

Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



“The Spiritual Path(s)”

June 2022

My former teacher and mentor, noted theologian and educator Matthew Fox, offers the Four Paths of Creation Spirituality as a map of the healthy spiritual journey. A true scholar, Fox names these in Latin.

The first is the *Via Positiva*, or the positive way, which sees the universe and all life as fundamentally a blessing. Fox’s seminal work, *Original Blessing*, turns the notion of original sin on its head by noting that the universe had been birthing the wonders and beauty of our interconnected cosmos for billions of years before the first human did something thoughtless or cruel. This path calls us to awaken to this awesome reality, and to the amazement and delight born from being part of it.

Path two is the *Via Negativa*, the negative way. While acknowledging that people sometimes commit horrible acts, negative here doesn’t primarily mean bad, or evil. Rather this path calls us to accept that life contains uncertainty, confusion and sometimes suffering, and counsels us to not run from these but to engage the dark night of the soul when necessary; to enter silence and let it inform us; to let go into emptiness and loss rather than trying to control everything and everyone.

The third path is the *Via Creativa* – the way of creativity and inventiveness, both in nature and humans; of giving birth to art and other forms of beauty, and to better ways of doing things.

These three paths culminate in the *Via Transformativa* – using our creativity in the transformative work of healing and celebration, of justice-making and compassion.

Especially in periods of substantial change, this map can support both individuals and institutions because it helps us locate ourselves on this cyclic journey. And particularly when we find ourselves in a *Via Negativa* phase, it provides assurance by reminding us that this is not the end point, and strength by offering spiritual wisdom – again don’t flee pain or uncertainty but allow these to inform and deepen our souls; and learn to let go. Because even the most positive change inherently entails releasing past and present.

Knowing what is often born from this are greater levels of creativity and compassion also helps us better trust the process. And by locating our lives in a ground of blessing, it reminds us that despite challenges we are part of a world that shimmers with unceasing radiance if we can but tune into it.

I hope this map provides useful touchstones as HUUF walks another stretch of its life journey, one that’s likely to include each of the Four Paths.

Inside

Page 2: Editor *required*

People

RE Calendar

Page 3: RE

Page 4: RE cont.

The Fourth Principle

Page 5: Sunday Services

Art

Page 6: Climate Action news

Monthly Climate Action

Page 7: Sangha Retreat

GA elections

HUUF Retreat

Page 8: Pastoral Care Team

Classified ad

And though they weren’t explicitly named prior to the May 15 Congregational Meeting, in my view all were present in thoughtful, considerate, and productive ways. Assuming this continues — and there’s every indication it will — the future thriving of this Fellowship, including its vital *Via Transformativa* work in congregants’ lives and in the world, is assured.

Many Blessings, now and always...

Rev. Peter Farriday (he/him)

Editor *required*

At the Congregational Meeting, I talked about individuals becoming entrenched in their positions in the Fellowship. That is certainly true of me. I have been associated with the newsletter for 13 years, seven of those as the editor. If the newsletter has become staid and stale, I am a major part of the reason. It's time for new blood.

As with most positions in the congregation, finding a replacement generally requires a crisis, so I will precipitate one: The summer newsletter will be my last as sole editor. If someone does not take the position by August when the September newsletter is due, the newsletter will cease to be. I will happily and unreservedly aid a new editor in transitioning into the position, but I will not continue as the sole editor.

The responsibilities of the editor are:

- 1 Editing *every* article. This includes: selecting articles that relate to the Fellowship; correcting grammar and punctuation; editing content for clarity, redundancy, length and applicability to the Fellowship. The editor has the right and responsibility to cut content when an article is too long and to make wording changes when the article is unclear. The minister is edited gently, generally only for grammar and punctuation. If there is a content problem with the minister, I contact the minister if there is time, and the ministers have been good about submitting early. I do not contact other submitters about edits unless there is ample time.
- 2 The editor lays out the newsletter. The layout software that has been used for at least 25 years (PageMaker) has not been updated in that time and is no longer supported. It is Windows only and will not install on many computer since the advent of Windows 10. Someone with experience in page layout software (e.g. Adobe InDesign, MicroSoft Publisher, Affinity Publisher, Scribus, etc.) is needed for this position. Laying out the newsletter on standard word processing software would be difficult and probably result in a less finished product.
- 3 The finished newsletter is sent to Central Office and posted on the internet. I currently do the internet posting, but that could be done by the office staff. The web version and print version do not have to be identical. In some cases, I have appended content to the web version that I did not consider vital to the print such as photos.

