



# The Flaming

# Chalice

NEWSLETTER OF STARR KING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH FEBRUARY 2008

## *A Month of Sundays*

### *February Celebration Previews*

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#### ***Two Sunday Services at 9:30 A.M. & 11 A.M.***

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**3:** *The Transcending Mysteries and Wonder of Lent* (Rev. Katie Kandarian) Easter comes early this year, with Ash Wednesday this coming week. One of the sources of our faith is the direct experience that can make our lives rich and meaningful. What if we made Lent a time to note those experiences, and share them?

*Immediately following the service, the minister will hold a brief informational session in the Library for those with questions about Unitarian Universalism or interested in membership.*



**10:** *A Call to Love* (Carol Bodeau) In the face of commercialized “love” and exaggerated romanticism, how can we return to a recognition of the deeper meanings of love? Together we explore the challenges and rewards of deeply loving commitments to others. *Chalice Deadline.*



**17:** *The Lovers, the Dreamers and Me* (Rev. Tess Baumberger) This service will take a creative look at how like the Muppets our congregations can be. Despite all our differences, we are all earthlings. *Bookstore Open.*



**24:** *Real Life True Stories of a Heretic* (Rev. Katie Kandarian) College students are learning critical thinking by reading *Out of the Flames* about Unitarian heretics from the past. Michael Servetus is the “fearless scholar” who was burned at the stake. How did printing and publishing lead to his death?

Love is the spirit of this church,  
and service its law.

This is our great covenant:  
To dwell together in peace,  
To seek the truth in love,  
And to help one another.

JAMES VILA BLAKE



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# Katie's Bay View **Rev. Katie Kandarian**

## To Stand in Awe

The ministry of this congregation consists of all us working together, contributing what we can, in what is often called *shared ministry*. Although this congregation has just one called professional minister, responsibility for the congregation's health and wellbeing really belongs to us all. When we work together in teams, we can often feel a genuine sense of spiritual reward.



This is also the case for me, in my ministry with, and to, you. One of the most visible areas of ministry for which I am responsible is worship. But because the *result* is visible doesn't mean that but how it is conceived is always visible. Often, planning for worship is done months ahead in choosing themes for the entire worship year. This year, with the blessing of having a full-time intern, we try to have a general plan about who is leading worship each particular week, with some idea as to intended topics or themes, yet still trying to leave room for spontaneity or breaking news along the way.

Working with an intern lends a level of inspiration to my creative process, in the choosing of topics as well as in sermon writing and choice of readings. I love having someone in the office with whom to talk over my thinking, as Carol often brings new ideas and suggestions. I love mulling over hymn possibilities, sitting together and moving around the order of service when something doesn't feel quite right.

I also feel incredibly supported when I can trust the musician to understand what I have in mind as the intent and mood of

an upcoming service. Working with Marla Bacina this year has added richness and fervency to my confidence in the outcome of the morning's event. Marla has written a guest column this month that I encourage you to read. Our budget allows for a professional musician approximately three times a month; other weeks we rely on gifts of the members of the congregation to accompany and play, on recorded music, acapella singing or a combination of all of these.

Recently, we have welcomed regular storytellers to our worship team in Glen Jacob and Doug Sprague. The addition of their sharing brings layers of meaning and fun to the Sunday morning experience. Crystal Carroll and Karen Yearout creatively contribute altar décor appropriate to the season.

And always, it is delightful to have the calm presence of the worship associate to help link our celebrations together in a seamless thread. The worship associate chooses the morning's chalice lighter and is always looking for people who like to participate in worship by sharing a reading.

If you would like to participate in worship in any way, please let me know. We are looking for one or two more regular storytellers and are always in great need of piano accompanists. It's a shared ministry, a team effort.

In our hymnal are these words of Jacop Trapp:

*To worship is to stand in awe under a heaven of stars,  
before a flower, a leaf in sunlight, or a grain of sand.*

May our worship lead us to this place.

