

SFUU CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 2021

Christmas for ALL

Greetings of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace beloved siblings in Community,

Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace are the weekly themes for the Christian season of Advent, which precedes the Season of Christmas. Yep, both are seasons... multiple days of gestation/preparation, and multiple days of celebrating the continual birthing/manifestation of Divinity amongst earthly creatures/beings. However, this Christian tradition has been adapted, redacted, and greatly misappropriated for all sorts of reasons, from theological politics and cultural syncretism to cynical commodification of beliefs.

Don't worry, I'm not leading you into a diatribe of "Keep Christ in Christmas!" Christ does not need defending! Christ might need some saving from self-righteous and self-proclaimed Christians, but I believe that Jesus can handle even those who give Him a bad name. As they say: Bless their hearts! The primary intention of this short note is to invite you to experience these Holy Seasons as if they had never happened before, because guess what?! They haven't! Yes, Advents and Christmases of the past exist only in the past. They are no longer. They are gone! However, Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace can be experienced if we open ourselves to seasons that present themselves to us anew.

What if we let go of Christmas notions that no longer liberate, enlighten, and connect us to our own humanity and divine nature, and the humanity and divinity of all creation? What if we take some time rethinking Christmas, preparing inwardly/spiritually/consciously, and gestating the Light within, in hopes that love and peace with justice will be embodied through us, between us, around us, for us, and for all, ALL in capital letters and no small print, ALL regardless of their religious affiliation or no affiliation at all, race/ethnicity, place of origin and immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, socioeconomic status, and any other identifier that is used to dehumanize and objectify?

I believe that Christmas is for ALL, not only for those who believe that Jesus is the son of God, because Christmas transcends traditional particularities. It is all about the incarnation of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace, and that can happen within and through anyone and everyone who so chooses to be Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.

On another note of Hope + Love + Joy + Peace... Rev. AJ, Rev. Wendy, Rev. Lynn, and I have arrived at a mutually agreed ministerial covenant, therefore anyone from our congregation who would like to reestablish contact with them are free to do so. They were an integral part of the recent history of our congregation, and they might have established deep connections with some of you, and it is important to us that those bonds are honored. I'm your minister/pastor/Rev., but that doesn't mean that healthy connections cannot remain between you and your former partners in ministry. AJ has a new Facebook account in case you want to find him on that platform.

Well beloved, may we prepare, nurture, and embody the Holy Seasons presenting themselves anew to all who choose to live into them.

Yours in Lovingkindness,

Rev. Alex

2 Services at 9 and 11 a.m. at SFUU, Streaming available at 9 a.m.

SIERRA FOOTHILLS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS WELCOME YOU!





Church Office

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Patricia Leftridge
music@mysfuu.org

Rev. Alex's Office Hours:
Tues - Wed - Thurs - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
(or by appointment)

Email is checked daily and you may email our office administrator or call the church office with any needs or questions.

Submissions for our publications are as follows:

**Weekly eBeacons & Order-of-Service Announcements
Due Wednesday by 5 p.m.**

This information is usually generated through Calendar Requests made through the website. Please submit any additional information or clarifications to our Office Administrator at admin@mysfuu.org

To submit a calendar request, please visit www.mysfuu.org, sign in on the "Members" tab, and follow the instructions for calendar requests. Contact our administrator if you have forgotten the member's password.

**Newsletter items due by 5 p.m. on the 24th of each month
Send to joansac61@gmail.com**

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Learn More about Unitarian Universalism



SFUU is part of the Pacific Western Region of the UUA—www.uua.org/pacific-western— and the Pacific Central District (PCD) of the UUA— www.pcd-uua.org

Committee Updates

Membership

Interested in becoming an official member of SFUU? We will welcome new members during a service in January. For more information, contact Rev. Alex, Revalex@mysfuu.org, or Membership Chair Mary Piette at piettes@msn.com.

Caring



The mission of the Caring Committee here at SFUU is to be aware of the medical and emotional needs of our congregational members and to coordinate and provide assistance when needed (providing meal trains, transportation to services and appointments, visitations). If you or someone you know would benefit from our help please contact our committee chair, Bonnie Dahl (530-889-1576), Rev. Alex (415-706-5397) or committee members Beryl Mayne, Karen Morse, or Sally Knost. If the work of this committee would be a way you would like to serve our church community, contact Bonnie or Rev.Alex.