That's basically it. The job takes about twelve hours of work once a month with no newsletter in July. The editor does not have to have been an English major, but it helps if you have writing experience. I will work with anyone who wishes to take on the job.

Stephen Sottong

People

Joseph Strang reported that John and Mickey Strang have passed away, Mickey 12/21/2017 and John 3/17/2022.

RE Calendar

Sunday RE, 11 am:

Please join us, in person, as our dedicated team of Youth Religious Educators continue to offer a multi-age, inclusive and deeply nourishing space for our children to gather while adults enjoy the service time. This month, we'll explore the theme of "Celebrating Blessings" through crafts, songs, stories and outdoor Nature-based activities.

We welcome youth - from infancy to 12-years-old - to join us in this fun, collaborative and curiosity-led space.

June 5 - We'll explore the topic of Blessings, look at how they operate in other cultures, and create Prayer Sticks as a way to carry a reminder of the sacred with us back out into the everyday.

June 12 - As an accessible way to look at Intersectionality and explore the diverse identities we all carry, and that populate our world, youth will weave "Diversity bracelets" to explore this notion with our hands.

June 19 - The blessing of family and friends. Cards and paper art to take home.

June 26 - Please join us for our next all ages Social Action Sunday service:

"Tending the Soil": For those able and willing to join us in person, we will partner with Centro del Pueblo to offer our time and energies at their community garden space - Jardín Santario, on the corner 11th and F in Arcata. Volunteers can expect to put their values into action by weeding, shoveling, unloading compost/wood chips, clearing areas, and harvesting in this important communal space. Check the website for more details and sign-up sheet to follow.

RE

To Our Beloved HUUF Families

“The bud
stands for all things,
even for those things that don’t flower,
for everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing;
though sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness,
to put a hand on its brow
of the flower
and retell it in words and in touch
it is lovely
until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing”
Galway Kinnell

Years ago, I injured my hip while (over)training for a marathon. Rather than the glorious achievement I’d planned for myself, instead, I got to spend the next several years learning how to live with chronic pain and limited mobility. Many hundreds of dollars were spent seeking the help and curative powers of outside experts. People in white lab coats who’d spent years learning the secrets of the human body, and who offered me a whole battery of tests and treatments to try on for size. Folks with niche specialties who could prod my fascia, manipulate my spine, inject me with substances designed to right my ailing body once again. Eventually, after years of trying, I could no longer afford to call upon the saviorism of the experts. I found an app that promoted the curative powers of mindfulness, breathing, pain and brain education, and meditation. “What the hell?,” I thought. What did I have to lose?

And so I began the practice that would eventually restore me to health. I stopped fighting, stopped seeking, and set aside time each day to learn about the processes at work within my being, and observe the pattern of my thoughts, my breath, this broken but resilient skinsuit I’d been blessed with.

At moments of difficulty, I think it’s natural to look outside of ourselves for guidance, to pin our hopes and aspirations on the curative powers of some magical figure just beyond our current view who holds the key to unlocking our understanding and our path to a better future. But what if it is this very thinking that robs us of our agency and power here in the present? What if we stopped waiting for the blessing of a mythic *other*, and learned, in this moment, to practice self-blessing instead?

This month’s Soul Matters packet guides us through a process of writing out a blessing for ourselves and the situations we find ourselves in. I invite you to try it.

- 1 Start by reflecting on where you are right now on your journey and where you need to go.
- 2 Jot down a list of what you think you need to hold on to and remember as you take the next steps of the journey in front of you.
- 3 Read some other blessings for inspiration and structure ideas (e.g. John O’Donohue, Jan Richardson, or Bernadette Miller, etc).
- 4 Put pen to paper or finger to keyboard and get writing.

