

Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



Farewell

May 2020

When I sit down to write, I first find music that speaks to this moment. I look out the window, take in the details of the clouds, the birds fluttering through the trees. I often light a candle on the altar and invoke the river, Earth, and wise ancestor spirits to be with me, to help me each day live a life of loving kindness, for I have learned I can create nothing alone.

I have been honored to serve as the Director of Religious Education for the past three years. As many of you know, this year began with an unexpected opportunity. I was asked to teach physical education at Jacoby Creek School just three days before the year began. Throughout this year, I have been able to fulfill both roles only with the help of this incredible community. The Board appointed Amy Day in October as my assistant to share many of the administrative responsibilities of the position. Yet within a few short months, she was inspired to step into leadership roles well beyond her official responsibilities. Alanna Reyes, our childcare coordinator, continues to care deeply for our families and lovingly tend to our physical space in this sixth year of working with our community. The teaching staff, OWL facilitators, and the RE committee have shown up consistently with big hearts and generous offerings.

The appreciation I have received for my work here has far surpassed any other community I have contributed to. For that, I am eternally grateful. Your expression of gratitude has allowed me to experience the essential role beloved community plays in fostering spiritual growth in individuals.

In many of the narratives told by mainstream western culture, leaders are often credited for the work of an entire community or movement. Within stories of the environmental or the civil rights movements, leaders like Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks or Rachel Carson are credited with “ending segregation” or “eliminating DDT”, when in actuality, these individuals were surrounded by beloved communities that supported them in becoming transformative leaders. These spiritually mature leaders were able to amplify what they had received, inspiring action and strategically organizing the offerings of awakening voices.

As the Fellowship walks through this profound moment in global history, I humbly invite you to consider the narratives we enact about leadership. How is power and hierarchy still embedded in our organizational structures? In what ways can we restructure our beloved community to further promote shared leadership and sustainability? In what ways do we personally contribute to the mounting health and environmental crises? In what ways do we personally create sustainable, beloved culture within and beyond our Fellowship home?

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A wise elder from our community once defined spiritual maturity as taking complete responsibility for one's own life and the impact it has on our world, while simultaneously acknowledging the seen and unseen forces that shape our daily lives. Greta Thunberg made a conscious choice to begin a *School Strike for Climate*, after her parents and a supportive medical community spent several intense years helping her heal from tortuous bullying. Had her parents ever imagined that giving up their ambitious, successful careers would be one step towards igniting a global youth climate movement? Had they ever dreamed that their parenting choices would help galvanize four million people to co-create the Global Week for Climate action, the largest climate strike in world history. In her memoir, Malena Emman explains they supported Greta's protest, simply because making the plans made her so happy. Even though they didn't want her to skip school and had the power to say no, to stop her, instead they choose to share that power and allow her to decide what was best for her, regardless of prescribed norms and pressures from the established school institution.

This is truly one of the great mysteries of life. We often can not foresee what impact our choices will make. Though we can be certain that our lives do ripple into the currency of our families, our friends, our community.

By the time the newsletter reaches each of you, my tenure as the DRE will have come to a close. I will be stepping into new roles in our community where I will continue to do similar work, supporting youth, families and educators in the transformational work of empowering children. I participated in the fellowship community for nearly ten years before I stepped into the DRE role. I am deeply committed to this land and the communities that are devoted to building healthy, sustainable systems. The relationships with families and elders, teachers and staff, are ones that I will continue to treasure and nurture in whatever capacity that I can as we welcome and support our new DRE in her role of co-leading and co-organizing the next phase of our vibrant youth and family offerings.

May each of you find the right music for this moment.

May you notice the beauty in the wings of the sky and the branches of the wind.

May the light of our chalice connect you to our rivers, earth and wise ancestors.

And may the spirit of love surround you, everywhere, everywhere, you may go.

