

Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



The Practice of Renewing Faith

March 2022

Our March Soul Matters theme is Renewing Faith. As I see it, one key component of such renewal is to regularly engage in a spiritual practice.

Like other types of practice, it's something done consistently — even when we might not feel like it. And while “practice” can be its own end, most often people practice for something: athletes practice to improve their skills for competition; musicians practice to better their craft in order to perform for others, etc.

In the case of spiritual practice, we practice to become better at handling all facets of life itself: relationships, work, change, pain, struggle, conflict, achievement, creativity, anger, joy, and the rest.

I won't strictly define the “spiritual” part of spiritual practice, but to me this means that at minimum it helps us feel spirited, or enlivened. This takes different forms for different people, so practices vary widely. And whether still and quiet — meditation being the most familiar illustration — or more active — for instance yoga, chanting, an art form (e.g., calligraphy, pottery), gardening, music, even running — the form isn't what's essential. What calms and/or lifts our spirit is the quality of consciousness that emerges through it.

While it may not occur every time, this consciousness typically stands somewhat apart from our everyday mind; it shifts us into a more spacious awareness, a sense of being more connected to other beings (including those like trees, waves, stars), yet at the same time less attached to our personal troubles. An effective practice pulls us deeply into the present — which paradoxically can help to heal our pasts and open up our futures.

At its most profound, the “spirit” in spiritual practice brings us into relationship with the Transcendent — the Spirit of Life — including the spirit of our life. It helps us discern how our soul most wants to live and give, and provides strength and energy for that sacred odyssey. At its best, practice makes purpose.

In all these ways, spiritual practice renews faith: faith in our relationships with others, human and non; in our ability to remain loving and fair-minded amid challenges; in our ultimate connection to the Source of Life, and to the divine shard of this, that lives in each of us.

So if you haven't yet found or established a regular spiritual practice, the fertile month of March is a wonderful time to check out a few varieties, plant one in your life, and see what grows...

Many Blessings,

Rev. Peter Farriday (he/him)

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Religious Exploration

To Our Beloved HUUF Families

I'm turning 40 this week. Many other birthdays never quite panned out the way I had anticipated: At 18, I "celebrated" the achievement of having survived on my own for the past year-and-a-half, estranged from my family of origin. At 25, rather than revel in the beauty of the *actual* life I'd managed to create - a kind man who loved me, great friends, a temporary home in the lush foliage of Hawaii plus some epic travel to come - I cried over my confetti-strewn cupcake for all the previously imagined milestones I'd set for myself at this age that I'd yet to achieve. On my thirtieth, I waddled ungracefully around the woods surrounding our home, expecting the arrival of our child, who would come 4 days later. This one feels different somehow. The storyline I hatched long ago aligns more closely with the flesh-and-blood, brick-and-mortar world I've come to inhabit. Or maybe it's that, over time, I've come to abandon the plot altogether.

Years ago, back in my blogging days, I wrote a piece after a particularly thorny visit with my younger sister wherein I examined the topic of love. Within this tiny corner of the interwebs, I sat in imaginary conversation with myself, my sibling and the harsh, inflamed words we'd spat at one another, and the archetype of Kuan Yin. She, the bodhisattva, who is said to have stood upon the threshold of Nirvana, beckoned toward the glow of immutable, celestial light that awaited her just beyond, and rather than move effortlessly through that portal, she glanced back. She looked once more at the suffering world behind her, and her heart was moved. Rather than pass seamlessly into the honey-coated atmosphere of the Afterworld that awaited her, she stayed inside this aching realm. Rather than cashing in her "enlightenment ticket" for a one-way pass to Endless Bliss, she chose to use her understanding for the good of others. She, whose likeness I have chosen to adorn the entrance to my driveway, so that each time I enter or exit this space I am called to remember: "Your life does not exist for you alone. Your gifts are meant to be shared, freely and abundantly with others." A heavy, 3-foot tall reminder that compassion, not ambition, should dominate the center of my world.