These are the words that came to me as I sat with the feelings, fears and aspirations I sense within our Fellowship right now:

“*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened ...*”

I remember these words from my childhood

And how I was told, there was always a place for me in the seat of Grace

Should I have need of it

continued on page 4

Look at us now - we, indeed, so very weary, weighed down by sorrows and troubles too innumerable to mention
The weight of so many worlds collapsing on our shoulders
It stifles the breath
And Creation, once so dappled with endless possibility and light
Feels all of a sudden small and dark
Remember the miracle of your own human birth
How marvelous a thing it is to come into this world with senses, intellect, gifts, resources, time, allies
All conspiring on some level to see you rise up and assume your place in the family of things
Remember Grace bears two faces (maybe more)
One that is soft and yielding, tender as the womb
And one that is fierce and hollowing, a storm
Remember that Pele rebuilds the Earth at times by first sending out rivers of lava to incinerate the very ground on
which we stand
Remember the place you inhabit - which now feels so fraught and grand
Is but one tiny spot upon a much larger, cosmic map
Remember you are not the first - nor will you be the last - to wander for a moment in despair
But know that the seat of Grace is open to you
Sometimes, it just means sitting down inside the great, big difficulty
And to remember that God exists in all things
She is waiting in the very breath inside your body, the movement of your heart and hands
To perform her next great miracle
You, too, bear a part in the healing of this world.
yours in grace & gratitude,

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

The Fourth Principle

From the service of the Seven UU Principles.

Being UU leaves us with a terrible responsibility since we have no dogma or holy writ to fall back on with unthinking certainty. Instead, we must search for our truths on our own.

Our 4th Principle: A Free and Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning, embodies this heavy duty we place on ourselves. While freedom leaves us open, responsibility constrains us. Without freedom, the search is pointless; without responsibility, the search is chaotic and can lead to some of the dark places that have plagued religion. We are tasked, not just to examine one set of ideas and principles, but a broad range, always keeping in mind that none will be absolutely complete or perfectly true. While our founding tradition may derive from Christianity, we cannot limit ourselves to it. Other traditions, secular and religious, scientific and philosophical, offer glimpses of a truth we will never fully grasp. However unsettling, uncomfortable and scary it may be, the search never ends. We are not allowed to rest on old certainties. While we should never expect to find absolute truth, we may, if we are patient and diligent, glimpse bits and pieces of it.

This search is not unique to our religious tradition. Many Eastern, native and mystical traditions also call for a search for truth. Ours differs only in the breadth of sources we use in this search.

Our responsibility as a Fellowship, under this principle, is to provide a safe, non-judgmental forum where a diverse group of people can discuss the widest range of topics. Whenever we limit the range of discussion or revert to rote answers, we violate this principle.

Sunday Services

Sunday, June 5 – 11 a.m. – Your One Wild and Precious Life – Rev. Peter Farriday

Mary Oliver closes her poem “The Summer Day” with this query: “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” As we near the cusp of another summer, we’ll explore how responding from our soul’s depths empowers us to both savor the world and give our fullest gifts to it.

Sunday, June 12 – 11 a.m. – Universalism: Past, Present and Powerful – Rev. Kalen Fristad

In the 1960s two distinct religious organizations joined to form the Unitarian Universalist Association. This presentation delves into the origins, history, and the powerful message that Universalism has to approach today’s difficult problems. It is a hopeful message applicable to both Christians and non-Christians.

Rev. Kalen Fristad has been a United Methodist minister for more than 40 years and is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship. He traveled the country full time with his wife, Darlene, from 2003 to 2006 accepting invitations to speak at churches, proclaiming the hopeful message of Universalism. He retired from the parish ministry in 2013 but continues to travel the country speaking on Universalism. Over the years he has spoken at more than 240 UU churches.

Sunday, June 19 – 11 a.m. – The Art of Letting Go – Rev. Peter Farriday

Renowned mythologist Joseph Campbell writes, “You have to strive every minute to get rid of the life you have planned in order to have the life that’s waiting for you,” while 13th- and 14th-century mystic and theologian Meister Eckhart said, “The soul grows by subtraction.” Using these as points of entry, we will explore the spiritual art of letting go.

Sunday, June 26 – 11 a.m. – Tending the Soil – Amy Day

For those able and willing to join us in person for this, our Social Action Sunday initiative, we will partner with Centro del Pueblo to offer our time and energies at its community garden space, Jardín Santario, on the corner 11th and F streets in Arcata.

