

# Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



October 2022

## Ministerial Relations Committee makes recommendations

The Ministerial Relations Committee (MRC) submitted the following proposal to the HUUF Board of Trustees in July 2022. Below we present our ideas for how to move forward without a minister while supporting HUUF's staff with fair compensation and clear duties during this transitional time. This proposal is slated to be discussed at the October congregational meeting.

Serving on the MRC, we worked closely with Rev. Bryan Jessup and Rev. Anthony Johnson. We learned to view the Fellowship from the perspective of ministry. And it is from that perspective that we make our recommendations and offer our support in this time of transition.

### Recommendations:

1. Encourage HUUF members and friends to participate in the summer series of discussions led by the Program and Worship Committee about the Future of Worship at HUUF. Worship has been the consistent center of congregational life during the pandemic and through the changes in clergy. It is natural for people to come together in small groups to reflect on what spiritual nurturance means to them.

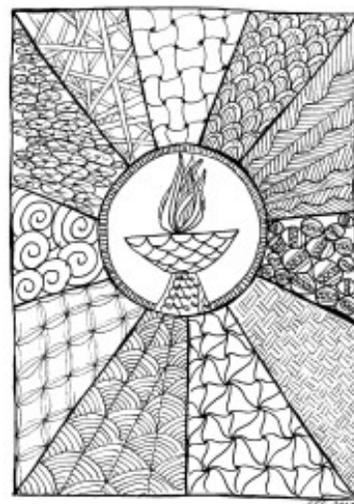
2. Convene the Council of Chairs for a special meeting to decide on whether this body, or which members, could serve as a Transition Leadership Committee (TLC) as recommended by consultant Ursula Bischoff.

2a. The TLC would decide on key issues to be discussed by the congregation in small groups over the next year related to:

congregational mission or purpose (why we exist and who we want to become); what form of ministry is desirable and sustainable; and what organizational structure can sustain and support our purpose and ministry.

3. Covenant with an Interim Ministry Team for the period of 2022-2024. This team would consist of our two religious professionals: Amy Day, Director of Lifetime Religious Education, and Bridgette Garudi, Congregational Administrator, who would provide constancy,

<b>Page 2:</b> Minister (cont.) Future worship
<b>Page 3:</b> Board update People
<b>Page 4:</b> Sunday Services
<b>Page 5:</b> Climate action Leaf cutter bees
<b>Page 6:</b> Climate Action
<b>Page 7:</b> RE
<b>Page 8:</b> RE (cont.)
<b>Page 9:</b> RE (cont.) Gender bias
<b>Page 10:</b> Future worship



*continued on page 2*

coordination, and congregational engagement; as well as a UUA or local religious consultant who would plan and direct “the inclusive and comprehensive process of deep listening, reflection and discovery that will chart a future direction for the congregation” as conceived by the TLC and confirmed by the HUUF board and congregation.

3a. At a congregational meeting next fall, HUUF members would decide on creating a committee to engage in a search process that would result in engaging a minister in August, 2024.

MRC support:

Current MRC members Alison O’Dowd and Bonnie MacGregor will recruit an additional committee member who will join in the supportive activities described below. As they work together during this interim period, they will develop a committee on shared ministry to help sustain ministry at HUUF into the future.

1. Members of the MRC will serve on the TLC to help plan the interim process.
2. The MRC will act as a support committee to the Interim Ministry Team (IMT). They will assure good communication between the IMT, the board, and the TLC and work collaboratively to guide ministry over the course of this interim period.
3. The MRC will assist the board in ensuring that professional staff are fulfilling their contractual agreements and assist in conveying any concerns the IMT may have to the board and the TLC.

*Alison O’Dowd, Bonnie MacGregor, Ministerial Relations Committee*

## Future of Worship discussions

The Program and Worship Committee is happy to report that we had wonderful engagement in the summer Future of Worship discussions. There were six discussion groups at the three services, three in person and three on Zoom. We also posted the discussion questions in the Weekly, the Newsletter, and on HUUF’s website for anyone to respond to by September 10. The good news is that we garnered 22 pages of notes on your comments. We had aspirations to report back to the congregation on the themes and patterns of your feedback in this October newsletter. Alas, that process is taking longer than we had thought, so we will include our report in next month’s newsletter.

Thank you all for your honesty, insights, ideas, and great heart and spirit.

