



THE BFUU COMMUNICATOR

Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists

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

October 2026



Sunday Services at 11:00 AM

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

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

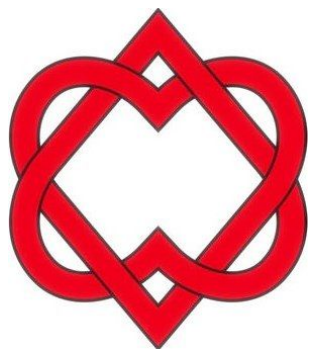
October 4: Berkeley could be Utopia - it just needs 238 policy changes *Hank Pellissier (he/him)*

Let's have a Citizen's Town Hall! Hank will first praise Berkeley's epic history of radical leadership, then he'll urge the mob-fellowship to vote YAY! or NAY! on his fresh list of revolutionary reforms. Wacky. Political. Participatory.

"Imagination is one of our most powerful tools. What we imagine, we can become." - Robin Wall Kimmerer



Image by Dmitrii Vaccinium on Unsplash



October 11: 'The Unified Heart' of Leonard Cohen presented by The Conspiracy of Beards

Through its cracks, the heart is opened and calls for restoration... 'that's how the light gets in.' Through the concept of the *Unified Heart*, Cohen says, "The heart beneath is teaching to the broken heart above, come healing of the body, come healing of the mind."

October 18: Be the Specter You Wish to See in the World *Gregory Stevens (they/he)*

We'll explore a world haunted by capitalism and the socialist movements haunting it back. After all, our liberal religion emerged from the Christian story of Jesus, a revolutionary zombie who rose from the dead to bring all to Life. Together, we'll gather as ghosts, ghouls, zombies, witches, and other gothic troublemakers to ask: What if we are the specter haunting capitalism?



Image by Shaylyn on Unsplash



Image by Melody Zimmerman on Unsplash

October 25: The Unique Challenges of Being a UU During the Holidays

Jim Freschi (he/him) and Jay Roller (he/him)

The Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays are rapidly approaching, and they provide some unique issues for Unitarian Universalists. Jim Freschi and Jay Roller return to BFUU to add a little perspective to this busy season. They'll discuss how to navigate this often hectic and sometimes confusing time with joy and gratitude while also being true to our UU principles.

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

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Virginia Hollins-Davidson, Chair
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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
Sunday 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

Last month I emphasized the necessity for people of Unitarian faith to engage with the political life of our country, in this time, in these circumstances. Today I'm thinking about what brings us joy in the middle of the chaos.

We have strengthened our relationship with The New School. For me it's always such a delight to watch interactions with the children, their teachers, and parents. We now have monthly Activist Potlucks on important issues, and as the community pours in to participate, I feel we are fulfilling an important mission. Our new sound system is now up and running, and we look forward to hosting more musicians and artists.

And, of course, the simple pleasure of our gathering together on Sunday mornings. Our sacred traditions, inspiring and thought-provoking talks, lively music and conversation over lunch.

I am grateful for all of this.

gillian

October Shared Plate Partner

World Food Program

Donate here: <https://donate.wfpusa.org/page/UNWFP>

The World Food Program is the world's largest humanitarian organization saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity, for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of weather extremes. Responding faster, smarter, and more efficiently to reduce hunger during emergencies and help communities build resilience against future shocks.

Sunday Service Leaders

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.

The Conspiracy of Beards

Founded in 2003, the Conspiracy of Beards is a choir of men dedicated to the music and legacy of Leonard Cohen. They have traveled the world bringing the music and wisdom of this Canadian-born, universally embraced artist, poet and interpreter of the human/divine connection. COB is a friend and frequent visitor to BFUU.

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.

Jim Freschi (he/him)

Jim Freschi was born in Southern California and moved to the Bay Area 26-years-ago. He worked in public affairs for publicly-owned water districts and was previously a reporter and editor for small newspapers in the San Joaquin Valley. He now lives in Oakland, has been a member of the Live Oak Unitarian Universalist Fellowship since its founding in 2009, and currently serves as its president.

Social Justice Watch

Beloved BFUU Community,

Our cordial community potlucks are well attended and are evolving to address problems “du jour” and facilitate related effective actions.

