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December 2015

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December 2015
Theme:

Joy

*Tema de
Diciembre 2015:
Alegría*



FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH *of San José*



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One of two tables of FUCSJ members at the PACT luncheon on Nov. 13

December Theme: Joy



Looking for Joy in All the Right Places

by the Reverend Nancy Palmer Jones

When I meet with the Worship Associates to begin planning our December worship services, I groan as we turn toward the month's theme of Joy. How can joy make me protest? Well, it's the media's relentless insistence on good cheer—as though happiness can be produced on demand. It's the nonstop soundtrack of perky holiday songs—enjoyable for the first few weeks, not so much after that. It's the shopping frenzy that skyrockets earlier and earlier each year, even as it draws me up in its wake. Kudos to all of you who find December joyful from the get-go, but I confess: the symptoms of the season can turn your Senior Minister into a bit of a “Bah, humbug!” kind of person.

The theme brings up other questions, too. What is joy, anyway? Does the quality of joy change over time for each of us? Maybe I'm holding joy to the wrong standard, expecting elation when quiet contentment now signals my own deeper experience of joy.

In response to all this puzzling, Worship Associate Brian Singer and I give ourselves some homework: Every day, we will make a list of everything that brings us joy, large or small, between November 11 and De-

cember 13, when he and I lead worship together.

I am failing at this homework. Oh, there have been plenty of sweet moments since Brian and I concocted this plan, but somehow I still resist listing these things as “joy.”

What's up with that?

I bet it has something to do with my most common theme: that we are called to live with broken-openheartedness. As I write, we are flooded with news of violent attacks and with violent responses to those attacks. We wait anxiously to hear wheth-

And yet—my better self reminds me that it's not enough to stay stuck there. Why are the December holidays associated with joy, after all? At the heart of Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa lie some common themes. Each of them offers the promise of new life: whether it comes in the form of an amazing liberation struggle and the miracle of light, or in the birth of a humble child whose teachings of love will change the world, or in the celebration of a rich heritage and the renewal of commitment to community. *Each one calls us to connect to something larger than ourselves.* These holidays promise that we will find joy in these connections.

So today, I finally start my homework—my list of small daily joys. As coauthor Karin and I start our trip to Phoenix, I notice the joy sparked by conversations with strangers we meet along the way: with the taxi driver who is proud of his profession; with the baristas at the airport Starbucks where our smiles and warm wishes really do make for a better day; with the cashier at

the newsstand, where I buy handfuls of beautiful greeting cards—a silly card for my brother who turns 70 today; several copies of a card that says, “In my imaginary universe you live right next door”; a

See *RIGHT PLACES*, page 5



er the United Nations Climate Summit in wounded Paris will produce effective responses to climate disruption. Heck, when we look at the woes of the world—both far away and nearby—they are enough to make anyone glum.

Tema de diciembre: Alegría



Buscando Alegría en Todos los Lugares Adecuados

por la Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

Cuando me reúno con los Asociados de Servicio para comenzar a planificar nuestros servicios de diciembre, yo me quejo mientras regresamos hacia el tema del mes de la alegría. ¿Cómo puede la alegría hacerme protestar? Bueno, esta insistencia implacable de los medios de comunicación en el buen ánimo—como si la felicidad pudiese ser producida a solicitud. Es la banda sonora continua con canciones navideñas alegres—agradable por las primeras semanas, no mucho después de eso. Es la locura de las compras que se disparan más temprano cada año, aun cuando me atrae algo en su despertar. Felicitaciones a todos los que encuentran diciembre alegre desde el principio, pero confieso: los síntomas de la temporada pueden convertir a su Ministra Decana en un poco de un tipo de persona ¡Aburrida!

El tema también trae otras preguntas. ¿Qué es la alegría, de todos modos? ¿Cambia la calidad de la alegría en el tiempo para cada uno de nosotros? Tal vez mantengo la alegría equivocada del estándar, esperando euforia con tranquila satisfacción ahora llamando a mi propia experiencia más profunda de alegría.

En respuesta a todo este desconcierto, Brian Singer, asociado de culto y yo nos dimos algunas tareas: Cada día, vamos a hacer una lista de todo lo que nos trae alegría, grande o pequeña, entre el 11 de noviembre y el 13 de diciembre, cuando él y yo conduciremos el servicio juntos.

Yo estoy fallando en esta tarea. Oh, ha habido un montón de momentos dulces desde que Brian y yo elaboramos este plan, pero de alguna manera todavía me resisto a enlistar estas cosas como “alegría”.

¿Qué pasa con eso?

Apuesto a que tiene algo que ver con mi tema más común: que estamos llama-

siosamente oír si la Cumbre del clima de las Naciones Unidas en un París herido, va a producir respuestas eficaces a las perturbaciones del clima. Caramba, cuando vemos las desgracias del mundo—ambos, lejos y cerca—son suficiente para que cualquier persona este triste.

Y sin embargo, lo mejor de mí me recuerda que no es suficiente para quedarse atascado allí. ¿Por qué están las festividades de diciembre asociadas con alegría, después de todo? En el corazón de Hanukkah, Navidad y Kwanzaa hay algunos temas comunes. Cada una de ellas ofrece la promesa de vida nueva: Si viene en la forma de una increíble lucha por la liberación y el milagro de la luz, o en el nacimiento de un niño humilde quien enseña que el amor va a cambiar el mundo, o en la celebración de un rico patrimonio y la renovación del compromiso con la comunidad. *Cada una nos llama a conectarnos con algo más grande que nosotros mismos.* Estas festividades prometen que encontraremos alegría en estas conexiones.

Así que hoy, por fin empiezo mi tarea—mi lista de pequeñas alegrías diarias. Karin como coautora y yo iniciamos nuestro viaje a Phoenix, noto la alegría provocada por conversaciones con extraños que nos encontramos en el camino: con el taxista que está orgulloso de su profesión; con



dos a vivir con sinceridad rota. Mientras escribo, estamos inundados con noticias de ataques violentos y con respuestas violentas a esos ataques. Esperamos an-

“Seguro, veo la ironía en mi obtención alguna alegría en la compra, pero en un nivel más profundo, también veo que conseguí conectar a algo más grande que mi propio mal humor.”

los baristas de Starbucks en el aeropuerto donde nuestras sonrisas y los calurosos deseos realmente hacen un día mejor; con el cajero en el puesto de periódicos, dónde compro puñados de hermosas tarjetas de felicitación—una tarjeta tonta para mi hermano que cumple 70 años hoy; varias copias de una tarjeta que dice: “en mi universo imaginario que vive justo al lado”; una tarjeta de acción de gracias que cita a nuestro antepasado Unitario Ralph Waldo Emerson; y tarjetas de agradecimiento para los amigos que me hospedaran en Phoenix. Me imagino el placer que estas tarjetas traerán a sus destinatarios. El cajero y yo bromeamos acerca de cuánto costarán las tarjetas y nos reímos cuando ambos suponemos que muy poco. Seguro, veo la ironía en mi obtención alguna alegría en la compra, pero en un nivel más profundo, también veo que conseguí co-

nectar a algo más grande que mi propio mal humor.

¡Y de repente la alegría no parece tan difícil de encontrar! Escuchando mi propia guía interior (en lugar de los anuncios corporativos y las bandas sonoras) y girando mis pensamientos hacia los que me rodean, se me ocurren cien maneras para encontrar la alegría.

Así que, amigos, permitámonos realizar esta práctica espiritual de encontrar—y crear alegría— esta temporada. Conectémonos con algo más grande que nosotros

mismos. Seamos ejemplos compasivos, respuestas amorosas a los problemas del mundo y a nuestros corazones rotos. Esta es la “nueva vida” que hará que los días de fiesta tengan significado para nosotros los Unitarios Universalistas. Este es el milagro que nosotros podemos crear juntos. ¡Vengan, mis hermanos, vamos en busca de la alegría en todos los lugares correctos!

Con renovada esperanza y alegría,

Rev. Nancy



The worship team from our November 15 Diwali celebration: Rev. Nancy, Ann Osborne, Sundar Mudupalli, and Ram Karakala.