Inside this tiny diatribe from years ago, I watch my former self grapple atop the page with this topic of what it means to love. To offer grace and understanding to another — or oneself — not because that person perfectly met our expectations or behaved how we would like, but rather because we are *called* to love them. Nothing more. Love — not as compensation for good behavior or services rendered to our ego or limited self, but as something freely given, a ceaseless "Pay It Forward" of the soul.

"...and again.. I am being taught.. "Teach Me How To Love.." And this is part of the lesson... to love what is.. What is right in front of you... The gift that came.. and not what you ordered. Perhaps the real deal is to love the seemingly unloveable.. in others.. in ourselves.. 'You are not what I thought you would be.. Every day you do something to disappoint me, to unnerve me.. To dash my high-flung expectations to the wind.. And yet I am here. And I love you. I don't know what this means but I do... I do.'"

It has taken me forty years inside this body to release much of my tightly-held agenda for this life, and open myself to the wonders of a narrative beyond the confines of my small, egoic mind. It has taken two years, and counting, for us to ween ourselves, collectively, off the endless opine for a return to "normal." To stop craning our necks out to sea, awaiting the return of a ship (that was never that wondrous to begin with, truth be told) that has sailed on from view, and turn squarely towards the lifeboat, the scraps and floating bits of wreckage we are on, and to see what can be made from these instead.

In every manner of spiritual tradition, before we can reach transcendence, we are asked to come deeply into presence. To be with what is. To release the shiny image in our minds so that we can focus on the inglorious and ragged beauty of what's right in front of us. Or maybe, to hold fast to a vision of what could be, while we devote ourselves fully and wholeheartedly to the work at hand.

May this vessel of time, before us and behind us, prepare us for the task of living inside a world that defies our expectations. May it build in us a resilience rooted in open-heartedness and a willingness to stay soft despite the hardships that remain. May it mount in us a courage — a word, once more, that is seated in the heart — that turns us



hand of life and of one another fully — ready to embrace, ready to take the pieces left to us, and fashion something beautiful, we have only yet to imagine.

yours in grace & gratitude,

Amy Day (she/her) Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration

As we continue to monitor the caseload and outlook of Omicron in Humboldt County, and our Sunday services are relegated to Zoom for the time being, the RE Teaching staff is looking into other ways to meet the needs of our youth and community at this time. Please, check the weekly email to stay in touch with what's currently on offer. At present, there are plans to reopen our doors to in-person Sunday services on March 20, should caseloads continue to decline. We look forward to welcoming you and your children back into our RE classroom then for games and songs and crafts and more. May we be together in body, as well as spirit, soon!

Please join us - Teen Coordinator Sabrina Miller, with support from DLRE Amy Day and youth leaders from within our congregation for another round of **Teen Council** meetups. Our work right now is focused on ways to center the wants, needs, and passions of our youth. You can expect snacks, creativity, movement, and a space where free flowing and open-hearted conversation is brought forth. Plus build upon our previous efforts to explore ways to put our values into action in the larger world. We encourage participants, 13 and older, who wish to join us, to be vaccinated, to create a safe and comfortable space for all. Presently, our Teen Council meetings take place on the second and fourth Sundays, 1-3 p.m. — **March 13** and **March 27**.

Through our Fellowship Engagement & Lifespan program:

In Person Soul Matters group: Facilitator Alison O'Dowd returns this month to host this drop-in-friendly, multi-generational group at HUUF, the second Saturday of the month. This month's group will happen on **March 12**, 2-4 p.m. Please contact Amy if you would like to attend at comm@huuf.org.

In addition, members of our RE teaching and childcare staff will be on hand for our youth while this small group is in session. They'll offer games, movement, exploration and practices for their own playful and imaginative way to relate to this month's theme. To sign your child up, please contact Amy Day at comm@huuf.org.