*Bonnie MacGregor for the Program and Worship Committee*

## FINDING ELIM

By Dave Nelson



YOU KNOW, I’M PRETTY SURE WE COULD GET THE MOWER OUT AND MULCH THESE LEAVES RIGHT INTO THE LAWN.

## Board Update

The HUUF Board of Trustees - Debi Cooper, Sally Williams, Rebecca Paez, Sandy Lynn, Cassie Brilbeck, Montana Caoutte and Chris West - met three times between August 30 and September 20.

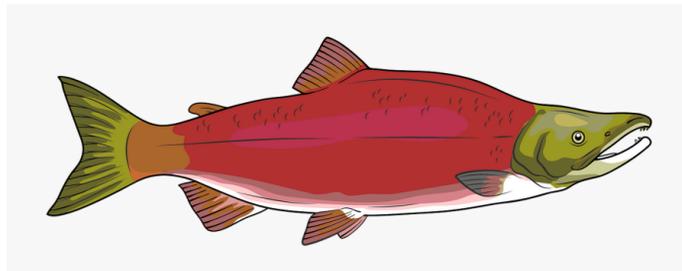
At the special meeting on August 30 board members heard a report from Amy Day and Bridgette Garuti. They expressed their feelings and views regarding job compensation and expectations and communication difficulties. It was strongly suggested that the board be more creative in the way it runs programs. It was pointed out that the lack of a personnel committee or human resource position leads to some of the problems we have been experiencing. The creation of a position for an assistant to the DLRE was approved. The importance of focusing on staff needs was emphasized. We discussed the challenge of funding health insurance for staff, but no solution was agreed upon. Amy Day announced that she will leave her position as DLRE in December.

At the September meeting the board decided to amend the bylaws for a situation in which there are fewer than six board members. Chris Chapin expressed interest in joining the board with emphasis on improving communication between board, staff, and committees. It was noted that the board had already set a policy for a board member to attend staff meetings every other week. The possibility of a staff member attending board meetings was raised, as well as a system to set duty expectations. We discussed the Ministerial Relations Committee's proposal, which includes forming a Transitional Leadership Committee and an Interim Ministry Team as a pathway toward hiring a new minister. It was decided to keep the HUUF honor tax to the Wiyot Tribe at last year's level, and there was discussion about HUUF supporting a Nicaraguan student.

Board members attended a retreat on September 17, and two new board members were approved at the congregational meeting on September 18.

The board meets 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month, and the first 30 minutes is scheduled for open public discussion.

*Sandy Lynn*



## People at HUUF

HUUF member **Alison O'Dowd** received a grant from the California Wildlife Conservation Board to support research into salmonid food webs in the Klamath River. The project seeks to understand the food web dynamics associated with Klamath dam removal by examining the water quality, salmonid food resources and diet in the Klamath River and its tributaries before, during, and after dam removal. Findings will inform management of fisheries and fish food resources associated with future dam removal projects, and will also advance the field of disturbance ecology by documenting the effects of a large-scale 'planned' disturbance.

*Chip Sharpe*

## Climate Action for October

The Environmental Voter Project estimates that over 8 million environmentalists did not vote in the 2020 presidential election and over 12 million skipped the 2018 midterms. Several environmental groups are identifying these non-voting environmentalists and working to convert them into a critical mass of consistent voters that will be too big for politicians to ignore.

- Sierra Club ([sierraclubindependentaction.org](http://sierraclubindependentaction.org)): Make phone calls using a high-tech setup that has been tested and enthusiastically approved by our own Pat Carr. Pat says he talked with dozens of people in a 2-hour session. There's a 45-minute training, a script, and personal assistance.
- Climate Action: Post Cards for Climate ([postcardsforclimate.com](http://postcardsforclimate.com)) They send you the names and addresses and free post cards. You supply the pen and stamp.
- Environmental Voter Project ([environmentalvoter.org](http://environmentalvoter.org)): schedules Zoom sessions for group phone banking. (Their current postcarding campaign is at capacity.)
- 350 Humboldt meets on Zoom every Sunday at 7 p.m. for letter and post card writing. They have a devoted group of participants.

Over 300 of your fellow community activists have been writing post cards under the guidance of Frederica Aalto ([faalto@sitestar.net](mailto:faalto@sitestar.net)). The names and addresses come from Reclaim Our Vote and Flip the West. You can pick up post cards and stamps at cost at several convenient locations.

Only 5 weeks left before the election on November 8. These groups make it easy to channel our energy so we can make a difference.

