

DECEMBER 2023



KALEIDOSCOPE

UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF SANTA BARBARA
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

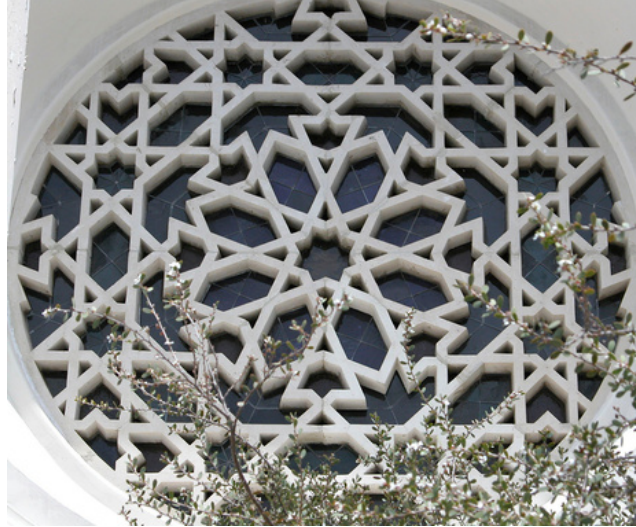
**INSIDE THIS
MONTH'S
ISSUE:**

**Upcoming
Services**

**Christmas Eve
Services**

Winter Solstice

**Programs and
Events**



Living with Integrity - Nurturing Wonder - Inspiring Action

SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER

**Services at 10:00 AM
In-Person and Online**

Sunday, December 3

Keeping Watch

with Rev. Julia Hamilton

WThis Sunday is the first of our winter holiday services, and we will reflect on the Christian practice of Advent. What does it mean to wait in expectation, not alone, but in a community? How do we hold Hope (the first candle on the Advent wreath) in these times?

Sunday, December 17

Chasing the Sunshine

with Rev. Julia Hamilton

At 7:27pm on Dec 21st, we will arrive at the winter solstice. The longest night of the year in our hemisphere. From this point on, the days get longer. Let us celebrate the fact that, as Maya Angelou said, "Every storm runs out of rain". The sun always returns-

Sunday, December 10

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins

with Rev. Julia Hamilton and a cast of delightful characters!

Hanukkah runs December 7-15, and so this year for our annual holiday play we are sharing the delightful tale of a band of frightful goblins who are getting in the way of the celebration! For eight nights, Herschel has to outwit the goblins so he can kindle the lights of hanukkah and bring joy back to the village. Join us for a multigenerational dramatic adaptation of this award-winning children's book.

Sunday, December 24

Peace, Love, and Pancakes!

With Peter Hale and Gary Welterden

It's Christmas Eve! Because we have three full services that evening, the morning we are going to enjoy a cozy pancake breakfast in Parish hall. Good good, good company, and a simple service to warm your heart.

Sunday, December 31

The Good Things

Ken Ralph, Worship Host

Members of our Worship Team have taken a moment, during each of our Sunday services this year, to share something good that's going on around us. We've also asked congregants to write down a good thing they've noticed and put it in our "Good Things Jar" every week. Have you ever wondered what wonderful things have been added to this jar over this past year? Well, December 31st seems like the perfect time for us to take a look. Join us as we take a walk through many of the good things that 2023 bestowed upon this troubled world. You might be surprised how much good there was.

Christmas Eve Services

Join us on December 24 in-person or online!

5:00 PM A Joyful Story: Our Family Service

Join us as we bring the story of Christmas to life accompanied by our favorite carols. All ages are welcome at this fun and festive service, and warm up your heart with the glow of "Silent Night" sung by candlelight.

7:00 PM Comfort and Joy: Lessons and Carols

Come light candles and hear the words of the Christmas story accompanied by beautiful music from the choir and Christmas carols for everyone. With open hearts and joyful singing, we will reflect together on the spirit of the Christmas season.

9:00 PM A Joyful Jazz Christmas

The sound of a saxophone on a cool winter night. Carols sung with a little swing. Words of comfort and joy. A jazz combo will provide the music for us, we reflect on the spirit of the Christmas season and close out the night in the glow of "Silent Night" sung by candlelight.



