Humboldt Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



To the Beloved HUUF Community

Enter the Darkness

"*(In my sleep I dreamed this poem)*
Someone I loved once gave me
a box full of darkness.
It took me years to understand
that this, too, was a gift." Mary Oliver

In a world which denies our biorhythms, which decrees we must continue to strive in direct opposition to the mandate which Nature herself is calling us to: the invitation to slow down, to settle, breathe, sleep, to surrender the maniacal cadence of ceaseless productivity and soften to the pace of reflection, peace, and ease. As the days darken and the temperatures drop, we feel the pull to prop ourselves up on artificial stimuli—more sugar, caffeine, alcohol, work, media—whatever our distraction or drug of choice—to keep ourselves moving at the frenetic pace we are told life demands. What if Winter were not an impediment to our continued growth and unfolding, but rather the precise and holy portal we must move through in order to access a deeper level of being? What if the pull to slow down was not an obstacle to be overcome, but a sacred invitation to "*be still and know,"* to practice, in some small part, a bit of Buddha nature? To touch an aspect of Divinity itself, not through strident, concerted effort, but through the aspect of Presence and Grace?



Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith posits that there exists not one, but rather seven types of rest we all need in order to replenish ourselves.

1. The first of these is Physical Rest, which we can access through both actual sleep (a practice out

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Thursday, December 19

CUUPS celebrates a Yule Ritual

Join us as we celebrate the longest night of the year and welcome the return of the light! Our Solstice Spiral Walk is a tradition honoring the changing seasons, renewal, and the light within each of us. Together we will walk a spiral of evergreens, lighting candles along the way. As the spiral gradually fills with light, we are reminded that together we illuminate the darkness. As a community, we will join our voices in song, encouraging the light to return and celebrating the promise of longer, brighter days ahead. All ages and spiritual paths are welcome to join us for this meaningful celebration of nature, community, and hope.

Holli Senn

Christmas Dinner at HUUF

All are invited to a holiday meal on Christmas Day, beginning at 2:00 p.m. We will gather for appetizers by 2:00 and serve the main course, a leg of lamb, soon after. We hope to also have a vegan main dish. This is a potluck, so please bring a dish to share. Why cook many dishes at home when you can cook just one and share it with your Fellowship family?

Berti will want to know in advance whether you are coming and how many people you will bring. And please let her know what dish you will bring for the potluck.

We will need a few people to start set-up at 1:00 p.m., and we will also need a clean-up crew afterwards. Please let Berti know if you are able to help. Anyone

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of which Black Womanist theologian and culture-maker Tricia Hersey has made an entire movement through her work in "The Nap Ministry"), and also other practices of gentle movement, yoga or bodywork.

2. We need Mental Rest, as well, she tells us. Places where we construct moments of mindfulness and presence inside the constructs of our everyday, through acts of reflection or pause.

3. Sensory Rest—where we are invited to dim the lights, silence our notifications and allow our overstimulated nervous systems a reprieve from the inhumane cacophony of modern, digital living.

4. Creative Rest—pausing to sing or throw on a favorite record and dance barefoot in the living room, craft or paint something, or inexpertly pluck a few chords upon an instrument.

5. Emotional Rest is said to be a process of gently reclaiming our agency—maybe we *don't* need to carry *all* the problems of the world, all at once, all the time?

6. Social Rest can come in the form of communion—showing up for the forms of relationship and connection in our world which truly nourish us, prioritizing the bonds which guide and uplift us, rather than break us down.

7. And finally, we land in the quadrant of Spiritual Rest—the ways in which we access purpose, belonging, and meaning. Restoring and recommitting to those habits and rituals which help us drop beneath the surface machinations of a life, and into the pith, heart and belly of the thing.

The Dark—the thing which we are taught to resist and deny in so many aspects of this modern world, but the thing which can offer up so many rich, restorative and regenerative gifts—should we choose to give ourselves to it fully.

