

Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



Unwrapping Divine Presence

December 2021

In a supernaturally oriented world, miraculous tales of an angel telling a young woman she'll be the virgin mother of God's son, a star guiding wise men to his birthplace, and heavenly beings announcing this to shepherds, would have been accepted as credible. But the scientific revolution forever changed human perception.

It also gave birth to critical biblical scholarship, and with it the painstaking reexamination of traditional Judeo-Christian narratives. The result is a sharp divide between scholarly conclusions and the beliefs of many Christian churchgoers, particularly those of an Evangelical or related stripe.

For instance, Matthew and Luke, the only gospel writers to include a birth story, totally disagree on how it was Jesus happened to be born in Bethlehem. Because he almost certainly wasn't. The overwhelming academic consensus is that he was born in Nazareth of Galilee. (Hence "Jesus of Nazareth.") The Bethlehem tradition was a later attempt to position Jesus as the anticipated messiah who would arise from King David's lineage, and whose prophesied birthplace would be Bethlehem.

Also while Mary looms large in Christian tradition, she does not in early Christian writings. Before the ninth decade of the Common Era her name appears just once, in a crowd member's shout: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary...?" (Mark 6:3). There's no intimation she was a virgin, or that Jesus' birth was in any way miraculous (<https://tinyurl.com/DecHUUF>). Because it wasn't.

What *was* exceptional about Jesus was his life – one so attuned to divine presence and so full of transformative love that it forever altered many of those who encountered him. Such a life compelled the ancients who tried to communicate its power to later add literary embellishments, feeling this exceptional person should enter human history in an exceptional way.

While Unitarian Universalism grew out of the Judeo-Christian tradition, over the centuries it has become ever more inclusive, and now celebrates this divine presence wherever it's encountered. Clearly Jesus embodied, or "incarnated" that presence, so there is every reason why those who are uplifted by his example should celebrate the transcendent healing power, passion for justice, and egalitarian compassion he displayed.

And whether you are moved by this or other sources, my holiday wish for you (and me!) is that our hearts open more and more fully to this limitless, loving force – the spirit of divine presence that is born in and wants to shine through you.

Happy Holy-days!

Rev. Peter Farriday

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Kitchen use policy proposal

The HUUF kitchen has a rich history serving as a vehicle for our congregation to gather, celebrate, fundraise and, in the past, make food and be of service to the larger community. Sadly, for the last two years, this valuable and useful space has sat largely empty. We have begun receiving requests from outside entities, both small, for-profit entities, as well as non-profit, social justice groups, to utilize our kitchen space on a semi-regular basis.

HUUF's kitchen has the appropriate space and equipment to cook and serve food in quantity. It has never been certified by Humboldt Environmental Health, but has the potential to meet certification. Kitchen use can take two tracks: Either rental to small scale, local food producers, or to provide space on a donation basis in solidarity and support with social justice groups feeding their target population. Slightly different policies would apply to each.

Community groups feeding low-income, special needs and homeless people are seeking quality facilities to prepare food. With HUUF's commitment to devote its resources to humanitarian purposes and to foster cooperation and openness in our community, our kitchen can be of service. This will also provide a direct pathway for HUUF members and friends to be actively involved in Social Action initiatives and volunteerism inside our building once more. Keep in mind, feeding people *is* ministry and there is a big community need for kitchen space.

HUUF members have expressed concerns about the following key issues:

- If income is realized will it have taxation implications? – We have researched this question, and we can operate the kitchen with little or manageable taxation obligations. For details, contact Sylvia Shaw or David Marshak.
- If the space is used more will it impact the equipment? – There will be reasonable wear and tear on some equipment but not all. Some inquiries are strictly for prep space and will have very low equipment use. Users will be given use and care guidelines.
- Do outside community groups preparing food need to get food permit certification? – Yes if it's food for sale they must obtain individual permits that certify the food prep area qualifies. This is their responsibility.
- At some point do we want to consider renting to for-profit food vendors? – Nothing should be off the table. A slow and prudent approach is good. Building rental helps balance HUUF's budget, and strategic and regular rental to a few local for-profit vendors could have significant impact on our bottom line.
- Are there insurance liability issues? – Each outside entity must have insurance that covers their individual liability around producing a food product.
- How will the space calendar and sanitation be managed? – The calendar will be managed through the Administrator, same as other use/rentals. Certain sensibilities will always apply ie: Don't rent the space on Sundays (during service hours) or during other HUUF high need times like Holiday potlucks, etc.
- Do we seek to cover kitchen costs (gas, etc.) with fees to groups or do we consider the costs a donation to the social justice community? – Recommending that we look to what other rentable kitchen spaces charge and developing hourly and day use rates with differentials for for-profit vs non-profit and for sale vs fundraising vs free or community donation (e.g. food for the homeless).

We are seeking congregational approval and support to allow select, small-scale, for-profit food vendors (vetted and approved by our Congregational Administrator and the Kitchen Committee) to rent our kitchen space for occasional food prep needs, with the provisions and considerations listed above. We are also seeking congregational approval and support to allow select non-profit groups (also vetted) on a donation basis for social justice efforts, both independent of our organization and in partnership with us, as specific needs allow.

Please, take some time to consider this proposal and share your thoughts and support. There will be two separate open meetings for discussion of this proposal offered before the final draft of this goes to the Board on December 14:

Monday, December 6 at 1:00 p.m., HUUF Multipurpose Room (in person)

Wednesday, December 8, 6 p.m. on Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/92847364772?pwd=K0YrbVFhQ2V3Tmc3cUhobGw5Q1RSZz09>

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Religious Exploration

To our beloved HUUF families

These words come to us from an interview with Adrienne Maree Brown, by way of this month's Soul Matters packet exploring the topic, "Opening to Joy." In the wake of Kyle Rittenhouse's monstrous acquittal, the past 20 months we've endured (alone and together), and our faith's call to create joy not only ourselves, but also for "the independent web of Life of which we are a part...," these felt like the right ones to share with you all:

"I don't think that everyone has to be doing 100% radical work for the world to change. I *do* think that everyone needs to become mindful of themselves as part of interconnected systems that depend on each other for quality of life and survival. ... You don't have to jump to being an organizer. You *do* have to be aware that if you are not working on solutions for solving society's ills then you're probably participating in creating those ills.

You just have to be awake to the fact that you are in a community, and there are people who rely on and are impacted by the decisions that you make. If you're a taxpayer in the US, then you are responsible for the wars that we're involved in, and the borders that are being erected in your name. You are responsible for people being separated from their children. You are responsible – right? So how can you bring as much joy and contentment and satisfaction to your life and other people's lives as possible? One of the things I feel like I'm often trying to do is to debunk the idea that you have to be a full-time activist in order to be doing anything for the world.

I actually think you have to be a full-time *human* because you have to be paying attention to the fact that you're already connected. You have to stop believing in the lie that if your family is okay then that's enough. ... The level of interconnectedness matters. That when whatever apocalypse is coming comes, it doesn't matter how well your individual family is taken care of.

I lived through 9/11 in New York and, on that day, it didn't matter what your particular address was, where you lived, if your family had tons of food for dinner or not. On that day what mattered was the person to your right and to your left and whether you figure out how to safely move out of the path of danger and figure out how to take care of each other. We're in a world where that is a condition more and more often. What I think we learn from indigenous communities and Palestinian communities and Black communities is that pleasure is a fundamental need. We have to be able to feel what it is we're longing for. We have to be able to feel the light in order to keep going – in order to know that we're getting somewhere."

This month in our RE Classroom:

We'll explore "Opening to Joy" in these ways:

Sunday, December 5, 11 a.m.: Join us in our multi-age classroom where we'll have fun with sensory play, movement and breath. We'll also introduce this month's Chalice song.

Sunday, December 12, 11 a.m.: We'll create handmade ornaments and talk about the different rituals we employ, both culturally and within our family of origin, to make meaning and joy this time of year.