With love and light,



Therese FitzMaurice

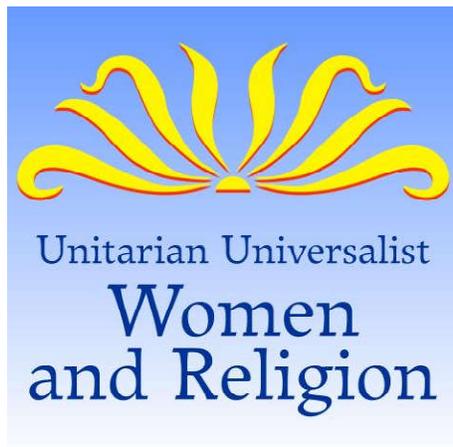
New Director of Religious Education

We are pleased to announce that Suzanne Kimmel has accepted the position of Director of Religious Education at HUUF. This position reports to the Minister. Suzanne will be responsible for the overall growth and development of our RE program. Suzanne graduated from the University of Cincinnati, with a degree in Health Sciences. Prior to accepting this position, she served as Director of Religious Education for the Unitarian Universalists of Petaluma (UUP,) from August 2016-August 2018. She holds Certifications from the California Child Abuse Mandated Reporter program; is a Restorative Justice Conference Facilitator, a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and a Registered Health Information Administrator. She has also served as an Adult Chaplain and Adult Advisor to the Young Religious Unitarian Universalists of the Pacific (YRUUP.) Suzanne is a graduate of the Chaplaincy Institute Interfaith Chaplaincy and Ministry program and is currently a student at Starr King School for the Ministry with an expected graduation date of May 2020.

Suzanne brings experience and a proven track record of success in the Religious Education field, which will be invaluable in meeting our Fellowship RE goals and objectives. I am confident that Suzanne will be an excellent match for this position and a strong asset to our Religious Education program.

Please join me and the DRE Search Committee members; RE Committee co-chair Michelle Hastings, Wendy Rowan and David Marshak in welcoming Suzanne to our Humboldt Unitarian Universalist family.

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson, Berti Welty



Report on the 2020 Women and Religion Retreat

I had the good fortune of getting in under the wire of COVID-19 to attend the 2020 Women and Religion Retreat at Enchanted Hills Camp in Napa, from March 5-8.

The mission of UU Women and Religion is “to free ourselves, others, and the earth from traditional, historical, and contemporary oppressive and patriarchal systems.” As co-founder Rosemary Matson said, “We do not want a piece of the pie. It is still a patriarchal pie. We want to change the recipe!” Our own Beverly Allen, Sue Lee Mossman, Thea Gast, and Marilyn Walker were involved from W & R’s founding and are remembered and revered. In the historical album, I found photos of all four as well as incisive essays by Beverly and Sue. I was, at times, the happy recipient of some of their reflected glory.

This year there were over 50 dynamic women there. Although it was interesting to me to discover how steeped we all are in the UU culture—we know the same songs, we’re used to the same format for meetings and services—still there was widely varied life experience and intriguing depth shared by the individuals.

On arriving, each of us was assigned to an “affinity group” of about five people. This group met for an hour on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings. Thought-provoking questions were prepared ahead of time by the retreat organizers. They were designed to trigger conversation around the theme of the retreat: Navigating Life’s Passages. Friday’s questions addressed early life; Saturday’s addressed midlife; and Sunday’s addressed the end of life and, finally, death. We observed deep listening principles, using a talking stick. This activity was one of the highlights of the retreat for me. It was a chance to get a glimpse into intimate details of each other’s lives. I was honored to get to know these powerful, accomplished, humble women.

There were a number of workshops to choose from. I attended one titled Gender Identity and Expression led by a woman who identifies as queer. Marnie Singer led us through the rapidly evolving experience and vocabulary of the LGBTQ population, providing much-needed education for me.

I also attended a workshop on Shared Leadership, based on Elizabeth Fisher’s book, *The Circle Model of Shared Leadership*. The thrust of the model is to make group meetings more participatory, effective, and lively. I picked up numerous tips from the other members of the workshop that I will apply as a facilitator and participant in Thursday Night Reflections (as well as other groups).

I led a workshop titled Yin and Yang/Feminine and Masculine: Restoring Balance in Our World. It was based on the sermon I gave at HUUF on November 10, 2019. My presentation was well received and generated some stimulating conversation. Two women expressed an interest in my speaking at their Fellowships in the Bay Area. A number of women bought copies of my book, *Laotse, Waldo, and Me*.