Yours in the journey, *Amy Day, Lay Minister*



Holiday ideas for the environment

Christmas is coming, think about:
Gift your family solar panels: roof or field.
Turn off lights in rooms not in use.
Turn off TV, lap tops, computer, phones, heaters, and such when not using.
Limit outside lighting if not needed for safety, even holiday lights overnight.å
Unplug chargers not in use (day or night).
If you can afford it, invest and use electric appliances rather than gas.
Check out hybrid or electric vehicles for a new or used car or truck.
Wrap gifts in plain paper or newsprint, use paper ribbons.
If you have children, let them 'decorate' paper for wrapping with 'potato' stamps or drawings.
Rather than 'things', gift a donation to a cause of your choice in their name.
Give a consumable gift like dried fruits and nuts or cheese, or a farm share membership.
Some New Years resolution ideas:
Save gasoline (reduce our oil consumption) by grouping errands
Updating your vehicle? Think hybrid or electric.
Consider vacationing without flying or taking an ocean liner.
Use public transportation when you can (take a book to read, or your phone).
Cena Marino

Christmas Dinner, from page one

bringing decorations should come by 1:30 p.m., and those bringing appetizers or drinks should come by 1:45 so they can be set up.

This year I hope to find a pianist who can play while we sing Christmas carols. For those who wish to participate, we will have a type of white elephant "gift" exchange which won't involve exchanging actual physical gifts. With this exchange each person who wishes to participate will list a fun activity they would be willing to treat another person to. For example, you could offer to take someone for a walk in the Community Forest, or you could treat them to lunch. This way, people will get the opportunity to make new friends.

Berti would appreciate knowing what you will be bringing and how many are in your party. Email her with subject line: Christmas. We will need the following dishes: vegan main dish, mashed potatoes, dressing, appetizers, green veggies, salad, desserts, bread, beverages. Also let her know if you are able to help with set up and clean up. If you decide at the last minute—just come with a dish to share. Most people label their dishes—omnivore, vegetarian, vegan, and such.

Berti Welty

HUUF Services

Sunday, December 6, 11:00 a.m.
***Chalica,* with Amy Day**

Whether you are a seasoned observer, or brand new to this weeklong, Unitarian Universalist tradition, we invite you to explore the various ways in which we bring meaning, ritual, and reverence to this season. As we explore the history and practices inside many of our beloved winter holy-days, this will be an invitation for each of us to reconnect with the ways in which we imbue the days of winter with the felt sense of the sacred.

Sunday, December 13, 11:00 a.m.
***As the Waters Rise...*with Dot Campbell**

As the waters rise, we invite you to prepare for the next disaster!

We will discuss the value of neighborhoods learning to come together to support each other in good times so that we know and trust each other in times of need. Maggie Gainer will share how the Bayside community is preparing and she will invite us to her next event later the same day, 3:00-4:30 p.m. at Bayside Corners. Elizabeth Mackay of Blue Lake will talk about forming a neighborhood "pod," at which neighbors meet and agree to support each other. Training opportunities and web sites will be available.

Friday, December 19, 5:00 p.m.
***Yule Ritual*, with the Redwood Coast Covenant of UU Pagans**

Join us as we celebrate the longest night of the year and welcome the return of the light! Our Solstice Spiral Walk is a tradition honoring the changing seasons, renewal, and the light within each of us. Together we will walk a spiral of evergreens, lighting candles along the way. As the spiral gradually fills with light, we are reminded that each of us illuminate the darkness. As a community, we will join our voices in song, encouraging the light to return and celebrating the promise of longer, brighter days ahead. All ages and spiritual paths are welcome to join us for this meaningful celebration of nature, community, and hope.

Sunday, December 20, 11:00 a.m.
***Until Looking Becomes Love…* with Amy Day**

These words, taken from a poem and meditation upon the holy practice of reclaiming awe, shall be our guide and invitation for this time together. Join us as we examine the ways in which we may cozy up to the vehicle of wonder and glimpse the presence of the sublime (even inside that which feels supremely ordinary). We may remind ourselves of how a dedicated practice of perceiving the majestic inside the mundane may be a powerful way to accompany ourselves and one another through dark times.

Thursday, December 24, 5:30 p.m.
A Winter Solstice Celebration in Story and Song
With the HUUF Fellowship Choir and Young Singers under the direction of KayRaplenovich

We will share the tale of villagers who closed their gates after the harvest and retreated to the safety of their homes seeking protection from the short days, long nights, and darkness of winter. The fear of what they did not understand, and could not see, prevented the villagers from experiencing the stars in the velvet sky and the joy of gathering in the moonlight. One flamboyant member of the community entices the children to cross their thresholds without fear, wander into the unknown and celebrate the light rising from the darkness.