Love,

*Katie*



## Wheel of Life

*Please send information to the Pastoral Care Committee.  
Good news is welcomed, as well as your sorrows.*

- Healing prayers to Carol Bodeau who is healing after breaking her shoulder.
- And more prayers for healing to Natasha Bugosh, after breaking her foot.
- Well wishes for Bryne Golec who is moving to Sacramento to be near her son.



## February Birthdays

*Best birthday wishes to . . .*



- 3 Dick Albert
- 8 Ellery Medilla
- 8 Andy Hansen
- 13 Bill DeSmidt
- 16 Lee Berger
- 19 Meredith Schuler
- 19 Alison Corson
- 23 Grace Shaw-Smathers
- 24 Eric Gable



## Congregational Informational Meeting Q & As

On 6 January last month, members were invited to attend a presentation by Dave Byrens, the architect for our building addition, and his associate, Dong Kim.

The meeting began with a power point presentation during which various aspects of the site plan were displayed and discussed. The discussion included rationales for the design, county requirements, and aesthetic considerations. At the conclusion of their presentation, Dave and Dong invited questions and comments from the audience.

The following is a sampling of the members' questions and the architects' responses.

*Q. When can we expect to begin construction?*

A. We are positioning the project for construction in May 2008, contingent on the County's approval of the site plan by February 2008.

*Q. How much do you expect the addition to cost?*

A. A rough estimate would be about \$250,000.

*Q. Will the new plan meet the code requirements for parking and waste disposal area?*

A. Yes. All code requirements are met in the site plan.

*Q. Will the addition trip new code requirements in our existing building?*

A. Not likely, especially since we will not be trying to modify the existing bathrooms.

*Q. Are two separate ADA bathrooms required?*

A. Yes. The number is based on the number of people in the congregation

*Q. What about building "green" with such features as skylights?*

A. Green materials are becoming very popular in construction. Dong, who is LEED certified, is willing to work with us to be green where we can within our budget.

*Q. Will the modification of the kitchen reduce our attic storage space?*

A. No. It should actually increase the storage space.

As the question and answer session progressed, excitement and enthusiasm were contagious. Dave and Dong were forthright and knowledgeable in their answers, and they remained after the formal session to talk individually with members.

So what's next for your Unitarian House Subcommittee (Frank Satterwhite, Darryl Ray, Meg Jurich)? We will be attending the public hearing on our site plan 12 February, and meeting to work on a plan to fund the project. Stay tuned.



## OUR CHURCH BOARD IN ACTION

### January 2008

*The following is a summary of the Board's business meeting. Feel free to discuss any of these items with Board members.*

1. **Unitarian House:** An informational meeting will be held on 6 January at 12:30 P.M. The architects will show pictures of the plan. We are expecting to break ground in May.
2. **RE Report:** A service on Religious Education is being planned for 13 January. The fall teachers will stay through the school year. Middle school students will use the curriculum *Neighboring Faiths*. The Oakland UU church is offering an OWL program in which our youth may participate. A new RE brochure is being developed.
3. **Membership Report:** We are offering visitor DVDs that introduce UUism for visitors to take home. The PCD Growth Conference is 12 January.
4. **Five Year Vision Review:** Board reviewed the 5 year vision for the church, developed at last year's Board retreat. In particular, a draft implementation plan for welcoming visitors was outlined.
5. **Minister's Report:** The new cleaning staff is working well. The special plate collections have been generous.
6. **Treasurer's Report:** Pledges that came in December restored us to budget. The collection plate is close to budget, even with the special plates. The building fund currently has about \$108,000.

## Children's Religious Education

### What does “religious education” mean to UUs?

Lynn Ungar  
Minister for Lifespan Learning,  
Church of the Larger Fellowship

Religious education, or religious learning and growth, is the life-long process by which we come to understand more deeply who we are in the world, what our lives and actions mean, and how we are connected to the past and future of humanity. It is the on-going process of maturing, of growing souls, of coming toward the fullness of our human potential. Religious education is classes, books and conversations, attentive walks in nature and prayerful moments of silence. It is all of the ways we come to appreciate more deeply our connections with “the interdependent web” of life, with the great teachers throughout history, with our neighbors and with the strangers whom we come to understand are our neighbors as well.

