

SFUU CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 2022

Happy New Year

January 1st, 2022 marks the beginning of what many of us hope will be our best year yet, or at least a better year than the last pandemic ones. Can I get an “Amen!”, a “Hallelu!”, or a “Right On!”, or any other form of hope sharing affirmation???



January 1st is also my fifth month of ministerial partnership with you, and hasn't it been just marvelous? It feels like we are a good match, doesn't it?! The learning curve was steep at times, and adjusting to a new context and new collective chapter has required adjustments and defaulting to grace all around. With that said, I wholeheartedly believe that we are finding our pace in this communal dance (Cheers for mixed metaphors!). It sincerely floods my heart with joy when I hear that my presence here is not only tolerated or needed, but it is celebrated. And guess what... this is how I also feel about y'all (I'm from the deepest South America). I am profoundly grateful for having a chance to journey with you, SFUU as a vital entity in our region, and all the people doing justice work in our county. It is true that I need a job to pay my bills, and honor my family commitments. However, our work has been more than a job to me or a ministerial career move. The partnership we have is the fulfillment of a lifelong dream, and an amazingly nurturing context for spiritual growth. You have embodied hope to me, and I pray that I have offered you some degree of hope and encouragement as well.

I have been also privileged to have a chance to practice my passion for altarscapes, or the fancy term -visual homilies, or visual sermons. Homily and sermon are commonly defined as “a religious discourse that is intended primarily for spiritual edification rather than doctrinal instruction.” However, another definition is “a tedious moralizing discourse” and that is something I want to avoid at all costs. Sermons are also often related to clericalism, or a practice reserved for professional clergy. That's why I prefer the term reflection. However, there is something to be said about using the term visual homily in order to lift up the practice of adorning the sanctuary above the practice of decorating a space. I have no desire to put down professional decorators and interior designers. I worked closely with those professionals in my previous career, and I do believe in the value of their craft. However, I try to distinguish their work from what I attempt in our sanctuary, in order to invite you into a deep reflection about our church environment on a week-to-week basis. How can the sanctuary space we occupy enhance your sensorial perception of “What Is”, the Mystery, the Truth, and the possible Universal Harmony one might be able to tap into?

Builders of sacred spaces have pursued the art of capturing the ineffable into tangible forms since time immemorial. Sometimes these sacred atmospheric efforts have gone to opulent exaggerations, at times it has fallen into overly stark ambiance and unrelatable scale, or a dimension of religious experience completely neglected. As you might've noticed, I am a visual learner, and I find that visual aids are tools that need to be considered in order for one to communicate effectively. I share this information with you because there are/will be times when the main message may not come through spoken words of a reflection, or an inspiring reading, or the lyrics of an eloquent song, but through what you might capture through your other senses, sixth, and seventh senses included.

My main goal with Sunday Celebrations, Meditation Sessions, and other Practice Opportunities is that all of us find the bridge between theory and visceral experience. My hope is to encourage seekers to deepen their journey and inspire those who might not even be seeking anything to remain reflective and bodily engaged with what unfolds within and all around them.

How can SFUU Celebrations be more conducive to the growth of your spiritual/human journey?
How can we continue to collaborate so SFUU can become an even more fertile ground for community spiritual/human development?

My office door is always open, and my phone is always on so we can reflect and enact your answers to the above questions and any other questions springing into your heart/mind/soul.

May 2022 be our most joyous and fruitful year yet!

Rev. Alex
415-706-5397

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

SIERRA FOOTHILLS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS WELCOME YOU!





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DIR. OF RELIGIOUS ED

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Patricia Leftridge
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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

New members will be officially welcomed to SFUU during Sunday services on January 23. If you are ready to take this step, or would like more information, please contact Rev. Alex at revalex@mysfuu.org or 415-706-5397.

Crafties



The holidays may have come and gone, but the Crafties are marching on. There will be new and delightful goodies to purchase throughout the year, and all proceeds benefit SFUU. This month look for washable cotton shopping bags in bright colors as well as jewelry, flatware sets in fabric wrappers made by our kids, and Claudia's cooling headbands to turn down the summer heat. And don't forget fair trade coffee and chocolate, all there for you in the fellowship room. A box for cash and checks is in the glass cabinet. A container for fair trade purchases is on the table with the coffees and teas. Best wishes for a peaceful and healthy new year!

Adult RE

Happy New Year everyone!

Adult Religious Education is having a book study beginning January 11 and will continue on January 25, February 2, and March 8. This should be a wonderful book discussion on Gender Identity and will be led by Rev. Alex. The book is entitled *Beyond The Gender Identity* by Alok Vaid-Menon. The book study will be held at 6:00 p.m. in person or on Zoom. Please let Vickie or Rev. Alex know if you plan on attending and they will order the books.

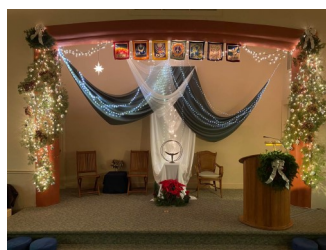
If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining our small but mighty group please send me an email. Jan Lowry herbaljan@gmail.com.

Worship

The Worship Team has settled into our new format of 9:00 a.m. service being recorded and available to view online and a second service at 11:00. The tech team is small, but mighty, and volunteers to assist with online service tech and sound tech are so needed and appreciated. And how about the chancel space! Just gorgeous! Thanks to Rev. Alex and others for creating such a beautiful worship space for us! The Worship Team really appreciates all your efforts to keep everyone safe with vaccination, masks and social distancing. Salud!