Eventually, with hesitation, the entire village joins the children with candles and song to celebrate the light. The tale is told through text and song culminating in raised voices of traditional seasonal carols. All are welcome to share in casting the dark aside and welcoming the light.

See Sunday Services, back page, for December 27 service

Climate Action Campaign

The Welcome Table and an EV rebate

As we approach Christmas and the new year, Climate Action Campaign members thank you for whatever you've done to protect our climate in the past year. Thank you for attending public meetings and contacting policymakers at our monthly climate action tabling and at other times.

Thanks to those who attended our November tabling and called administrators at Cal Poly Humboldt asking them to fund evening bus service in Arcata without increasing student fees.

Thank you for raising awareness about reducing waste through your personal commitment to reduction and reuse. (I've received positive comments at Eureka Natural Foods in McKinleyville and at the Arcata Farmers Market for reusing plastic bags and yogurt containers.)

On the topic of waste reduction, thank you to Cena Marino for her article in this issue on reducing holiday waste.

Again, our deepest appreciation to Chip Sharpe, Tom Lewis, and John McAlinn who brave the winter rains, fierce winds, and cold to hold the climate and Black Lives Matter banners every Saturday at the Courthouse in Eureka.

Gratitude to all who contributed time and treasure to donate and deliver climate and environmentally related books to local elementary schools in our area.

December CAC meeting is cancelled

With families visiting for the holidays, our December CAC meeting is cancelled. Please join us for the first CAC meeting of 2027 on Sunday, January 10, at 1:00 p.m. on Zoom. (If you're reading online, Click Here to Join.)

Free screening of *The Welcome Table* and potluck

On Saturday, December 5, at 3:00 p.m., CAC will join the Arcata Presbyterian Church's Earth Care Committee, 350 Humboldt, Centro del Pueblo, and other local groups to sponsor a free screening of *The Welcome Table,* a documentary from Oscar-nominated director Josh Fox. Join us for prescreening remarks by Brenda Pérez of Centro del Pueblo, and a post screening discussion over a potluck dinner. *The Welcome Table* tells the story of climate migrants across six continents, centering the voices and experiences of survivors on the front lines of the climate crisis. You'll find the trailer at https://fb.watch/KOaeb0wULt/

Drive 55, keep Earth alive (or keep 1.5 C alive) and save money too

Despite the climate damaging effects of burning fossil fuels, and the conflict-driven energy market, most people still drive vehicles with internal combustion engines. Doing without our cars is difficult if not impossible for many residents of our rural county. For everyone, our message is to *slow down*. Slowing down to 55 mph can increase your gas mileage by 15%, equivalent to spending 15% less at the pump. Think of it this way: one local station charges $6.45/gallon, but another station charges $5.49. Which would you patronize?

Stop by our monthly climate action table on the third Sunday of the month, and pick up a **Drive 55, Keep Earth Alive** bumper sticker.

And if you drive an EV, remember, EVs are not exempt from the inefficiency of speed. If you drive more slowly, you can go farther on a charge.

Redwood Coast Energy Authority EV Rebate

RCEA has relaunched their rebate program to help customers buy a new or used EV. Approved applicants can receive $1,000 toward the purchase of a new or used EV. RCEA will issue rebates to qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served basis while funding lasts. For more about this program and for rebates on appliances, and other energy related information, see redwoodenergy.org.

COP 31

Although the U.S. officially sat out the United Nation's COP 31 climate talks, Congress sent an unofficial delegation to Antalya, Türkiye, anyway. Following a historic midterm election in which voters resoundingly rejected Trump's agenda, climate activists delivered an open letter in which the following demands were included:

A fair and funded transition away from fossil fuels; just and renewable-powered electrification that brings energy access; and adequate public climate finance.

With hope on the horizon, Emily Dickinson's words are here for us now:

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without words
And never stops at all.

To everyone from CAC, our best wishes for renewed energy, good health, and renewed hope for Earth and her climate and a more equitable and just society in the coming year ahead.

