

Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



To the beloved community

December 2023

The gift of dark days

In 1959, Pete Seeger penned a little ditty, with help from the Hebrew Old Testament, extolling the wisdom of the seasons. How there is a time for everything. You remember?

*“...A time to be born, a time to die
A time to plant, a time to reap
A time to kill, a time to heal
A time to laugh, a time to weep...”*

Music does a funny thing to a psyche, though: how it makes a lyric itself indelible, forever inked into the terrain where language and melody reside in the mind, while the meaning can often be lost. Did Mr. Seeger do us a disservice by presenting these truths to us wrapped in such a peppy chord scheme? Would the message land a bit deeper had the words been handed to us in the more doleful sounds of a minor key?

In the Northern hemisphere, we’re moving steadily into the dark. The vibrance and fecundity of Nature steadily receding into the Earth. A plant person would tell us that our more-than-human, leafy relations are not dying, rather that the energy is dropping back down into the root system, doing deep work underground in preparation for a glorious spring.

We’re so very enamored of that spring. Too often we forget the necessity of loss that precedes it.

Recently, the Uyeki family held a beautiful Celebration of Life service for their beloved elders, parents and grandparents, Ed and Aiko, who left this world in the last year. We were treated to stories and pictures of a deep and abiding love that eclipsed the pain and ugliness of racism and internment they experienced. But the pain was not glossed over. Instead it was given a place at the table, so to speak. On the back of the program were printed the wise remembrances of Thich Nhat Hanh:

“The Five Remembrances

*I am of the nature to grow old. There is no way to escape growing old.
I am of the nature to have ill-health. There is no way to escape having ill-health.*

*I am of the nature to die. There is no way to escape death.
All that is dear to me and everyone I love are of the nature to change.
There is no way to escape being separated from them.*

*I inherit the results of my actions of body, speech, and mind.
My actions are the ground on which I stand.”*

Motivational author Steven R. Covey tells us that one of the things we need to remember in order to be effective in our labors is to “*Begin with the end in mind.*” One wonders what would happen if we took that to its logical extreme? To clear a space for death, suffering, and loss to have a

See “*Gift of dark days,*” page 2



Hybrid services return

Thank you very much to HUUF members and friends Sara Janus, Barbara Clark, Stephen Sottong, and JoAnn Huffman. These wonderful folks came together to form our Sunday Tech Team. Sara is putting together a user-friendly how-to book for anyone else who can help fill this need within our community. Currently we have three Sundays a month being offered both in-person and on Zoom.

If tech isn't your thing but you enjoy the work of these volunteers and would like to give back while remaining at home, we are also in need of Zoom greeters and facilitators. Members of our tech team fill more roles than you may think and they're open for more to join. Contact connect@huuf.org for questions or comments.

Rebekah Paez, Membership Director

Changes coming from the Unitarian Universalist Association

The Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA's) Article II Study Commission released a final draft last month. Article II of the UUA's Bylaws serves as the foundation for all of the work of the UUA and its member congregations, of which HUUF is one. It is the covenant to which all UU congregations pledge themselves. This final draft will be posted on the bulletin board in the hallway and can be found online at <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission>.

At next year's General Assembly, delegates will have the chance to make changes to this draft with a 75% majority and/or vote on the draft as is. Next year's General Assembly is scheduled for June 20-23, and will be an all-virtual event. Stay tuned for more information.

Rebekah Paez, Membership Director

Funding HUUF's future

The Membership Committee and others have been working hard at raising money for HUUF. In August, we raised \$2,881.50 from our yard sale. Thank you if you made a donation or bought an item. In October, we raised \$1,907 from tickets and donations to our Halloween Festival, *Taking Flight*. We hoped to host a trivia night this month but that has been rescheduled to February 2, 2024. We believe this will be HUUF's first ever 50/50 jackpot style fundraiser. Called "Trivia & Chili: A Fellowship Fundraiser," look for sign ups to bring chili ingredients and perhaps you may want to volunteer to help out as a cashier.

