

# Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



*To the Beloved HUUF Community*

## **Guiding our spirits into the New Year**

The day before the Winter Solstice, I had the good fortune (along with more than 35 other souls, ranging in age from 3 to 83), to sit in a circle led by our inimitable Community Song Leader Maggie McKnight. As usual, she guided us through a plethora of accessible tunes that simultaneously cracked us open and lifted our spirits. In honor of the darkest night, she brought this simple tune, from a poem by Wendell Berry, “To Know the Dark”:

*To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.*

*To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight,  
and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings,  
and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.*

We dimmed the lights, and brought a small candle into the center of the room. Together we conjured the sounds of dark wings, of blooming, and songs that linger in the heart once silence takes hold. It was simple, yet powerful. The word “ritual” can conjure images of extraneous, drawn out processes involving procuring a list of objects, or reciting specific words while facing the four directions, or adhering to a prescriptive litany of actions handed down through ancestral lines. All these things hold value, and yet ritual can take many forms.

Or as the poet Rumi might say, “*There are a hundred ways to kneel and kiss the ground.*”

Many UU congregations greet the Gregorian New Year with a simple Fire Ceremony in which each person writes on small scraps of paper words and phrases that speak to the energies of the previous year, writing all the things they wish to leave behind or see transformed in the time to come. Then, one by one, they take their small offering to the altar, add it to a communal bowl, and let it burn.

See “*Beloved,*” page 2



## **Endowment Fund grants are available**

The Endowment Fund Committee is pleased to announce that approximately \$8,000 will be available for small grants from the Endowment Fund in 2025. Endowment Funds can be used for purposes that align with UU principles and reflect the mission of our Fellowship. Examples of requests that can be considered include:

See “*Endowment,*” page 2

## **Beloved, from page 1**

Other congregations craft a “decades” service, wherein someone from each decade of life (10’s, 20’s, 30’s, for example) is invited to briefly share their heartfelt response to a given prompt, something akin to Mary Oliver’s famous line, “*What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?*”

Still others play improvisational games or enjoy an extended period of collective meditation. Or they gather for an act of service, akin to our Stone Soup, making sandwiches and writing cards to be shared with unhoused friends nearby. What’s the commonality, you may ask, between these diverse modes of worship, intention setting and commemoration? I would argue that anything that calls us into reverence, that draws our attention to a singular place to rest, that gently cracks open the heart and creates space where Grace, the Numinous, and our own Inner Knowing can begin to speak, constitutes a worthy and potent form of ritual.

As we stand upon the precipice of a new year, many of us still reeling from the one that just ended, I invite you to consider what form your ritual will take. How will you ground yourself for what comes next? How will you do the brave and delicate work of keeping your heart wide open? How will you make space to release the habits, beliefs, and behaviors that keep you small, and what will you invite in their stead? The world needs our strength as well as our softness. Whatever we can do to summon these traits is holy indeed.

May our New Year’s prayers, intentions, resolutions, and relinquishing serve to fortify us for what lies ahead. May they draw us ever closer to our heart’s wisdom and to each other. And may we remember, as the world feels increasingly frenetic and charged, that alchemy can be as simple as lighting a candle, singing a song, or taking a deep breath in the dark. There are a hundred ways to both kneel and kiss the ground, and also to light a spark.

Yours, in grace and gratitude,

*Amy Day, Director of Spiritual Life*

## **Endowment, from page 1**

- Buildings and grounds improvements (not regular maintenance);
- Religious education enhancements;
- Community service investments and actions;
- Membership leadership development; and
- Conference attendance and workshops.

Note that requests should not be used for annual operating expenses.

There is also limited funding available from the Chaffee Fund and the Moore Bequest for grants satisfying the fund requirements.

These grant funds will become available March 15, 2025. Grants can range in size from \$200 to \$2,000. Application forms will be available on our Fellowship website or by contacting members of the committee by email or phone. The deadline for submitting applications is February 15, 2025. For questions, call Cynthia Chason at (707) 601-6136.

We thank the many members of the Fellowship who have been so very generous in providing donations to our Endowment Fund. We hope you will consider a gift to HUUF in your planned giving and estate planning endeavors. Your legacy and our Fellowship mission can live on through contributions to the HUUF Endowment Fund.

Yours in Fellowship: *Cynthia Chason, Katherine Almy, Valerie Gizinski, Colleen Broderick:*  
*Endowment Fund Committee*

# Sunday Services

**Sunday, January 5, 11:00 a.m.**

***Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot, and Never Brought to Mind?***

**Montana Caouette, with Worship Leader Ann Kilby**

In this season of singing Auld Lang Syne, let's explore the concept of relationship capital—the life-enriching asset earned by regaining a positive connection with a family member or friend from a relationship now dormant or lost. Contemplate repairing a friendship long forgotten “for old times' sake.”



