



REVEREND MIKE'S WAYSIDE PULPIT

Changing What We Can and Living Without Despair

Dear friends,

As we head into the holidays, I'm aware that many folks have mixed feelings about it all. This is a season of joy for some; but ministry has taught me all too well that that is not the case for all people. For some, the prospect of reuniting with family members with whom we have fraught relationships is not fun. For others, this may be the first Christmas after losing a loved one. We have learned that depression is more prevalent during the holidays. Some things we can change; some we cannot.

A Buddhist teaching that has always had meaning for me is about the concept of *dukkha*. It is often translated as *suffering* – although *dukkha* is more than that, as it also describes that which we find *unsatisfactory*, as well as possibly *painful*. The teaching includes the idea that we suffer in life (or are unsatisfied or in pain) because we do not accept things the way they are. We attempt to change reality to conform to our preconceived notions and strong desires, and then suffer as a consequence when we cannot change reality. Conversely, by accepting life as it is and letting go of preconceived notions, we allow ourselves to be happier, healthier people.

Changing what we can, and letting go of our attachments to changing that which we cannot, is the first step; the second step, living without despair, is just as important. We seek to not allow reality – matters in life or current events beyond our personal control – to bring us to a state of despair. It is so easy for us to become attached to a particular outcome, and just as easy to become depressed if the outcome is not what we desired. (As much as I wish for a different outcome to the election a year ago and have had a desire for sanity in Washington in the year since, I've had to accept reality, as it is.)

It's easy to say to ourselves "*just accept it*" about whatever issue is concerning us. It is harder to actually do so, to experience our life in a state of acceptance. This is why we need others in our lives, to support us in living without despair. We listen to each other as we struggle with accepting realities in our lives or in the world around us. We lift each other's spirits from the depths of despair, especially when we find it too difficult to accept some harsh reality in the moment. We care for each other. We need each other, especially as we face whatever *dukkha* is before us now.

May it ever be so and blessed be you all!

Rev. Mike



MONTHLY THEMES

DECEMBER

RELIGIOUS
DIALOGUE ACROSS
DIFFERENCES

JANUARY

MAKING
RESOLUTIONS AND
MOVING FORWARD

SIERRA FOOTHILLS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS WELCOME YOU!



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Our Office Administrator is in the office on most Thursdays from 11am-2pm.

If you wish to meet with Rev. Mike, please contact him for an appointment. His day off is usually Monday.

Submissions for our publications are as follows:

Weekly e-Beacons & Order-of-Service Announcements – Due Tuesdays by 5pm.

This information is usually generated through Calendar Requests made through the website. Please submit any additional information or clarifications to our Office Administrator Ronda Pate at sfuadmin@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, Ronda, or Amy Evans if you have forgotten the member password.

Bi-monthly Newsletter – Due by 5pm on the 10th of July, Sept, Nov, Jan, Mar, & May to Joan Lactis, joansac61@gmail.com

To 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 of the UUA—www.pcd-uua.org



REflecting and Learning: Children and Youth

Well it's that time of year -- cliché 'holiday spirit extravaganza'. Snow, decorations, presents, and family gatherings. Turkey? Ham? Eggnog? What's the tradition in your family? TV and movies offer plenty of scripts for how these things go, but really, what are your traditions? It might seem obvious to you, but have you shared these with your loved ones lately? Have you told the stories that you associate with the holidays? What have you kept and left behind? What have you built? I remember as a child spending many hours lying awake or sneaking out to listen to adults reminisce. I learned so much about my family and about what our traditions were from these quiet hours. This is where I learned the why and where and how of our family rituals. But whether it is from reminiscing or from discussion, it is important to elevate the traditions of our families. Wishing you all a very happy holiday season!



Upcoming Events:

Holiday Caroling: December 15 at 6:30pm at SFUU. *See Calendar page for details*

K-2nd Grade OWL: January 7 - March 4 from 9:15-10:15am on Sunday. Registration will start soon!