### Nurturing Your Spirit

Church of the Larger Fellowship

In January we celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a Christian minister who practiced non-violent resistance—changing the world without hating or trying to hurt the people whose actions he opposed. King was inspired to this way of non-violence by Mohandas Ghandi, the great Indian leader who used the Hindu idea of *ahimsa*, non-violence toward all beings, as the foundation of his work for the freedom of the people of India.

Practicing non-violence can be a very powerful way of changing the world, and of changing your own feelings and ways of looking at the world. One spiritual practice that helps to put you in a non-violent frame of mind is to do a peace meditation. The more often you do it, the more you train your mind, heart and spirit to react in non-violent, peaceful ways. You can find a nice peace meditation here (scroll down to the bright pink box for the meditation itself).

Carey Sanchez Para, Religious Education Chair  
510/502.4098 or careysanchezpara@comcast.net

What a pleasure to be involved musically with the diverse yet committed community which I've discovered at SKUU. I appreciate the opportunity to help create an atmosphere which enhances meditation and worship through the medium of sound.

I always enjoy hearing about the theme or topic for each upcoming service, and I love culling through the repertoire for music which supports and enhances the theme. There is so much to draw on, and often I am amazed at the synchronicity of coming upon just the right music to fit the service.

Just a bit about me: as a child growing up in Colorado, my first music teacher was the organist at our church (Lutheran), and I played for various church functions, services in convalescent homes, and for school and community musicals. I went on to major in music in college and earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in piano performance. I enjoyed playing collaboratively with other musicians in small ensembles, accompanying various instrumentalists, and playing for everything from theatre productions to dance classes.

Along the way, I explored multicultural percussion and movement related arts—dance, T'ai Chi, yoga, and various mind-body modalities which explored the use of imagery for skill effectiveness as well as healing. I've also studied and continue to cultivate the Japanese healing arts of Reiki and Jin Shin Jyutsu. I feel that these healing and movement arts support and feed my music making. My other interests include literature, poetry, visual/graphic arts, and especially children's literature and literacy issues.

I am interested in how we all can be a force for healing in the world. I believe that music has the capacity to provide great healing, and I enjoy contributing to the collaborative energy at SKUU and working with the caring and open individuals I've found here.



## *Service Auction is Fast Approaching!*

The list grows longer!

The 2008 Starr King Service Auction will be held 16 February at 6:30 P.M. We have already assembled a wonderful selection of services. Here are some samples:

- ♥ Oktoberfest Dinner
- ♥ California Cuisine Dinner
- ♥ Dinner based on the Cantos of Dante
- ♥ Cheese Making Classes
- ♥ Orchid Sitting
- ♥ Pet Sitting
- ♥ A Ride to the Airport
- ♥ Sailing on the Bay
- ♥ And much, much more!



If you haven't sent in your service offer, there is still time. Look for the orange forms at church, or contact Terri Owen (terriowen\_07@yahoo.com or 510/888.1612).

### *Dessert Potluck*

While the bids are flying at the auction, we will also be enjoying a delicious dessert potluck. We need donations of your favorite dessert to share. The combination of dessert, camaraderie and fast paced bidding will make for a fun evening for all!

### *Absentee Bidding*

If you find that you cannot attend on the night of the auction, you can still bid. If you would like to bid on an item, you can submit your bid and we will have someone bid for you at the auction. We will make a lists of all the offers available before the event.



So please....

- ✓ Send in your service offer today
- ✓ Let us know if you can provide a dessert
- ✓ Plan to attend on Saturday 16 February and support our church

Starr King  
Unitarian Universalist  
Church

# Service Auction and Dessert Potluck

## 16 February 2008

Bring a friend, bring a date  
or come alone if you wish!