Sue Lee Mossman, co-chair

This month's non-Sunday service events at HUUF

*Some are outside groups meeting at HUUF. You are welcome to attend all. * means there is an article with more details in this issue of the Newsletter.*

December, 2026

Every Wednesday
- 6:45 p.m.: HUUF Choir practice

Every Thursday
- 7:00 p.m.: Reflections, on Zoom
- 7:00 p.m.: Ancient Forest Sangha—Thich Nhat Hanh meditation group

Every Saturday
- Noon to 1:30 p.m.: HUUF for Black Lives Matter at Courthouse

First and third Wednesdays
- 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.: Practicing Community Care, on Zoom

Sunday, December 6, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
Garden of the Heart Sufi Dancing

Wednesday, December 9, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.
Afternoon Open Soul Matters Group

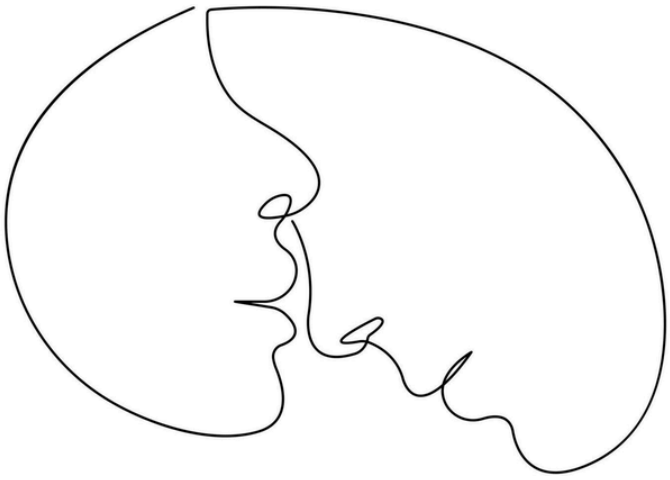
Thursday, December 17, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Evening Open Soul Matters Group

Friday, December 18 , 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.
HUUF Big Sing followed by potluck*

Saturday, December 19, 5:00 p.m.
CUUPS Yule Ritual*

Friday, December 25, 2:00 p.m.
HUUF Christmas Potluck Dinner*

Berti Welty



HUUF Poetry Corner

A Taxonomy of Kisses

Curled in my arms
waddled in a warm blanket
Lips pressed on the wet newborn's face
I love you forever and ever
precious, precious baby of mine

Playing canasta on the living room carpet
Heads close together
each teasing the other
feeling their warm timid breaths
Who would be first to dip into puckered lips?

It wasn't erotic…the kiss
Strangely tender—me half asleep
Tipsy on beer, beach party and sun
Going back to campus
hitchhiked a ride from a stranger

Hours and hours, rolling, stroking
Nibbling lips and thrusting tongues
The music, the wine-
the skin pleading for more

My tears roll down on the cold forehead,
shut eyes, still chest
My lips pressed against a limp cheek
NO! no don't go—my heart stutters
The room already empty

Colleen Broderick

Monk Robes

Monks swathed in carmine robes,
chants echoing through ancient chambers.

Clouds of filmy smoke dance,
escaping from flickering butter lamps,
and washing over Tibetan monastery walls.

Carmine—that deep, smokey, bark-like red,
sprinkle clouds of paprika,
warming the nostrils.
Carmine—the color of OM.

Colleen Broderick

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HUUF Services, *continued from page three*

Sunday, December 27, 11:00 a.m.
Cider Sunday
with Montana Caouette

Cider, cider, cider, rejoice, and be glad. We will make this a special day during which we will share a past significant event in our lives and how it relates to our current spirituality. Cider will be provided, but please bring finger food with a story to share about holiday family traditional foods.

In-person Soul Matters groups

Come one, come many! If you're interested in a daytime Soul Matters meeting, HUUF Lay Minister Amy Day will continue hosting a 90-minute circle, open to all, on the second Wednesday of each month. This month that will be on **Wednesday, December 9, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.** in the Sanctuary.

If evening is more to your liking, join us on the third Thursday of the month, with Doug Carroll and Gigi Collins rotating facilitation each month. You can find them at the far end of the CARE building, in the RE Lounge, on **Thursday, December 17, 7:00-8:30 p.m.** Contact Amy at minister@huuf.org for more information.

Classified Ad

I need an IHSS worker to fill in a few hours per week, ideally someone who can help with organizing, cleaning and cooking. No set hours, as my schedule changes weekly. I have a great worker who is very busy and I need someone to pick up between three to eight hours weekly. I live in Eureka. Any amount of help would be greatly appreciated!

Please contact: Mandy Bray (707) 499-5673 or email me at therealmandybray@gmail.com Thanks!