



THE BFUU COMMUNICATOR

Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists

510-841-4824 office@bfuu.org www.bfuu.org

January 2026



Worship Service Sundays at 10:30 AM

BFUU Fellowship Hall 1924 Cedar St, Berkeley CA & on Zoom

except as noted

reading this offline? please email worshiponline@bfuu.org for link

January 4: Reparations Begins with Us

David Mayer (he/him) and Awele Makeba (she/her)

We will gather as community recognizing the profound injustice of chattel slavery and its enduring legacy of institutional racism. From Reconstruction's unfulfilled promises to today's wealth, housing, education, and health disparities, its impact remains clear nationally and here in Berkeley. Words are not enough; action is required. Though federal reparations may be distant, we can begin real repair now. The journey starts with us.



Photo by Marlis Trio Akbar on Unsplash



Flaming Chalice fabric art by Peg Green

January 11: Universalism is Faith in Action

Gregory Stevens (they/he)

Unitarian Universalism began as a theological commitment to God's all encompassing loving grace. Faithfulness today requires turning ideals of universal love into universal housing, healthcare, education, and so much more. Our theology is proven by the world it helps create.

January 18: You Don't Need a New You — You Need a New Yes

Prince Muraguri (he/him)

January signals a new year but not a new you. We still carry the same fears, doubts, and habits into fresh calendars. This service explores how real change doesn't come from becoming someone else, but from learning to say a new "yes" to God, to courage, and to the next right step even when you're afraid.



January 25: The Theology of JETPIG (Our Shared Values)

Gregory Stevens (they/he)

How do we understand our Unitarian Universalist shared values in a world where billionaires hoard wealth at the expense of the many, where ICE detains and disappears people while tearing apart families, and where fossil fuel lobbyists dominate the UN's biggest climate conference? How do we build a world where our values actually shape society?



Please see [page 2](#) for our shared plate partner information and [page 3](#) for Minister/Speaker bios.



Office: 1606 Bonita Ave Berkeley CA 94709
510-841-4824 office@bfuu.org www.bfuu.org

Clergy & Staff

Reverend Jojo Gabuya, *Pastoral Care Minister*
Reverend Tom McAninley, *Community Minister*
Lynn/Luna Orlando, *Recording Secretary*
Anders Renee, *Office Coordinator*
Sharon Knight, *Event Space Coordinator*
Ed Keating, *Facilities Manager*
Shae Jewell, *Sexton*

Board of Trustees

Margaret Hurlbert, President
Gillian Fynn, Vice President
Mike Gardner
Phoebe Thomas Sorgen
Sumi Hoshiko
Betsy Nachman (Alternate)
Ben Burch, Treasurer/Secretary

Committees

Aesthetics (Subcommittee of B&G)
Chair currently vacant
Building & Grounds Committee
Abbot Foote, Co-Chair
Ben Burch, Co-Chair
Caring Community
Karen Dewald, Chair
Committee on Ministry
Jinky Gardner, Chair
Finance Committee
Ben Burch, Co-Chair
Abbot Foote, Co-Chair
Hospitality Committee
Chair currently vacant
Membership Committee
Jeff Palmer, Convener/Chair
Music Committee
Margaret Hurlbert, Chair
Nominating Committee
Virginia Hollins-Davidson, Chair
Personnel Committee
Ben Burch, Convener/Chair
Poetry Committee
Frances Hillyard, Chair
Religious Education (RE) Committee
Chair currently vacant
Social Justice Committee (SJC)
Chair Phoebe Sorgen
SJM Task Force (Subcom of SJC)
Margaret Hurlbert, Convener
Worship Services Committee
Jeff Palmer, Chair

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in The Communicator are those of individuals and are not necessarily those of BFUU, its officers, or its trustees.

President's Corner

With the support of Board and Committee members I have accepted the role of Board President. I look forward to working with all of you to keep BFUU the vibrant and responsible community it has always been. Many, many thanks to Margaret Hurlbert who has carried so much responsibility as President for three years. Margaret is coaching me in the duties of President! In this season of reflection we can look back on a year where we have said Farewell to cherished old friends, and Welcome to some valued new members. We have also continued BFUU's history of progressive social action, ever more important in the current national crisis. Our worship services have been a stimulating mix of ordained and lay leadership and eclectic music. Here's to another year of Spirituality, Social Justice, and loving Community.