Re our Aug program featuring Patricia Ellsberg in person and her late husband, Daniel, in the film “An Ordinary Insanity,” see our handout below on how to **reduce risk from nuclear weapons**, which risk is higher now than ever! Back from the Brink is a fine organization to join in that worthy struggle: <https://preventnuclearwar.org/>. Warheads to Windmills also does very fine work and has presented at BFUU: <https://warheadstowindmills.org/>

Re our program on the 25th anniversary of 9/11, **please call Capitol Hill (800-826-3688) and urge a truly independent investigation**. The official investigation was a sham. Michael also recommended that we urge KPFA to cover alternative views on 9/11: <https://kpfa.org/contact/>

Re the upcoming ELECTION, our Oct. 6 program, organized by Betsy and Gillian, will be enlightening. Meanwhile, a preview: [Find a No Kings: Vote Early event near you on Saturday, October 17](#), a day of action to turn people power into voter power. Help turn out voters early. Help neighbors cast their ballots. Connect folks to local election protection work through Election Day. Voting on Nov. 3 is better than never, but please **VOTE EARLY**. Vote-by-mail early voting begins Oct. 5. Secure ballot drop boxes open Oct 6. Last day to register to vote is Oct 19. Some voters have been purged without being notified, so make sure you are still registered! <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>

Artificial Intelligence will be the topic in Nov. Thanks to the "Hugging Face" autonomous and secretive AI hack, the Anthropic whistleblower Jacob Coxon, and now an Open AI hack of the Australian government, the public and legislators are finally awakening to this grave risk. Coxon agrees with Nobel laureate and AI “Godfather” Geoffrey Hinton that, if superhuman AI is allowed to be developed, it could significantly [threaten human extinction](#), so please **urge your Senators and Rep to co-sponsor the Sanders and Casar bicameral Ban Artificial Superintelligence Act: 800-826-3688**. (Other proposed legislation is thusfar too weak.) An enforceable global treaty is doable and is necessary. Sign up here to be notified of local protests: <https://stoptherace.ai/?ref=explainx>

We are small, and together we are mighty!

For a safe, just, and sustainable world!

Phoebe

Social Justice Watch

How to LESSEN RISK of NUCLEAR APOCALYPSE

Anything we do to get money out of politics is helpful. Weapons manufacturers bribe/donate to electeds.

10 of the worst nuke corporate profiteers:

Northrop Grumman: Major contractor for nuclear weapons systems.

General Dynamics: Significant contracts for nuclear weapons.

Boeing: Involved in the production of nuclear delivery systems.

Lockheed Martin: Engages in various aspects of nuclear weapons production.

Honeywell International: Supplies components for nuclear weapons systems.

Raytheon: Develops missile systems and other military technologies.

BAE Systems: Engaged in defense and aerospace, including nuclear capabilities.

RTX: Involved in advanced technologies for military applications.

AECOM: Provides engineering and construction services for defense projects.

Fluor: Offers project management and construction services for military contracts.

Protesting, boycotting, denouncing etc. those corporations is also helpful. Add Palantir and Black Rock to the list, and Open AI, xAI, Google, Anthropic, Meta, etc.

Join the SF/Bay Area Back from the Brink hub which organizes congressional visits etc:

<https://preventnuclearwar.org/> Meetings 2nd Thursdays 7pm

To get on that list, email Scott Yundt of Tri-Valley CARES: scott@trivalleycares.org

<https://trivalleycares.org/>

Western States Legal Foundation <https://www.wslfweb.org/>

Mayors for Peace Action Toolkit:

<https://www.unitedforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/MAYORS-FOR-PEACE-ACTION-TOOL-KIT-rev.-7-25-26.pdf>

The sharp Damocles sword dangles over us all! How about non-violently occupying corporations, sites, Livermore Lab, and/or complicit politicians' offices?

Raise general awareness and grow the resistance!

BFUU Sponsored Events

DIGNITY FOR ALL ART EXHIBIT & ART BUILD



Photo: Peg Hunter

SUNDAY OCT 11
Berkeley Fellowship of
Unitarian Universalists
1924 Cedar Street
 (at Bonita) Berkeley CA 94709

12:30-1:30pm: ART EXHIBIT OPENING:

See the opening of the exhibit of original artwork from Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity and allies campaigns for dignity and human rights for all--for immigrants and refugees and for communities in Palestine. Art is used as a powerful tool to tell stories, amplify prayer and win positive change. Hear from artist/arts organizer David Solnit, other artists and from Rev Deborah Lee, Co-Executive Director, Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity. This is part of the Berkeley Fellowship's 10 year rotating exhibition called Behold! Be Bold!

1:30-5:30pm: ART BUILD:

Everyone is welcome to join in creating art that will be used on the 2026 Pilgrimage: Becoming Beloved Community (im4humanintegrity.org).

Will be working outdoors.