Christmas Eve Service Photos

The Worship space was totally transformed for the Christmas Eve service. Here are some pictures in case you weren't able to attend.



Board of Trustees

Dear Beloved Community,

I am hoping each of you had a good holiday and were able to appreciate life's gifts, whether alone, with family, or with friends. I know holidays can be a mixed blessing with multiple emotions, so I'm hoping if there were challenges there was also joy. Our community is always there if you need support. I'm wishing you a wonderful 2022 with whatever life adventures are in store for you.

Sierra Foothills UU has been building excitement that we hope continues in the new year, with new visitors coming to most services, classes and covenant groups being planned and more outreach into the community with Rev Alex. I encourage each of you to help our community with service in some area. I also encourage you to participate in an activity that fills your soul and to contribute financially to sustain all we have to offer. Our one time ask for a new roof and AC replacements is underway early (so everyone who wants to take advantage of a tax deduction for 2021 please contribute before the end of the year). More opportunities to support this important ask will be available in 2022.

This January we will again participate in the community event remembering the birthday of Martin Luther King, a man dedicated to peaceful work consistent with our values. Stay tuned for more information. I look forward to the new year with the expectation we will hear more SFUU voices in our community. Our commitment to social justice is strong and we live in an area where voices are important. Look for opportunities to add yours. I look forward to our worship and work together in the next year.

Wishing you peace and joy with justice,

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. (*cont'd on p 6*)



Mission Earth Report

Adult R.E.

Jan Lowry

Building & Grounds

Bob Niblack

Children/Youth RE

Leah Florence

Communications

Joan Lactis

Finance

Ann Denison

Membership

Mary Piette

Social Justice

Barb Munn and

Carol Koons

Worship

Amy Evans

TEAMS & TASK FORCES

Stewardship

Stevie Rea

Plans for the Spring!

Your Mission Earth team (Barb, Tom, Carol, Janet) are busy planning! We are putting together a letter-writing campaign to ask local retailers to consider alternatives to plastic packaging, creating a public Facebook page devoted to sustainable living, partnering with worship to bring you Earth-care practices for the Lenten period, preparing for a book study to consider ways to foster realistic collective action on climate change, and looking forward to celebrating Earth Day and Easter with you on April 17th. If you are called to care for the Earth and want an outlet for your ideas and energy, Mission Earth may be the team for you! Contact Barb Munn, or [visit our web page](#), for more information.



Rooftop Solar Still Under Threat

Many of you signed petitions in advance of an early December meeting of the CA Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regarding recommendations made by the utilities for changes to its net energy metering program. They have since met, and their proposed decision includes much of what the utility companies were lobbying for, including a \$57 monthly fee for solar users and an 80% cut in the credit that solar owners get for sharing surplus solar energy with the grid. This new net-metering policy will go into effect on January 27th unless Governor Newsom steps in. Go to the Social Justice **Take Action** page to either call Governor Newsom or sign an updated petition asking him to intercede with the CPUC to keep CA's solar industry growing.



Mission Earth's Plastic-Free Ideas

Did you miss our tabling event for reducing plastic in your everyday lives? You can see up close photos of our ideas, and get access to the handouts from our tabling event on the [Mission Earth Page](#).



Proper Disposal of Fats, Oils, and Grease

Did you know that fats, oils, and grease (FOG) should not be thrown directly in the trash (I didn't)? It turns out that FOG contaminates recyclables during waste disposal, so needs to be handled separately from your regular trash. You can call to have it picked up in many places, or you can take it yourself to the transfer station in Auburn, or to the Western Placer Waste Management Authority in Roseville. Go to [Placer Recycles](#) to find out more about properly disposing of fats, oils, and grease.

Faith in Action



Fall was a busy time for Social Justice at SFUU! We participated in the Crop Walk, helped package meals at Bethlehem Lutheran, provided a generous holiday for an immigrant family, and continued our work to reduce plastics in our lives. Our team continues to be so grateful for the participation of our congregation in all these activities! Your generosity is noticed!

January and February will be a quiet time for us, a chance to pause and recharge before our Lenten season kicks off with activities centered around caring for the Earth and social justice worldwide (through the UU Guest at your Table program).

And, know that all are welcome to drop into our meetings on the third Thursday of the month, at 6:00 p.m. in the SFUU Zoom room. Whatever your social justice interest, we have a place for you on our team!

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
- 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

(cont'd from p.4) 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.

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.



UPCOMING WORSHIP

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

Streaming at 9 a.m.

Monthly Theme: Living with Intention



January 2: *Dance Like Nobody's Watching*, led by Rev. Alex da Silva Souto

January 9: *Living with Intention*, led by Rev. Alex da Silva Souto

January 16: *Restorative Justice*, led by Rev. Alex da Silva Souto

January 23: *New Member Sunday*, led by Rev. Alex da Silva Souto

January 30: *TBA*, led by Amy Evans

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

SFUU AFTER HOURS

Moonraker Brewing Co. in Auburn, January 13th, starting at 6:30 p.m.

BREWED AWAKENINGS

Flour Garden, in Auburn, January 4th, starting at 10:00 a.m.

MEDITATION

SFUU Sanctuary, Mondays 6:30 p.m., Thursdays 8:00 a.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.