Right Place

Continued from page 3

Thanksgiving card that quotes our Unitarian ancestor Ralph Waldo Emerson; and thank-you cards for the folks who will put me up in Phoenix. I imagine the pleasure these cards will bring to their recipients. The cashier and I joke about how much the cards will cost, and laugh when both of us guess too low. Sure, I see the irony in my getting some joy out of shopping, but on a deeper level, I also see that I managed to connect to something larger than my own grumpy self.

And suddenly joy doesn't seem so hard to find! Listening to my own inner

guides (rather than the corporate ads and soundtracks) and turning my thoughts toward those around me, a hundred ways to find joy occur to me.

So, friends, let us engage in this spiritual practice of finding—and creating—joy this season. Let us connect with something larger than ourselves. Let us model compassionate, loving responses to the world's woes and to our own broken

“Sure, I see the irony in my getting some joy out of shopping, but on a deeper level, I also see that I managed to connect to something larger than my own grumpy self.”

hearts. This is the “new life” that will make the holidays meaningful for us Unitarian Universalists. This is the miracle that we can create

together. Come, my boon companions, let us go looking for joy in all the right places!

With renewed hope and joy,

Rev. Nancy

In Our Own Voices: JOY



“In Our Own Voices” shares congregants’ free-flowing responses to the theme of the month. We draw these responses from on-line surveys.

How do these responses to December’s theme, Joy, change the way you encounter joy this season? Do some answers remind you of long-lost joys that you might

seek out again? Do others echo your own longing for more joy in your life and in our world? What do you think joy is? Is it a big feeling of elation, or a quiet emotion sparked by simple things?

You might keep a Joy Diary this month—a simple list of what experiences bring you joy this season. When we engage in this practice, the list can help us identify

our own sources of joy. Maybe we’ll even broaden our definition of joy, and find that we have more joy to give others, too.

As for me: Though joy is sometimes elusive, I feel joy in serving our shared mission: to make Love visible in all that we do and say. And I certainly feel joy in serving you!

With love,

Rev. Nancy

Joy in Times of Trouble

This is a great topic during a time of world suffering and the anxiety of our everyday lives. While in personal pain, or reacting to the suffering in the world, how can we be open to experiencing joy and beauty? What is joy? Is it a feeling of excitement and euphoria, or the peaceful calm of contentment? How much can it be shared? How can we share it? Is it an internal state, or is it triggered by something outside of ourselves?

We need more joy in the world! I am always pleased when something brings more joy into my life, whether it is a reminder that I am in control of some parts of my life, or it is just the latest internet cat video. For Unitarian Universalism, we need a balance between being the agents of change and the agents of joy. It is wonderful when they coincide.

Joy is another word for happiness. Perhaps happiness is a more grounded term. Happiness or joy relates to the world around us because (a) greed and fear are dominant themes in our society, undermining joy, (b) the dominant institutions in our society (such as multinational corporations, our United States financial system, and our federal electoral system) are not democratic, egalitarian, cooperative, kind, and sustainable, thus causing unhappiness, and (c) a happy and balanced life requires the time and institutions to support these, at a time when the average U.S. person is working the longest hours with the most alienation

of any advanced country. Within Unitarian Universalism, joy means we should make love visible by creating institutions in society that are democratic, egalitarian, cooperative, kind, and sustainable; without these, there is no foundation for love, or for joy.

Joy and the Holidays

When stepping outside the Christ-centered paradigm, how is this theme relevant to the depths of winter/dark of the year?

I find December to be a joyful month, so I like that it is the theme of the month. When I think of various celebrations—Yule, Hanukkah, Christmas—I am struck by how they all focus on light in a time that has the most darkness. I think the message is that hope and joy can be found in the darkest of times—even if it’s by simply appreciating the warm glow of a candle.

How do you celebrate the holidays? What is your favorite memory of the holidays? There might be joy in your answers.

When Joy Is Elusive

Not feeling joy right now. Maybe in time. Any suggestions for finding it when you’ve lost it?

Gratitude multiplies joy; it gives joy room to grow.

Joy many times seemed to be elusive. Why did I not feel joy while others around me did? Why did I feel joy when others around me did not? My chosen spiritual path and many others

teach that joy does not come from outside of us. It comes from within. As I began to look within, I found that joy really was and is within me and that it is not dependent on the world around me or even what I was experiencing in my life. If I am not feeling joy, my thinking is not aligned with my true Mind. I am out of sync with who I really am. I think that we are trying to fix ourselves by fixing the world outside us. There is nothing wrong with improving the world and reaching out to help others; in fact, we are called to do that. But it is no substitute for doing the work of looking within and finding the awareness of our true Divine Self.

What Brings Me Joy?

What brings me joy? A child delighting in his first snowfall, and then, when spring comes, that same child thinking the Washington, D.C. plum blossoms are snow! Dancing outdoors under moonlight. Listening to classic ‘60’s rock, the tunes I remember from my high school and college years.

Not the shiny images of commercial joy from the mall and television ads. No, it’s the quiet joy of light sneaking in.

Children’s joyous actions and reactions bring joy; even seeing sweet little faces does. Seeking joy for myself is life-giving.

It is a true joy to spend time with others in deep, deep sharing.

What Is Joy?

I think of joy as a quiet, steady condition, compared to the spiky, noisy emotions of, say, elation or ecstasy. Joy is something that comes from within and is less influenced by what's happening externally. For me it's more related to internal satisfaction or contentment.

Joy is hyper-happiness.

Joy is such a simple, basic emotion. Watch young animals—puppies, rabbits, children—at play, and you can see pure joy there. I associate joy with simple pleasures; you can't force it. "Having fun" may not be the same thing. I enjoy nature, just being outside, seeing the sunlight through the trees, experiencing a beautiful day. Joy is the gratitude, the gladness, of being alive to experience a beautiful day. I have fears that future generations will have less of this joyful experience.

Joy is a simple emotion. It's something that bursts out of you and you can experience moments of joy even though there are other dark things around. It's this fairly simple, primitive emotion—of deep happiness, maybe a feeling that things are right in some ways. It doesn't necessarily have to continue. It can be triggered by little things. I still remember the tremendous sense of joy I had one day, way back in college, just from taking a bite of an apple out of a vending machine!

Does joy change its character over the years? Surely it must. I still think of it as unbounded energy, as exalted, abandoned, thoroughly released happiness ... but I don't feel those things so often these days. Maybe I am looking in the wrong direction, expecting joy to feel as it did when I was much younger. I carry more weight now than in the old days—or maybe I am more conscious of the weight of living that has been there all along. So now I feel joy in the friendships and connections I make when I work with interfaith colleagues and companions on issues of justice, on issues of Life. I feel joy in being around my longest-term, deepest friends—just in being near them or hearing their voices on the phone or seeing their texts or Facebook posts. I feel joy in quiet introverted moments at home or on morning walks when I give myself a chance to rest in the creative process or in self-care. When I am making something, or relishing some work of art or natural beauty—that surely is joy. I feel joy in getting confirmations that I am doing what I am called to do, even when it is hard. I'd like to reacquaint myself with joy by broadening and deepening my definition!

Introductory Letter from Emily Carroll

Dear Community of First Unitarian Church of San José,

I'm excited to get on board as your sabbatical Director of Lifespan Religious Education and to join your mission to deepen our spirits, work for justice, and create one sacred family. What a lovely mission!

The first time I stepped into a Unitarian Universalist Sunday service, it was home. It

felt like a big enough space for each of us to bring our full self.

That was in college in 2008 when I had been "allergic" to church for several years after being raised in various Christian traditions from Catholic to nondenominational to Unity. Since then I have practiced Buddhism in Thich Nhat Hanh's tradition,

joined the Friends Religious Society, and returned to my Christian roots via the practice of centering prayer and the teachings of Thomas Keating. (If you think that's a hodge podge, just ask me where I'm from!)