In the meantime, HUUF raises funds through the Offertory at Sunday morning services. We're also stocking up on Equal Exchange chocolate, coffee, and other treats. We will offer tea, pecans, dried mangoes, and even olive oil produced in Palestine. We will also have a bookshelf with various books for sale next to the Equal Exchange cabinet. To help, you can sign up online or in the hallway to be our Sunday Cashier. Contact connect@huuf.org for questions or comments.

HUUF Membership Committee (Jeanne Chapin, Joanna Welch, Nancy Engle, and Rebekah Paez)

Gift of dark days, from page 1

place at the table. Death: not a far-off ephemeral figure to be shunned and avoided, but rather welcomed as a birthright, something that comes to us all regardless of age, status, or virtue.

To do this work of Life grants us the beautiful, agonizing knowledge that all of it is just on loan, and that every glorious and brutal thing we encounter will one day come to an end. Would it change how we show up in this liminal space if we knew that our actions were the only ground we had to stand on in the midst of the ever-shifting terrain of reality? If we knew in our bones it was not for us to determine what part of the song we fell into; how long the time of laughter or weeping or loss would endure? If all we knew was that we had to sing the piece of the song that came to us to play, and play it well, however mournful or jubilant the tone?

In slumber, our bodies repair themselves. In grief, our hearts are broken open to a new depth of tenderness. In the dark, great and mysterious things are taking root. And in the absence of light we are granted new ways to see. May we continue to hone and harness the gifts of this season. May we be awakened to the sacred resonance of the chords we play. And may we use whatever difficulty or heartbreak we encounter to continue to fuel our collective being, the work we are able to show up and do inside this one fleeting and precious world.

Your Shared Ministry Team, Amy Day and Bridgette Garuti



Sunday Services

Sunday, December 3, 2023, 11:00 a.m.

***Wrestling with Mystery* — Josh Charles and Berti Welty**

Following an introduction to the topic, we will separate into small groups. Using our developing skills in deep listening we will discuss the Soul Matters topic for this month, "Mystery." The following questions are offered as possible springboards for conversation: Is there a significant mystery in your life for which you're hoping to find an answer? How has the way you engage with mystery changed as you've grown older? Have there been mysteries that you've solved that you wished you hadn't? How do you handle uncertainty? How does faith play a role in this?

Sunday, December 10, 2023, 11:00 a.m.

***Mystery and the Wonder of Creation* — Josh Charles**

We will hear the story of creation, based on the latest scientific discoveries, from the big bang through the formation of our solar system, the origins of life, and human evolution. We will explore Carl Sagan's famous saying "We are a way for the universe to know itself."

Sunday, December 17, 2023, 11:00 a.m.

***Stone Soup Sunday* — Amy Day**

Bring what you've got and put it in the pot! In partnership with Arcata House, we will use a portion of our time to prepare meals for those experiencing homelessness. We'll send them off with a bubbling and delicious pot of "stone soup" made from ingredients that we bring. Bring an offering of chopped vegetables—from your own garden, farmshare, or neighborhood produce section. We'll share stories and songs, and break bread together: a celebration of what we can create when we bring our blessings and lay them on the altar of service and change.

Sunday, December 24, 2023, Morning Service, 11:00 a.m.

***Christmas and Unitarian Universalism* — Amy Day**

What does it mean to celebrate Christmas as a non-creedal people? These words from the Rev. Clay Nelson speak to our ethos as UUs: "We promote Christmas as a time of beauty, peace, generosity, kindness, family in its broadest sense and, of course, merrymaking. This is why we still celebrate Christmas. It's not really a miracle — we aren't big on miracles. We celebrate because humanity needs it. All of us: Catholics, Protestants, atheists, humanists, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, earth-centred indigenous peoples, pagans and seekers." Come explore ways to observe this lustrous time of year and honor what is sacred to us all.

Sunday, December 24, 2023, Evening Service, 5:00 p.m.

***Celebrating Together: Warm Hearts and Gladness in Sharing Our Blessings*—Ann Kilby and Helpers**

Join our yearly family Christmas Eve/Yule gathering in the Sanctuary, for storytelling, reflecting, renewing our ceremony of the candles, and singing together.

Sunday, December 31, 2023, 11:00 a.m.