Finally, sharing a ride and a room with Joanna Welch and Lydia Johnson was one of the most rewarding aspects of the retreat. Traveling with people is one of the best ways to get to know them and receive their gifts.

The Endowment Fund Committee gave me a grant to attend this retreat. I’m deeply grateful to them and to the Fellowship for this enriching experience.

Margy Emerson

Climate Action Campaign news

You are invited on Wednesday, May 13, from 10:30-11:30 a.m., to attend the free videoconferencing information session on Socially Responsible Investing for Individuals (in a Covid world), presented by Brian Plumley from Edward Jones in Arcata. The presentation will be presented via a videoconferencing platform to be determined (Zoom or WebEx). To register, please email Sue Lee Mossman at syl1@humboldt.edu by May 10.

Thanks to Pat Carr, you may have already received by email info from 350 Humboldt on their Earth Day plans which includes asking people to “Stop the Money Pipeline” i.e., the flow of cash from banks and capital firms to fossil fuel developers. Just since the Paris Climate Accords in 2015, big banks have invested *\$1.9 trillion* in fossil fuels. Many of those banks have local branches e.g., Chase, Wells Fargo, Citi (sponsor of Costco’s popular credit card). Do you have insurance through Liberty Mutual (so does the Keystone XL pipeline), or a credit card through Bank of America (they’ve given \$106 billion in credit to fossil fuel companies)? If you personally manage any investments, you might unknowingly be doing it through Blackrock, which oversees huge investments in fossil fuels and deforestation projects — even as renewable energy outpaces fossil fuels in profit.

Redwood Coast Energy Authority launched a new \$500 rebate program on electric bike purchases for Humboldt County beginning the week of April 20 to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of Earth Day.

John Schaefer is scheduled to present information on low cost battery storage for blackouts via Zoom, tentatively on Wednesday, June 3, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Please email Sue Lee Mossman at syl1@humboldt.edu for more information.

Despite the disappointment of the cancellation of the UU-UNO Intergenerational Seminar on Climate Justice in New York City, a few of our HUUF members were pleased to be able to attend remotely (Allison Bronkall, Sue Lee Mossman, and perhaps others who I may not know about because it’s hard to keep track of UU cats).

Drive 55, drive in the right lane, and keep earth alive.

Sue Lee Mossman

Art

Eve Anderson’s exhibit continues until we are able to gather in our beautiful sanctuary once again. The Art/Aesthetics Committee announces that the next show will begin two weeks after we are back in the building. The “We Are Back” exhibit” will be an all Fellowship, all ages (pre-school through 100 or more) show. We invite you to enter. Make something, while you are sheltered, that can be hung on the wall. Save your work until the entrance day.

You may not call yourself an artist. Yet you may be trying out a craft, fabric project, painting, drawing, photography process (cell phone shot of a stay at home moment) etc. We want you to share these with the rest of our community.

And finally, for a get outside time one can view members work in the “Outdoor Sanctuary” (see Garden installations article) any time. Sunset is magic.

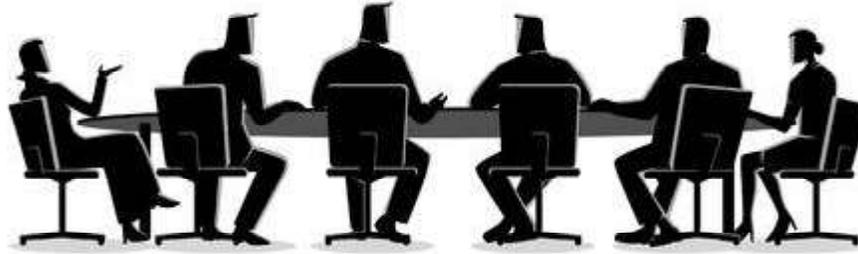
Cheryl Rau



HUUF Board of Trustees confirmed

Thanks to all who participated in the on-line confirmation of the Board nominees. A quorum was reached. The HUUF Board of Trustees as of July 1 will be: Co-presidents: David Marshak and Berti Welty, Vice President: Sally Williams, Treasurer: Rebekah Paez, Secretary: Peter Gillis, Trustees: Caitlin Bair, Debi Cooper, Michele Hasting and Kate McClain. The HUUF Endowment Committee as of July 1 will be: Howard Stauffer, Katherine Almy, & Cynthia Chason.