**Sunday, January 12, 11:00 a.m.**

***Where Do We Come From? Where Are We Going?***

**Amy Day**

At times, it behooves us to peek into our storied pasts to inform the future we long for. Whether you're well versed in UU history and theology, or brand new to the topic, come take a deeper dive into the rich tapestry of our living tradition. May this dip into our collective heritage provide a nourishing foundation to launch our dreams of who we can become, to serve the world in the here and now.

**Sunday, January 19, 11:00 a.m.**

***Love Is a Verb: Pledging to Help Resist Attacks on the Vulnerable***

**Brenda Perez, with Worship Leaders Corazon Amada and Ann Kilby**

Brenda Perez of Centro del Pueblo will tell us how we can offer solidarity with undocumented local residents, now that our president-elect plans wholesale attack on undocumented people nationwide. Centro del Pueblo is leading locally in supporting these vulnerable folks.

Bring your questions and your open hearts. "Together we can do all things."

**Sunday, January 26, 11:00 a.m.**

***Good Ancestors, Part I -- Amy Day***

Join us for this panel conversation with some of our beloved elders. We'll sit down with some long-term members who've served HUUF in various capacities and explore what values called them to serve, what insights they unearthed from these experiences, and gather the wisdom they have to pass on to those of us who are moving into our own journeys as emergent leaders.

Bring a simple potluck dish to share.



## Climate Action Campaign

### **E-bike incentives are here, but biomass air pollution is too**

The California E-Bike Incentive Project has finally gotten underway, providing up to \$2,000 for the purchase of a new e-bike. This project is funded by the California Air Resources Board, whose mission is to protect public health and ecological resources by reducing air pollution, while considering effects on the economy. For more information, go to [ebikeincentives.org](http://ebikeincentives.org).

In not-so-good-news, it's been more than 20 years since Humboldt Redwood Sawmill Company's biomass facility in Rio Dell had its permit renewed by the local Air Quality Board. Ordinarily such permits are renewed every five years, allowing for tightened requirements as

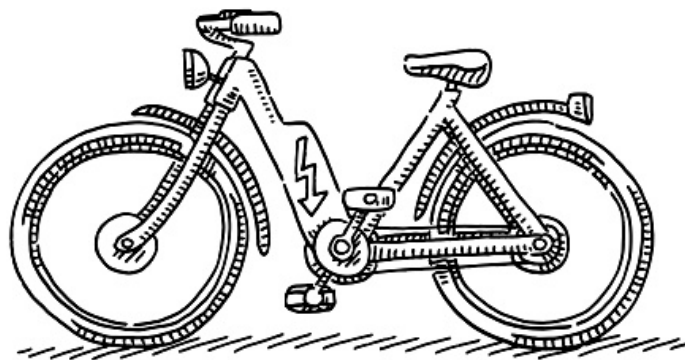
technology improves and scientists learn more about air pollution's effects on people. A big thank you to Valerie Gizinski who provided technical support for a Zoom press conference that led to the publication of this information in the Mad River Union <https://tinyurl.com/biomassplantquestioned> and in the Times Standard <https://tinyurl.com/Times-Standard>.

Organized by Dr. Wendy Ring and the Humboldt Coalition for Clean Energy, of which CAC is a member, the press conference alerted local media to this shocking fact. Without Val's expert tech support, the HCCE would not have been able to get this information to the public.

Thanks to those of you who wrote postcards and signed the petition to Costco executives this past fall to request that Costco drop its credit card relationship with CitiBank, one of the top funders of fossil fuel exploration and development. According to the organization Third Act, Costco leadership is listening. Third Act attributes this progress to demonstrations and the thousands of handwritten postcards and signed petitions that have been delivered to Costco executives. Third Act is continuing this effort in 2025, and we will surely hear from them what we can do next.

Gratitude and blessings to all for the new year!

*Sue Lee Mossman, Co-Chair*



## **Welcome new HUUF members**

We are delighted to announce that we have several new HUUF members. Holly LaRocque, Sara Janus, and Charity Butler have made the formal commitment to become members of our beloved community. We are so glad to have their unique gifts, insights, and energies brought into our midst. You may have already seen these lovely folks at recent services, bravely stepping up to introduce themselves and lending our gatherings renewed vitality and light. Be sure to say hello and welcome them to the fold.

### **New Member Class coming in February**

Director of Spiritual Life Amy Day will start a New Member Orientation series beginning in early February, date yet to be determined. This is a great opportunity for members, both new, prospective, or longstanding, to renew their understanding of our unique faith tradition, and weave themselves more deeply into the life and future of this community. Drop Amy a line at [comm@huuf.org](mailto:comm@huuf.org) if you'd like to know more.

## HUUF Board Notes

### **Board seeks new members; more solar panels approved for HUUF rooftop**

The December 12 Board meeting was attended by Margy Emerson, Corazon Amada, Amy Day, Hart Mendenhal, Bonnie MacGregor, and Montana Caouette.

The public comment period was attended by HUUF Nominating Committee (NC) members Sylvia Shaw, Tom Lewis, and Laurel Busse. Per their report to the Board, the Ministerial Relations Committee (MRC) will help the NC recruit and interview potential board members for next year. The HUUF bylaws require that Board candidates are presented at the March Congregational Meeting. However, it has been difficult to recruit new Board members the last couple of years.