Gathering and Hanging of the Greens

Tis' the season to be jolly!

Every year "WE" gather greens to decorate the Sanctuary.

Who is "WE"?

It's YOU!! ❤️

The Flower Committee and USSB relies on members to gather greens from thither and yon to make the Sanctuary even more beautiful for Christmas Eve.

"WE" is your community, those of you who grow them, please call us and we can clip and transport them to the sanctuary.

Those of you that do not grow any juniper, pine, redwood, fir, holly etc, you have time to notice where such greens may be growing and help them out with some trimming. Perhaps where you live has a groundskeeper or gardener? Consider asking them to trim and set aside greens.

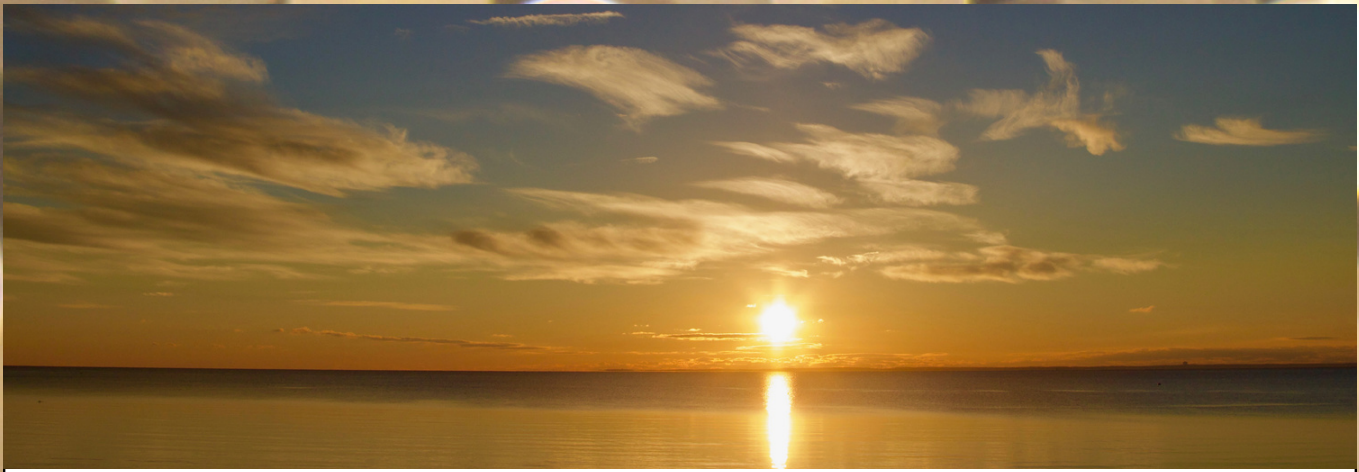
Please drop off the greens on December 18 or 19 at USSB in the portico (outside the doors of Parish Hall). No amount of a greens is too large or small, but we do need **A LOT** of greens!

Join us on **Wednesday, December 20** between **8:00 AM-12:00 PM** for the **Annual Hanging of the Greens**. No special expertise is needed--room for any willing hands!

Coffee and persimmon bread will be provided for inspiration and fuel!

Questions? Call Kathleen at (805) 687-6218 or text Donnis at (805) 453-6374





Winter Solstice

Welcoming the Solstice at Goleta Beach

Thursday, December 21 from 4:00-5:00 PM

Bundle up and bring blankets, chairs, and a thermos of your favorite hot beverage to Goleta Beach (near the playground) to watch the sun go down on the shortest day of the year. Let's welcome winter solstice together with readings and community singing. Sunset is at 4:52 PM.

If you are new a new member or visitor to USSB, this is a great, small event to meet other members of the congregation!

FYI: Parking at [Goleta Beach](#) is free!



Christmas Eve

Pancake Breakfast

Sunday mornings would not be complete without something to attend at the Society. Since there will be 3 services in the evening (Christmas Eve!), there will be a free **Pancake Breakfast** created and staffed by your Worship Arts team from **9:00-10:30 AM**.

You can come in your pajamas, robe, and fuzzy slippers but do come...with your appetite and a friend or two. The perfect way to introduce new people to USSB with an invite to share a hearty meal, community, and good conversation.

