

# Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



## From days of darkness, into the light~

January 2023

I have been spending much time of late in darkness. Some of it consciously, intentionally, born of my own design: taking extra time to rest or daydream or walk (without an agenda or aim) through the cold, bright morning light, maybe read a book for pleasure's sake alone. Some of it foisted upon me: a nasty flu bug that traipsed through the house, leaving my partner in bed for seven days, my kiddo for three, and me in harried caretaker mode for a week and counting, attempting to bolster my own fledgling immune system. Bridgette, too, as she has made her way back into the office, re-establishing herself in her workaday routine, continues to bump up against the aftermath of her first dalliance with Covid-19. The brain fog that takes over the moment you sit down to accomplish a particularly heady task, the exhaustion that creeps in just after midday, when you've still got miles of your to-do list unfurling before you.

Inside our congregation we're met with daily stories of surgeries and recovery timelines gone askew, setbacks, loss, trauma and heartbreak that had nothing to do with the plans we had made. Perhaps we'd gotten ourselves to a tidy little through-line where, although the world still seemed to be operating around us with a certain degree of sadness and institutional collapse, we could at least chart an individual course that would see us, safely and without harm, across that collective sea. And then illness struck, or depression or an unexpected bill that emptied the bank account, or a devastating call from a loved one. How often do we think of these "descents into darkness", as hiccups, or detours from our actual "Real Life" plans? Does it feel sometimes as if we are holding our breath, just waiting for this shadow period to pass us by, so we can get on with the bright future we had in mind?

What if the waiting is an integral part of the plan? What if collapsing is the necessary precursor to uprising once more? What if sometimes things must be broken in order to be rebuilt? What if your life, or, dare I say, the beating heart Life of the Collective - battered, bruised, crumbling, as it is right now, is not, in fact, a mistake, a momentary detour, but rather, a necessary and holy threshold? Rumi writes in his poem, *The*

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## Darkness, continued from page 1

*Guest House:*

Welcome and entertain them all!  
even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture,  
still, treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

Too often in my own life I have been quick to dismiss the darkness. Or, again, as Rumi puts it, “the dark thought, the shame, the malice,” preferring instead to identify myself with my “sunnier” qualities, my accomplishments, my more likable character traits, pacing uncomfortably in place until the page can turn upon a lighter chapter in my emerging story.

I think of the great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and his famous speech. This wise man didn't come to a crowd, belabored by devastation and struggle, and say to them, “I have a Five-Point Plan!” He came to them with a dream. A dream born of hardship and loss and daily confrontation with systemic racial injustice. A dream born by peering deeply into the darkness, and beginning to divine a way collectively through it.

“I have a dream.” May it be said of us that we too are consciously, intentionally turning toward those dark and difficult places where dreams are made. That we have spent time in the belly of the whale, languished in the interminable in-between spaces, the Bardo, the Unknowing. That we have been willing to exit the neat storylines we had planned in order to encounter the dragon, meet our angels and guides and emerge with the elixir it is said heroes and heroines bring back to their tribes. May it be said that we are learning, ever more, to trust the holy contour of our lives, whatever season of it we find ourselves in. May we take time to dream, and honor the simply being that often precedes any worthwhile doing. May we continue to be faithfully led to the unique medicine that we carry, often mined within the depths and dark nights of the soul, ready to offer the healing that only we can bring to a world that eagerly awaits the coming of the Light.

In grace and gratitude, Your Interim Ministerial Team,  
*Amy Day and Bridgette Garuti*

## HUUF Climate Action Campaign news

Kudos to the Arcata City Council who recently passed an ordinance mandating composting of all organic waste (food and yard). Plans for implementing the ordinance will begin in January and must be fully in place by the end of the year to be compliant with SB 1383. See [https://enewspaper.times-standard.com/infinity/article\\_popover\\_share.aspx?guid=52925677-f42c-460e-899c-34237af291c4](https://enewspaper.times-standard.com/infinity/article_popover_share.aspx?guid=52925677-f42c-460e-899c-34237af291c4)

The California Air Resources Board, which oversees the state's response to the climate crisis, recently released the final draft of its new plan to cut carbon emissions. One aspect of the plan calls for a 25% reduction in the collective number of miles driven in the state by 2030 (even more by 2045) to avoid climate disaster. Currently, California is not even meeting the 15% reduction called for in the last plan issued five years ago. According to data from CalTrans, both total and per capita driving have increased over the last several years. See <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/sustainability/sb-743/california-vmt-data>