The Board discussed updating HUUF's solar array. Margy Emerson previously met with solar contractor Roger and members of HUUF's Climate Action Campaign to discuss options for installing an inverter as well as new solar panels. It was suggested that installing an inverter compatible with both the existing panels, which are working well, as well as the new panels would be the best option. Estimated cost for the inverter upgrade is \$5,000, \$3,000 above the originally approved budget. Margy proposed that this \$3,000 be added to the original budget, and the Board consented to do so.

The Board discussed strategies to keep Bridgette on to help train an interim administrator who will serve until the post can be filled permanently. A Hiring Committee has been formed, including Montana Caouette, Corazon Amada, Alison Bronkall, Emily Teraoka, Tom Lewis, and Judy Rishel. They plan to have a job announcement posted by January 1 and to conduct interviews by the end of the month.

Board members felt positive about the December 8 Congregational Meeting and recognized the hard work the Consensus Committee (CC) put in to make it happen. It was also recognized that committee members will need to work harder at the next meeting to keep the consensus guidelines clear to congregation members. Chart notes developed during the December 8 meeting will be sent to the congregation; however, the voting process to choose which proposal to work on first has not yet been decided on.

The Board will next meet on January 14 at 7:00 p.m. in HUUF's Sanctuary. The first 30 minutes of every Board meeting are reserved for HUUF members to address the Board and Amy Day.

*Jason Teraoka, HUUF Board Secretary*

### **We are all in this together**

HUUF's Nominating Committee met in mid-December to nominate three prospective new Trustees for the Board. If elected, the nominees will join the Board on July 1, 2025 and serve for two years. Under the leadership of Sylvia Shaw, the committee discussed possible nominees. The list was short.

After 45 minutes of deliberation we came up with a new plan. The Committee decided to halt our nominating duties for now and take a deeper look at the culture of volunteerism at HUUF. Toward this goal, the Committee will create two special worship services to be held in January and February. During these services we will listen to testimonials from members as to the importance of HUUF in their lives. Dividing into small groups, we will have an opportunity to share our thoughts and feelings about HUUF's personal importance to us. During these services we will review HUUF's organizational framework and explain how the Board and committees function and how these positions interact with the staff.

HUUF is at a transition point this year as we decide how best to fill leadership positions. But what is clear is that *we need each other* (volunteers) to operate and run our Humboldt UU Fellowship. *Because we are HUUF!*

*Tom Lewis*



## Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

P.O. Box 506  
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**(707) 822-3793** <https://huuf.org>, email: [office@huuf.org](mailto:office@huuf.org)

**Director of Spiritual Life:** Amy Day,  
on campus Tuesday and Thursday, email:  
[comm@huuf.org](mailto:comm@huuf.org)

**Director of Operations:** Bridgette Garuti, on campus  
Monday-Wednesday, noon-4:00, appointments preferred;  
Thursday by email only, at: [office@huuf.org](mailto:office@huuf.org)

**Communications Coordinator,** Tiffany Hess, on campus  
Tuesday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., email:  
[connect@huuf.org](mailto:connect@huuf.org)

**Sunday Service Pianist:** Annette Gurnee Hull

**Newsletter Editor:** Pat Carr, email: [newsletter@huuf.org](mailto:newsletter@huuf.org)

**Newsletter Proofreader:** Stephen Sottong

### **Board of Trustees:**

**President:** Margy Emerson

**Vice-President:** Michael (Montana) Caouette

**Treasurer:** Hart Mendenhal

**Secretary:** Jason Teraoka

**Trustees:** Corazon Amada, Josh Charles

### **Classified Ad**

Making travel plans for 2025? Don't forget to secure a reliable pet/house sitter. Call Montana Caouette at (928) 607-1931 today. Fellowship references available.

### **Acknowledge the HUUF grounds February 8**

Let's take the words of our land acknowledgement and put them into action next month. Here's an opportunity to do more than just acknowledge that others lived and cared for HUUF's beautiful grounds long before we were born. Join members of the Grounds Committee on Saturday, February 8, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. As we pay tribute to Native people by caring for our Fellowship grounds, we'll also enjoy an energizing bit of outdoor exercise.

*Montana Caouette*

### **Lunch bunch, anyone?**

Let's get together for lunch again.

HUUF's lunch bunch group is back with a little twist. Instead of gathering at homes and restaurants as we did before, let's meet at the Heritage Cafe at Eureka's Humboldt Senior Resource Center on Wednesday, January 15, from 11:30 to 12:30 (address is 1910 California St., Eureka).

Join us every third Wednesday of the month. For reservations, text Susan Brauner on her cell (805-990-2016) or call her home phone (707-497-6878) by Tuesday January 3. She'll let the Heritage Café know how many lunch bunchers to expect. Suggested donation is \$3.50 to \$5.00.