I grew up on the Central Coast of California in Santa Maria, and studied Literature/Writing and Religious Studies at University of California, San Diego. I served as Director of Religious Exploration at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Studio City for three years in Los Angeles and then began a graduate program in Humanities and Social Thought at New York University. I moved to Hawaii for a short stint serving as Director of Lifespan Religious Education at their Unitarian Universalist Church, and island life greatly agreed with me! I

returned to California just this Fall for an internship at a contemplative Christian center in Santa Rosa called the Journey Center, and that brings us to the present! I plan to return to Hawaii in the summer, unless my discernment process of creating a contemplative spirituality center is called elsewhere.

After spending the last three years teaching in a middle school classroom, it is wonderful to return to the work of nurturing and celebrating the spiritual lives of children and a UU congregation. Living in the present moment with beloved community, an open heart, and hands active in service is what life is all about. Through love, connection, and answering to that of

God in everyone, we transform our own hearts and help transform the world. Making love visible brings a powerful, bright light that is the reason we are here as a community.

It is an honor to hold the sacred space during Reverend Geoff's sabbatical, and also work, learn, grow, and serve with you! I can already tell this is a diverse and vibrant congregation. Much gratitude to Rev. Nancy, Rev. Geoff, and to the search committee for all their hard work in this process! I look forward to getting to know each of you over the next six months and beyond.

With Love & Light,

Emily Carroll
faithlovegratitude@gmail.com



Unitarian Universalism, Radical Trust & Geoff's Sabbatical

By the Reverend Geoff Rimositis

We want doctors to have the answers about our medical condition, prognosis and treatment. We want the plumber to know how to fix our leak. The only mystery we want to deal with is how much it is going to cost. We hope for less mystery not more. From the dentist to the mechanic we expect know-how, competency and efficiency. No guess work. No mystery. Get it done and preferably under estimate.

But when it comes to our beliefs—hands off! We Unitarian Universalists are do-it-yourselfers. We just have to remember to measure twice and cut once. (Or think twice and speak once.) We can't always count on a plumb and level life. It may take a few shims (usually little pieces of wood) to stick under a lopsided world. There is the shim of what we need versus what we want. We can count on satisfying a need keeping things in balance longer than satisfying a want. We may find that our lives need the shim of a walk in the woods far from the maddening crowd. Clear the mind, exercise the body, and feed the spirit with the beauty of leaf, stem, precipice and valley. It can have a profound leveling effect on our state of mind and emotional/spiritual health.

Unitarian Universalism requires the most radical of trust: trust in yourself! Our faith trusts that you know more about yourself than we do! Even more than the most enlightened souls we may call saints. As the Zen master said: *Don't confuse the moon with the finger pointing to the moon.* It may not be polite to point but we'll take advice (when asked for) when we need it. We'll garner wisdom and insight whenever and wherever it presents itself. And we reserve the right to decide if that advice/wisdom is gold or bonkers. It's our life after all.

I miss listening to an occasional short segment that used to be on national public radio called Mr. Science. I loved his byline. *I know more than you do. I have a master's degree in science!* It was funny and I think it even had some science though it often put it on its head.

No one likes a know-it-all especially when they rub your face in their smartness. But as Spider Man's Uncle said: *With great freedom comes great responsibility.* As hard as it is to be humble, that's what it takes to make radical trust work. We open ourselves up to what we can learn even if we have to face the truth of ourselves that may need some leveling. Yes, even the annoying have something to teach us (once we are at a safe distance to appreciate it).

And thanks to First Unitarian's sabbatical policy for its ministers I will be at a distance (hopefully safe) next year from January-June 2016. A minister earns one month of sabbatical for every year of service and is eligible to take a sabbatical every 5 years. My last sabbatical was in 2008. A sabbatical is time of renewal and learning. It is a great gift that lets a minister spend time in focused learning so s/he can bring that learning back to enrich the ministries of the congregation. It is also a time of personal/spiritual renewal to work on deepening the important relationships in his/her life. Thanks to a vote of our Board of Directors they have affirmed my sabbatical for next year. I will be sticking close to home as my spouse Patty will continue to work. My main project will be studying how best to roll out an adult faith development program called *Wellspring* at First Unitarian in the fall of 2016.

First Unitarian is blessed having Emily Carroll (see her bio in the newsletter) serve as the Sabbatical Religious Educator from



January through June 2016. Emily was recommended by the Sabbatical Search Committee and approved by our board of trustees. Emily has experience serving as a religious educator at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Studio City, California. She brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm for working with children, youth and all ages in creating beloved community. Emily will be working 30 hours a week during her time with us and will be supported by the Sabbatical Committee that includes Gautam Biswas, Kristyn Greenwood, Deborah Rosenquist and Suzy Balch-Delacey.

Thank you First Unitarian for the radical trust you place in your ministers and in each other to know best what we need to grow our spirits and fine tune our capabilities to manifest more love in a world hungry for it.

I will be busy sticking shims under my life and I hope to come back to you more balanced and with an invigorated spirit to enrich our common life together.

With all my hope and love,

Geoff

Universalismo unitario, Confianza Radical y Tiempo Sabático de Geoff

por el Rev. Geoff Rimositis

Quemos que los médicos tengan las respuestas sobre nuestro estado de salud, pronóstico y tratamiento. Queremos que el fontanero sepa cómo solucionar nuestras fugas de agua. El único misterio que queremos abordar es cuánto va a costar. Esperamos menos misterio no más. Desde el dentista al mecánico esperamos conocimientos, competencia y eficiencia. Sin conjeturas. Ningún misterio. Solo hazlo y a bajo precio.

Pero cuando se trata de nuestras creencias—ni tocarlo! Nosotros los Unitarios Universalistas lo hacemos nosotros mismos. Sólo tenemos que recordar de medir dos veces y cortar una vez. (O pensar dos veces y hablar una vez.) No siempre contamos con una plomada y un nivel de vida. Esto puede requerir unas cuñas (generalmente pequeñas piezas de madera) para pegar debajo de un mundo desigual. Es la cuña la que necesitamos frente a lo que queremos. Podemos contar en la satisfacción de una necesidad para mantener las cosas en equilibrio más que satisfacer un deseo. Nos podemos encontrar que nuestras vidas necesitan la calza de un paseo en el bosque, lejos de la multitud enloquecedora. Despejar la mente, ejercitar el cuerpo y alimentar al espíritu con la belleza de la hoja, un tallo, un barranco y un Valle. Esto puede tener un profundo efecto de nivelación sobre nuestro estado de ánimo y salud emocional y espiritual.

El Unitario Universalismo requiere la más radical de las confianzas: ¡confianza en ustedes mismos! ¡La fe confía en que ustedes saben más sobre ustedes que lo que nosotros sabemos! Incluso más que las más brillantes almas que nosotros podemos llamar Santos. Como el maestro Zen dijo: no hay que confundir la luna con el dedo que señala a la luna. Esto puede

no ser educado el apuntar, pero tomaremos el consejo (cuando se solicite) cuando lo necesitamos. Nosotros obtendremos sabiduría y conocimiento cuando y donde sea. Y nos reservamos el derecho a decidir si ese consejo/ sabiduría es oro o loco. Después de todo es nuestra vida.

Echo de menos escuchar un segmento corto ocasional que solía estar en la radio pública nacional llamada Sr. Ciencia. Me encantaba su firma. ¡Yo sé más que tú. Tengo una maestría en ciencia! Era divertido y creo que incluso tenía alguna ciencia aunque a menudo lo ponía en su cabeza.

A nadie le cae bien un sabelotodo, especialmente cuando les restriega en sus caras su inteligencia. Pero como dijo el tío del Hombre Araña: con una gran libertad viene una gran responsabilidad. Tan difícil como ser humilde es lo que se necesita para trabajar esa confianza radical. Nosotros nos abrimos a lo que podemos aprender incluso si tenemos que enfrentar la verdad de nosotros mismos que puede necesitar cierta nivelación. Sí, incluso el fastidio tiene algo que enseñarnos (una vez que estamos a una distancia segura para apreciarlo).