Maintenance news

Furnace Upgrade: One of HUUF's three natural gas furnaces was replaced on February 5 with an energy efficient electric heat pump. This project is a big step in our Climate Action Campaign to reduce the direct use of hydrocarbon fuels at the Fellowship. The installation cost \$12,240 and was funded by members' endowments to HUUF. Over the next year we will evaluate the increase in electricity consumption and, in 2023 increase the size and output of our roof-mounted solar array accordingly. California Heating designed and made the installation using the existing ductwork. A new programmable thermostat in the hallway will regulate system operation on a schedule matching our typical use of the building. Overnight and during days when the building is expected to be empty it will keep the temperature at 55 degrees. On Sundays (I believe we will meet inside again some day soon!) it will heat the building to 68 degrees at 8 a.m. The Sanctuary furnace is similarly programmed. If you have an event outside of this schedule and you wish to have heat, you will need to learn how to use the thermostats and I will be happy to show you. To learn more about the heat pump and how to operate the thermostat contact Scott Allen. To learn more about climate action you can contact Sue Mossman or another member of the CAC team.

Skylight Replacement: All skylights have been replaced as of February 11. The "operable" skylights that had shades built in between the panes of glass and were openable were replaced with standard fixed skylights. The openable units were more prone to leaking and being left open. Significant wood rot was found in the roof structure beneath two of the skylights. It will take some time to repaint the stained drywall and soffit beneath the units that leaked. Any volunteer painters out there? Know a good painting contractor? The estimated installation cost of \$6285 will increase to cover the carpentry work and materials to repair the rot. This project was funded by the Suzanne Moore Bequest. To learn more about the skylight replacement project or other building maintenance, contact Scott Allen at raindog371@gmail.com.

Sunday Services

Sunday, March 6 – 11 a.m. – It Matters What We Believe – Rev. Tom Lewis and Rev. Peter Farriday

Unitarian Universalism is one island of religious tolerance in what at times seems like a sea of religiously motivated bigotry. It begins with blessing, not sin, and inspires people to grow into their fullest potential, not threaten or shame them into conformity or the denial of their authentic personhood. This is sacred work because, as Sophia Lyon Fahs wrote, “It matters what we believe.”

Sunday, March 13 – 11 a.m. – The Golden Rule peace ship – Helen Jaccard

Today’s service relates to one of the guiding principles of Unitarian Universalism: “The goal of a world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.” This is also the mission of a small sailing ship named the Golden Rule. In the 1950s its crew tried to protest nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands. Decades later the ship was found sunken in Humboldt Bay, and local and national Veterans for Peace organizations restored it. While its home port is Humboldt Bay, it now sails internationally, promoting peace wherever it goes.

Helen Jaccard, project manager for the Golden Rule, will talk about the ship’s mission and why the many volunteers are called to be involved. Stephen Sottong, a member of Veterans for Peace, will be the worship leader.

Sunday, March 20 – 11 a.m. – The Divine Feminine – Bonnie MacGregor and Rev. Peter Farriday

Symbols of the Divine Mother or the Divine Feminine – the archetypal Source of Life and its energies of fertility, creative nurturance, and interdependence, among others – have appeared in most, if not all, cultures and eras. Honoring both the dawn of the fertile season of spring as well as Women’s History Month, we will explore the Divine Feminine’s ancient wisdom and modern ideas about reclaiming its restorative energies for today.

Sunday, March 27 – 11 a.m. – To the Sea with Northcoast Environmental Center

Isak Dinesen wrote that saltwater – from tears, sweat or the sea – could serve as a cure for almost anything. Join us then for this Social Action Sunday as we strive to craft a potent synthesis of these three elements. In partnership with our friends at the Northcoast Environmental Center, we will gather in person for a coastal cleanup effort to match our heartfelt effort to meet the needs of our beloved coastline.

For those joining via Zoom, there will be collective work to process our eco-grief and our love for this ailing world. We will strive to connect to local strategies and campaigns that are aimed at directing these energies into action.