Volunteers can expect to put their values into action by weeding, shoveling, unloading compost/wood chips, clearing areas, and harvesting in this important communal space. More details and a sign-up sheet will follow.

For those joining us via Zoom, we will team with other beloved UUs nationwide for a live stream of General Assembly’s Sunday morning worship. Featuring Rev. Gretchen Haley, Rev. Sean Neil-Barron and Shari Halliday-Quan as key speakers, this event is sure to inspire and empower. Zoom coffee hour will follow the stream.



Art and Aesthetics

The YoYo effect of COVID has made planning and hanging art shows difficult. And apparently we will soon be under more restricted conditions once again. In light of this Peggy Ho’s work will continue in the the Fellowship Hall for now. Thank you Peggy for continuing to have your beautiful photos here.

We will seek to have a show featuring the work of the children and youth of HUUF later. Mandy Bray has interest in hanging her work. Laura Phelan-Shahin will have a show in September if health regulations allow “and the creeks don’t rise.”

Cheryl Rau

Climate Action Campaign (CAC) news

CAC will join other community climate action groups for Summer in the Redwoods at the Redwood National and State Parks on **June 18**, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. and table at the Kuchel Visitor Center (<https://tinyurl.com/Kuchel-Center>). We will provide information on climate justice related legislation and postage paid stationery so that people can write to their legislators to express their support for climate related issues that recognize inclusion, equity, and diversity. We will also host an art table for families to express their opinions with climate related art.

We thank Pat Carr for his research and for comments below relative to the County Climate Action Plan (CAP). The County CAP was considered at the City Council meetings of Arcata, Eureka, and Fortuna on May 16-18 and continued discussions will occur at future City Council meetings.

The draft CAP is available on the county's website (<https://tinyurl.com/Climate-Plan>). There's no date specified for conclusion of public input except that by August, 2023, environmental review and public hearings are expected to be complete, hopefully leading to CAP adoption.

Here are Pat's comments:

"I reviewed the CAP closely last fall. It was a good document, with strong goals for building electrification (commercial and residential, both new and retrofit), EV adoption (30% of all cars in the county by 2030), improving access to chargers, and alternative transportation like biking and carpooling. The changes made over the past few months have been minor.

One concern I have about the CAP is that the human resource factor is weak. The position of CAP coordinator needs to be buttressed by staff. It's simply too big a job. The cities and county will likely need more staff for building inspections. The county as a whole will need more electricians and solar installers to help with electrification.

I hope that we'll all support the CAP — compared to CAPs in other California counties, it's quite good and lays out the kind of actions our local governments should take. Calling the Board of Supervisors and the city council members of every city is a good way to do that."

Thanks for your continuing and relentless efforts to help protect earth's life support systems, the health of our children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and seven generations ahead.

Sue Y. Lee Mossman

Climate action of the month

For June climate action, the Climate Action Campaign suggests that we write two postcards or letters to Senator Mike McGuire (for address, see <https://huuf.org/cac-climate-action-campaign/>) and ask him to support SB1173 and SB 1230.

SB 1173, the Fossil Fuel Divestment Act, passed off of the Senate Appropriations Suspension File a few days ago and is headed to the Senate floor for a vote. This bill would seize the momentum of the worldwide divestment movement by requiring CalPERS and CalSTRS to divest from the top 200 fossil fuel companies by 2030 and report annually on their progress. Write to Senator Mike McGuire and ask for his support of SB 1173.

As for SB 1230, the Clean Car Equity Bill, here's a sample letter for you to use as is, or for you to personalize (e.g. I am a District 2 voting constituent and I urge you to support etc.):

While California is already leading the nation in clean car sales, we must accelerate our transition to zero emission vehicles (ZEV) if we are to reach our state's 2030 climate goals. SB 1230 will help to do this by addressing two huge barriers to the adoption of ZEVs: cost and availability of charging stations especially in low income communities. This bill puts equity front and center by simplifying financial incentive applications; allowing point-of-sale rebates; and will create good paying jobs that benefit low- and moderate-income communities. SB 1230 is good for the climate, good for the health of our people, and will support more green jobs. Please support SB 1230.