Just be prepared to have fun  
and to do a good deed for the church.

Don't forget your checkbook

because

this is an important  
fundraiser for our church.

For more information contact  
Terri Owen (510-888-1612 ,  
terriowen\_07@yahoo.com)

## Our Church Here . . .

All are welcome to participate!

### EVENTS

✦ **Social Justice:** Sunday 3 February at 12:30 P.M. at Starr King Church, the Social Justice Committee will present Starr King activist Jim Forsyth and the Rev. Lee Williamson reporting on their trip to the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia, protesting the United States' training of Latin American military troops in repressive tactics. In 1981 over 900 civilians — men, women and children — were massacred in El Salvador by rightist military men trained at the School of the Americas. The protest march that Jim and Rev. Williamson attended was dedicated to those martyrs. Find out more about the movement to shut down the School of the Americas at <http://www.soaw.org/>.

✦ **Earth Spirituality Classes.** Due to the success of our first two meetings, we've extended our adult RE series on neo-paganism and Unitarian Universalism. This series of informal gatherings will be held on the first Sunday of each month (with the exception of January, when it will be held on the second Sunday). Please join us for any or all of the following topics:

**3 February:** Communicating with spirit (channeling & divination).

**2 March:** Mystical visions (dreamwork and meditation).

**6 April:** Shamanic Journeying (drums, chanting, trance states).

**4 May:** (topic to be determined by group interest).

✦ A Pagan Gathering Circle will be held on Sunday 10 February at 1:30 P.M. in the church library. Imbolc (otherwise known as Candlemas, St. Bridget's Day and Groundhog Day) will be hosted by Mary Lasack. The

ritual will be followed by a snackluck. All faiths and non-faiths are encouraged to come: This is an Open Circle. Questions? Call Ruth and Bill DeSmidt and/or Mary Lasack.

✦ **Come and Bid!** Our biggest single fundraiser, the **Service Auction**, will be held this year on 16 February. This is always a fun evening for both providers and bidders. To offer a service or solicit one, contact Terri Owen (510/888.1612 or [terriowen\\_07@yahoo.com](mailto:terriowen_07@yahoo.com)). The Service Auction is a wonderful opportunity for our members to get to know each other through offering a bit of themselves!

#### ✦ **Ashland Trip Update**

All the calculations have been made, and we find that there are still a few openings without exceeding our maximum for this trip. If your plans have changed, or if you've just changed your mind, you can still go with us. We will see three great plays (*The Clay Cart*, *Fences* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), enjoy meals and other social times together and have the opportunity for side trips (art, shopping, wine tasting). We will also have a pre-trip preview of the plays, and there will be a talk for our group only once we arrive in Ashland. The trip will be Saturday 15 March through Monday 17 March. Cost of the excursion is \$205 per person, double occupancy. This includes deluxe accommodations at the Plaza Inn, three blocks from the theater, and tickets to the three plays. Contact Doug Sprague ([dougnata@pacbell.net](mailto:dougnata@pacbell.net)) or Donnie Rett ([brett146@juno.com](mailto:brett146@juno.com)) for a reservation or further information. Full payment for the weekend is due by 2 March.



## Intern Committee Report

Bob Meyerson, Chair

It's hard to believe, but our intern, Carol Bodeau, is almost halfway through her time with us at Starr King Church.

The Intern Committee has been meeting with Carol regularly, and individual members also meet with her on an individual basis. I think this has been beneficial both to Carol and to the members of the committee.

While the intern's immediate supervisor and mentor is our Minister, Katie, the committee's role is valuable. Because the Intern Committee is comprised of lay members of the congregation, we members have a unique opportunity on several levels. Like all members of the Starr King Congregation, we can see the intern in her role as a worship leader. In addition to direct experience, we are able to get feedback from other congregants. This is important to get a sense of how the intern has integrated into the life of the church.