Sunday, December 12, 1-3 p.m.: Teen Coordinator Sabrina Miller, with support from Amy Day, will offer a fun and interactive space for teens to explore. Building off of last month's successful first meeting, we'll bring in games and dialogue, snacks and creative practice, and look at ways to disrupt the cultural messages of consumption and excess this time of year, by crafting rituals of celebration that hold meaning for us. We encourage participants, 12 and older, who wish to join us, to be vaccinated, to encourage safe and celebratory space for all.

Sunday, December 19, 11 a.m.: "Honoring the Dark" – Join us as we journey to the shortest day, the longest night. Inside this All Ages Service, we will bear witness to the necessary beauty of this season, and its mercurial power. We'll honor the holiday of Winter Solstice and invite ways to celebrate and harness this time as we journey once more to the light. Come a little early, at 10:30, if you'd like to join us in making mason jar lanterns that we'll light during the service and you can take home with you after. Please note: No separate RE classes will be offered on this day, but childcare will be available for those two and younger.

Sunday, December 26, 11 a.m.: Join us in your jammies. Berti Welty will be hosting a holiday singalong via Zoom. Bring your coffee and your cocoa and your keyboard or ukulele and let the season ring another day more.

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Kitchen (continued)

You may also send written comments prior to December 11 to: david.marshak@gmail.com. These will be shared with the Board.

Yours in fellowship,

The Kitchen Ministry Team: Sylvia Shaw, Chair; Bridgette Garuti, Lead Strategist, Congregational Administrator, & Rental Coordinator; Amy Day, Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration and Board Liaison; Sabrina Miller, Teen Coordinator and Liaison to Cooperation Humboldt

Religious Exploration (continued)

Through our Fellowship Engagement program:

In Person Soul Matters group: Alison O'Dowd facilitates a drop-in friendly, multi-generational group at HUUF, the second Saturday of each month. This month's group will happen on December 11, 2-4 pm. Childcare is available. Please, let Amy Day know if you need it in advance.

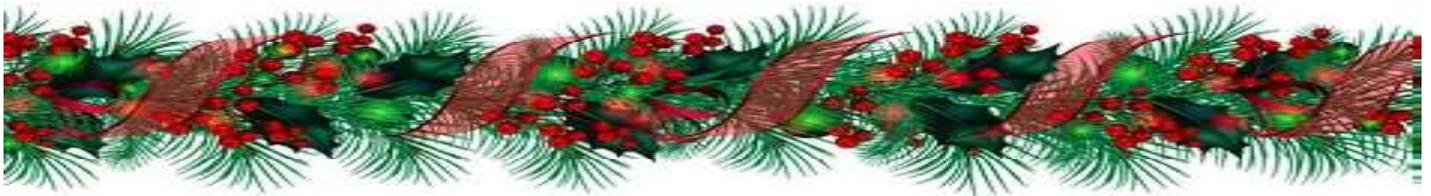
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Again, from Brown:

“Pleasure reminds us to enjoy being alive and on purpose... Pleasure – embodied, connected pleasure – is one of the ways we know when we are free. That we are always free. That we always have the power to co-create the world. Pleasure helps us move through the times that are unfair, through grief and loneliness, through the terror of genocide, or days when the demands are just overwhelming. Pleasure heals the places where our hearts and spirit get wounded. Pleasure reminds us that even in the dark, we are alive. Pleasure is a medicine for the suffering that is absolutely promised in life... Pleasure is the point. Feeling good is not frivolous, it is freedom.”

Yours in grace and gratitude,

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



Climate action of the month

The climate crisis is here. Earth calls each one of us to act. This month, HUUF's climate Action Campaign is asking you to focus on reducing your use of plastics.