In Fellowship,
Gillian

January Shared Plate Partner

The Berkeley Reparations Coalition

The Berkeley Reparations Coalition is a community coalition of political, civic, and faith leaders that formed after the murder of George Floyd to explore reparations for BUSD students who are descendants of enslaved Americans. At the Coalition's request, BUSD created a Reparations Task Force of BUSD students, family members, staff, and community members. After over a year of public engagement, research, and expert consultation, the Task Force issued its final report in 2024, which was unanimously supported by the School Board. The report recommended that BUSD pursue three types of reparations: a harm report (historical survey of the harm caused by BUSD and its efforts at repair); curricula on the legacy of chattel slavery at the federal, state, and local levels; and educational opportunity grants. The Coalition is supporting the implementation of all three recommendations through education, organizing, and advocacy.

Worship Service Leaders

David Mayer (he/him)

David is Co-Founder of Reparation Generation, an interracial movement of citizens across the U.S. Reparation Generation imagines models of repair and healing, then tests the and evaluates these programs in real time. David was the Co Founder of BeHOME (Berkeley Housing Opportunities for Municipal Employees) a community-based project that supported the creation of work force housing for city employees. This project was a catalyst for the successful establishment of 110 units of educator housing now in construction on San Pablo and Virginia in Berkeley. David runs a small medical device company and lives in Berkeley.

Awele Makeba (she/her)

Awele is a nationally/internationally known actor and storyteller. Known throughout the country for the production of the annual the OUSD, MLK Oratorical Fest, an annual competition which challenges today's students to deliver speeches inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. The MLK Oratorical was featured in the HBO documentary, WE ARE THE DREAM. Awele produces and is often seen in theater productions around the SF Bay Area. Awele volunteers as Reparation Generation's National House Meeting Coordinator, which is a key roll in the Community Engagement and Activtation (CEA) Program. Awele teaches Theater Arts a Skyline High School in Oakland. Awele lives in Oakland.

Gregory Stevens (they/he)

Gregory is a former Baptist preacher, long time labor organizer, and interfaith community activist. They're the lead organizer for the Unitarian Universalist EcoSocialist Network, but by day sell their labor power to California Interfaith Power & Light. Gregory has an MDiv from Claremont School of Theology and an MA in Activist Anthropology from California Institute of Integral Studies.

Hank Pellissier (he/him)

Hank is founder/director of Humanist Mutual Aid Network, a nonprofit working mostly in Africa. He lives in Piedmont with his wife Carol, they raised two bio-daughters, and they're now guardians of a foster refugee girl from Ethiopia, plus Hank has a bio-son (he was the sperm donor to two lesbian friends). Hank is currently a contracted education writer for GreatSchools.org, he was previously managing director for a futurist think tank, the Institute for Ethics & Emerging Technology, and a columnist for Salon.com, SFGate.com, and NYTimes (SF edition) His main interest is wealth distribution/global egalitarianism/poverty alleviation; he just launched a website titled Eat The Rich. He also writes limericks and doggerel, decades ago he was a performance artist and a SF Slam Poetry co-champion.

BFUU in 2025: Year in Review



Betsy Rose, Margaret Hurlbert, Mark MacDonald, and Marjorie Mikels at Sing 4 Justice and Peace



Betsy Nachman, Melissa R, and Gillian Fynn, at the first No Kings march in June

Social Justice

As always, BFUU remains committed to standing up for justice, especially this year! In June the Social Justice Committee hosted a very well attended and informative event to educate the community on how to be effective allies to immigrants. In November, BFUU hosted a benefit concert with Emma's Revolution and raised over \$800 for the Middle East Children's Alliance! Many members have been wearing their yellow BFUU shirts and carrying the purple banner at No Kings marches and other rallies. And who says standing up for justice can't be fun? BFUU members and friends sang for justice peace every other Friday over the summer at a busy intersection in Berkeley.



Left: Hank Pellissier reps BFUU with the purple banner that Gene Herman had made.