Adult RE

Adult RE have begun meeting again, and in November we decided to have a book study. We requested books on Gender Identity. We received a few book ideas from you and decided to go with “Beyond The Gender Binary” by Alok Vaid-Menon. Rev. Alex will facilitate, and we will have dates and times for this read as well as where we will be meeting by the next Newsletter.

We would also like to continue with the Covenant Groups, so be looking in your inbox for a message from me, if you attended any of these groups. We will continue with a more flexible group setting as we move forward. Our next meeting will be December 14 at 6:00 p.m. in the zoom room. Feel free to join us. You can contact me, Jan Lowry, at herbaljan@gmail.com.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Worship

The Worship Team recently conducted a training on assisting with services and working with our new minister, Rev. Alex, which was well attended- thanks to all our new and not so new Worship Partners for your contributions! Creative juices have really been flowing as far as use of our worship space, service components, and flow. And the tech team has worked out many challenges to bring us terrific services. We are so grateful for our community of seekers, both our worship partners and participants!

Blessing of the Animals

On October 31st SFUU members joined with folks from Bethlehem Lutheran Church for a Blessing of Animals. Here are some photos.



FUN-d-Raising

Story Slam

We had another fun and engaging evening of storytelling at our November 6th Story Slam. Nine entrants competed for a \$100 first prize. Fifty viewers (some in person, following Covid protocols, and some watching on Zoom) scored each storyteller and votes were tallied to determine the winners. 1st place went to Anne White, 2nd place to Sharon Watson-Hamilton, and 3rd place to Meg Dorsey. Some close scores but no ties! Other entrants: Susan Rushton, Sue Fegley, Milo Florence, Sam Florence, Robert Ludgate, Beryl Mayne.

Here are some photos of the event.



Emcee extraordinaire Bob Niblack



Sue Fegley



Both Sam and Milo Florene told stories.



1st place winner Anne White



The amazing Storytellers



The prize winners



Tallying the scores

A Tree Grows on Finley Online Auction

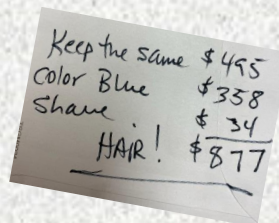
The Story Slam was the kick-off to another successful online auction. Forty-one bidders vied to win spots at dinners and outings or buy jewelry, baskets, or artwork. Rev. Alex's hair generated a lot of activity, bringing in almost \$900 before the outcome was known— they will keep their curly locks. Almost everything sold, bringing in a total of \$5570 for SFUU.



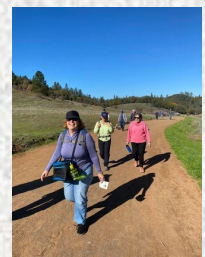
Puppy Pleaser basket sold for \$60.



Rev. Alex's hair made for some active bidding.



One event has already taken place—hike and picnic.



Board of Trustees

Beloved Community,

Hope your Thanksgiving tradition (whatever that is for you) allowed you some time to reflect on the blessings in your life however large or small. I so appreciated, a reminder during Sunday service, to ponder the question of what is enough. Good timing as we move into our holidays of giving. December also brings my favorite pagan holiday of Solstice.

The days continue to be shorter and darkness longer during this month with December 21st being the longest and darkest night and shortest day of the year. The dark triumphs over the light this day, but this signifies a turning point, and the days slowly start to get longer going forward. Something that always gives me joy.

The energy of winter is that of going within. For me, the wood stove provides both light and heat, and I can take time to pause. The darkness and silence allow me to pay attention to my deep yearnings, and my new inspirations can eventually emerge. For me, consciously linking my awareness to nature's cycles helps me connect to our earth and appreciate my rhythms and growth cycles in sink with ancient traditions.

Our Faith Community celebrates how each of us develops and maintains traditions for individuals and families in each season. This December, after so much separation, we can each decide for ourselves and with our families, what traditions remain sacred, which ones we have outgrown and what new traditions we want to put in place. As a Congregation we can do the same, as we continue to grow and evolve as a community.