Please RSVP for Art Build: bit.ly/interfaithartbuild



Sponsored By
 Berkeley Fellowship of
 Unitarian Universalists
 Social Justice Committee

EAST BAY COMMUNITY POTLUCK



Tuesday, October 6th, 7pm



1924 Cedar St., Berkeley

Sponsored By

Humanist
 Mutual Aid
 Network



Illustration by
 Ben Wiseman

ELECTION DEFENSE PROJECTS

We have invited

- Alameda County Registrar of Voters
- Bay Resistance
- Greg Palast and Save Your Vote
- Indivisible East Bay
- League of Women Voters Berkeley Albany Emeryville



<https://bit.ly/4j5b8Nh>

Please use our QR code or link to RSVP and to submit a project we need to hear about. We will make time and/or space for guest submissions.

Good food. Good company. Stronger together.



Community Events

The New School of Berkeley

FALL FESTIVAL

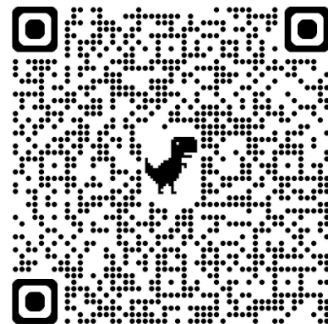
OCTOBER 17, 2026
11AM-2PM

Buy Tickets Here



\$35/adult, \$20/child, 2 &
under free.

Includes food, beverages,
activities & more.



FOOD & DRINKS | KIDS ACTIVITIES
LIVE MUSIC | ARTS & CRAFTS



**New School
of Berkeley**

BFUU Sponsored Events



BFUU OPEN MIC

Berkeley Fellowship Monthly Open Mic 3rd Fridays

Friday October 16th at 7:00 PM

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

Sign-ups begin 6:30. Perform or just come to enjoy! Show time 7:00pm

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: bfuusjev-subscribe@lists.riseup.net



Host: Lady Driftwood (she/her) and her two cents

Featured Artist: Sharon Knight (she/her) and Winter (he/him)

I create in a Celtic inspired folk-rock style I call Neofolk Romantique, and I love to make connections through a shared musical landscape. It's as though we have a portal into a secret garden that only those who share this musical space can access.



Freestyle Dance

October 2nd, 9th, 23rd, 30th 7:30 - 10:00 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 available. **FREE for BFUU Members!**



East Bay Activist Potluck: Defending Elections

October 6th 7:00 - 9:00 PM in Fellowship Hall

How can we help build the VOTER POWER we need to transform our global crises into new opportunities? Bring a dish to share and come hear from effective local organizations. Scan QR code to RSVP or visit here: <https://bit.ly/4j5bBNh>

Rainforest Radicals: The History of Rainforest Action Network

October 18th 4:00 PM in Fellowship Hall [RSVP Here](#)

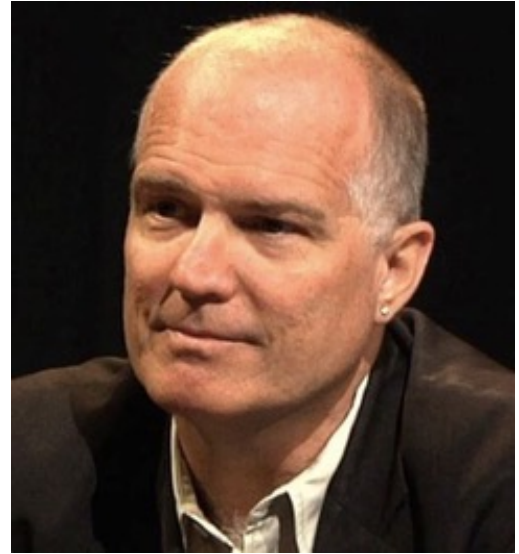
Join us for a panel discussion about how ordinary people can change international systems of corporate and social injustice feat. Prof. David Benac, author of "A History of Rainforest Action Network and Transnational Organizing", and other panelists TBA. The discussion will be moderated by Prof. Robert Buzzanco, co-host of The Green and Red Podcast.

For more than forty years, Rainforest Action Network (RAN) has excelled at using peaceful civil disobedience, local and international organizing, and strategic communications to change the destructive behavior of some of the world's biggest banks and corporations. Many of the strategies pioneered by Rainforest Action Network are used by social and environmental movements today. *Event is co-sponsored by BFUU SJC*

Community Voices

In loving memory of the great David Keith Cobb, SJC friend and mentor

1962 – September 7, 2026



David spoke passionately in our Hall many times, inspiring us to action. As an attorney, he realized that the Citizens United v FEC SCOTUS decision would upend democracy so, back when few people had heard of “corporate personhood,” he founded the Move to Amend Coalition towards ending corporate rule. He ran for President of the US as a Green and, in two elections, jumped through considerable legal hoops to defend US democracy from electoral fraud. The Green Party of California wrote: “David’s vastly generous heart, analytical mind, and optimistic spirit have guided and inspired many... We are all better to have known you and we commit to putting the lessons and wisdom you so generously and unconditionally shared with us towards the future we need and deserve.” His last words to Phoebe shortly before he passed: Onward to the world we deserve! May he rest in peace and may the memory of his example continue to inspire good trouble and bad ass organizing.