Right: Mike Kerr and Phoebe Thomas at the Interfaith Pilgrimage for ceasefire in Gaza

BFUU in 2025: Year in Review

Worship and Music

We had so many amazing services this year! Many speakers were also guest musicians who wove song into their message like Lady Bianca, Lea Morris, Te Martin, and Destiny Muhammad.

Other notable services included the ordination of Rev. Simone Chiodini and a milestone sermon from Theo Kocs-Meyers (pictured right), who preached for the first time in the same hall where he grew up listening to his father, Rev. Ben Meyers. Following the retirement of Rev. Carrie Knowles and the departure of Rev. Ben Meyers for a new role, the Worship Committee embraced creativity. They introduced a variety of new voices, including staff members Anders Renee and Sharon Knight, along with lay-led services celebrating Women's History Month, humor, and the art of poetry.



Above: Virginia Hollins-Davidson, Lady Bianca, and Melissa R

Below: New members Hank Pellissier, Rev. Jojo Gabuya, Damon Guthrie, Gillian Fynn, Sumi Hoshiko, and Joady Guthrie



Right: Berkeley City Council member Igor Tregub and other guests at National Night Out

Community

BFUU continues to find new ways to reach out to the community. In August, we hosted a National Night Out event and met some of our neighbors, including Berkeley city council member Igor Tregub (pictured below). The Membership Committee invited these folks and recent visitors to join for an informal dinner in November.

BFUU also continues to build community through its regular events, like the History Club, Open Mic night and music events.

Sadly, BFUU also lost some beloved members this year: BFUU Poet Laureate Gene "Papa Green" Herman, and choir member Lawrance Philips.



BFUU Sponsored Events



BFUU OPEN MIC

Berkeley Fellowship Monthly Open Mic 3rd Fridays

Friday January 16 at **6:45 PM**

Musicians, Poets, Magicians, Comedians, Storytellers, etc.

Sign-ups begin 6:15. Perform or just come to enjoy! Show time 6:45pm

BYO potluck refreshments (optional) Suggested donation \$10-\$20 No one turned away.

Sponsored by BFUU Social Justice Committee

To get low volume Social Justice announcements/alerts, email: bffuujev-subscribe@lists.riseup.net

Host: **Evelie Delfino Sâles Posch** (she/her) is a sacred song singer/writer; recording artist; drummer; dancer; Tibetan and Kundalini yogini; Pranic healer, Certified Sound Therapist; choral director; storyteller; actress; music educator; independent scholar; and magical activist. She performs with and directs Mahal, a kosmik-ethnik-ekstatik-trance-tribal fusion muzik ensemble.

Featured Artist: **Andrea Prichett** is a Berkeley-based singer songwriter formerly with the feminist folk trio "Rebecca Riots". She is also an activist who weaves together songs and stories that uplifts both the personal and political.

Breathe Move, Play! Interplay with Rev. Jojo

On Zoom: 1st and 3rd Sundays 1pm-2:30

In person: 2nd and 4th Sundays 2pm-3:30 in Fireside Room

Unmute your body. Bring in your creativity. Experience the Joy of Living in the Moment! Refresh your soul and find amusement. Retrieve the Wisdom of your body. Build Community and Strengthen you Connections! \$5-\$15 donations accepted, no one turned away for lack of funds. RSVP by email josefina.gabuya@cst.edu



Freestyle Dance

January 9th, 23rd, 30th 7:30 - 10:00 PM and January 16th at 9 PM in Fellowship Hall

There's no instruction. Our dancing DJs play a wide range of music to get you moving – world, funk, blues, pop, electronic, oldies, and more. Requested donation \$20, no one turned away for lack of funds. Some work-exchange is



Berkeley History Club

Wednesday January 13th, 7 - 9 PM, Potluck dinner at 6 PM in Fellowship Hall

Come build community with people who enjoy conversations around historical topics. For more information write eventpartner@bfuu.org

1st Sundays Writing Group

January 4th at 12:30-2 PM in the Fellowship Hall Lobby

BFUU is sponsoring this free writing group open to word lovers from all levels of experience. Bring pen and paper for writing or a piece that you would like to receive supportive feedback on.

Poetry Corner

Jenin: Lost Item Report

by Frances Hillyard

I lost my house:

In it I had my own room,
It had a lovely garden.
The street next to it was
not all sewage.