Wishing you a holiday filled with joy and love,

Maureen Bauman, BOT President



All We Need is Love— and About \$70,000

We know our church building is about 100 years old, and our congregation purchased it in 2001. The roof on our church is surely not that old, but it's old enough that no one seems to know how old it is. What we **do** know is that we have been patching leaks for a long time, and we are overdue for a new roof. We have bids to do this job for around \$50,000, but we anticipate that some dry rot mitigation will be necessary after the old roof is torn off. This will add to the cost, and we don't know how much that will be.

Here is more bad news. We have two heating/air conditioning (HVAC) units that are about thirty years old. They still work, with a little repair work from time to time, but they are already well past their expected useful life. They are also far less energy-efficient than currently available equipment and are not capable of providing the kind of air flow and filtration system we need in the age of Covid. We could easily need to spend about \$15,000 to replace each one. Taking care of this before it becomes an emergency is advisable. (For those of us who have been around for a while, you may remember that a third HVAC system for the RE and office wing of the building was replaced a few years ago. The old units we need to replace are for the Sanctuary and Social Hall.)

Neither of these situations comes as a surprise to the leadership of SFUU, but the Board of Trustees has decided that now is the time to deal with them. We have a Chalice Lighter Grant request with the UU Pacific Central District which we hope might generate as much as \$4,000. We will be needing at least \$70,000 more, and our entire annual operating budget is a bit less than \$200,000. So this is a big deal.

Here is the good part. Be it ever so humble, we love our church home. It's the only home we have, at least for now...and for an unknown number of years to come. We are hopeful that our love for SFUU, the roof over our heads, and the indoor air that we breathe will make it possible for us to raise the money we need for this effort. (*cont'd on p.6*)



Adult R.E.

Jan Lowry

Building & Grounds

Bob Niblack

Children/Youth RE

Leah Florence

Communications

Joan Lacktis

Finance

Ann Denison

Membership

Mary Piette

Social Justice

Barb Munn and

Carol Koons

Worship

Amy Evans

TEAMS & TASK FORCES

Stewardship

Stevie Rea

Mission Earth Report

Keep CA Rooftop Solar Growing

The CA Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is reviewing recommendations made by utility companies for changes to its net energy metering (NEM) program for people with rooftop solar. If you are wondering what happens to solar panel owners and the solar industry when NEM is adjusted to favor the utilities, then watch [Johnathon Scott's Power Trip](#). This 2020 documentary deals with how changing regulations negatively affected the solar industry in



Photo courtesy of Dennis Schroeder, National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

Nevada, and can be viewed on [PBS Passport](#). Mission Earth urges you to sign a petition asking the CPUC (and the governor) to support a Net Energy Metering policy that would keep rooftop solar growing. They are hoping for thousands of signatures by Dec 10th (prior to the next CPUC meeting). Go to the Social Justice [Take Action](#) page to learn more and sign the petition!

Concrete Examples of Plastic-Free Products for You to Peruse

You are invited to stop by Mission Earth's plastic-reduction display table after Sunday services on December 5th. Check out the things that we have done to shrink the growing single use plastic in our lives. We welcome your ideas as we continue our journey to care for the Earth.

Are you flying for the holidays? Consider purchasing carbon offsets!

If you are like me, you may experience carbon-guilt when making reservations to fly across the country to see your family. If so, then purchasing carbon offsets can mitigate the environmental impact of your trip. Carbon offset programs should ideally remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere through actions that would not happen otherwise (a concept known as [additionality](#)). An organization created to help people maximize their climate giving, [Giving Green](#), recommends four carbon-offsetting programs that have strong additionality:

[Tradewater](#) (finds and destroys chemical refrigerants)

[BURN](#) (provides fuel-efficient cookstoves to people in East Africa)

[Climeworks](#) (sucks CO₂ from the air, then sells it commercially or stores it underground)

[Charm Industrial](#) (converts agricultural residue into bio-oil then stores it underground)

Click here for [Giving Green's analysis of each of these companies](#).

(cont'd from p. 5) We have established a special fund for the contributions we will be needing. Although our fund-raising campaign officially kicks off in January 2022, we anticipate that some members and friends of SFUU might want to take advantage of this charitable opportunity before the close of this calendar year. So never fear, you don't have to wait to jump on the bandwagon! (If you write a check, just write Roof Fund on the memo line, or donate through our website and designate the Roof Fund.)