- Buy drinks, salad dressings, and condiments in glass bottles or jars and recycle them.
- Bring all the bags you think you'll need when you grocery shop — the large totes and the smaller paper or plastic bags that you're reusing for bulk items.
- Wash and reuse plastic bags. Recycle plastic bags you can't reuse at Safeway or Winco.
- Avoid buying items wrapped in plastic.
- Request paper wrappings at delis and insist that take-out foods be in compostable containers. Bring your own mug and utensils.
- Wherever you shop, request that more items be made available in bulk.
- Avoid buying and washing fleece garments that send microplastics into the watershed. Alternatives are cotton, wool, and down. You can also wash fleece in a GUPPYFRIEND Washing Bag.

Let us know what new behaviors you've adopted and share your additional suggestions with us. Margy Emerson (margaretemerson@att.net) will compile your responses and report in a later newsletter.

Thanks for all that you do.

Cena Marino and Margy Emerson

Sunday Services

Sunday, Dec. 5 – 11 a.m. – The Heart of Happiness – The Rev. Peter Farriday

The Dalai Lama teaches that people have a right to be happy, and that it's good for both oneself and others. Since happiness isn't one-size-fits-all, especially in this hyper-commercialized holiday season, it helps to review some of the forms that happiness can take, and which ones bring the deepest satisfactions.

Sunday, Dec. 12 – 11 a.m. – Finding Joy in the Midst of Suffering – Bonnie MacGregor and Ann Kilby

As we face the inevitable pains in our everyday lives, as we counteract harm and oppression in the world, as we work to save the web of life and people on our planet, how do we not despair? How can we find a joy that sustains our inner vigor and brings us a sense of happiness?

Drawing on a conversation between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in which they discussed these very questions, Worship Leaders Ann Kilby and Bonnie MacGregor will re-enact some of their exchanges as they share their wisdom, humor and spiritual practices.

Sunday, Dec. 19 – 11 a.m. – Honoring the Dark – Amy Day

Join us as we journey to the shortest day and the longest night of the year. Inside this all-ages service, we will bear witness to the necessary beauty of this season and to its mercurial power. We'll honor the holy day of Winter Solstice and invite ways to celebrate and harness this time as we journey once more to the light.

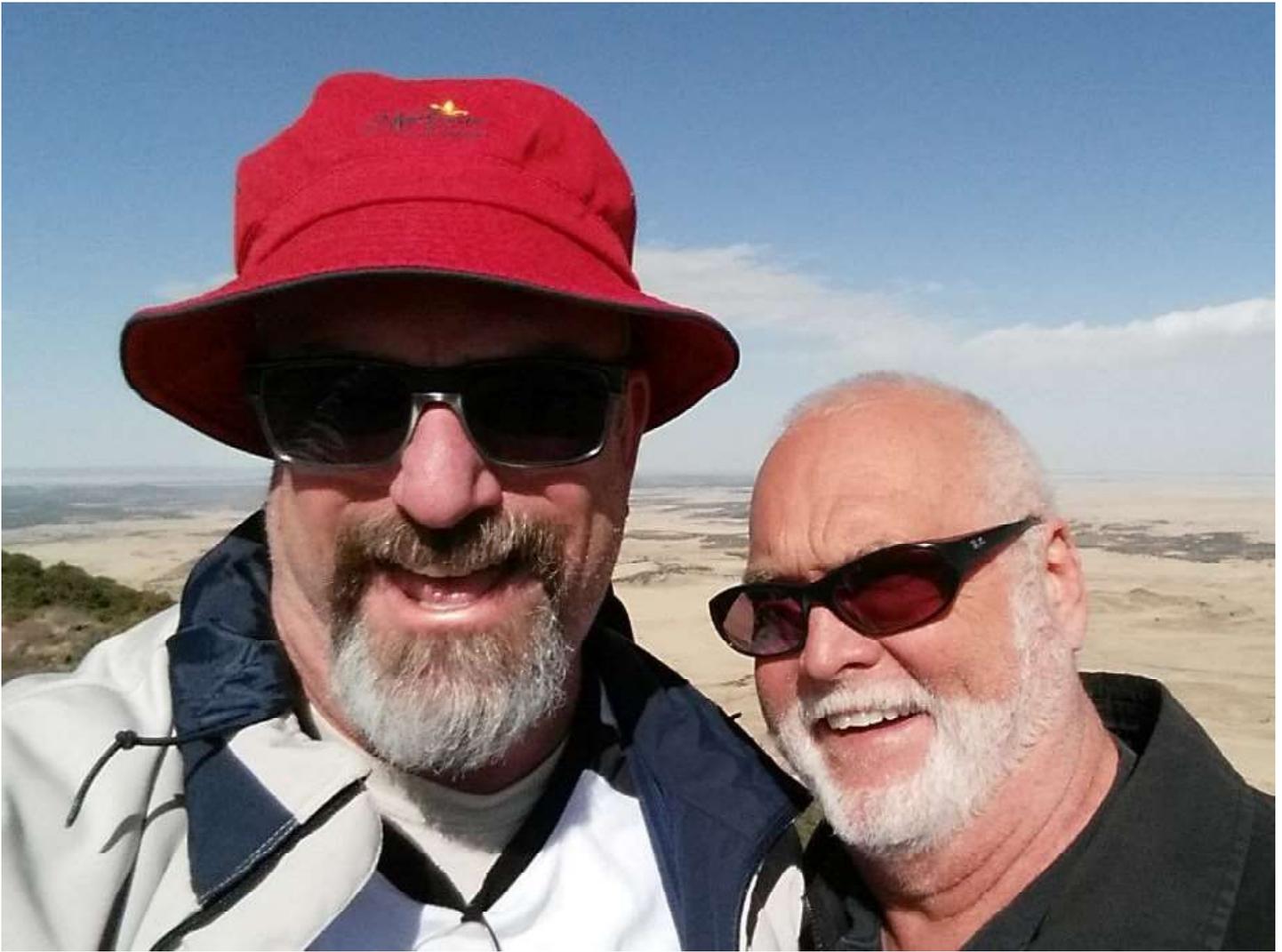
Christmas Eve, Friday, Dec. 24 – 11 a.m. – Unwrapping Divine Presence – The Rev. Peter Farriday