*Margy Emerson*



## Holey leaves found on Fellowship grounds

Full of native plants, the HUUF grounds are more than just a beautiful place. If you have recently looked at the redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*) growing next to the door by the HUUF nursery you may notice the leaves often have circular cut outs in them. These are made by native leaf cutter bees (*Megachile wheeleri*). If you are lucky enough to see them, leaf cutters are about the size of honeybees, with black stripes but more muted yellow coloring. They carry pollen, lots of it, in hairs on the underside of their abdomens. Leaf cutter bees are important pollinators and both native flowering plants and farmers depend on them.

These are solitary bees, lacking hives or any social order. The mother bee carves the leaves to line small openings, often in a tree, but I have found these chambers between shingles at my house. She then deposits a single egg in each chamber that she makes. The mother bee collects pollen to put in the leaf chamber, then closes it up. The developing bee grows within its leafy chamber during the winter and emerges in spring as an adult.

Discovering the leaf cutter bees reminds me of the interdependence of our native insects with native plants, and how we have the opportunity to help both thrive in our gardens.



*Debby Harrison*

# Sunday Services

**Sunday, October 2 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Grace as a Feature of the Known Universe – Ann Kilby**

This service will be a multifaceted, interactive exploration of the experience of Grace (no religion needed) and how we may use these experiences to enhance our capabilities and resilience.

**Sunday, October 9 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Ministerial Possibilities – Berti Welty and Tom Lewis**

This service will focus on the various types of ministries within the Unitarian Universalist Association as well as trends in ministry. Our congregation will be determining what type of ministry best aligns with who we are, our goals and aspirations. This will help the Fellowship be more informed as options are explored.

**Sunday, October 16 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Outreach Possibilities – Marla West and Berti Welty**

April Sousa of the Church of the Joyful Healer will share with the Fellowship community what that church is, its core beliefs, outreach ministries and, more specifically, its Saturday Gathering for the unhoused.

**Sunday, October 23 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Let Service Be Our Prayer – Amy Day**

Please join us for another Social Action Sunday. This will be an opportunity to come together as a beloved community and express our values in sacred service. For those who would like to join us virtually, a separate Zoom space will be hosted for small group gatherings and discussion.

**Sunday, October 30 – 11:00 a.m.**

**Explorations in Poetry – Pat McCutcheon**

Come, come whoever you are, for the Fellowship Poets are back again with new poems from the heart. We, the HUUF Ten, continue to delight in our weekly poetry explorations that began in April 2020. Come on this Sunday morning to snap your fingers in appreciation.



## Climate Action Campaign news

As we welcome the fall equinox and temperatures begin to drop, it's good to know that Redwood Community Energy Authority's Repower Plus option offers customers 100% renewable electricity, with roughly one third each coming from hydropower, solar, and wind. The average monthly bill is roughly \$10 more than that of PG&E's price. But about 39% of PG&E's electricity is sourced from nuclear. See [redwoodenergy.org](http://redwoodenergy.org) for more information. HUUF is currently enrolled in Repower Plus.

There is some encouraging climate news, thanks to petitions, letters, and phone calls you may have made. About 200 global health groups (e.g. Physicians for Social Responsibility) recently joined the World Health Organization in calling on international governments to agree to a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty: an agreement to end oil, gas, and coal production rapidly, and ensure a just transition to a renewable energy economy.

Louisiana's 19th District Court has reversed that state's decision to issue air permits that Formosa Plastics needed to build a proposed petrochemical complex in St. James Parish.

Governor Newsom recently signed 40 climate bills that include achieving statewide carbon neutrality no later than 2045; establish a setback of 3,200 feet between oil and gas infrastructure and homes, schools, and hospitals; and provide incentives for heat pump installation and purchase of EVs.

Thank you, Joanne McGarry, for making your Bright and Green dishes available to keep solid waste to a minimum at Community United of North Arcata's Welcome to Valley West picnic for Cal Poly Humboldt students. At the picnic, 120 hamburgers were served, along with salads, dessert, and beverages.

As our newsletter goes to press, CAC/HUUF members plan to join local climate groups on Friday, September 23 on the Arcata Plaza to support the "Fridays for the Future" movement started by Greta Thunberg. The event will feature music, speakers, and a march, and we'll be there with our banner and placards, and Stop Wall Street flyers for distribution.

CAC and the Caring Circle are working on plans for carpooling to HUUF Sunday services.

Thank you, Ann Kilby and Bruce Maxwell, for representing CAC at the Halloween Festival planning meeting.