Just as across the state and nation, transportation is Humboldt's largest source of carbon emissions. Locally we tend to keep cars longer than do people in the urban areas of the state, so it will be longer here before everyone transitions to zero-emission vehicles. So we have a collective responsibility to drive less, and

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## Sunday Services

**New Year 's Day 11:00 a.m.**

### **Building a Valued Centered Life in 2023**

Berti Welty will lead this informal hybrid service at the Fellowship. The first Sunday in January traditionally is a gathering to discuss possibilities for the year ahead while participants sip cider. While the year's possibilities are endless, the focus of this service will be on clarifying one's values as a way to center one's self in making decisions about 2023. Annette will surprise us with a diversity of music accompanied by Linda Holland on flute. If coming to the in-person gathering, please plan to remain masked while not actually sipping cider. If you are sick at all – please stay home. Following the service, hot spiced cider will be served and we'll get a chance to sample the various finger foods that participants bring. If able, bring simple finger food to share.

**Sunday, January 8, 11:00 a.m.**

### **Tell Me a Story**

Join us for this all ages service to explore the stories that have helped shape and guide us. Facilitated by Amy Day, we'll revisit well-loved favorites, and invite in new narratives and tales to delight and inspire. You're invited to bring a beloved book to share, swap or donate as part of this interactive experience.

**Sunday, January 15, 11:00 a.m.**

### **Mystical Stories and Songs – Rabbi Naomi Steinberg**

Rabbi Naomi will share original tales from the Jewish tradition to uplift the spirit and guide us on our journeys. We will sing beautiful songs with traditional melodies from Spain, Eastern Europe and the Middle East - rich sources of love, strength, and wisdom to take in and share. She will be joining us at the Fellowship for this hybrid service. Bonnie MacGregor will serve as worship coordinator.

**Sunday, January 22, 11:00 a.m.**

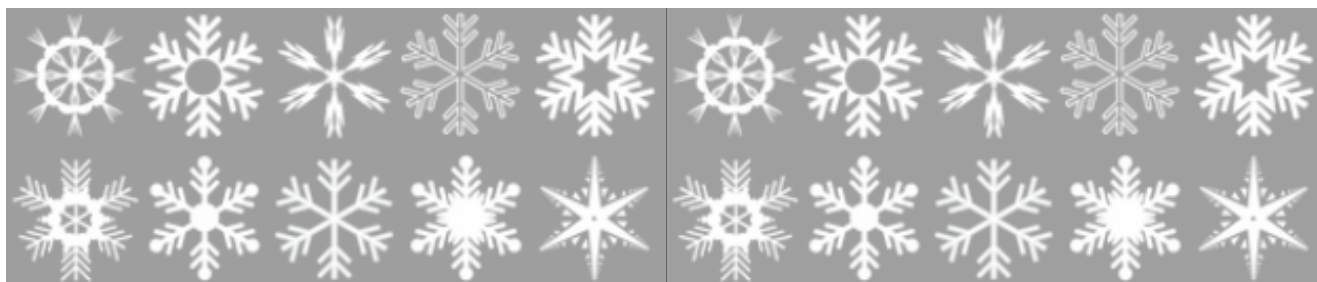
### **Engaging the Dharma Within and Without**

The KDK Arcata Buddhist Group will host Bay Area guest speaker and teacher, Tibetan Buddhist Lama Lodu Rinpoche. Lama Lodu Rinpoche will direct a teaching on how we effectively follow our chosen spiritual path while remaining effective advocates and change-makers in the cause for social justice. Please note: this service will follow a different format than many of our typical HUUF Sunday services, as the event will be solely hosted by our visitors. Childcare will be provided.

**Sunday, January 29, 11:00 a.m.**

### **The Great Undoing: No Hurry, No Worry – Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson**

Rev. Anthony will explore finding the wisdom in all of us as we create our future. He will be joining us at the Fellowship for this hybrid service which will be facilitated by Bonnie MacGregor.



## Smells of Childhood

In a park along Raritan River in New Brunswick,  
New Jersey

Idly watching mallards chasing each other round  
a pond.

In one intake of breath

Swept back to childhood

by the deep lush wet scent of grass

To a familiar expanse of English park with a pond  
mommies with kids throwing bread to the ducks  
Laughing at noisy duck quacking fights  
Weekend walks, plus umbrella, in case of a shower

School days in London meant trips each way  
Double Decker red bus, standard back then  
Diesel fuel smelled as it lurched to my stop.  
I ran straight upstairs into fug of blue air  
Smell of damp wool coats and cigarette smoke  
In smokers' only place to ride.