Y Gracias a la política de la Primera Iglesia Unitaria para el tiempo sabático de sus ministros, yo estaré a una distancia (esperanzadoramente segura) el año que viene desde enero a junio de 2016. Un ministro gana un mes sabático para cada año de servicio y tiene derecho a tomar ese tiempo sabático cada 5 años. En 2008 fue mi último tiempo sabático. Un tiempo sabático es tiempo de renovación y aprendizaje. Es un gran regalo que permite a un ministro pasar tiempo enfocado en el aprendizaje, y entonces ella o él pueden traer ese aprendizaje a enriquecer los ministerios de la congregación. También es un tiempo de renovación personal y espiritual

para trabajar en la profundización de las relaciones importantes en su vida. Gracias a una votación de la Junta de Administradores que ha confirmado mi tiempo sabático para el próximo año. Yo estaré pegado cerca de casa mientras que mi esposa Patty seguirá trabajando. Mi principal proyecto es estudiar la mejor manera para introducir un programa de desarrollo de la fe adulta llamado Manantial en la Primera Iglesia Unitaria en el otoño de 2016.

La Primera Iglesia Unitaria es bendecida con Emily Carroll (ver su biografía en el boletín) servirá como Educadora Religiosa de sabáticos desde enero hasta junio de 2016. Emily fue recomendada por el Comité de búsqueda de sabático y aprobada por nuestro Consejo de administración. Emily tiene experiencia como una educadora religiosa en la Congregación Unitaria Universalista en Studio City, California. Ella trae una riqueza de experiencia y entusiasmo para trabajar con niños, jóvenes y todas las edades en la creación de la comunidad amada. Emily va a trabajar 30 horas a la semana durante su tiempo con nosotros y será apoyada por el Comité sabático que incluye a Gautam Biswas, Kristyn Greenwood, Deborah Rosenquist y Suzy Balch-Delacey.

Gracias a la Primera Iglesia Unitaria por la confianza radical que coloca en sus ministros y en aquellos que conocen mejor que nosotros tenemos que cultivar nuestro espíritu y afinar nuestra capacidad para manifestar más amor en un mundo hambriento de él.

Estaré ocupado pegando calzas debajo de mi vida y espero volver más equilibrado y con un espíritu vigorizado para enriquecer nuestra vida en común juntos.

Con toda mi esperanza y amor,

Geoff

Circling Around

by Torchy Hunter

Day of the Dead altar, wow! And the honeyed richness of **Marta Norment's** voice in the story. Her students must just be transfixed listening to her voice. KQED has a series "Film School Shorts" with lots of movies about Day of the Dead. To be watched. And for those

of you (and me) who suffer from ADD, they are short!

Question of the day: What makes you happy? **Henry Ruddle** has a new place to live. **Barbara Grover** can walk! And friends and health. (At this point I started telling folks to tell me interesting, not boring things.) **Rick Merritt** is happy about his half-sister Sandy. Backstory: he's been looking for her and his birth mother for 16 years. **Alec McClean** is happy that our



Scene from the November 1 Day of the Dead service: Like a picnic in a graveyard, members wrote letters to deceased loved ones on towels laid out on the labyrinth.

Jain Schaeffer's returning to church. Jain herself is happy to be upright and walking. This may be a universal happiness. **Steve Madden** chose this time to embarrass his son by saying he was happy about **Federico's** new girlfriend, Laurel.

Both were standing right next to us and began uncontrollably giggling and blushing. You do remember the line about being nice to your kids because they choose your nursing home? **Jay Porter** is happy about life, family, and a new career. And chocolate covered peanut butter pretzels.

Met a new guy at church, **Ron Garcia**, who's happy to be alive. (I let him get away with that answer because he's new.) He's a physician's assistant who works in Santa Clara and lives in Santa Cruz, and is willing to make that trip on Sundays to see us.

I always know when "Raindrops are fallin' on my head" came out because the kids and I were on a trip to the beach and when the line came ".... because I'm free, nothing's worrying me...", my son Chris said, "He's only free. I'm four!" **Mary Martin** is happy about anger. You have to talk to her. And I am happy about our new dog, Kenna, a rescue, of indeterminate provenance, who could be any breed, so I've decided to say she's from the kennels of the King of Siam.

Circle Supper Gala

By Barbara Derbyshire

We are planning a special holiday event again this year. Plan to join us Sunday, December 20, 5:30 - 8:00 pm in Hattie Porter Hall.

All are welcome, but it is important that you sign up in advance so we'll know how



many places to set. Please RSVP by Monday, December 14 at the latest! There will be time to mingle while nibbling appetizers and enjoying festive beverages before we sit down to enjoy the special dishes you all will bring. Save this date and watch for more details coming soon. Questions? Contact Barbara, CircleSuppers@aol.com



Democratic Governance

Board Meetings from September and October:

by Rob Strong, Board Secretary

The Board met Thursday Sept 3rd and Thursday Oct. 1st. These regular business meetings are held 7 pm the first Thursday of each month in the downstairs conference room of the church. *(This summary was delayed due to the confusion of the Secretary over the publishing schedule.)*

The 9/3 meeting:

The Board ratified the members of the newly formed Investment Committee: MM Feldman, Bob Howd, Jim Rumbaugh, Dena Dickinson, Bill Shepard. These folks will be responsible for determining the appropriate manner to invest/preserve our operational cash, considering banking and investment possibilities. (Thank you each for your service!)

The Treasurer, Bill Shepard, reported that pledge income is lagging. There will be focus from the Stewardship Committee to understand why, and to personally contact some of the major donors to help resolve.

The Board also ratified Joyce Miller, Bob Howd, and Bev Harrison as the Audit Committee. (Thank you each for your service!) These folks will be looking into the processes, records, and health of all the finances of the Church.

Significantly, the Board approved a policy/process for performing "ministerial evaluation", keeping in mind that the purpose of the ministerial evaluation is primarily for guidance and growth of the minister towards our Vision of the Church. This coming year, 2016, this process will be used with Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones.

The Board decided that the Congregation will be involved in developing out Vision 2020. Recognizing and expressing our community's Vision 2020 will need the thoughtful involvement of you! There is an SGM session planned for the first session in November, and a Townhall meeting

on Nov. 1st after Church, both of these to initiate the thoughtful Appreciation of what has been accomplished with Guidance from Vision 2015, and what more our congregants long for, to be expressed in our Vision 2020.

Vision 2015

We seek to build a religious community that makes Love visible in word and deed. Therefore we are called to:

1. Create a caring, connected congregation that actively reflects the richness and diversity of our community, honoring and nurturing with justice and compassion all that makes each of us unique.
2. Undertake bold initiatives to transform ourselves and our community.
3. Worship together so that we connect with the divine, transcending the boundaries that limit us, to become part of something greater than ourselves.
4. Care for, nurture, and empower the growth of our children and youth through vibrant and engaging lifelong faith development and social programs.

The 150th Committee (via Madeline Morrow and Robert Strong) reported that it is focusing on the Oct 18th "20 Years After Surviving the Fire" service. The hope is for a major party honoring the firemen that saved our building. Joanna Woodrow's bequest has been allocated to fund the music (that she so loved) to be part of our 150th Year celebrations.

The 10/1 meeting:

The Treasurer reported that the low market seems to be a factor behind delayed pledges ... many are waiting for the market to rise if selling/donating stock. The Stewardship Committee is sending letters to some of our larger contributors asking

whether they can pay more now rather than later.

Rev. Geoff reported that two candidates to cover during his Sabbatical this year have been identified. These will be considered at the next Board meeting, Nov. 5th.

The Board had a very interesting discussion concerning the possibility of a banner to recognize "Black Lives Matter". There was a range of concern ... more discussion, education and preparation will be required before this achieves consensus. One possibility being considered is to acquire bracelets in support of this movement.

Speaking of banners, the 150th Committee is planning to hang a banner on the south side of the tower to draw attention to our "150 Years of Making Love Visible," in addition to a general town hall meeting on Nov. 1st after church.

The 18th of October will be (was) the service honoring those who saved our building, the 20th Anniversary of Surviving the Fire. Mary Mary Feldman is taking the lead (thank you Mary Mary!) in planning the PARTY after the service. And there will be fire trucks and ice cream and "Fire" music for all, and for the people who come to Church a lunch of taco-truck tacos and aqua frescas.