UUkulele Sing-a-Long

For those who don’t know me, my name is Sandy Lynn, and I could use some help. I need to stop not playing my ukulele! And I have an idea: UUkulele Sing-a-Long.

Here’s how it would work: Until it’s safe to meet in person, we would meet via Zoom. Anyone who would like to share a song could do so, and share the music in the Zoom meeting. The rest of us, in the comfort of our own homes, would sing and play along. Of course each person would only hear the song leader, since on Zoom only one person at a time can be heard, but at least we would see each other playing and singing, and still feel the music together. Anyone would be welcome, whether or not they shared a song, or even just wanted to listen, and anyone could suggest songs for others to share as well. We could collect copies of the music in a shared Google folder so people could practice the music on their own. If you think you might be interested or have questions/comments/suggestions, please email me, at slynn.uk@gmail.com.

Board of Trustees Minutes

The regular Board of Trustees meeting was called to order on February 8 at 7 p.m. by David Marshak. **Present:** David Marshak, Cassie Brillbeck, Chris West, Montana Caoutte, Peter Farriday, Sally Williams, Sandy Lynn, Bridgette Garuti, Amy Day. **Absent:** Debi Cooper, Rebekah Paez.

Admin Report: Revisiting COVID safety numbers for ourselves as well as for renters, especially for weddings was discussed.

DRLE Report: It was suggested that, since there are presently so many tasks for the DLRE, that the Board help prioritize tasks. How the COVID restrictions have impacted our feeling of community was discussed, and that we need to create and take advantage of as many community-building activities as possible, and also our own self-care. It was noted that our old Sunday rhythm has been lost, and we need to continue to look beyond Sundays to connect. Bridgette and Peter noted that there are many new people inquiring about HUUF via the website and phone messages, and we could use a way to get back to these people. Action Item: Sandy will consider this and report back to the Board.

Minister's Report: A concern brought up in the last Board meeting about "unqualified volunteers" and their roles in the hiring processes was discussed, specifically the background check process, and it was noted that no offense was intended. The difference between reference checks and background checks for staff working with children was clarified. It was suggested that we consider creating a guideline that clarifies the process of background and reference checking. We need to have an official job description for the Administrator position, and a process for creating it. Included in this discussion was that during the COVID restrictions, and since our pool of volunteers is now smaller, more and more tasks have been added to the Administrator's and the DLRE's roles. Many of these added tasks are not well defined. It was suggested that a sub-committee be formed to take on these issues.

Financial Reports: In Bek's absence, David shared the comments made by the chair of the Finance Committee, Dave Harris, that our finances are doing well and will be "in good shape" by the end of this fiscal year.

Pledge/canvass drive planning: It is unlikely that anyone will come forward to run the pledge drive. Although we have lost a number of pledges this year as compared to prior years, the amount of money pledged by the remaining members was maintained despite not having a pledge drive for two years. A question was raised whether we need a pledge drive. A response pointed out that pledge drives were a tradition, and following traditions is valuable for many reasons. Also it is a way to engage new members into the culture of pledging and participation. Action item: David will bring his ideas for a pledge drive to the March Board meeting.

Re-opening time frame for hybrid services: How to determine if and when we reopen for in-person services and activities was discussed, and whether to adhere to the County/State mask advisory if they let the mask mandate for vaccinated people expire on February 15. It was proposed that we continue to require masks for at least the first in-person outdoor meeting and agreed that the fourth Sunday activity planned for February 27 be allowed to go on as planned and that the first Sunday in March would be too soon to reopen. We agreed that the March 13 service will still be on Zoom, so we can hold the Annual Fellowship meeting on Zoom immediately after the service, thus increasing the likelihood that we will have a quorum. We tentatively planned to return to hybrid services on March 20. Bridgette noted that we need to formalize the March 20 plan by March 10 so there will be time to inform members.

Annual meeting: The annual Fellowship meeting will be March 13 on Zoom, immediately after the service.