Hoped for front seat, big windows and view  
Glimpses into second floor kitchens,  
Tops of awnings over shops below  
Bustles of commuters diminished in size,  
Bent heads of mothers pushing their prams.

The school playing field at the top of a hill  
Weekly we trudged up it, games gear in our arms  
Late in the year, field hockey sticks  
Smell of wet grass just a part of the game.

The gym doubled as dining hall  
Long tables and benches, a cabbage smell  
At recess, small bottles of milk  
And fresh cinnamon rolls brought in every day

Home for holiday weeks in my pre-teen years  
Portscatho, tiny town on the rugged Cornish coast  
We'd run down the higgledy piggledy street  
Drawn by intensely mouth-watering smell.  
Kids and families waited for the giant door  
At the back of the bakery to open  
and the baker to roll out trays of hot donuts.  
Be careful, he warned, the jam's very hot!  
Salivating, we blew and we blew,  
Willing that jam to cool.

Below were the sand and the rocks of the seaside,  
Seaweeds and salt called us down for a swim.  
Smells of my childhood swept me away  
Like a magic carpet,  
To another continent, another time

*Jenny Hanson, December 16, 2022*

## Board report

The board is happy to report that HUUF's Membership Committee is again running and we will soon have greeters at Sunday services to welcome new members. The committee is busy updating the membership list and hopes to be done by the end of January.

Regarding social action, there has been preliminary outreach with community groups including Arcata House, Redwood Pride, and the Church of the Joyful Healer to see how HUUF could support their projects. More information will be posted in the Weekly and the newsletter.

As for HUUF's tech needs, two board members, Cassie Brillbeck and Sandy Lynn, will be covering the tech duties for Sunday services until the tech position is filled. Also, the board approved acquiring a laptop that will be dedicated to our tech needs.

Staff job descriptions are still being updated, including new titles: Director of Operations (formerly Office Administrator), and Director of Spiritual Life (formerly Director of Lifespan and Religious Education). The board will participate in a retreat at the end of January to discuss the new roles and goals set forth by the Ministerial Relations Committee and the new Interim Ministry Team.

The need for a building security system was discussed. There have now been some concerning occurrences on the HUUF grounds, including graffiti and cars speeding in the parking lot at night. The board is looking into options for keeping the grounds safe.

We discussed adding a new section to the HUUF Newsletter to give members a place to voice opinions rather than simply make announcements and reports.

The official duties of board members continues to be a topic of study and discussion. We will revisit an idea proposed in the past to organize the board into a system of clusters which grouped certain committees and projects together according to similar goals.

The HUUF Board meets 7:00-9:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month via Zoom. The first 30 minutes are dedicated to open public discussion. The Zoom link will be posted each month in the HUUF Weekly.

*Sandy Lynn*

## Climate Action of the Month:

### **Get with Arcata's new anti-plastic ordinance**

Big change! On January 1, 2023, Arcata's Single-Use Disposable Foodware Ordinance takes effect. Under the new ordinance, stores are prohibited from dispensing plastic foodware #1-7, which includes "compostable" plastic--a critical and long-overdue step.

Containers provided by stores must be made from fiber-based, readily compostable materials such as wood, sugar cane, or bamboo. The City will annually decide on exemptions for specific disposable foodware products that do not yet have a fiber-based alternative.

Containers must also be free of fluorinated chemicals (PFAS). Exposure to PFAS can cause cancer, liver damage, thyroid disease, decreased fertility, and increased risk of asthma. PFAS can be present in some grease-resistant paper, fast food containers/wrappers, microwave popcorn bags, pizza boxes, and candy wrappers. Food vendors with proper dishwashing capacity must use reusable foodware for onsite dining.