RE Retreat at Montera Lighthouse: weekend of February 24. This is an annual event for RE teachers and families. Save the date and RSVP to Adrean Dills before December 23!

Volunteer Spotlight: Marylee Drake, Supplies Shopper

Did you ever go to the supply cabinet in the hallway to get cups, paper plates, or napkins? Did you ever wonder how all those supplies got there? It turns out that SFUU member Marylee Drake is the SFUU member volunteer who monitors and replenishes those supplies. She enjoys going through the church regularly and finding out what is needed and going to Costco to purchase it so that people have what they need for events and coffee hour. She would like us all to know that we don't need to shop for those supplies ourselves. In the photo you can see her standing by the list of supplies that are regularly stocked. If one of those is running low you can leave a sticky note or contact her and let her know and she will make sure to get some. While she appreciates the generosity of our members, it's better if other members don't buy supplies because of storage limitations it is better. Thanks, Marylee, for your service to SFUU.



Transition Team Update

The SFUU Transition Team to work with Rev. Mike Walker has been selected by the SFUU Board and held its first two meetings in October and November. According to the UUA's "Transitional Ministry Handbook: A Guide for Congregations and Ministers," the TT should consist of five to seven members who are widely known and respected by the congregation. "Their role is to provide the Interim Minister with insight, organizational and facilitative talent, and willing hands as the ministry proceeds. The Transition Team is the minister's 'brain trust.'" The team will be in place for the two-year interim tenure of Rev. Mike. Team members are Robert Archer, John Bowman, Tricia Caspers, Joan Harris, and Randy Nemeth. The TT will be hosting events to help the congregation process grief over the departure of Revs. Lynn and Wendy and come to a collective understanding of where the congregation wants to go in the future. The team will announce dates of these events in upcoming newsletters.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Adult R.E.

Jan Lowry

Building & Grounds

Bob Niblack

Children/Youth RE

Tricia Caspers

Communications

Laurie Soper

Finance

Maureen Bauman

Membership

(vacant)

Social Justice

Shannon Dooley-Miller

Worship

Amy Evans

TEAMS & TASK FORCES

Bylaws

Stevie Rea

Stewardship

Gary Koerner



Shared Ministry—We Are Family

Festival of Lights Parade



We are officially entered into the Festival of Lights Parade in Auburn on December 2!!! We will need help from all who would like to help make it another successful event for SFUU. We hope that we will be able to use a truck to pull the lovely chalice that a member of SFUU made for us several years ago. The parade starts at 5:30pm in downtown Auburn and ends at the Fairgrounds, but come to the church at 3:30pm to help set up. This is the largest and best parade in Auburn. This year, we are hoping the participants from SFUU will be able to wear clothing that has the SFUU name/logo on it so that everyone watching will know who we are. Contact Marsha von Desoneck for more information.

Winter Solstice Celebration

Acknowledge the passing of the season with celebration of the darkness that will bring the light by joining us in the neo-pagan rituals of the Winter Solstice at 7pm on Thursday, December 21. Vegetarian potluck at 5:30pm. Children of all ages are welcome to attend.

A Community Celebration For Martin Luther King, Jr

Save the Date!

Peace, Social Justice, and Equality

Voices from Our Community

Monday, January 15, 2018, 10am-12noon

General Gomez Arts & Events Center

808 Lincoln Way, Auburn, CA

Join us for coffee & bagels and a noon march to the downtown Auburn clock tower.

Contact: Millee Livingston, milleelivingston@gmail.com or 530-887-1775

Stewardship All-Congregation Dinner

To strengthen our beloved community and continue SFUU's financial viability, the 2018 Stewardship Campaign will kick off with an all-church dinner on Saturday evening, March 10, at the Congregational Church's hall in Auburn. Join us for a fun and filling event! Details to follow.

President's Message



Workshop Wrap-Up—On Sunday October 29, Sarah Schurr from the UUA came to lead a workshop in two parts, Part I with the whole congregation, and Part II with the Board and committee chairs.