***Cider Sunday* — Berti Welty**

As is our tradition, we will enjoy hot milled cider and the goodies people bring to share. Those gathered will be invited to ritually release what they do not wish to carry with them into the New Year and share intentions for the future. Music and humor will be celebrated.,

Children, teen, and family religious education (RE)

Sundays at 11:00 a.m.: Our wonderful RE staff provide meaningful engagement in the form of games, crafts, songs, sharing time, stories and outdoor play to our youth, grades Pre-K-5, during Sunday services. Nursery Care is also available for our babies and toddlers. Bellamy Devine (they/them) continues as our Teen (& Tween) Coordinator. Join us for offerings for the teen and tween set the first and third Sundays of the month.

This month we'll be exploring the topic of "Mystery" as part of our ongoing learning through the Soul Matters curriculum.

HUUF Poetry Corner
November 9, 2016

by Pat McCutcheon

I keep seeing Virginia Woolf
fill the pockets of her dark jacket
with stones, preparing
to walk into the River Ouse.
She could not face what
she knew was coming.
That First War—its mustard gas,
bloody limbs strewn across the trenches,
shell-shocked returnees—
had been too much.
She feared what was to come,
as I do now
for the first time in my life.
The chill in my marrow must be
what she felt before entering the water.

I long to love again
our amber waves of grain,
purple mountains' majesty,
but fear deepens the chill in me.
I want to claim the flag again,
with justice and mercy for all—
for our transgender son and his husband,
my Muslim friend and her family,
their wounded African American son,
my students from Oaxaca, Michoacan,
Guatemala,
our own same-sex marriage.

I will listen, ears and heart open,
to those who voted differently—
my brother's Fundamentalist Evangelical
friends,
that white t-shirted hiking buddy
with his beloved Harley, or
his one hundred year old mother.
I will listen to their anger, fears,
and to my own.
For I yearn to love again
my own broken land.

Notes from the garden

Volunteers in and on the ground

Saturday, November 11 dawned sunny and crisp,
perfect for gardening. Sorry to say, Pat and I were the
only volunteers who attended the work party that day.
Pat raked a mountain of maple leaves from the walkways
between buildings while I weeded the garden by the Care
Building and transplanted California fuchsia into the
sand bed.

A pair of large volunteers were in evidence, but
they were of the botanical kind: silk tassel shrubs. They
wouldn't fit well in the small area where they had grown
and needed to be moved. I hoped to transplant them to
the area around the new heat pump, but realized that
keeping them in control would require more pruning than
our small crew can take on. Instead, we transplanted
them across the property along the west edge and hoped
for the best. At Berti Welty's suggestion, we'll plant a
couple huckleberry shrubs as a screen for the pump and
they should be much easier to maintain.

Our next Grounds Work Party is scheduled for
Saturday, December 9, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We
hope a few more folks can join us.

Valerie Gizinski

Christmas potluck will spread good cheer

Once again Jo and Berti will host a holiday
dinner at the Fellowship. The Christmas potluck will
begin at 2:00 p.m. on Christmas Day. Why go to all the
effort to cook multiple dishes after a busy Christmas
morning? Prepare a dish to share and come dine at the
Fellowship. Jo and Berti will provide roast lamb as a
main course and crab cakes as an appetizer. Everyone
else can bring dishes to fill out the meal. Assistance in
set-up and clean-up will be needed.

An online sign-up will be available on the [HUUF website](http://HUUF.org), HUUF.org, under "Holiday Dinner." This will
show what others are bringing so you can avoid
duplication and we'll have a balanced meal. Earlier sign-
ups have a wider choice of options. Questions? Call or
email Berti Welty, (707) 382-1472;
bertijo@humboldt1.com. If you're up for it, bring your
ringing vocal cords. We hope to have some singing along
with the fine dining.

Berti Welty



Halloween Festival shows off talents, supports OWL

The return of HUUF's Halloween Festival on Saturday, October 28, was viewed by 200 people who followed their Guiding Lights to see 11 skits scattered about HUUF's grounds. Not simply an event celebrating Halloween's mystery, the festival raised funds for HUUF's Our Whole Lives lifespan sexuality education program. Above, Michael Caouette slumbers peacefully as Dorothy in "There's no place like HUUF." Below, the Priestesses of Mabon offer wisdom and treats. Top right Jessalyn DeLucchi sings the merits of having strong bones. Bottom right, Laura Phelan-Shahin tells the story of the Celtic stone goddess, Calliach.