Unitarian Universalists don't consider Jesus to be the Messiah, and they have set aside the mythic legends that attend this theological claim. Yet his enlightened presence was so potent that people can still bathe in the spiritual afterglow through song and celebration, giving and sharing, caring and candlelight. Join us in honoring the spirit of universal love that this great sage embodied.

Sunday, Dec. 26 – 11 a.m. – Sunday Service in Your Jammies – Berti Welty

This informal, Zoom-only service will feature holiday-related musical and story offerings from Fellowship members. There will be opportunities to share about personal holiday experiences and show off zany, beautiful and unique "jammies." Note: There will be no in-person service at the Fellowship.





New members Paul Boisvert and Rick Marshall

Paul and Rick have been UUs for 20 years, beginning in San Luis Obispo in 2001. From there, they moved to Napa in 2008 and the Sierra Foothills in 2014. Last December they moved to the coast and settled in McKinleyville, along with their cats, Mia and Pepper.

Connecting with HUUF has been more of a challenge during COVID than it had been with previous moves, but Paul and Rick have managed to connect locally through the landscape maintenance team, a Soul Matters small group, as well as online book studies (Paul) and the choir (Rick).

Rick is retired from 30+ years in local government service in both Napa and San Luis Obispo counties. Paul is retired from the high-tech field and the non-profit sector where he did administrative management work.

Paul has studied music composition and orchestration, is continuing to compose new works, and has had some of his works performed. Rick is volunteering at Providence St. Joseph Hospital and also sings with the Humboldt Chorale and A Company of Voices.

Since retirement, they have traveled to western Canada, across the southwestern U.S. to Texas and New Orleans. They celebrated their twentieth anniversary with a European adventure including a cruise on the Rhine and the Danube, as well as a side trip to the Highlands of Scotland. They have several “future” trips planned for whenever such things are possible again.