Poetry Corner

The wisdom in your heart
springs up like wild
California Poppies
in a field accepting
it’s edge of trees
and guardian mountains
whose steep sides you respect—
perhaps too much.
Look into not to.
Be swayed and know the world
as a poppy knows.

Frances Hillyard

Dear BFUU members,

Beginning this month, I am available to provide pastoral care for members on a part-time basis. If you are going through a difficult time and would like a little extra support, please be in touch with me.

Additionally, I would love to hear any good news you would like to share, or anything you would like me to know about you, your family, or the larger BFUU community. Your questions are welcome as well.

One last thing; I will NEVER under any circumstances send you an email requesting your assistance with money or gift cards. These requests are always scams.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Rev. Bonnie Dlott
revbonnie@bfuu.org

Weekly Meetings

BFUU Choir Practice on Tuesdays at 7:00 PM

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

Sunday Service on Sundays at 11:00 AM

Please contact worshipservices@bfuu.org for committee information.

Monthly Meetings

Board of Trustees Meeting Thursday 10/22 at 3:00pm on Zoom

Social Justice Committee Meeting 3rd Sunday 10/18 after service (noonish)

Please contact Phoebe at sjc@bfuu.org

Sunday Service Committee Meeting 1st Thursday 10/1 at 7:00 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](#)

Sunday Services

1st Thursday at 7:00 PM

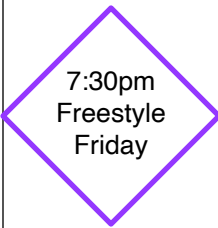
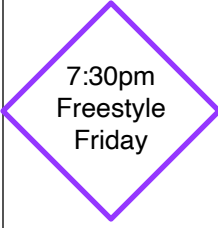
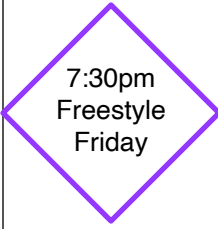
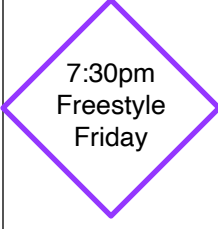
contact [SSC Chair Jeff Palmer](#)



Abbott Foote
Simone Chiodini
Mike Gardner
Rev. Tom McAninely
Brett Torres

Would you like a birthday shoutout in the Communicator? Email office@bfuu.org with your birthday!

Fellowship Calendar October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:00 PM - Z SSC Meeting 7:00 pm - BR Gurdjieff Group	2  7:30pm Freestyle Friday	3
4 11:00 am - FH+Z Sunday Service * ¹	5 5:00 pm - FH Joy of Singing	6 7:00 pm Choir Practice * ¹ 7:00 pm - FH Activist Community Potluck	7	8 7:00 pm - BR Gurdjieff Group	9  7:30pm Freestyle Friday	10
11 11:00 am - FH+Z Sunday Service * ¹ 12:30 pm - FH David Solnit Art Show 1:30 pm - Courtyard Art Build with David	12 5:00 pm - FH Joy of Singing	13 6:30 pm - FH Improper English Dance 7:00 pm Choir Practice * ¹	14	15 7:00 pm - BR Gurdjieff Group	16  7 pm - FH Open Mic Night	17 11 am - 2 pm - Courtyard New School Fall Festival
18 11:00 am - FH+Z Sunday Service * ¹ 12:30 pm - FH Social Justice Committee 4:00 pm - FH Rainforest Action Network Panel	19 5:00 pm - FH Joy of Singing	20 7:00 pm Choir Practice * ¹	21	22 3:00 pm - Z Board Meeting 7:00 pm - BR Gurdjieff Group	23  7:30pm Freestyle Friday	24
25 11:00 am - FH+Z Sunday Service * ¹	26	27 7:00 pm Choir Practice * ¹	28	29 7:00 pm - BR Gurdjieff Group	30  7:30pm Freestyle Friday	31

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, Tuesday, Thursday 12pm-4pm or by appointment

BFUU OFFICE STAFF

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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 NOVEMBER COMMUNICATOR:

October 21, 2026 at 11:00 AM

Please email office@bfuu.org with submissions.

Address Correction Requested

Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists

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