The Board of Supervisors will discuss the proposed Nordic Aquafarm on Wednesday, September 28, 9:00 a.m. at the County Courthouse. Three local groups are appealing the Planning Commission's approval of the project. We expect about an hour of presentations from Nordic and the three appellants followed by a chance for the public to speak, either in-person or on Zoom. After September 26 instructions on joining the meeting on Zoom will be available at: <https://humboldt.legistar.com>.

OLLI presents three free, 90 minute online climate relevant talks at the noon hour on Mondays this month. See <https://extended.humboldt.edu/olli/events/brown-bag-lunch-presentations>. On October 3, "Statewide Ballot Measures in November" includes members of the League of Women Voters. On October 10, it's "Political Engagement Opportunities: Making Your Voice Heard" with Caroline Griffith and Jane Woodward. Griffith serves as executive director of the Northcoast Environmental Center and is passionate about collaboration. And on October 24, check out "Solid Waste Matters: Green Waste and Organics," with Peter Fuller of the Humboldt Waste Management Authority to learn about plans for handling green waste and how our county will meet methane emissions targets as required by law.

Only one climate bill appears on the November statewide ballot. Look for information on why you should vote yes on Proposition 30 in next month's newsletter.

*Sue Lee Mossman*



UU CLIMATE ACTION  
NETWORK

## Religious Exploration

I have lots of conversations these days about “holy math.” This idea that families, classrooms, communities, workplaces, and congregations, work best when we strive towards the “80/20” rule. If people work 80% of the time at their strongest gifts and talents, with the other 20% spent on the necessary nuts-and-bolts work to achieve their aims, we are *all* better for it. Sadly, often that this ratio becomes reversed. We load people with tasks, meetings, requests and to-do’s that fall outside their immediate zone of genius (and optimal service), leaving them scant time and energy for the work that gives value and feeds people’s souls.

During my brief (just under 3 years) term here at HUUF, in collaboration with trusted committee members and volunteers and my beloved Core Team colleague, Bridgette Garuti, I have worked toward the following:

- Creating more opportunities for multi-generational worship and connectivity through spearheading All Ages Services
- Reinvigorated our Social Action work by devising and implementing a fourth Sunday Social Action service, which has also served to create vital connections and relationships with like-minded organizations like the NEC, Cooperation Humboldt, Food for People and others
- Served as a catalyst for the first phase in our Nature-based Playscape
- Provided small group ministry, innovation and informal pastoral care through the Soul Matters groups, Newcomers gatherings and circles, writing groups, Elders’ panels and more
- Originated the role of tech support when Covid began and helped craft the job description
- Nurtured relationships with the larger Interfaith network, promoted our values and amplified our presence in the community
- Provided valuable feedback, structural support and input to a variety of our committees
- Served as a welcoming and pastoral presence to those who enter our doors, or find themselves in Fellowship spaces
- Provided regular, heart-centered communication to the larger congregation
- Offered spiritual companionship and support to previous and existing staff, as well as to congregants seeking support

Beyond this, there exists another longer list related to the work I’ve done specific to RE:

- Re-booting and co-facilitating our OWL program
- Recruiting, hiring, companionship and supporting RE staff to provide rich and meaningful experiences for families
- Conducting 1-on-1 and small-group outreach to reconnect to families and created additional offerings beyond Sunday child care, in response to those exchanges
- Supported our fledgling Teen group
- Overseen and coordinated the Halloween Festival

Looking over this sample of my efforts at HUUF reminds me that my personal “genius”

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in the service of offering, connection, relationship-building, and growth. I do my utmost service to the world when I funnel the majority of my efforts toward building the new and championing and uplifting those working alongside me.

What I am not good at however, is continually battling the old. To unofficially perform many of the duties that would normally be allocated to a professional minister, and yet have to fight for the recognition and compensation that would normally accompany such labor. To extend multiple requests to our lay leaders, asking for the chance to come together and collaboratively imagine and craft new and bold solutions to the challenges that we face, only to be told on multiple occasions that my voice is not welcome inside that space. To ask for a timely resolution on matters related to staffing, compensation, and reasonable division of labor, only to have that request put off, time and again.

Let me be clear: I hold tremendous affection and respect for the individual members of our Board. I know it's hard and often thankless work, and I wish to be your support, ally and champion in that work. But to do that, I must be asked, must be invited to the table where the conversations take place, must be taken up on repeated offers to help craft innovative and holistic solutions to the problems we face. Otherwise, there is no generative path forward.