Concerning the building of the Vision 2020, the month of November will be about gathering thoughts and appreciations of Vision 2015, and longings for, "what's missing" that need to be stated. Synthesis into a draft vision will begin in January. Rev. Geoff has scheduled a "Youth Townhall" for Nov. 5th. There will also be the SGM session and the general town hall meetings.

The Board did move into Executive session for about 30 minutes. Executive session is a confidential meeting, most usually confidential due to personnel considerations.



by the Reverend
Geoff Rimositis

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

9:30 - 10:45 AM (DOWNSTAIRS CLASSROOMS, CHILDCARE AVAILABLE)

Inherent Worth And Dignity

Parent Meeting featuring *Roots & Wings: UU Parenting in the Millennium*

Curriculum author: Linda Ann Scacco, Ph.D. • Topic: Facilitator: the Rev. Geoff Rimositis

Teaching Tolerance, states: “When we put ourselves in another person’s shoes, we are often more sensitive to what that person is experiencing and are less likely to tease or bully them. By explicitly teaching students to be more conscious of other people’s feelings, we can create a more accepting and respectful school community.”

What can we, as Unitarian-Universalist parents, do to counter the epidemic of bullying? Looking to the UU principles is a good first step. In particular, the first principle provides the foundation of our beliefs. As Unitarian-Universalists, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of each person; we believe in the essential goodness of each and every human being. We believe that we each have the potential to become our best selves. To pass this value on to our

children, parents must try to instill in them the belief that everyone should be treated with respect, care and compassion. According to Michelle Richards, this begins by nurturing our children’s empathy, respecting them, and accepting them for who they are. More difficult is to show “genuine respect for a person we don’t agree with or even particularly like.” Known as “radical hospitality”, this term suggests that we must be open to others who are different, “not only accepting those differences, but affirming them ... offering everyone in our lives a loving kindness that goes beyond judgment or assumption.” Richard also discusses teaching generosity and gratitude to our children.

Future Topics:

Attachment and Connection, Raising Children in an Affluent Age, Children and Money, Children and Spirituality...



Save the Date: March 12, 2016

Inspire Young Minds

This signature event supports the Third Street Community Center’s work to bridge the achievement gap, promote STEM education, and create a college-going culture for disadvantaged children in San José. Please contact Rosemary at rosemary@3street.org for information or to help with the event.



Like us on Facebook!

Help us grow our online presence and continue the conversation on our Facebook page. “First Unitarian Church of San José.” New articles, thoughtful quotes, and photos every week! www.facebook/FUCSJ

Unitarian Universalist Parents Meetup Group

<http://www.meetup.com/UUParents>

The Meetup group is a safe venue for parents and children who embrace a Unitarian Universalist philosophy to connect. The group was formed by parents in the First Unitarian Church of San José <http://sanjoseuu.org> who wanted an easy way to get to know like-minded parents. The philosophy of the church, and the Unitarians of this group, is love. Parents belonging to this group have many different lifestyles and beliefs, but we are united in our

commitment to acceptance of each other and our children. You do not have to attend any church or consider yourself religious to be part of this group. Just go to our Meetup site, <http://www.meetup.com/UUParents/> and fill out a few profile questions, which are meant to verify you are a parent with some interest in this group, and an organizer will approve you. For more information contact the Rev. Geoff Rimositis, Grimositis@sanjoseuu.org, (408) 292-3858, ext. 225.

Children and Youth Classes



For a full description of our 2015-2016 curriculum, please refer to the September 2015 Church Circular.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

1st -4th grades — Hanukkah

5th-8th grades — Outstanding Unitarian Universalists

9th-12th grades — Group meets at regular time, 11:30-12:30

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

1st -4th grades — St Lucia Day (December 13) —Swedish celebration of lights

5th-8th grades — Dreaming of Change

9th-12th grades — Group meets at regular time, 11:30-12:30

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

NO CLASSES TODAY. Children will present the holiday play, The Magic of the Poinsettia.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

1st-8th grades — Combined youth program

9th-12th grades — YOUTH REMAIN IN THE SERVICE TODAY

Our Whole Lives

7th-9th Grade Sexuality Education Class Begins In January 2016

Our Whole Lives is based on the philosophy of comprehensive sexuality education, which helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior.

It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: **human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture.**

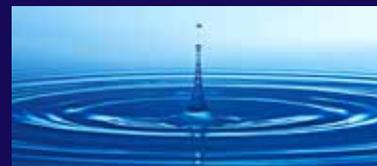
Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, comprehensive sexuality education provides not only facts about anatomy and human development, but also helps participants to clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, social, and political aspects of sexuality as well.

The First Unitarian Church of San José and The Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fremont youth will

again team up to teach the class. On-going Sunday afternoon three-hour classes will be held at Connections, 39055 Hastings Street, Suite 106, Fremont 94538. <http://connectionscenter.org> All-day Saturday retreats will be held at The First Unitarian Church of San José.

The information meeting and mandatory parents' orientation have already occurred, but it's not too late to sign up! Classes run January 2016-May 2016

For more information contact Rev. Geoff Rimositis, GRimositis@Gmail.com



Small Group Ministry Open Enrollment Coming in January

Maybe you've heard others talking about the group they meet with about twice a month? A chance to share ideas and get to know other Unitarians in a small group; a ministry to each other. January is open enrollment where we try to match participants with group openings. We are in Hattie Porter Hall every Sunday in January, 2016. We have a table staffed with Leaders from current groups. Come by, ask a question, pick up a flyer, say hello.

Contact the Coordinator:
Rebecca Mason
Themasonmorisons@sbcglobal.net



One of two tables of FUCSJ members at the PACT luncheon on Nov. 13

Sunday Services / Servicios Domingo

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6 11 AM



Saying Yes to Joy

Advent II: Love

How much choice do we have about joy? Do we need certain external circumstances in order to experience joy? Does joy happen to us, beyond our control? Or can we create joy? Can we encourage it to bubble up from within? Can we fling open the doors of our heart when joy comes knocking? How do we stay connected to joy even in hard times? We launch December's focus on joy with a funny story, some peaceful music, and sweet collective pondering. Come in and find some joy!

Worship Leader: Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

Worship Associate: Jim Rumbaugh

DOMINGO, DICIEMBRE 6 11 AM

Diciendo Si a la Alegría

Adviento II: Amor

¿Cuánta elección tenemos acerca de la alegría? ¿Necesitamos ciertas circunstancias externas para experimentar alegría? ¿La alegría nos pasa a nosotros, más allá de nuestro control? ¿O podemos crear alegría? ¿Podemos animar a que se propague desde dentro? ¿Podemos nosotros abalanzarnos a abrir las puertas de nuestro corazón cuando la alegría viene tocando? ¿Cómo nos quedamos conectados a la alegría incluso en tiempos difíciles? Lanzamos el enfoque de diciembre en alegría con una historia divertida, música tranquila y dulce ponderación colectiva. ¡Vengan y encuentren alguna alegría!

Dirige: Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

Asociado de Culto: Jim Rumbaugh

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10 7 PM



Held in the Arms of the Earth

A Midweek Holiday Service For Everyone!

In the midst of a hurrying, flurrying, worrying world, let us ground ourselves for this season in the strength and beauty of the Earth herself. We will chant our way toward the Sun's return, reminding ourselves that "to everything, there is a season." This service—made up more of music and ritual than words—will feed everyone, from the sorrowful to the celebratory. Come enjoy the sanctuary by candlelight and revel in the peace we can create together.

Worship Leader: Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones;

Worship Associates: Marnie Singer, the Alegría Singers, and more

JUEVES, 10 DE DICIEMBRE 7 PM

Retenido en los Brazos de la Tierra

¡Un Servicio a Medios de la Semana de Festividad para todos!

En medio de un apresurado, frenético, preocupado mundo, dejemos de castigarnos a nosotros mismos por esta temporada en la fuerza y la belleza de la tierra misma. Vamos a cantar nuestro camino hacia el retorno del sol, recordándonos que "para todo, hay una estación." Este servicio—compuesto por más música y ritual que palabras, alimentará a todo el mundo—de la tristeza a la celebración.