By sharing individual views and communicating with the congregation, the Intern Committee is able to give the intern important feedback about the impression she makes on the congregation. For that reason, the committee is interested in your comments regarding how the intern conducts Sunday services, as well as her performance in other aspects of ministry and in activities such as attendance at various board and committee meetings.



The beauty of having the Intern Committee lies in the very nature of a representative group of congregants to evaluate the intern on the basis of their individual experiences and expectations. In that vein, we will shortly be putting together an interim report on our findings. Given the multi-talented person we are evaluating, this could be the easiest part or the most complex part of our committee.



# Committee Highlights



## Earth Ministry, *Karen Urbano*

We are underway with the environmental audit. But there are many areas that need covering. Do you have a hand in the following areas at Starr King? Remember that this is a snapshot of now. When we know what now looks like, we will come up with a plan for improvement that will be the Action Plan for our Green Sanctuary application.

*Energy Use:* What is the average cost of utilities? What conservation measures are in place?

*Recycling:* Is there any recycling going on here? If so, what type?

*Non-disposable materials:* Does SKUUC have policies for the use of non-disposables, such as in the kitchen? What about the use of cleaning supplies? Are they non-toxic? If there is a cleaning service, are they being educated in the use of safe materials?

*Purchasing and investing:* Does SKUUC have any policies about purchasing and investing? Are existing investments by the church in line with environmental and social values? (Note that Free Trade coffee is already provided at coffee hour.)

*Landscaping:* What about landscaping policies using native and climate appropriate species, as well as use of chemicals? (Note that we are way ahead of the curve here already due to Carol Henrie's great plan for the grounds!)

*Religious Education:* What current religious education programs address the environment, both for children and adults?

*Worship and Celebration:* How well does our worship integrate the wisdom of the Earth? Earth Day is a part of this.

*Social Action:* How is Earth caring a part of our overall social action program?

What other environmental issues are a part of the life of SKUUC, in adult education or discussion groups or in the local community that might be the basis for a Green Sanctuary program or activity? Here is where we can get creative. I'm thinking of the Social Justice group's efforts to stop the proposed Hayward power plants.

Please join in this important effort! Our next meeting will be on Sunday 24 February at 12:30 P.M. in the Library. We will also start to plan for our Earth Day service. I welcome your questions and comments, but most of all, your participation! Karen Urbano (510/632.7625 or karenjean@earthlink.net).

## Association Affairs, *Ramón Urbano*

### UU Principles Review

The Commission on Appraisal of the UUA is presently working on a project to review our UU Principles (Article II of the UUA Bylaws). You can review the seven Principles printed in our Order of Service. This periodic review is mandated in our UUA Bylaws.

In January of 2007 every UUA congregation was mailed a packet of workshop materials for adults, youth and children to use in reviewing Article II as a congregation and providing feedback to the Commission. These workshops and feedback were submitted by many congregations across the nation, including some of those in the Pacific Central and Pacific Southwest districts. Papers by congregations and members, along with interview with outside experts, will be reviewed by the Commission, and a symposium of UU and non-UU scholars will be held (tentatively) in January 2008.

Unfortunately, by the time of this article's publication it will be too late for individual submission of surveys. If and when changes to our Principles are presented and voted upon, it will be noteworthy for our denomination.

As a point of reference, the Mission Statement of the Commission on Appraisal of the UUA is: Grounded in the living tradition of our free and responsible faith, yet charged with acting independently, the Commission's mission is to provoke deep reflection and to evoke timely, creative transformation of Unitarian Universalism, our congregations, and the Unitarian Universalist Association.



In January, we raised our glasses in appreciation and bid an affectionate farewell to our longtime member Bryne Golec, who is moving to Sacramento to be near her son. While Bryne will be missed, she has promised to visit Starr King when she can. Best wishes, Bryne!

*Photo by Betsy Dye.*

## ONGOING ACTIVITIES

♣ **SKIFFLE dates have changed again to Wednesdays!** Starr King Instrumentalists for Fun, Laughter and Entertainment gather in the Sanctuary for instrumental music every Wednesday evening from 7 to 9 P.M. All instruments, levels of musicianship welcome.