Finally, we would like to remind our members and friends of less obvious ways to contribute, such as direct tax-free transfers from an IRA (for those over 70 1/2 years old) or contributions of appreciated stock with no capital gains tax. For more information on this subject, feel free to contact Jim Robison (jimrobison66@gmail.com , 209-277-6201).

Faith in Action

Holiday Adopt a Family

Donations are coming in for our Holiday Adopt a Family! It's not too late to join us in creating a special holiday for a Northern California family in need! Here are the details...

- NorCal Resist has matched us with an undocumented or asylum seeking family of 7 that is struggling financially.
- Use this link [Holiday Family Sponsor google doc](#) to see gift ideas and sign up for your contribution. We're also accepting cash donations to purchase gift cards for the family.
- The Social Justice team needs all donations no later than Dec 5.
- Contact Carol (carolk401@hotmail.com) or Barb (bjmun57@gmail.com) for more information!
- This project is another partnership with our neighbors at Bethlehem Lutheran!
- Most importantly – THANK YOU!

Equal Exchange Holiday Special!

We've received a new shipment of Equal Exchange coffee, teas and chocolate just in time for holidays. These products are delectable AND by purchasing through Equal Exchange you are helping small farmers earn more for their labors. As a special thanks to you, we're giving away beautiful cloth gift bags with each purchase (while supplies last)! Check out the display in the foyer of the church!



Want to take ACTION?

We're making it easy! Right at the top of our [Social Justice home page](#) (find it under Faith in Action on the home page of our SFUU web site) see the "Click Here to Take Action" button. It's irresistible, so go ahead and click..... Right now you'll see how you can:

- Sign a petition to keep CA rooftop solar growing
- Join in on our Holiday Adopt a Family
- Volunteer with Faithful Friends or the Auburn Interfaith Food Closet
- Support climate legislation
- Support Campus of Hope – a Placer County project to provide housing for the homeless

Share the Plate 2022!

Thank you to everyone who nominated organizations for Share the Plate for the coming year. After careful consideration, the Social Justice team selected the following 2 groups to join the Auburn Interfaith Food Closet for 2022. Drum roll.....

Faithful Friends - This all volunteer group supports non documented people who have been picked up by ICE and are being detained in the Yuba County Jail. The group visits detainees, purchases stamps and helps pay for phone calls so they can be in contact with family, and assists with support once detainees are released.

Rainbow Alliance - This student club at Sierra College supports LGBTQ+ students. In her response to the news of their Share the Plate selection, faculty advisor Tamal Wonnell wrote:

What a wonderful gift to our young LGBTQ+ students! They will be so deeply touched and honored!..... Reverend Alex came and spoke to our club last week and the impact was HUGE. We're looking forward to having them back again.

Thank you again for your wonderful work supporting the community - that's what a REAL church does.



UPCOMING WORSHIP

Services at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Streaming at 9 a.m.



December 5: *Joy vs. Happiness*, led by Rev. Alex da Silva Souto

December 12: *Joy as a Limitless Quantity*, led by Meg Dorsey

December 19: *Winter Solstice*, led by Rev. Alex da Silva Souto

December 24 (Friday), 6 p.m.: *Christmas Eve*, led by Rev. Alex da Silva Souto

December 26th (Sunday): NO SERVICE

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS PARADE

Saturday, December 4th, 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Setup at SFUU starting at 3 p.m.

SFUU AFTER HOURS

Crooked Lane Brewing Co. in Auburn, December 8th, starting at 6:30 p.m.

SFUU Zoom Gatherings!

2nd and 4th Tuesdays

7:00 p.m. – UU Mamas

Alternate Fridays

6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - Youth Group

<https://tinyurl.com/sfuuzoom>



SFUU
190 FINLEY ST.
AUBURN, CA 95603

WWW.MYSFUU.ORG

Mail Return Service
Requested

**AN LGBTQ
WELCOMING
CONGREGATION**



THE MISSION OF THE SIERRA FOOTHILLS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS
is to build beloved community that respects diversities as we nourish the spirit,
care for the Earth, and inspire faithful acts of peace and justice.

Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- ◆ The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- ◆ Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- ◆ Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- ◆ A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- ◆ The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- ◆ The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- ◆ Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.