Part I: A History Lesson—The entire congregation was invited to spend time reflecting on the history of SFUU and how past experiences influence our current identity and affect how we approach our next ministry. I am sure that we all responded to the workshop in different ways. I had many take-aways from the meeting, including:

- 1) The congregation was accustomed to functioning with lots of lay-leaders and fewer responsibilities for a minister due to several years of part-time ministry.
- 2) We have had some challenging experiences with calling a minister, which may make some folks anxious about how to move forward.
- 3) The church has grown slowly but steadily over time, acquiring a building, supporting full-time ministry, hiring paid staff (DRE, music, admin), and adding numerous programs.
- 4) Folks are grieving the loss of Rev. Lynn and Wendy at differing paces, and this needs to be given care and space.
- 5) Revs. Lynn and Wendy worked far more hours than one full-time minister possibly could—there will need to be some changes in the expectations we have as a congregation for the next called minister.

Part II: Things Get Racy! (with an R-A-C-I)—After the group workshop, the Board and committee chairs got together with Sarah to discuss communication and accountability. We learned the mnemonic RACI - for each thing the church does, we need to know:

Responsible—Who does the task? Can be one or many folks.

Accountable—Who is in charge of making sure things are done and done right? Should be one person (“the buck stops here”).

Consulted—Who needs to be consulted before implementing something?

Informed—Who needs to know about what is going on?

Turns out, we don't have many of our important church functions “RACId,” and that can lead to miscommunication, hurt feelings, and the ball getting dropped. This is something that we hope to apply moving forward and you may be asked to RACI something that you are involved in! Reverend Mike's interim ministry is a great opportunity to explore and define what various roles should be, and RACI looks like an excellent tool for this.

From the Board

Sit on It! (Or not...): A Conversation About What to Do with Our Wooden Church Pews

As some of you may recall, we once had wooden church pews throughout the sanctuary. Most of those were removed to make way for more versatile stacking chairs a few years ago. The pews that were removed are gathering dust in storage. What to do with the pews? One possibility is to donate them (Ian Duncan, your fearless VP may have found someone who is interested).

The next question is, should we also get rid of the pews remaining in the sanctuary now? They are nice-looking, but squeaky. The board will ultimately decide their fate but would like input from members. Emotionally attached to the pews? Want them for your home entertainment center? Anything else you want to tell us (besides “Sit on it!”)? Let us know in the next few weeks so we can make an informed decision. Contact Ian Duncan (2ianduncan@gmail.com) or Jenny Ferris (jennytferris@yahoo.com) with your thoughts.

Faith in Action

SOCIAL JUSTICE FOCUS ISSUE CHALLENGE



Holiday greetings from your Social Justice Committee! It has been two years since we as a congregation decided to commit to a focus issue of Caring for the Earth, and we are again at a crossroads, in choosing an issue or issues for the next 2 years.

In October, we held a forum to review our accomplishments from the previous 2 years. We had over a dozen community and church events and activities during that time, as well as numerous sermons from the pulpit related to our focus issue. Our Faith in Action page at mysfuu.org will be sharing that as well as results of a congregation-wide survey over the next few

months that relates to how we got where we are and where we are going. We are excited to report that the many responses to the survey show that, as a congregation, we are an amazing group of folks, a high proportion of whom describe ourselves as engaged in justice issues, and that the issues important to us are many and varied.

This December, we will be evaluating the results of the survey. If you have not yet done so, you may still complete a survey; we will post it on the Faith in Action section of the Social Justice page at mysfuu.org.

REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE OF AN ACTIVIST: MILLEE LIVINGSTON

Fifty years ago, when my husband and I moved from New York City to San Francisco, I had no clue that I would translate my concerns for peace, freedom, and justice into actions. It was the time of the Vietnam War and I quickly joined anti-war community organizations to join marches, rallies, meetings and other actions. At that time, I became a member of the San Francisco branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. I was active in that organization until 2014, when I became one of the founding members of Indivisible Auburn, an organization founded by former Washington, DC, staffers to protest/resist the current US administration.