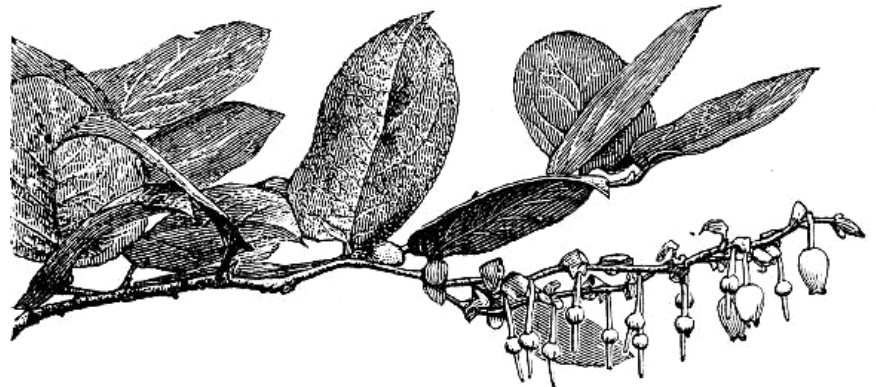
Here's where you come in: stores and restaurants will be encouraging customers to bring their own durable, reusable containers. Just as you're in the habit of taking your shopping bags with you to the store, get into the habit of taking these with you too: containers for deli, produce, and bulk food items; as well as coffee or juice cups (both ideally lidded). Plan ahead, and check with the vendor to be sure your containers are appropriate. And make sure they're clean. Perhaps keep a stash of containers in your car. You'll be paid \$.25 if you have your own container, but you'll be charged \$.25 if you don't.

It's worth the effort. Giving nature a second chance will quickly become second nature. More details: <https://www.cityofarcata.org/DocumentCenter/View/11267/Single-Use-Foodware-Guide>

*Margy Emerson*

### **Notes from the Garden**

A group of dedicated volunteers gathered on December 10 for a Grounds Work Party. Given the forecast for rain we decided to work only two hours. Lynne Abels, Katherine Almy, Montana Caouette, Margy Emerson and Karen Underwood joined forces to rake the maple leaves clogging the walkways, flatten the now-rotted willow stumps to sprig some new seedlings, and plot out more planting and beautifying this winter.



Keep your eyes on the renovated CARE building garden beds at the east end of the main parking lot. We'll be adding a sand mulch and bender board to one of them, and tending the starts planted in the amended soil. We're excited about the native salal planted under the pines at the far west end of the big meadow. Salal is closely related to huckleberry and should provide a low shrub layer to enhance the habitat value of that stand. We owe a big thank you to Barbara Barratt, who with her late husband Ray, salvaged native shore pines from the building site that is now the Holiday Inn near the airport in McKinleyville and created the pinery that we and the wildlife at HUUF enjoy today.

Our next work party is scheduled for January 14, 2023 from 10am to 1pm., join in the camaraderie, no experience necessary!

*Valerie Gizinski*



# Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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**Board of Trustees:**

**President:** Debi Cooper

**Vice-President:** vacant

**Secretary:** Sandy Lynn

**Trustees:** Chris Chapin, Chris West,  
Michael 'Montana' Caouette,  
Ann Kilby, Pat McCutcheon

## Deadline and classified ad information

Deadline for the February newsletter issue is  
Friday, January 20 at 5:00 p.m. Send articles  
related to HUUF (email only) to  
[newsletter@huuf.org](mailto:newsletter@huuf.org). Full guidelines at: [https://  
tinyurl.com/HUUFNewsGuide](https://tinyurl.com/HUUFNewsGuide)

Classified ads are \$.10/word. Send payment to  
the HUUF office and email text to the newsletter  
email address by the deadline.

## Editor's note

Articles in the HUUF Newsletter express  
the opinions of the individual authors unless  
otherwise stated. We treasure your opinions,  
stated with love; that is the spirit of this  
Fellowship! It takes energy from each of us,  
coming from our various perspectives, to make  
HUUF what it is, and contributing articles or  
artwork to the newsletter requires real work.  
Thank you to all who do so.

## CAC, continued from page 2

to drive more slowly on our local highways. In our  
Fellowship, CAC encourages members to carpool as  
much as possible, and to be "in the right lane and  
drive 55" on our local highways.

We have solutions to the climate crisis, but  
what is required is the will to adopt those solutions  
and to fund them. In the new year, CAC will  
continue to look for climate-saving actions that each  
of us can do as individuals, and we will advocate  
and push for legislation and ordinances that address  
the climate crisis locally and beyond.

Finally, thank you, John Schaefer, for your  
My Word article in the December 10, 2022 issue of  
the *Times-Standard* regarding fixed bottom off-shore  
wind turbines versus floating off-shore wind turbines.  
[https://enewspaper.times-standard.com/infinity/  
article\\_popover\\_share.aspx?  
guid=4666718b-6bb8-4d09-  
b918-70d682a02a92](https://enewspaper.times-standard.com/infinity/article_popover_share.aspx?guid=4666718b-6bb8-4d09-b918-70d682a02a92)

*Sue Lee Mossman*