♣ **Morning Discovery** meets in the Library from 10 to 11:15 A.M. on first and third Wednesdays (6 & 20 February). All are welcome to join us to explore community and spirituality, discussion and shared silence.

♣ **Evening Discovery** meets in the Library at 7 P.M. on first and third Wednesdays (6 & 20 February) for thoughtful reflection on different topics that focus on the spiritual, the religious or the personal.

♣ The **Social Justice Committee** meets on second Sundays (10 February) after second service. All welcome.

♣ The **Book Group** will meet Thursday 14 February at 7 P.M. at the home of Marian Babbidge (510/889.9462) to discuss *The Bookseller of Kabul* by Asne Seierstad. All welcome! Please ring to let the host know you will be coming.

♣ **SKIT** improv group meets in the Sanctuary on second and fourth Thursdays (14 & 28 February ) at 7:30 P.M.

♣ Join the **No Room for Racism** vigils that are held in Hayward every third Friday (15 February) from 4 to 5 P.M. at the intersection of Jackson-Mission-Foothill. An opportunity to stand for your values! Sponsored by South Hayward Parish.

♣ The **Film Group** will gather on Saturday 23 February at 7 P.M. The film will be *Lackawanna Blues*, an award winning film about a young boy's life shaped by the cast of characters in a boarding house in 1960s Lackawanna, New York. This film was chosen to celebrate Black History month. All welcome! Let host Stuart Fink (510/537.4421) know you are coming, and please bring a movie snack to share.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

♣ **Do you know our Church history? *An Ordinary Miracle* and *The Miracle Continues*** are available in the church office, \$15 each or two for \$25.

♣ **Help make our website brilliant!** Please submit your contributions of photos of church events and/or activities for the website (<http://starrking.org>) to [webmaster@starrking.org](mailto:webmaster@starrking.org).



♣ **To schedule an event**, visit the online calendar at our church website ([http://www.starrking.org/skuu\\_committee\\_meetings.htm](http://www.starrking.org/skuu_committee_meetings.htm)) to check availability, then call the office and we will add your event. View the website calendar for all church events.

♣ Please submit written announcements for the Sunday bulletin to Nancy by 1 P.M. on Tuesday. Office contact info: [office@starrking.org](mailto:office@starrking.org) or 510/581.2060.

♣ To preserve a sense of worship on Sunday mornings, please remember to **switch off cell phones** and other devices before entering the Sanctuary.

♣ **Committee chairs/events coordinators:** To avoid schedule conflicts, notify the Church Office Administrator of dates and times of ALL meetings and events (even if ongoing or off-site).

♣ Donate interesting books in excellent condition to our **Church Bookstore** for resale. Shop in our bookstore on third Sundays. See Evelyn Cormier.

♣ Our **SKUUC Food Donation Basket** for South Hayward Parish Food Pantry is located just inside the eastern entry door in our Sanctuary. Please be generous every week and donate healthful nonperishable food items .

♣ Stuart Fink has placed a Lions' Club collection box on the Community Table. **Eyeglasses you no longer use** will go to Latin American countries, along with eye doctors who will fit people in need.

♣ The Religious Education Committee would like to remind parents with small children that **the service can be heard in the library** should you need to leave the sanctuary due to crying or antsy children. The volume adjustments are near the speakers .

♣ The **Outreach Committee** suggests recirculating the *UU World*. Leave old copies in waiting rooms, or put them in the Outreach Committee box in the church office for use at public events.

♣ **A Gentle Reminder** from the Worship Committee: Candles of joy, sorrow and concern should be brief and pointed, or the service may run too long.

♣ **Babysitters Needed.** The Religious Education Committee is in need of babysitters during Sunday services. Please contact Karen Kramer (783.2221).