We are also looking for some volunteers to lend a hand in the kitchen. If interested, please contact Peter Hale for more information.



Ushers Needed for Christmas Eve

We are seeking additional volunteers to assist with usher duties during Christmas Eve Services.

Being an usher on Christmas Eve is easy and a great way to connect with members and visitors during these festive services! Being an usher during a Christmas Eve service involves handing out programs and candles and helping to collect the offertory.

Services are being held at 5:00 PM, 7:00 PM, and 9:00 PM. Assist at one, two or all three--it is up to you!

If you would like to sign up or have questions, please contact Outreach & Membership Coordinator Angie at angie@ussb.org.



CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

Which Christmas Eve Service Should We Attend? A Primer for Families

If you're new to USSB and you're wondering which Christmas Eve service is the best fit for you and your family, here's a primer of what to expect.



All three services share the same homily and many of the same readings. And every service culminates with a congregational candle light singing of Silent Night.

We plan the 5:00PM service with families of young children in mind. We'll sing child-friendly carols and create a Christmas Pageant right there on the spot! No lines to learn. Costumes provided. Lots of fun! No one is expected to sit still in this service!

The 7:00 PM service is the most traditional of our services. We'll sing well-loved carols, and the choir will provide beautiful choral anthems. If you long for a warm and cozy Christmas Eve, perhaps with a hint of Currier and Ives, this might be the service for you.

If you want something a little different, consider the 9:00PM Jazz Service. This is the most intimate of our Christmas Eve services, with an instrumental combo and vocals joining in to jazz up those familiar holiday carols.

Children are welcome at all three services. We do not open childcare on Christmas Eve, but we will have fidget bags at the 5:00 PM and 7:00PM services to keep little hands busy, and our baby corner will be set up just like Sunday mornings. For more information or questions, contact Charla charla@ussb.org

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

Holiday Craft Party, Sunday, December 3, 10:00 – 11:30 AM

Kids and adults are invited to take part in this beloved USSB tradition. Join RE staff and volunteers in Parish Hall to create delightful crafts and gifts for a family member, a friend, or just for yourself. We have wreath making, salt dough ornaments, candy cane reindeer, and more to delight congregants of all ages.



USSB Religious Exploration Presents:



Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins

Sunday, December 10, 10:00 am

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins, a Multigenerational Holiday Play, Sunday, December 10 at 10:00 AM

Hanukkah is December 7-15 this year. Do not miss our festive production of Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins, adapted from the book by Eric Kimmel. A band of frightful goblins has taken over the synagogue, and the villagers cannot celebrate at all! Hershel vows to help them. But can one man alone stand up to the goblins, save Hanukkah, and live to tell the tale?

PROGRAMS & EVENTS



A HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM EARTH ADVOCATES COMMITTEE CHAIR, ARIANNA JANSMA

As we wrap up our Thanksgiving celebrations and enter another season of year end partying and gift giving, perhaps we can remember to invite a long-forgotten guest to our holiday gatherings and include this guest on our holiday shopping list. That forgotten guest is our planetary home, the Earth.

The 7th principle of our Unitarian Universalist faith reminds us to have **respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.**

It is easy to include our friends and family members in our holiday plans. But what about including the Earth in our activities? We take great care to provide the best holiday meals for those we love, choosing the finest produce and freshest meats. But we feed the Earth inedible, indigestible trash. We search for only the most perfect gifts to give our cherished friends and family. And what do we gift the Earth? Our cast-offs, non-recyclable wrapping papers and packaging, hundreds of types of plastics that will remain in landfills for decades or more, massive amounts of carbon dioxide emissions from holiday air travel, 'live-forever' chemicals added to our ground water... these are the 'gifts' that we give to the Earth and its ecosystems.

I think that we can do better. It will take awareness and practice, but I would like to suggest that we make the Earth a partner in our holiday plans. This is the gift that I would like us to give to the Earth in return for all that it provides for us, to be aware of the consequences to the Earth of our choices and our actions. In our Earth Advocates portion of the upcoming Friday newsletters we will offer ideas for using offsets to balance your airline carbon emissions and suggest eco-friendly gift ideas and alternatives to traditional gifts.