Having had experience in the Bay Area with Unitarian Universalists, which always supported our community actions, I became acquainted with the UU's in Auburn. I had been a speaker at their services regarding peace and justice issues a few times. One day I picked up their hymnal and read their seven principles and said to myself, "Hmmm, this is what I believe, so why am I not joining this group?". So I did, becoming a member on April 14, 2002. Needless to say, I joined the Social Action Committee, now known as the Social Justice Committee.

In the beginning of my time with UUs, I was a member of the Membership Committee, a good way to meet people, many of whom became long time friends. Two of the important programs I brought to the UUs, in my opinion, are the Community Celebration for Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Children's Peace Camp. Both are continuing today as well other community UU projects.

One current project that might be of interest is the Giving Tree, which the UUs have supported for many years. This year, the Giving Tree donation tags will include items that county nurses and social workers have identified as needed. Check the future Order of Service for more information or contact Alex Suba at 916-945-7788. This is a good way to support the work of our youth.



UPCOMING WORSHIP

There is one service at 10am during December

Dec 3 *A Pastor, Priest, Rabbi, and Imam walk into..*

Rev. Michael Walker

Dec 10 *Faith, Hope, and Love Abide*

Rev. Michael Walker

Dec 17 *We Are Family*

Rev. Michael Walker

Dec 21 *Winter Solstice Celebration*

5:30pm Potluck , 7pm Ritual

Dec 24 no morning worship

Dec 24 5:30 pm *Christmas Eve: A Prayer of Peace and Hope*

Rev. Michael Walker

Dec 31 *A Gathering of Community*

Worship Committee

Jan 7 *TBD*

Jan 14 *An Answer to Injustice: Lessons from Martin Luther King*

Rev. Michael Walker

Jan 21 *The Future: An Undiscovered Country*

Rev. Michael Walker

Jan 28 *UU Heritage: Social Witness and Action*

Rev. Michael Walker

See the website for worship service descriptions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

CHILDREN/YOUTH RE

Christmas Caroling

Friday Dec 15, 6:30-9:30pm,

This is a C/RE event, but all in the congregation are welcome. We will go as a group to the town square to sing Christmas carols and return to the church for more music and games. ~Bonnie Dahl,

bjdahl2@gmail.com

ADULT RE

Men's Group meets 2nd & 4th

Wed of each month, 6pm-7:30pm,

SFUU Social Hall. ~Jim Robison,

jimrobison66@gmail.com

Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication Circle:

2nd Thurs of the month, 6:30-8pm,

SFUU social hall. ~Val Bowman,

valeriebowman2@gmail.com

Crafties: 2nd and 4th Wed of the

month in the social hall, 9-11am.

~Val Bowman.

DEEPENING CONVERSATIONS

The(*)logies on Tap

Dec 20, 7-9pm, Joy

Jan 17, 7-9pm, Letting Go

Location varies, check e-Beacon

Hosts: Bill Boyce & Andy Cramer

(Andrew_cramer@sbcglobal.net)

Brewed Awakenings,

Dec 5, 10-11:30am, Play

Dec 9, 10-11:30am, Joy

Flour Garden, Auburn

PATH TO MEMBERSHIP

December 9: Saturday Supper,

5:30pm. RSVP to Rob Bietz,

mybuddyrobincool@gmail.com

CONGREGATIONAL EVENTS

Festival of Lights Parade

Saturday Dec 2, 3:30-8:30pm

MLK Celebration

January 15, 10am-12noon

General Gomez Arts Center

RE Spring Retreat

February 23-25: Save the date!

Stewardship Dinner

March 10

Spring Fundraiser

April 21

Check the e-Beacon, announcements, and website for the most up to date information.

Visit our website calendar at

www.mysfuu@mysfuu.org

to find out when committees meet.

Worship Themes
December – Religious Dialogue Across Differences
January – Making Resolutions and Moving Forward



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WWW.MYSFUU.ORG

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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.