♣ **How are chalice lighters and readers for services chosen?** The Worship Associate for the service asks someone to do it. If you would like to participate in worship by lighting the chalice and/or reading from the pulpit, just tell any Worship Associate, who will add your name to the list of interested participants. *Please note* that you must be at church 15 minutes prior to the start of the service in order to be asked.

♣ Our Sanctuary serves as an all-purpose room; things get moved several times each week to accommodate meetings and activities. *PLEASE* after an event or meeting, **leave the Sanctuary in the worship configuration**. Put chairs back *each time* they are moved.

♣ The Worship Committee reminds us that the **musical postlude** at the end of the service is a part of worship; please remain seated to maintain a reverential quiet until the last note.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

♣ **Serving Sunday Morning Coffee** is a great way to meet members and spread happiness! *Your help is needed* in the set up position. This person would arrive at church about 35 minutes before first service, start the coffee and set everything up, then remain and serve coffee after first service. Please let Terry Babbidge (889.9462) know if you can fill this important slot on Sunday.



♣ **Calling All Volunteers!** Please join our All-Church **Grounds & Landscape Clean-Up Day** on Saturday 9 February. We will work from 9 A.M. into the afternoon. Our main focus will be to tackle the weeds on our cultivated plateaus, but we're flexible and can find a way to include you. Bring gloves to protect your hands. Our mission is to create a beautiful, water-wise environment of native and Mediterranean-adapted plants that affords inspiring beauty and spiritual solace, while providing habitat. Work ranges from light weeding and cultivation to irrigation maintenance to vigorous weed-clearing and mulching. We always have fun! Contact Carol Henrie (886.1018).

♣ Please see Betsy Dye if you would be interested in operating the **sound system** one or two Sundays a month.

♣ Sign up at the Community Table to bring **flowers or plants for the altar**. Let us know if you are honoring a loved one or celebrating a special occasion.

♣ **Volunteer pianists:** Share your talents when our regular accompanist is off. Contact Joyce Kinnear (885.0781).

♣ **Babysitters needed!** The Religious Education Committee is in need of babysitters during our Sunday services. Volunteer to offer your services on a regular basis or on occasion. Please contact Karen Kramer (783.2221).

## What's the Word? *Al Murdach*

*This monthly column explores today's meaning and significance of some important religious words from the Christian tradition.*

### No.24: **Judgment**

If there is any word in the Christian vocabulary which most causes a shudder in the typical UU, it is probably the word, Judgment (especially if it is capitalized). Most UUs have long ago driven the word in its religious sense from their minds, since it seems to signify exclusion, intolerance and domination. The ancient image of Christ sitting on the judgment seat, prominent in such cathedrals as Chartres or in Michelangelo's famous portrayal of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel, only confirms the notion that the idea of final judgment in Christianity symbolizes the diminishment of humans in the face of an implacable, angry and unforgiving God. Even more repulsive to UUs is the notion that God is some kind of celestial book-keeper, constantly adding up sins and good deeds so he can gleefully separate the sheep from the goats on the Last Day. Truly not ideas that any UU can relish.

It is the Universalist solution that most appeals to UUs: in the final judgment all are saved, so everybody wins. In this approach, since all win (and all get prizes), judgment is shown to be unimportant and therefore eliminated because it is irrelevant. Q.E.D. However, eliminating judgment, though a feel-good solution, raises problems of its own. For example, there is the Adolf Hitler Problem; in the all-win scheme it doesn't matter if one tortures and slaughters thousands of innocent victims, because the mass murderer is saved along with everyone else. Since no questions are asked, why be good? *Inherent dignity of all living things?* Who cares? Why not rape and pillage to your heart's content because you are guaranteed a ticket to happiness no matter what you do? The UU answer to this dilemma has generally been to do away with the idea of an afterlife. So no judgment, no afterlife, no rewards or punishments, no big deal. However, this approach still doesn't eliminate the Adolf Hitler Problem. Instead, it merely avoids the idea of consequences for bad behavior, which makes most of us uncomfortable. Somehow, the concept of just desserts seems more fitting. So typically UUs, secular humanists, agnostics and atheists, along with all the rest of us, are reluctantly driven back once more to the idea of judgment. Only this time it's the judgment of humankind, or public opinion. In other words, we feel that it is necessary to be, or at least to seem, good because we don't want to suffer the rejection and censure of our peers, neighbors, family, fellow church members, etc. So in the final analysis, judgment becomes identified with social acceptance and respectability. This eliminates the Adolf Hitler Problem.