ALBANZAS EN ESPAÑOL (SPANISH LAUDS)

10:15 AM

Venga a unirse a nosotros para este servicio simple de oración-meditación de media hora (sin sermón) a las 10:15 am en una mezcla de inglés y español en la biblioteca de la iglesia.

Come join us for this simple prayer-meditation service (without sermon) at 10:15 am, held in a mixture of English and Spanish in the Church Library.

Vengan a disfrutar del santuario a la luz de las velas y gocen en la paz que podemos crear juntos.

Dirige: Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones;

Asociados de Culto: Marnie Singer, los Alegría Singers, y más

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 11 AM



Show Up for Joy!

Advent III: Joy

Our First Unitarian ancestor, Mrs. E. O. Smith, knew a thing or two about how to create joy. Come find out more about this amazing foremother—including her full name!—as we celebrate our First 150 Years of Making Love Visible. Mrs. Smith's story then launches us into a deeper exploration of the sources of our own joy. What's your autobiography of joy? Let's create a new chapter with this Sunday's service.

Worship Leader: Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones ;

Worship Associates: Brian Singer and Kristin Rivers

DOMINGO, 13 DE DICIEMBRE 11 AM

¡Ser Visible para la Alegría!

Adviento III: Alegría

Nuestra Primera Antepasada Unitaria, la Sra. E. O. Smith, sabía una cosa o dos acerca de cómo crear alegría. Vengan y

encuentren más información sobre este increíble ancestro— ¡incluyendo su nombre completo!—mientras celebramos nuestros primeros 150 años de Haciendo el Amor Visible. La historia de la Señora Smith nos lanza en una exploración más profunda de las fuentes de nuestra alegría. ¿Cuál es su autobiografía de alegría? Vamos a crear un nuevo capítulo con el servicio de este domingo.

Dirige: Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones; **Asociados de Culto:** Brian Singer y Kristin Rivers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 11 AM



Holiday Youth Play: The Magic of the Poinsettia

Advent IV: Peace

The Legend of the Poinsettia is the story of a little girl who gives from her heart and creates something beautiful with her love. Come and enjoy this offering from the children of the congregation directed by Ruby Delgros. And bring your gift list as Santa will be making a visit after the service. Better be good for goodness sake!!!

Worship Leader: Rev. Geoff Rimositis

DOMINGO, 20 DE DICIEMBRE 11 AM

Feriado Teatro Día de la Juventud: La magia de la Poinsettia

Adviento IV: Paz

La leyenda del Poinsettia es la historia de una pequeña niña quien da su corazón y crea algo hermoso con su amor. Vengan a disfrutar este regalo de los niños de la congregación, dirigidos por Ruby Delgros. Y traigan sus listas de regalos mientras Santa nos estara hacienda una visita después del servicio. s mejor ser Bueno en el nombre de la bondad.!!

Dirige: Rev. Geoff Rimositis

THURSDAY, DECEMBER. 24 5 & 8 PM



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

Cherishing the Old, Welcoming the New

Advent V: Love Arrives!

This year, we offer a true Unitarian Universalist Christmas Eve celebration, embracing skeptics and believers alike. Gathered with all ages, we sing the beautiful old carols and dance our way to joy. We lift up the brand-new lives born to our families and communities this year, so please do bring the names of all the babies you want to welcome on this special night. We relish Crystal Isola's singing of "O Holy Night," we bask in the glow of candlelight, and we go forth ready to create a more loving, peaceful, hopeful, and joyful New Year. All are welcome!

Worship Leaders: Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones and Rev. Geoff Rimositis

Worship Associates: Bev Clifford (5:00) and Brian and Marnie Singer (8:00)

JUEVES, 24 DE DICIEMBRE 5 Y 8 PM

SERVICIOS DE VISPERA DE NAVIDAD A LA LUZ DE LAS VELAS

Amando lo Viejo, Bienvenido lo Nuevo

Adviento V: ¡El Amor Llega!

Este año, ofrecemos una verdadera celebración de Nochebuena Unitaria Universalista, abrazando a los escépticos y creyentes por igual. Reunidos con todas las edades, cantamos los hermosos villancicos antiguos y danzaremos nuestro camino a la alegría. Nosotros levantamos el estilo de nueva vida nacida de nuestras familias y comunidades este año, así que por favor traiga los nombres de todos los bebés que quieran darle la bienvenida

en esta noche especial. Nos deleitamos con Crystal Isola cantando "O Holy Night" "Noche de Paz", Disfrutamos en el resplandor de la luz de las velas, y vamos adelante listos para crear un nuevo año más amoroso, pacífico, esperanzador y alegre. ¡Todos son bienvenidos!

Dirige: Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones y Rev. Geoff Rimositis

Asociados de Culto: Bev Clifford (5:00) y Brian y Marnie Singer (8:00)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27 11 AM



Awaken Your Intention

Join us for a quiet and contemplative service. We will send out the old year and ring in the New Year with singing bowls filling the sanctuary with sounds of peace and silence, creating space for moments of meditations and identifying our intentions for the year to come. Bring your Singing Bowls if you would like to participate in a chorus of ringing.

Worship Leader: Dena Dickinson

Worship Associates: TBA

DOMINGO, 27 DE DICIEMBRE 11 AM

Despertar Su Intencion

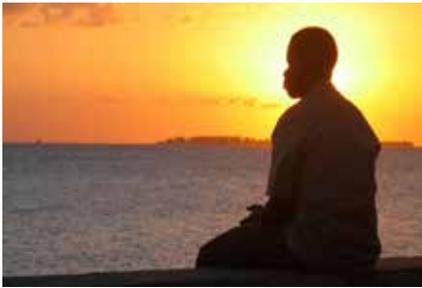
Únase a nosotros para un servicio tranquilo y contemplativo. Despediremos al año viejo y teñiremos en el año nuevo con campanas, llenando el santuario con sonidos de la paz y silencio, creando un espacio para los momentos de meditación e identificar nuestras intenciones para el año que viene. Traiga sus campanas si le gustaría participar en un coro de sonido.

Dirige: Dena Dickinson

Asociados de Culto: TBA

Announcements

MONDAYS 6-7 PM



Weekly Meditation Group

First Unitarian Church Sanctuary

We meditate starting at 6 pm for 30 minutes. We begin with the ringing of the meditation bell and setting the timer for 30 minutes.

Come in the door at the end of the ramp and quietly enter the sanctuary. You are welcome, no matter what time you arrive, to sit in a chair or on the labyrinth. You can bring a cushion to meditate on. You can leave after the meditation but all are welcome to stay afterwards for a brief check-in about our meditation experience and practice.

To be put on the meditation group email list, contact meditation group convener, **Rev. Geoff Rimositis**, GRimositis@gmail.com.

1ST & 3RD SUNDAYS 2:30-5 PM



San Jose Community Dances

Hattie Porter Hall

Great exercise, great LIVE music, great fun! All dances taught — beginners welcome. For more information, see bacds.org/series/community/san_jose or facebook.com/groups/SanJoseCommunityDance.

2ND AND 4TH SUNDAYS 12:45 PM

UUthful Spirits Lunch

Hattie Porter Hall by Newcomer's Table

Join our young adult/young-at-heart fellowship group for Sunday Lunch!

Meet in Hattie Porter Hall near the Newcomer's table about 12:45 pm. Questions? Contact uuthful_spirits-owner@yahoo.com

WEDNESDAYS 7-9 PM



Alegria Singers Choir Practice

Sanctuary

Join the FUCSJ choir in singing at Sunday services, special events such as solstice celebrations and Coffeehouses, and various church activities.

SUNDAY, DEC. 6 10-11 AM

HUUmanati Sunday Forum: Read Aloud!

Hattie Porter Hall

Readings aloud is the latest cultural thing. Bring something to read (or recite) aloud.

This could be your own masterful words, a classic poem, liner notes from a record album, a Dr. Bonner's Peppermint Soap bottle, song lyrics, essay, graphic novel, to-do list or whatever. You are only limited by your imagination and to 5 minutes of the hour. Come by to tarry awhile, share your selection, or just listen. It's fun, and interesting discussions usually follow each selection. We meet at the table nearest the coffee. For more information, contact Amy: 408-730-9622.