Announcements: All internal doors in the HUUF building are fire doors and, thus, need to be closed at the end of each day when the last person leaves. Sandy Lynn and Bert Taylor have agreed to serve on the Personnel Committee. We need one member to join them. Scarlett is staying until summer, so we have more time to hire. It was suggested that Scarlett be asked if she would be willing to enter into another contract.

Next meeting: is March 8.



Sandy Lynn

Climate Action Campaign (CAC) news

A huge round of applause to thank everyone who's written letters to the Planning Commission with comments on the draft EIR concerning the Nordic AquaFarms project and in particular to John Schaefer and Pat Carr for their comprehensive analyses.

CAC offers two climate action opportunities for March.

Thank you, Cena Marino, for our first option - Raising Our Awareness and Empathy for All People. Because of climate driven disasters or wars, there are millions of people who live in other parts of our planet that, due to circumstances beyond their control for whom their ability to get adequate water, food, electricity or support services is greatly limited. So, we ask you to read and think about these 4 empathy-raising exercises. Then think if you can try one of the first three for a day or two.

- 1 Limit your household's water use to two gallons per day, per person. This includes water for cooking, washing, showers, baths, flushing, drinking, brushing teeth, watering plants, etc. I would suggest measuring out the allotted amounts into buckets or bottles and checking flow rates for the toilet and shower. Keep track of how much you use for each activity.
- 2 Eat only one meal a day (or divide the amount of one meal into two or three portions for smaller meals). The foods should be locally grown and something you can prepare in one frying pan. No store-bought condiments or dressings; no eating in restaurants. Because this exercise is designed to experience genuine hunger without endangering health. Supplements and medications are allowed.
- 3 Limit your household use of electricity to two hours daily. Refrigerators and freezers are exempt. You may also augment lighting with battery-powered lanterns, even though many displaced persons may not have these things.
- 4 Wear the same clothing or outfit for a full week.

Please understand that this exercise is designed primarily to develop an understanding of and empathy for people who are living under different circumstances and with much less. A typical U.S. household has a carbon footprint (CF) of 48 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent/year. If you wish to calculate your household's CF, CAC member, Joanna Welch, recommends the World Wildlife Fund's CF calculator which calculates her CF to be at 5.61 tons/year. Congratulations Joanna on your climate efforts. Did this exercise encourage more discussion in your family or friends group? Were you able to do any of the four suggestions, and if so, for how long?

For the second option, CAC is hosting or co-sponsoring two climate related webinars which are scheduled for March. Please join CAC on Wednesday, **March 2**, 7-8 p.m., the for a special webinar presentation with Julie Neander and Maggie Gainer entitled "What We Can Do to Reduce Food Waste: CA Food Waste Reduction Laws" followed by a Q&A. Please join us for this free event at <https://huuf.org/home-2/upcoming-events/engagement/>. The impetus behind this presentation is SB 1383 which became effective in January. Various sections of SB 1383 or California's Short-Lived Pollutant Reduction Law aim to reduce the production of short-lived but very potent greenhouse gasses, such as methane from landfills, and seek to address food insecurity issues in the state.

Julie Neander, a long time Fellowship member, has recently retired from Environmental Services with the City of Arcata. Maggie Gainer is a co-founder of and consultant/trainer for Zero Waste Humboldt. Both have considerable experience working on local and state issues of waste reduction and resource sustainability.

On Monday, **March 7** at 7 p.m., CAC is a co-sponsor for the March 350 Humboldt Speakers Series talk entitled "Public Banks for Community Needs" with David Cobb. David is the Humboldt County and North Coast Regional Director of The California Public Banking Alliance, the Director of Cooperation Humboldt, and the 2004 Green Party candidate for President. David will describe how public banks function to keep our tax dollars working locally to meet community needs. Examples include backing climate change mitigation and adaptation measures and financing housing weatherization in disadvantaged communities. In addition, he will highlight provisions of AB 857, the Public Banking Act of 2019, that provide a pathway for cities, counties, and joint powers authorities to start public banks. Look for the zoom connection for this free event in the Friday Weeklies of March 4 and 11.