The Earth's delicately balanced ecosystems are in jeopardy. This intricate web of life supports us by providing sufficient oxygen for us to breathe, water to drink, relatively stable weather patterns and moderate temperatures to make our lives comfortable. Could we not bear them in mind when we feast, when we shop, when we travel, when we party? If you are willing, I would like to suggest that you literally set a place at your table for the silent Earth, an empty chair and table settings for the web of life that sustains us.

This is my holiday wish: that all people live together in peace and harmony with each other and with the Earth.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS



ENVIRONMENTAL FILM SERIES

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

7 pm

Parish Hall

Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara
1535 Santa Barbara St.

✦ Featuring "How Coke Killed the Refillable Bottle"
(Please note time change to 7 pm to allow for dinner at home)

Environmental Film Series

Wednesday, December 6
at 7:00 PM in Parish Hall

Join the Earth Advocates on December 6 for a screening* of *How Coke Killed the Refillable Bottle*. Learn more about what to do about this issue, The National Bottle Bill, plus, State Law SB54: Goals Penalty, and Enforcement. Also learn what to avoid regarding PFAS in drinking water.

There is no cost to attend this event.

*Please note that dinner will not be provided at this event.

USSB Alliance Meeting

Friday, December 1 at 2:00 PM in Parish Hall

We are pleased to present this inspiring story of friends on a walk who were not happy with the 2016 Presidential election and decided to work for change with their activist roots, The Activists that became SB Craftivists For Change.

It took awhile but the seeds were planted. Today a group of 60-70 women (men are welcome, too!) meet once a week to use their skills of knitting, writing, crocheting, and much, much more to help those in need in Santa Barbara and around the world. Come to find out the development of this great story. We will profile Rose Santillano-Millem one of the original walkers who holds this group together.

-Sylvia Abualy, Chair Program Committee

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Contemporary Issues Forum

Advances in Healthy Lifespan Extension:
Scientific Promises and Societal Change

Dr. Joel Rothman

December 13, 7:00-9:00 PM

Parish Hall \$10 Admission

How best do we teach complex, often difficult topics in American history to younger audiences in California and elsewhere? In 2021, the state of California became the first to mandate an “ethnic studies requirement” for students in the public schools, while in states like Florida, public officials have soundly rejected similar efforts, as they’ve spoken against “wokeness” and “critical race theory.”

MARK YOUR CIF CALENDAR! The Science and Ethics of Aging and Longevity, December 13, 2023. Presented by Dr. Joel Rothman, Director and Founder, Center for Aging and Longevity Studies; Distinguished Professor, Wilcox Family Chair in Biotechnology; Director, Biomolecular Science and Engineering Program, UCSB.

The forum will address these debates, and we begin by discussing how and why critical race theory became so influential at the major research universities over the last twenty years. We then turn to those vexing questions about how best to teach American history in light of the best archival works in the field, many of them inspired by approaches from critical race theorists. Come join us for the third program of the Contemporary Issues Forum, featuring Dr. John Park, Professor of Asian American Studies at UCSB. Dr. Park is a recognized expert on immigration law and policy, race theory, and political theory. He has authored/co-authored several books on these topics, including *Elusive Citizenship*, *Probationary Americans*, *Illegal Migrations* and *the Huckleberry Finn Problem*.



**Advances in Healthy Lifespan Extension:
Scientific Promises and Societal Challenges**



An evening with

Dr. Joel Rothman

Director and Founder, Center for Aging and
Longevity Studies; Distinguished Professor
of Biotechnology, UC Santa Barbara

Wednesday, December 13, 7:00-9:00 PM, Admission \$10

The Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara
1535 Santa Barbara Street

USSB HAPPENINGS

An Invitation to Participate

A Message from the USSB Nominating Committee

Each year at the Annual Meeting in June, **you are presented with a slate of candidates for the Board of Trustees**. We have nine Board Members who represent all of us in setting policy and guiding the congregation in collaboration with the congregation. The slate, usually of three candidates each year, is created by the Nominating Committee which works throughout the year to find candidates who can best represent the whole congregation, can work cooperatively in a team, and bring needed skills and experience.