My experiences, sadly, are not unique. We ask too much of our volunteers. Our staff is routinely asked to give more than is reasonably in accordance with their titles and payscale. Somehow we have managed to craft a system where all are asked to give in a way that is ultimately depleting to them. And such a system cannot last.

During my time here, I have collectively dreamed with many of you of what a system that is regenerative, and not extractive, might look like. Of one that replenishes as much as it takes. There are so many imaginative, creative and innovative ideas we could come together on. We could be leaders in re-envisioning what values-led, sacred community (and work and service and care) looks and feels like, and the impact we can make, from the inside out. And know that I, and the wonderful team of which I am a part, can be a fundamental part of this change.

Eventually, we know what happens when the “holy math” gets reversed. When a person begins to feel like 80% of their energies go to just plugging holes, rather than taking a good, long look at the source of the leak. Scrambling to pull people out of the river, rather than turning one’s attention upstream to where they are being pushed in, in the first place. When the people being tasked with doing the vital and mission-driven work of this Fellowship must jettison their efforts toward repeatedly asking for just compensation or clearer communication, or better systems of support, rather than whole-heartedly and with adequate resources engaging in the work itself. The edges fray. Systems collapse. Individuals like myself and beloved others who have stepped away from us during this past year or so start to wonder if there is a place where their precious human life force can be better put to use. If there exists somewhere beyond this space, a place where the groundswell of prophetic human voices are already coalescing into a pronounced and powerful choir. Where their one,

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small voice is welcome and honored, amplified and harmonized with by the whole, and they no longer need to strain to be heard.

I urge you, Beloved Community, however you collectively decide to move forward. Do not be so quick to put a positive spin on our present state, that you fail to leave room for difficult and uncomfortable truths to be heard. Do not be so firmly attached to old models of leadership that you fail to recognize and affirm the many forms of sacred service, guidance and stewardship that are happening right before your very eyes. Do not cling so tightly to the mythology of a singular, charismatic captain who will come to help us chart this difficult course, when there many wise and spirited sailors already on deck.

May we be more wedded to the possibility of what we might become than we are to the staid imprint of what we have been. Among you, there is a murmuration of wise and discerning voices straining to be heard. I pray you craft the means necessary, and soon, to let their songs take wing.

*Amy Day*



### **Reflection on unexamined gender bias in ministry**

It has bubbled up in me that even we at HUUF may have a case of unexamined gender bias when it comes to how and who we think of as providing ministry.

For all my years (25) at HUUF, the Program and Worship Committee has provided either half or all the Sunday services, every week of the year. And during this time, 95% of the members of Program and Worship have been women and not a one of us has ever been offered a dime for our work. We are volunteers.

In the three years since Bryan Jessup retired, we have had two ministers. Neither served a full year. All the ministry that they could not provide because of their lack of knowledge and understanding of our community and culture and people, and especially because of COVID, was provided by the only people who could provide that on a day to day basis: Amy Day and Bridgette Garuti. Yet we do not call their work ministry and do not pay them anywhere close to what we have paid our 3/4 time ministers at \$75,000 while they were here.

Yes, I know there is true merit in being educated and trained as a minister, but I ask once again, who is ministering to this congregation day in and day out?

Whatever decisions we make going forward together, we will need a team ministering both in the interim one to three years and beyond. Perhaps if we help each other examine our long-enduring cultural bias about what a minister looks like and what they are worth, we will find a way to open ourselves to the divine feminine and allow women to minister in the ways we do best while being shown our worth in societally appropriate ways by compensating us in equal pay for equal work.

*Bonnie MacGregor*

P.S. HUUF has only ever hired one woman minister and she was an interim minister for one year.



# Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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## Future of Worship discussions

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Thank you all for your honesty, insights, ideas, and great heart and spirit.

*Bonnie MacGregor for the Program and Worship Committee*

### 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](mailto:newsletter@huuf.org).

Joanna's Low Sugar Jam: Raspberry, Blueberry, Blackberry, Peach, Ginger Apple Butter, Marmalade, Apple Cardamom, and Vanilla. \$7 each or four for \$25. [jfwelch22@gmail.com](mailto:jfwelch22@gmail.com)

## Deadline Information

Deadline for the October newsletter issue is Tuesday, September 20 at 5 p.m. Send committee reports, announcements and articles related to HUUF (email only) to [newsletter@huuf.org](mailto: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>