For additional information on Dr. Andrea Tuttle's talk on "Climate Action from the UN (COP26) Perspective" at our February 20 service, we have another opportunity to hear from Dr. Tuttle on Monday, **March 14**, at noon at the

free online OLLI brown bag lunch program. From her NGO participation at COP26 last fall, Dr. Tuttle will share both an overview of how countries of the world arrived at the pledges that were made at COP26 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and how far countries must go to deliver the pledges that were made. Although retired, Dr. Tuttle continues to be actively focused on understanding the critical relationship between thinking globally and acting locally. You can register for this free event at <https://extended.humboldt.edu/event/un-glasgow-update-negotiations-action>.

Last month, CAC signed on calling on world governments to agree that when they leave the United Nations Environmental Assembly they will negotiate and adopt a legally binding global treaty on plastic pollution that addresses the entire life cycle of plastics, including extraction, production, transport, use, disposal and remediation.

All are welcome to join us for our monthly meetings on the second Sunday of the month. Our next meeting is **March 13**, 1 p.m., at <https://huuf.org/links/>.

Sue Lee Mossman

Playscape update - opportunities for involvement

With the help of crews from Adult Challenge, a residential addiction program, the Playscape is making great progress. Come out and take a look. The sod on the berm and rolling slope is growing nicely. The sprinklers are functional. The slide is now in place, needing only the top piece on the launch platform and the playground chips for the landing. Drains for the playground wood chips are in place. The wood-round staircases are done.

Next steps: 1. Finish the leveling of wood chips fall zone and install wood chips. 2. Construct the climbing wall. 3. Start planting native plants on designated areas of the berm. 4. Install rebar framework for Willow Tunnel. 5. Plant the willow branches that members will harvest.

We will be having a few HUUF work parties shortly. These will be:

- Harvest long thin willow branches following explicit directions
- Plant these willow branches
- Plant the native plants during a garden work party led by Valerie Gazinski
- Attach climbing holds once the climbing wall is completed.



If you are interested in one or more of these activities, contact me at bertijo@humboldt1.com or 707-476-0654. Let me know what you are interested in and times available. Weekend times for me would be Saturday or Sunday afternoons. If you could help mid-week, let me know.

Playscape Project Manager, Berti Welty

What's happening with Building and Grounds

If you have not been to HUUF recently, there are several major improvements and innovations to see.

The walkway has now been completed, with the section from the parking lot to the patio installed. Many thanks to Val Gizinski, with help from Bob Bronkall and Rick Marshall, for supervising this project. The entire walkway throughout the grounds is now ADA compliant and accessible for wheelchairs and other wheeled vehicles, as well as feet that will stay dry.

The skylights have been replaced, and one of the gas furnaces has been replaced with a heat pump, which you can see outside the building. The skylights had come to the end of their lifespan. The heat pump is the first step in our effort to decarbonize HUUF by moving from gas to electricity. As we install two more heat pumps, we will build out our solar panel installation so we can generate much or most of our electricity on site. Many thanks to Scott Allen for shepherding both of these projects.

Behind the CARE building **the playscape has taken shape**. It will provide much engagement and delight. Many thanks to Berti Welty for her vision and dedication in making this real – and to Montana Caouette and many others for supporting her in this enormous project.

You can see much of these innovations from outside, so please do come and take a look!

David Marshak



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Deadline information

Deadline for the **April** newsletter issue is Sunday, **March 20** at 5 p.m.
Send committee reports, announcements and articles related to HUUF (email
only) to newsletter@huuf.org.

Many file formats are acceptable, but .doc, .docx, .rtf and text are
preferred, and .pdf and .pages cannot be used. Late submissions are not
accepted without prior approval. Full guidelines at:

<https://tinyurl.com/HUUFNewsGuide>

Stephen Sottong, editor



Playscape