Climate Action Campaign

CAC supports climate plan and funding local transit

HUUF's Climate Action Campaign has recently supported important local climate issues. You may have heard that our county Board of Supervisors have the opportunity to develop a bold Climate Action Plan that would be "qualified," meaning its goal is to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions 40% below 1990 levels (a baseline year) by the year 2030. We've asked HUUF members and friends to contact the Board supporting this plan.

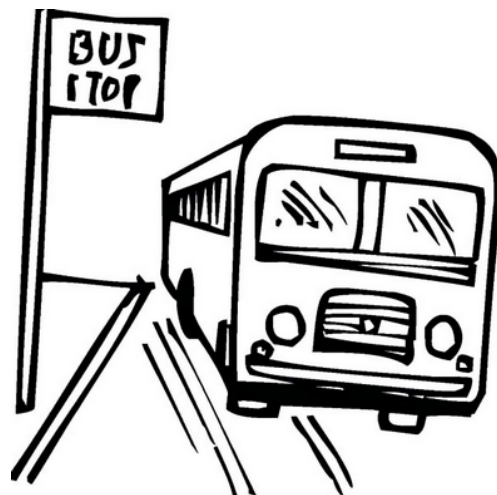
County supervisors are also considering asking voters to decide whether to increase local sales taxes to raise money for road repairs. We and others think such a tax increase, if passed, should also support local public transit, an important way to cut Greenhouse Gas emissions. On both these matters we've had a table outside Sunday Services and asked HUUF members and friends to contact the Board.

Meanwhile, thanks to John Schaefer for taking the lead to arrange a meeting between CAC members and State Senator Mike McGuire before the end of the year. Our goal is to discuss the best path forward for climate legislation on the following issues: expanding California's cap and trade policy so it covers climate damages; legislation that would hold utilities responsible for leakage of methane, a potent Greenhouse Gas; and strategies for reversing the Public Utility Commission's (PUC's) recent ruling that cut incentives for solar panels on apartment buildings and similar structures. The agencies involved, the California Air Resources Board and the PUC, are in the pocket of the utilities and have shown no willingness to take strong oversight over the industries they are supposed to be regulating.

As we go to press, Pat Carr calls our attention to the not-good news from CNN that the world briefly smashed through the two-degree Celsius warming limit for the first time ever.

<https://apple.news/AtPzWkxonTdyUkaNjaFgMNO>

But we must persist! Together, we aspire in the New Year to persist in our efforts against the violence being waged against humanity and Mother Earth. As the New Year approaches, I am grateful to all who are part of our shared ministry to support and care for each other so we can work on behalf of our planet and all life. Thank you all for who you are, for all that you do, and for all that you give. *Sue Lee Mossman, Co-chair*



Playscape gets musical

Thanks to Montana Caouette, Jason Teraoka, Paula Levine, Ed Moeller, and particularly Berti Welty for the addition of musical instruments they recently installed at HUUF's Playscape. The photo to the left shows one of three instruments added to the unique play area.

Special thanks to the Endowment Committee for providing funds for this leg of the project.

HUUF Events

From CUUPS and Soul Matters - Soulstice: Gifts of the Dark

Join Yemaya Kimmel, Bridgette Garuti, and Amy Day on Wednesday, December 20, 6:00-9:00 p.m., to greet and honor the returning of the Light. It will be an evening of song, ritual, candles and creativity. Together we'll weave the synergistic threads of pagan ceremony, hands-on crafting time, plus mindfulness and music into a communal and celebratory experience for all. Bring a small finger-food item or beverage to share at the closing of our time together and a \$5.00 materials fee to help cover the cost of supplies, if you can. No one will be turned away for lack of funds or empty hands.