MONDAY, DEC. 14 DEADLINE

SUNDAY, DEC. 20 SUPPERS



Circle Supper Gala

Hattie Porter Hall

We are planning a special holiday event again this year. All are welcome, but it is important that you sign up in advance so we'll know how many places to set. Deadline to sign up is Monday, December 14.

There will be time to mingle while nibbling appetizers and enjoying festive beverages before we sit down to enjoy the special dishes you all will bring. Save this date: watch for more details coming soon. Questions? Contact Barbara Derbyshire at CircleSuppers@AOL.com.

THURSDAY, DEC. 3 1-3 PM

Women's Alliance

Ramsden Fireside Room

We are discussing *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Ch.10-15, pp. 136-195), as well as *Belief & Unbelief: Womanhood Beyond Religion* by Barbara Walker (Essay #9 Cannibalism, #10 Gnosticism). Please contact Nancy at 408 985 5778 or nbc Coleman@gmail.com for further information. All are welcome.

FRIDAY, DEC. 4 8 PM

Dances of Universal Peace

Sanctuary

The Dances of Universal Peace are a spiritual practice honoring the inherent worth and dignity of every human being, celebrating the in-

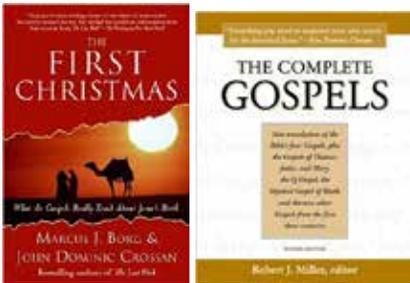
terconnected web of all existence, and using sacred phrases from the world's religions.

Come join us on the labyrinth under the dome of our church. Beginners and experienced dancers join together in these moving meditations. The words of the sacred phrases, as well as the melodies and the movements, are taught each time.

If you have questions you can email **Patrick Smiley** at patrick.smiley@sbc-global.net or telephone and leave a message at 650.596.8829.



SUNDAY, DEC. 6 1-3 PM



Christian Origins Book Study

Conference Board Room, Led by Bob Miess joining us in San Jose!

Books: *The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan, and *The Complete Gospels* by Robert J. Miller

On December 6 we will look at four early stories about the birth of Jesus. Two from the Bible: the Gospel of Matthew (which has the wise men) and the Gospel of Luke (which has the shepherds and the angels). Two are from Gospels that never made it into the Bible, known as the Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas. We

will see how different each story is, what they appear to be saying to people in their own times, and what elements have been picked up in present day popular stories; and we will consider what speaks to us as UUs today. Questions? Contact Bob Miess, Bob@BobMiess.com, 925-392-5901.

MONDAY, DEC. 21 7-9 PM



Candlelit Labyrinth Walk & Contemplation

Sanctuary

In this final, sometimes rushed week of Christmas and on the night of the Solstice, reclaim some time for quiet, pause and spiritual practice.

The labyrinth will be illuminated by candlelight and contemplative music will serve

as a backdrop for prayer and mediation or time for journaling or drawing. Come any-time between 7-9 PM to renew your spirit.

MONDAY, DEC. 21 7:30-9 PM



HUumanati Monday Meeting

Library (to the left in the front lobby)

Come join us, rest your feet, check in, and chat about what's on your mind. There may be board games and other easy activities, also. Questions? Contact Amy, 408-730-9622.

SATURDAY, FEB 6 1-3:30 PM

Save the Date! Jean von Kaenel Tea to Benefit Partner Church

Hattie Porter Hall

Suggested donation: \$20. More info to come! Information/volunteer: Monty Low, low.monty@gmail.com, 408-348-2778

Hiking Schedule (December 2015)

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 2 8:30 AM

Santa Teresa County Park 4.7 miles (short). BernalRoad entrance of the park. We will still meet at Bed, Bath & Beyond.

SATURDAY, DEC. 5 8:30 AM

Joseph Grant County Park around 5 miles. We will do a flatter hike in the valley. We can decide which loop to do once we get there. There are several loops to choose from. Meet at VTA Park and Ride on Capitol off of Alum Rock.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 9 8:30 AM

Long Ridge Open Space to Skyline Ridge Open Space. 6 miles, moderate. This is a shuttle hike. We will start at Long Ridge and end at Skyline. We have done both of these parks but not in the same hike. Meet at Saratoga behind what used to be the US Bank.

SATURDAY, DEC. 12 8:30 AM

Alum Rock Park, 5 miles, moderate. We will do the usual south rim hike. Meet at VTA Park and Ride on Capitol off Alum Rock.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 16 8:30 AM

Sierra Vista Open Space Preserve. Two hikes: 8 miles and strenuous or 4.5 miles and moderate. We carpool from the Berryessa Community Center at 3050 Berryessa Road.

SATURDAY, DEC. 19 8:30 AM

Almaden Quicksilver, McAbee entrance, approx 5 Miles, moderate. Meet at Bed, Bath and Beyond.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 24 8:30 AM

I will be in Florida. Wunderlich County Park, approx. 4.5 miles, modified hike with less climbing. Others can do the usual 6 mile hike. Meet at Page Mill/280 Park and Ride.

SATURDAY, DEC. 26 8:30 AM

I will be in Florida. Baylands starting at end of San Antonio Rd. We decide how long to hike-when we get there. Meet at trail head.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 30 8:30 AM

Still in Florida. Arastradero, 5 miles, moderate. Meet at trail head.

Report on the Homoródszentmárton portion of the 2015 Partner Church Pilgrimage

By Monty Low

On July 17, our pilgrimage began with 2 full days in Budapest, Hungary. After a travel day, we had a full day in Kolozsvár, Romania. Details of our visit to Budapest and Kolozsvár can be found in the August church newsletter.

I will add that in Kolozsvár, we were joined by Rev. Adél Nagy who remained with us for the duration of the trip to act as our translator and guide. Some folks may remember Rev. Adél preached at FUCSJ in 2013 when she was the Balázs scholar at Starr King School for the Ministry. Rev. Adél is the minister at the Unitarian Church of Recsenyéd, which is the next village west from our partner church.

For the next 6 days we were hosted by Rev. János Pál and our partner church in the village of Homoródszentmárton. Twenty two of us stayed in the dorm rooms of the church conference center while 6 of us elected to have home stays. Our food was prepared by the members of the church. The village is in the rolling foothills of the Carpathian Mountains with mostly dirt roads where

rush hour is 6 am and 6 pm when the cows travel between home and pasture.

On the first morning we worked on Istvan Bancsi-Rigo's vegetable farm as a service project. Unlike most young adults, Istvan and his wife Katinka have decided to stay in the village and farm the land. I am happy to report their daughter, Zsuzsánna, was born soon after we left. In the afternoon we visited the homes of Domokos Fazakas and Elza Cseke who showed us their prac-

tice of traditional Hungarian embroidery and fabric arts.

The second day we were scheduled to work on another service project but the weather was just too hot. So instead, we were taken to the outskirts of the village to visit two museums. The first was a display of a traditional farm with implements, tools, and a home with furnishings assembled by László Árpád (former church cantor). The second was a sculpture garden of the artist Victor Roman who grew up in Homoródszentmárton (https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Roman). That evening we traveled to the village of Felsősófalva and attended a camp for traditional music and dance. We were given a private demonstration of fiddle music by László Orbán who is one of the co-founders of the yearly camp. Later we attended a Táncház (dance party) and watched locals of all ages dancing to a large

energetic band of stringed instruments.

The third day was a day trip to a salt mine in the village of Parajd in the morning and to a craft market in the village of Korond in the afternoon. The salt mine was very large

with a spa, recreation for small children, ropes course, chapel and much more. A few of us opted for a stay above ground at a salty mineral pool.

The fourth day was Sunday with preaching by Rev. Nancy and Rev. János. At the service, we presented our gift, which was a beautiful caring quilt with panels created by people from our church and assembled by Joyce Miller. Caring quilts are not a tradition in Homoródszentmárton and Rev.