I lost my name long ago.

The soldiers would not speak it.
They called me a grass hopper.
Without my name no one
can help me find my home.
No one will recall the name
of a grass hopper's father.

I lost my voice long ago.

I can think I'm shouting Help!
Mercy! I'm innocent! I don't
know what you want!
They stand too far away to hear....
Or are these bullets their reply?

I lost my family album
buried in plaster and stones,
and nine friends
buried in plaster and stones.
I lost my child's red and yellow
ball. He carried it
under fire on his way to school.

I wish I could ask him
what he wants for lunch

Community Voices

New Dance Event: Underbelly

1st and 3rd Mondays 7-9:30pm in Fellowship Hall

Underbelly: The Art of Slowing Down® is a non-verbal somatic experience (through rest and embodied movement) where we reclaim our slow in a fast and overwhelming world. The human nervous system evolved from a world of relative stillness with slow-paced change and intimacy within small tribes. Today, we are bombarded with more information in a single day than our ancestors encountered in a lifetime. This affects our ability to listen, digest, recover, receive, connect, heal and thrive across all dimensions of life.

Join us for a slow, spacious, and regulating practice where we can come down from all the pushing and prescribing and safely rest in our unstructured being without constant intrusion. For schedule and tickets: <https://www.amyrogg.com/schedule--tickets.html>

Payment via Venmo or PayPal accepted at the door.

Winter Retreat 2026
★ Save the date!
Jan 30th – Feb 1st
Mutual Aid is Collective Liberation
Resilience Training, Awareness Renewal,
Music, Caucusing, Altar Building, Eating, Being
**DIVERSE & REVOLUTIONARY
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES**
Register here: bit.ly/dcawinter26
Davis, CA
revkev@druumm.org This project is funded in part by the Fund for Unitarian Universalism

Please spread the word that **The New School** has immediate openings for children aged 2-5 and is also enrolling for next year! The New School is a long-standing Berkeley institution with a play-based curriculum and experienced and nurturing staff. Formerly part of BFUU, they share our yard and buildings, and their continued success is important for us! Working parents will find their hours excellent, and tuition is reasonable. We love seeing the yard full of happy children playing! Please share this information widely with your friends and neighbors! For more info and to arrange a visit: (510) 548-9165 <https://www.newschoolberkeley.org/>

Weekly Meetings

BFUU Choir Practice on Tuesdays at 7:00 PM

Choir members practice songs for worship service and fun! Please contact Margaret at muscom@bfuu.org

Worship Service on Sundays at 10:30 AM

Please contact worshipservices@bfuu.org for committee information.

Monthly Meetings

Board of Trustees Meeting Thursday 1/29 at 3:00pm on Zoom (normally on 4th Thursday)

Social Justice Committee Meeting 3rd Sunday 1/18 after service (noonish)

Please contact Phoebe at sjc@bfuu.org

Worship Service Committee Meeting 1st Wednesday 1/7 at 5:00 PM

Please contact worshipservices@bfuu.org

Regular Committee Meetings

Aesthetics (subcom. of B&G)
Meets as needed

contact [Aesthetics Committee](#)

Buildings & Grounds (B&G)
Meets once per month,
contact [Ben and Abbot](#)

Caring
meets as needed
contact [Karen Dewald](#)

Committee on Ministry
meets as needed
contact [Jinky Gardner](#)

Finance
Meets as needed
contact [Ben and Abbot](#)

Hospitality
meets as needed
contact [Hospitality](#)

Membership
meets as needed
contact [Jeff Palmer](#)

Music
meets as needed
contact [Margaret Hurlbert](#)

Nominating
meets as needed
contact [Virginia Hollins-Davidson](#)

Personnel
Meets as needed
Contact [Ben Burch](#)

Poetry
Meets as needed
contact [Frances Hillyard](#)

Religious Education
Meets as needed
contact [RE Committee](#)

Social Justice Ministry
meets as needed
contact [Margaret Hurlbert](#)

Social Justice (SJC)
3rd Sunday noonish - after service
contact [SJC Chair Phoebe](#)

Worship Services
1st Wednesday at 5:00 PM
contact [WSC Chair Jeff Palmer](#)

Pastoral Care with Rev. Jojo

Pastoral/spiritual care provides soul companioning to any BFUU member/guest care seeker, regardless of age, gender, race/ethnicity, beliefs, status, and other divisive demographics. Soul companioning helps care seekers listen for the spiritual misery they may be experiencing, without changing or compromising their own faith convictions.

