individual numbers are in the directory.

EVENING BOOK GROUP

The book group will meet via Zoom on Thursday August 13th from 4-6 p.m. The book for August is *An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones. In September we will read *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui. Contact Linda Lampson with any questions or to receive an invitation to the Zoom meeting.

OLDER AND BOLDER WOMEN'S GROUP

Older and Bolder women's group—for women congregants who have passed their 80th birthdays.

We continue to meet at 10:30 on the second and fourth Mondays of each month, but until we can return to the Green Room, we'll meet by Zoom instead. We are fortunate that Chlele Gummer has agreed to set up our meetings; she has a list of the current members and sends emails to them with instructions each meeting day. For further information call Phyllis Clement at 823-0925, or Shirley White, Dorris Lee, Clare Whitfield.

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[Contact Us Today](#)