However, this solution doesn't feel very satisfactory either. If being good is equated with respectability, what about the Con Man/Woman Problem—people who pretend to be good but really aren't? Or the Unjustly Accused Problem—people who appear to be bad but really aren't? If judgment is only social, what about unjust judgments? There are always legal remedies, but the courts make mistakes too! Now we find ourselves not only driven back to the idea of judgment, but also once again considering the idea of divine or supernatural judgment, or judgment that does not rely strictly on human powers (which, because limited, may be wrong or misguided). So once more we find ourselves inescapably in religious territory when considering the idea of final judgment on human behavior. Amazingly it seems the Christian solution (that final judgment belongs to God and not to humans) may actually be worth reconsidering! In fact, though it's a galling thought to religious liberals, it is possible the traditional idea of judgment (maybe minus its medieval trappings) may even have some real value!

## Committee Highlights

# Friends of FESCO (Family Emergency Shelter Coalition)

*A Slice of Life* written by Martha Trigueros, FESCO Program Director

This month I have chosen to speak about a family that first arrived from North Carolina and settled in Fremont, California. The family lived in a motel for two months. They then moved into Winter Relief in September 2006, where they began their application process for the Banyan House. They were accepted and moved in on February 26, 2007.

Despite a minor setback in March 2007, this family did not give up hope. Because of a family emergency, it was necessary to return to North Carolina for a period of time. Upon their return to California, the mother became very ill and the father lost his job. When her health allowed it, the mother found a part-time job. The father continued to search extensively for full-time work. Because they wanted to keep their family together and provide their children with a consistent environment, the children continued to attend school in Fremont.

FESCO encourages families to start a savings account while living in any of the FESCO facilities. Despite their difficulties, this family opened a savings account with \$48 in March 2007.

The Banyan staff describes these parents as strong, determined and committed to one another and their children. The matriarch of the family is the disciplinarian whose persistence and authority holds the family together, with the support and care of her husband.

The mother returned to school in September to complete a master's degree in filmmaking. Her husband continues to train with the National Guard as a communication specialist while working full time as a security guard.

This family is looking forward to moving into a place of their own in January 2008. They have now saved over \$4,000. FESCO is looking forward to this family's future accomplishments, as they have proven their ability to overcome great obstacles and succeed.

## FESCO Appoints New Executive Director

FESCO announces that Cate Steane, J.D. has accepted the position of Executive Director of FESCO beginning January 2008. Cate was formerly Director of Operations with Rubicon Programs Management.

Rubicon, based in Richmond, California, has built and operated affordable housing and provided employment, job training, mental health, and other supportive services to individuals who have disabilities, are homeless, or are otherwise economically disadvantaged.

We congratulate Cate on her new position and look forward to working with her as the FESCO Executive Director.



Architect Dave Byrens and his associate Dong Kim met with the congregation in January to update us about plans for the new office building (see details on Page 3). Photo by Betsy Dye.

**Diane Meyerson represents Starr King UU Church on the FESCO board.**

# How to Reach Us

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### **Church Administrative Hours:**

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday  
9 A.M. – 1 P.M.

### **Minister's Office Hours:**

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday  
9 A.M. – 1 P.M.

*Note:* Please observe the minister's *uninterrupted* reading & writing time on Monday.

### **How to Reach Your Chalice Editor**

Deadline is the second Sunday of each month. Please put your contribution in writing.

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Leave in: The box marked *Newsletter Editor* in the Church office

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