Climate Action Campaign news

In July, the San Francisco Chronicle reported on the contents of the 3200 lbs. of trash collected by volunteers from Bay Area beaches: after cigarette butts (which are mostly plastic), came food wrappers, plastic straws, nets, bottle caps, six-pack rings, plastic bottles, and scraps of Styrofoam and plastic. What wasn't removed probably ended up in the ocean or the bay. Plastic has been called "the new coal" according to a recent Sierra Club report (see tinyurl.com/5wjud9wy). Not only are plastics a fossil fuel problem in terms of production, but the breakdown of plastic also releases tons of carbon emissions (see tinyurl.com/cwpm4dxc). Reducing use of plastics is December's climate action of the month. CAC thanks Margy Emerson and Cena Marino for their article in this newsletter that contains their suggestions for how to reduce plastic waste.

Many thanks to Scott Allen for bringing his own battery-powered leaf blower and his battery-powered mower for the removal of maple leaves and "seed copters" from the sidewalks, the patio, and the deck of our sanctuary building, and grass from the south side drainage ditch. Thank you, Scott for doing that, and doing much of it on Sunday mornings before service. The batteries are charged at his and Susan's grid-tied solar powered home. Scott receives the CAC's award for awesome climate action for helping HUUF begin the move away from the use of fossil fuels and gas-powered equipment. (Scott said he would be happy to let others try out his battery-powered equipment at HUUF and to share what he has learned about moving from gasoline to solar-charged batteries.)

Thanks to everyone who attended the November 6 climate rally to seek global action for climate justice at the Humboldt County Courthouse. CAC thanks Joanna Welch especially for the suggestion of a banner, and Bridgette Garuti, Sylvia Shaw, Margy Emerson, Cena Marino, and Sue Lee Mossman who worked on the wording, design, researching the cost, and finding a banner maker. The CAC banner made its debut at this rally. A photo of some CAC members at the rally was on the front page of the November 7 Times-Standard.

Thank you to Margy and Bridgette for working up a design for twelve 14 x 20 inch signs which can either be carried as singles or as double-sided signs. We thank Laurel Busse for the idea. Thank you, Sylvia, for arranging to get a set of poles made for the banner and sticks produced for the signs.

Our gratitude and appreciation to Ann Kilby and John Schaefer for their inspirational and informative November 14, Sunday service. Through the use of MIT's En-Roads interactive climate simulation game (<https://enroads.climateinteractive.org/scenario.html?v=21.11.0>), we can be informed about the projected effects of specific actions on future global temperatures. This tool can help us decide the individual climate actions we can put our personal efforts into, and prioritize the climate policies we should keep pushing for with our legislators.

COP 26 is over and world leaders failed to acknowledge that fossil fuels are the root cause of our climate crisis. Now it's up to us. We the people have no choice. We cannot give up. We must keep the pressure up on our legislators. Keep contacting them to support climate related initiatives. They need to know how many of their constituents support climate initiatives when negotiating with other legislators. We can also support leaders among our youth and indigenous and frontline communities who are doing the same.

Thank you all for your good energies in the past year on behalf of earth, her life support systems, and our children, grandchildren, and seven generations hence. We have no choice but to keep up our efforts in the new year. In the meantime, for the coming holidays, we in the CAC hope that you and those in your circles of care find moments to rest, be present and enjoy time with friends and family, and find support in our climate related efforts.

Sue Lee Mossman





Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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Law Enforcement Review Board

Police killings of so many people of color across our nation, ongoing tensions between citizens and police, and the publication of derogatory texts by a squad of Eureka Police Officers have elevated interest of Humboldt County communities in the establishment of a Citizens Law Enforcement Review Board, (CLERB). An official, independent CLERB, with subpoena power, that can represent groups in our community who feel ill-treated and ill-served would be a pathway toward understanding, reconciliation, and lasting, effective change. If you have interest in learning more, or in helping to design and establish an effective CLERB, or in championing support for a CLERB within HUUF, please contact Peggy Dickinson at ppotter1931@gmail.com and/or Chip Sharpe at chipsharpe@icloud.com



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Deadline information

Deadline for the **January 2022** issue of the newsletter is Monday, **December 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