János was very keen to incorporate its use. Our hosts presented us with a locally made ceramic chalice and plate. Domokos Fazakas also presented to us an embroidery he made with symbols of the churches of San Jose and Homoródszentmárton. That evening we were taken out of the village to an open field next to the small river for a picnic. Here a large caldron of goulash was prepared over a wood fire. Meanwhile the youth of the village and our youth took a tractor and trailer to gather two loads of wood to build a 16-foot-tall, teepee-shaped structure which would be put to use later. Before dinner there was a thunder storm which drove folks to seek shelter under the trees. Ignoring the rain, a soccer game broke out and tractor driving lessons were given to all the San Jose youth. While we were eating dinner, the rain stopped and in the twilight, the teepee of wood was set on fire. Standing in the glow of that huge fire, Levente-Lehár Zsombori broke out his accordion and played for us.

On the fifth day we took a trip to two UNESCO heritage sites. The first was the Unitarian church of Székelyderzs (<http://szekelyderzs.com/languages/english/english.html>). This church is prized as the earliest and most pristine example of a fortress church. Our second stop was Segesvár (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sighi%C8%99oara>) which is a colorful hill-top Saxon village with well-preserved buildings including a sixty four meter clock tower.

On the sixth day, seven of our travelers left the village early to have an extra day in Bucharest. The rest of us took in various activities such as a horse cart ride, visiting a nearby Saxon village, looking for the local stork nest or just relaxing. That evening the villagers gave us a good-bye party, bring-

“We were sad to leave but were happy to know that our partnership is still strong with a bright future. We look forward to bringing eight villagers to San Jose in 2017!”

Continued on page 19

Deepening Our Welcome:

Get-Acquainted Light Lunches 2015-16

by the Reverend Nancy Palmer Jones



On certain Sundays, the smell of fresh-baked bread wafts up from the kitchen downstairs, then floats through the sanctuary into the Library. The aroma invites First Unitarian's newcomers to gather with a small group of members and friends for a potluck light lunch (bread, soup, salad, etc.) right after the worship service in the cozy round room just off our entryway.

The host asks everyone in the circle to share their names and a little bit about the journey that has led them to First Unitarian. Like a small-group ministry session, the

conversation invites people into FUCSJ's practice of deep listening.

Longer-term members then share the church activities that enliven them. "Sign up for Circle Suppers!" one will say. "Join the choir," another urges. "What interests you?" we ask folks who are brand new to our congregation, as well as those who have been coming for a while but haven't yet found a way to connect deeply. "Let us help you get connected."

FUCSJ member Ed Gardner created this ministry a few years ago.

Here's how it works:

Worship Hosts and folks at the New-

comers' Table during Social Hour ask newcomers to sign up. Office Manager Dana Spinney sends them a welcome email. Then Ed sends an invitation to the most recent batch of newcomers as a Get-Acquainted Light Lunch approaches. We offer childcare in the nursery on request (RSVP 10 days in advance if you need childcare). A team of FUCSJ folks promises to bring food and offer a warm welcome. One or both of our ministers join the circle as soon as they can.

The result: The hour-long gathering deepens everyone's connection to our faith and encourages newcomers to make First Unitarian their spiritual home.

Volunteer to Help!

Please volunteer to help with one of the Get-Acquainted Light Lunches by emailing Ed Gardner with the date(s) when you are available: ednatsj@sbcglobal.net

Ed will ensure a good balance of long-timers and newcomers in each circle.

Lunch Schedule 2015-16

All lunches take place in the Library from 12:15 – 1:15 pm

- Sunday, January 31
- Sunday, March 6
- Sunday, May 1

Pilgrimage

continued from page 18

ing a couple to perform traditional dances in full costume.

On this pilgrimage we were glad to see old friends and meet new friends. The villagers and the pilgrims looked at pictures from the early partner church visits in 1992 and remarked how young the elders looked and how big the children have grown.

On the seventh day, we left the village and went through the mountains to Bucharest passing several ski resorts along the way. In Bucharest, for only half a day, we were escorted by Andrea Szasz, who had

just graduated as a translator from college in Bucharest. Some of our folks toured the opulent parliament building built by Nicolae Ceaușescu. In the evening all the travelers met for a final dinner at the Terasa Doamnei restaurant where there was a floor show with ethnic Romanian music and dance.

Two weeks after we embarked on this pilgrimage, we were on the plane home. We were sad to leave but were happy to know that our partnership is still strong with a bright future. We look forward to bringing eight villagers to San Jose in 2017!



160 North Third Street
San José, CA 95112

Want to Receive the Newsletter?

To receive the newsletter on paper, fill out the form at this link: <http://sanjoseuu.org/form/index.php?sid=2> or call (408) 292-3858

To receive the newsletter via email: fucsjooffice@gmail.com or join the Yahoo Group: groups.yahoo.com/group/uusj

Next issue copy deadline: 3 pm Wednesday, December 16

Mailing: Wednesday, December 23

View this newsletter online in PDF format at: sanjoseuu.org

Donations are welcome to help defray the cost of printing and mailing. Suggested donation: \$18-\$20 per year – please mail to Office Manager – or bring returnable bottles/cans for us to recycle!

Save the Dates

December 3, 1-3 pm, Woman's Alliance, Fireside Room

December 4, 8 pm, Dances of Universal Peace, Sanctuary

December 6, 10-11am, Huum-anati Forum

December 6, 1-3 pm, Book Study, Board Room

December 13, 9:30-10:45
Roots & Wings-Unitarian
Universalist Parenting in the Millennium

December 14, Deadline to sign up for Gala Circle Supper. Contact Barbara at CircleSuppers@aol.com

December 20, 5:30-8 pm Circle Supper Gala, Hattie Porter Hall
Contact Barbara at CircleSuppers@aol.com

December 20, 11 am, The Legend of Poinsettia Youth Holiday Play

December 21, 7:30-9 pm, Huumanati Monday Meeting

February 6, 1-3:30, Jean von Kaenel Tea to Benefit Partner Church, Hattie Porter Hall

READY TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF SAN JOSÉ? Contact Rev. Geoff, grimositis@gmail.com

For Pastoral Care

Our community strives to offer compassion, companionship, healing, and joy to all its members. Our pastoral care coordinators can help you find the listening ear or helping hands that you may need in difficult times. Please contact the Rev. Geoff Rimositis.

Contacting the Ministers

Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones and Rev. Geoff Rimositis feel honored to serve this congregation, and we cherish your trust! Here is how to reach us: Nancy (408) 292-3858, ext. 223 Mon.-Thurs.; cell (408) 952-9418; e-mail: revnpj@yahoo.com. Geoff: (408) 292-3858, ext. 225 Mon.-Thurs.; cell (408) 309-7796; e-mail: grimositis@gmail.com.

Cuidado Pastoral

Nuestra comunidad se esfuerza en ofrecer la compasión, el compañerismo curativo, y la alegría a todos sus miembros. Nuestros coordinadores en cuidado pastoral pueden ayudarle a encontrar un oído que escucha, o las manos que ayudan cuando ustedes lo pudieran necesitar en épocas difíciles. Para el cuidado pastoral, por favor, comuníquese con el Rev. Geoff Rimositis.

Contactando a los Ministros

La Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones y El Rev. Geoff Rimositis se sienten honrados de servir a esta congregación y apreciamos su confianza! Aquí esta como puede contactarnos: Nancy (408) 292-3858, ext. 223 de Lunes a Jueves; cell (408) 952-9418; e-mail: revnpj@yahoo.com. Geoff: (408) 292-3858, ext. 225 de Lunes a Jueves; cell (408) 309-7796; e-mail: grimositis@gmail.com

How You Can Support This Congregation:

Your Presence and Time

Attend Sunday services, join a Small Group or one of the many social/activity groups, serve on a committee, come to events, like us on Facebook. Visit www.sanjoseuu.org for more ideas!

Contribute to Fundraisers, Weekly Collections

Make an annual pledge of support (fulfill it by check, EFT, stock transfer or Paypal), attend fundraisers such as the service auction and mystery musical, watch for special collections.