Rev. Jojo offers in-person pastoral/spiritual care, either at the care seeker's home or, at the BFUU Minister's Office at 1606 Bonita Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709. For appointments, please call [+1\(209\)-693-8947](tel:+1(209)-693-8947), or email: josefina.gabuya@cst.edu



Fellowship Calendar January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>**Please note the different start time for Open Mic night this month.**</p> <p>We are experimenting with starting earlier to allow for Freestyle Dance to also happen afterwards. Come for the performances, stay for the dance!</p>				<p>1</p> <p>New Year's Day</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>10 am - 4 pm - FH Insight Meditation Offsite Retreat</p>
<p>4</p> <p>10:30 am - FH+Z Worship Service*¹ 12:30 pm - FH Writing Club</p> <p>2:00 pm - Z Interplay</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5:00 pm - CB Joy of Singing</p> <p>7:00 pm - FH Underbelly Dance</p>	<p>6</p> <p>6:30 pm - FH Improper English Dance</p> <p>7:00 pm Choir Practice*¹</p>	<p>7</p> <p>5:00 PM - Z WSC Meeting</p>	<p>8</p> <p>7:00 pm - BR Gurdjieff Group</p>	<p>9 6:30 pm - BR Menopause Wellness</p> <p>7:30pm Freestyle Friday</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11</p> <p>10:30 am - FH+Z Worship Service*¹</p> <p>1:00 pm - FR Interplay 3:00 pm - FH Jinky Gardner's Birthday party</p>	<p>12</p> <p>5:00 pm - CB Joy of Singing</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7:00 pm Choir Practice*¹</p>	<p>14</p> <p>7:00 pm - FH Berkeley History Club</p>	<p>15</p> <p>7:00 pm - BR Gurdjieff Group</p>	<p>16</p> <p>**6:45pm - FH Open Mic Night</p> <p>9:00pm - FH Freestyle Friday</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>18</p> <p>10:30 am - FH+Z Worship Service*¹ 12:30 pm - FH Social Justice Committee</p> <p>2:00 pm - Z Interplay</p>	<p>19 MLK Jr. Day</p> <p>5:00 pm - CB Joy of Singing</p> <p>7:00 pm - FH Underbelly Dance</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7:00 pm Choir Practice*¹</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p>7:00 pm - BR Gurdjieff Group</p>	<p>23</p> <p>7:30pm Freestyle Friday</p>	<p>24</p>
<p>25</p> <p>10:30 am - FH+Z Worship Service*¹</p> <p>1:00 pm - FR Interplay 1:30 pm - FH Indivisible Training</p>	<p>26</p> <p>5:00 pm - CB Joy of Singing</p> <p>6:00 pm - FH David Rovics Concert</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7:00 pm Choir Practice*¹</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p> <p>7:00 pm - BR Gurdjieff Group</p> <p>3:00 pm BFUU Board of Trustees Mtg*</p>	<p>30</p> <p>7:30pm Freestyle Friday</p>	<p>31</p> <p>2:00 pm - FH Uhuru Solidarity</p> <p>7:00 pm - FH Reclaiming Brigid ritual</p>



Elinor Roberts
Jinky Gardner
Marge Turngren

Spiritual Growth and Social Justice in the Heart of Berkeley

Building character, enriching spirits, promoting community, and serving humankind through spiritual growth and social action.

BFUU OFFICE

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 12pm-4pm or by appointment

BFUU OFFICE STAFF

Sharon Knight - Event Space Coordinator
Phone: 510-841-4824, ext. 3
Email: rooms@bfuu.org

Anders Renee - Office Coordinator
Phone: 510-841-4824, ext. 1
Email: office@bfuu.org

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY COMMUNICATOR:

January 21, 2025 at 11:00 AM

Please email office@bfuu.org with submissions.

Address Correction Requested

Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists

1606 Bonita Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94709