Berti Welty



May 3 service

'Wholly Families' - Our Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship family consists of many families of varying sizes and kinds. Our Zoom service will feature several of these families as they reflect on the question: "How has this Fellowship and UU values been relevant to you in these times?" Special music will be featured. An all Fellowship community Zoom 'coffee chat' will follow the service.

Berti Welty

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Stephen Sottong

Therese Fitzmaurice leaving her DRE position

Please join me in acknowledging the contributions of our own Therese Fitzmaurice.

She has served as our DRE with compassion and dedication and for this we are more than grateful. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors and our hearts are well and warm because we know that she will remain a part of the HUUF family and community.

Rev. Anthony Johnson

Garden installations - keep them coming

You still have time to plan and install your own creative addition to our impromptu garden 'art show'. Several people/families have already placed their creations in our wonderful Memorial Garden for all to enjoy as we get our exercise in a socially distant manner. To participate: plan and construct something that can be viewed but not touched, and will withstand the elements. Any writing should be big enough to easily read and protected from dampness. Bring it to the Fellowship and place it at one of the flags. Leave the flag there. I will collect it as I photograph your creation. Please let me know that you have placed an installation. If you wish to remain anonymous I won't share your name. However, I need to know in case you need to be contacted.

Will the anonymous creator of the beautiful 'Rise-Up' driftwood creation please notify me? It appears that it was not firmly in the ground and the gophers toppled it. I will provide a solid anchor if you can restore the pile of sticks to its former beauty.

Berti Welty





HUUF future events still planned

The following events are still planned pending lifting of restrictions:

All Fellowship Retreat at Mattole - August 7-9. As we get closer to the date, we will put out the registration forms, assuming it is safe to have the retreat.

Halloween Festival - October 24. Use this 'shelter-in-place' time to plan your 3 minute skits, make your costumes, and make a craft to hand out for your skit. Be creative.

Berti Welty





Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

P.O. Box 506
Bayside, CA 95524

24 Fellowship Way, Bayside (off Jacoby Creek Road)

(707) 822-3793 <http://huuf.org/>

e-mail: office@huuf.org

Administrator: Bridgette Garuti

Monday - Thursday noon - 3 p.m.

Minister: Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson

Monday - Wednesday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

822-3793 minister@huuf.org

Call or email for an appointment.

Director of Religious Education: Therese FitzMaurice

498-3564 t_keslin@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor: Stephen Sottong

newsletter@huuf.org

Board of Trustees:

Co-Presidents Berti Welty

Greg Blomstrom

Vice-President David Marshak

Secretary Peter Gillis

Trustees Kate McClain, Caitlin Bair,

Cathy Hanafi

Treasurer Rebekah Paez

UUA General Assembly goes virtual

Due to Covid-19, the annual Unitarian Universalist Association gathering from June 24-28 will be live streamed. You can attend without having to fly across the country. Registration fees are \$150.00. All participants in General Assembly (GA) programmed events must be registered for the conference. Everyone must also be registered, including program participants, presenters, invited guests, performers, office support staff, relatives, hosts, and dignitaries. This policy is consistent with the UUA principle of equity and avoids arbitrary distinctions.

GA registrants receive access to all workshops, performances, lectures, and events listed in the GA Program. Registrants will have exclusive access to a chatroom, recordings of previous streams, and dedicated support. The Service of the Living Tradition, Synergy Bridging Worship, or Sunday Morning Worship, however, will be open to the public; registration will not be required for these events. For more information contact generalassembly@uua.org.

Berti Welty

CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified ads are 10¢ per word.
Send your check to the HUUF
office and email the text of your ad
to newsletter@huuf.org.

Deadline info

Deadline for the **June** issue of the newsletter is Wednesday, **May 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/HUUFnews>

Stephen Sottong, editor