Food Outreach for Church of the Joyful Healer partnership continues

Our friends at the Church of the Joyful Healer in McKinleyville could use a little help providing food for the unhoused. Each Saturday, they provide bagged lunches, a hot meal, and an assortment of useful goods as part of their [Saturday Outreach Program](http://umc-joyfulhealer.org/saturday-gathering-outreach-ministry.html) (<http://umc-joyfulhealer.org/saturday-gathering-outreach-ministry.html>). On Friday, December 15 at 6:00 p.m. we'll gather at the HUUF kitchen to whip up burritos and sandwiches to be distributed the following day. A wonderful way to continue to live into our Aspiration: "Let service be our prayer."

Contact Amy for more information at comm@huuf.org

Coffeehouse Talent Showcase coming up in January

Do you have a hidden talent or secret skill? Share it with your friends and family at the HUUF Coffeehouse Talent Showcase, coming up Friday, January 12, at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Beer and wine (and non-alcoholic drinks) will be available by donation. Sing a song, tell some jokes, or just be the center of attention for three minutes. Everyone is welcome to perform or just come be entertained and share in the creativity of this wonderful community. Goofiness encouraged. For more information, or to sign up to take part, contact Dennis McGetrick at electricmckgetrick@gmail.com or (826) 898-1158.

HUUF Board notes

New Board member sought

The November 14 HUUF Board meeting began with discussion about the need for a HUUF member to join the Board. With the early departure of Cassie Brillbeck as Treasurer, Cynthi Chason has generously offered to help with the Treasurer's duties short-term, but we still need a sixth Board member to comply with our bylaws. The Board meets only once a month, and anyone who can meet that time requirement and join the Board will have a positive impact. Contact Margy Emerson or Pat McCutcheon if you are interested. We would greatly value your voice and participation.

The Halloween Festival was a great success. Costing around \$400 in materials to put on, it raised \$1907 to support Our Whole Lives (OWL) volunteers, who will be supported with a stipend for their time.

A team is being formed to interview applicants for the positions of HUUF Choir Director and a Community Song Leader. Job descriptions and interview questions are being developed and we hope to have these positions filled by this coming January.

Our next Board get-together is scheduled as an in-person meeting in the Sanctuary on December 12 at 7:00 p.m. The first 30 minutes of every meeting are reserved for HUUF members to bring to the Board and Leadership Team any topics or concerns (or fattening snacks) they wish to share with us.

Chris Chapin, Board Secretary



Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

P.O. Box 506
Bayside, CA 95524

24 Fellowship Way, Bayside (off Jacoby Creek Road) (707) 822-3793 <https://huuf.org/>

e-mail: office@huuf.org

Director of Operations: Bridgette Garuti, on campus Mon.-Wed. 9:30-4:00, Thurs. by email only

email: office@huuf.org

Director of Spiritual Life: Amy Day on campus Tues. and Thurs. email:

comm@huuf.org

Membership Director: Rebekah Paez, on campus Tues. 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday/Friday by appointment

email: Connect@huuf.org

Newsletter Editor: Pat Carr

email: newsletter@huuf.org

Newsletter Proofreader: Stephen Sottong

Board of Trustees:

Co-Presidents: Margy Emerson, Pat McCutcheon

Vice-President: Michael Caouette

Treasurer: Vacant, seeking volunteer

Secretary: Chris Chapin

Trustees: Jason Teraoka, Ann Kilby

WhaleCoast Alaska - A more authentic travel experience

Two unique and exciting tours organized by Unitarian Universalist congregations in Alaska are being offered next summer by WhaleCoast Alaska. Experience majestic scenery, wildlife, Denali National Park, Alaska Native culture, glaciers, and homestays with local UU members. Each tour is organized as a fundraiser for four UU congregations located in Alaska.

For 30 years, WhaleCoast Alaska tours have been the best way to visit Alaska. Register now for this amazing experience! Details: www.WhaleCoastAK.org Questions: whalecoastak@gmail.com



HUUF office closes for the holidays

The HUUF staff will be taking time to relax, retreat, and rejuvenate. We look forward to honoring the dark and being with our families! Beginning December 21, the office will be closed. We will open again to welcome the New Year on January 2.

Happy Holidays!