Sincerely,

Your name and contact information.

Sue Lee Mossman

'Living an Awakened Life' Retreat

All are welcome to join the Ancient Forest Sangha for a joyful and nourishing Day of Mindfulness in the Plum Village Tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh. We'll gather on **June 18** from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. for a full day of meditation and mindfulness practices that include a Dharma talk, sitting and walking meditation, lunch in noble silence, and deep relaxation.

The retreat will be led by Alexa Singer-Telles, LMFT, who was ceremonially recognized as a dharma teacher by Thich Nhat Hanh in 2014: "To live an awakened life is to be present with each breath, aware of the simple blessing of being alive. We will invite in the energy of the Buddha to Be Born (Bodhisattva Maitreya) and practice to cultivate our bodhicitta, the heart/mind of love. We will water the seeds of compassion wholeheartedly to benefit all beings."

Part of the day will be held indoors, so we will limit enrollment to provide appropriate spacing. Other Covid precautions: all attending must be fully vaccinated, masks are required when indoors, and all windows will be open (so it may be cool). Bring a vegetarian lunch, water, a cushion if you prefer to use one, and a blanket or yoga mat for total relaxation. Suggested donation for the day is \$30, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds; offerings of 'dana' - generosity - for our teacher will also be invited. If you would like to register, contact me at polkaqueen@gmail.com; 707-825-7446.

Valerie Rose

Elections at General Assembly

At this year's General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, delegates will be given the opportunity to vote on candidates to serve on the UUA Board of Trustees. We, Rebecca Mattis and Beverly Seese, petitioned to be placed on the ballot providing delegates a choice on who will serve as future UU leaders.

Please visit our personal campaign websites, RebeccaMattisUU.Blogspot.com and BeverlySeeseUU.Blogspot.com to learn about our backgrounds and campaign platforms.

We have arranged to hold three Meet the Candidates Townhall meetings on May 25 and June 2. Details can be found on our campaign websites.

Delegate voting opens June 1. We encourage you to become informed voters and live into our Fifth Principle, the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.



HUUF Retreat

2022 is the year that the annual summertime All Ages Fellowship Retreat returns to our beloved community from **August 12-14**, down in the lovely sunshine and river-adjacent space of the Mattole. You can expect songs and workshops and wonderful meals and a visceral reminder that, in accordance with this year's theme, we truly are "Better Together"! In an effort to maintain the health and safety of our community, we ask for proof of vaccination for all eligible participants, and a recent negative covid test. We will limit participants this year to about 50, so please, make sure to register your interest ASAP! You can contact Joanna Welch at jfwelch22@gmail.com and let her know how many in your group would like to participate, or call Bridgette at the office: 707-822-3793.



Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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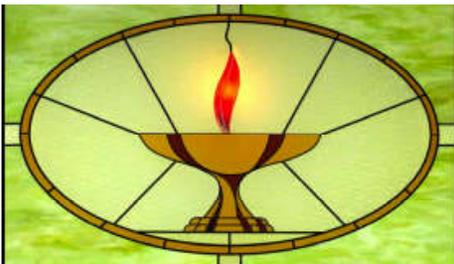
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Pastoral Care Team

The Pastoral Counseling Team is here to help with pastoral support as part the Fellowship's shared ministry. With Peter's departure the team will be Suzanne Kimmel, Tom Lewis, Shawn Nichols, and our administrator, Bridgette Garuti, providing coordination. Over the summer Suzanne will be traveling. Tom has his hands full with several ongoing counseling and ministering responsibilities as well as other charitable projects. So I will be the primary source. If you wish to contact me, please contact Bridgette. A meeting can be set at the Fellowship or where ever it is needed, or by phone if that is preferable. More about the services we offer later. For now the Fellowship's ministry is open for business.

Deadline information

Deadline for the **Summer** newsletter issue is Monday, **June 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>

CLASSIFIED ADS

Seeking petsitter/housesitter. Lotta will be staying home and needs companionship. She's an energetic medium sized cute dog who loves walks, treats, and chasing cats (not in that order). Contact Pat at 707-672-5039.

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

Stephen Sottong, editor