Or are you interested in being part of Nominating Committee? We are looking for new members to join us. Each year, two members complete their term and two new members join the committee in July. Let us know if you would like to be a candidate for Board or the Nominating Committee.

As the Nominating Committee gathers ideas and information, **we welcome your thoughts and suggestions**. The more we know, the more effective we can be. We look forward to hearing from you.

Please contact Deb Wolfe deborahwolfe541@gmail.com or Chris Shorb chrisshorb@gmail.com

The 2023-24 Nominating Committee,

Rachel Aarons, Susie DuPont, John Hartman, Chris Shorb, Deb Wolfe, and Onolee Zwicke

Sunday Zoom Hosts Needed

Have you been considering volunteering for USSB, but not quite sure the role? Consider being a Zoom Host for our Sunday Services!

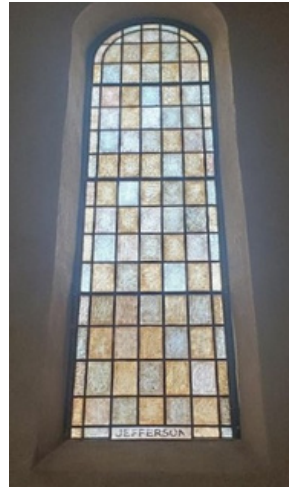


Being a Zoom Host is easy, fun, and can be done from the comfort of your home. USSB staff takes care of all the technical pieces, so you don't have to worry about that. The Zoom Host engages with our online congregation in the chat by sharing links to upcoming events, visitor guestbook, outreach offering, etc. If interested in becoming a Zoom Host or you have any questions, please contact Outreach & Membership Coordinator Angie at angie@ussb.org.

USSB HAPPENNINGS

SANCTUARY WINDOW UPDATE

If you are a member who has not yet voted for the name on the Sanctuary window, it's not too late. Voting will be taking place through December 10, 2023 by electronic ballot. In case you missed the original voting invitation, reminder emails from USSB/Election Buddy will be sent to members with a link to their anonymous ballot over the next few weeks. A Special Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 10th following service to read the results of the vote and celebrate the new name for our Sanctuary window. More information on the agenda, candidates, and voting process can be found on our website: <https://ussb.org/window/>



Capital Campaign: Next Steps... Let's Dream BIG Together

In October, our Capital Campaign Consultant, Rachel Maxwell, provided a written report on her recommendations following our September Next Steps Weekend.

You can read the full report [HERE](#), or watch her presentation [HERE](#), both of which are now on our Capital Campaign webpage, which can be found at www.ussb.org/capital-campaign

In her report, Rachel suggests the following "Next Steps" for our congregation:

1. Conduct a process for the full congregation to create a collective prioritized vision based in your mission
2. Engage with an architect to develop a realistic plan for facilities with cost estimates
3. Begin the Capital Campaign process
4. Develop a five-year strategic financial plan
5. Work on our Culture of Generosity

The Board has since developed a Visioning Process, which will be led by a Visioning Team throughout the fall and winter months. Keep an eye on your inbox this month for more information about this process and how you can get involved. We are ready for you to dream big and broad for this congregation and the future.

This is an exciting time to be at USSB! As Rachel concludes in her report, "*The Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara is healthy and well poised to expand your impact and mission in the Santa Barbara Community. Updating your facilities to be more accessible and sustainable as well as creating more spaces for spiritual nurture will reflect your mission more fully and you know it! Now it is time for the congregation to collectively create a vision for the facility that will allow you to step into the next 150 years!*"

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

FWC 2023-2024 Season: Join the Hospitality Team!



The predictions are for another wet winter, and that means our neighbors without shelter need a safe, warm place to sleep and a hot meal to get them through the night. So we are asking you – yes, you! – to volunteer to join a Hospitality Team for the Warming Center. [Sign up online here!](#)

USSB is on-call for several weeks over the course of the winter, in a rotation schedule with other downtown churches. Volunteering means joining one of the teams that will cook and serve the meal for each of our on-call nights (“the Monday night team”, for example). Click the [sign-up link](#) for more details. We also need a Team Leader for each night who will help coordinate their team’s shopping and cooking. In addition, we need special Christmas Eve and Thanksgiving volunteers for these holiday nights.

If this is your first time [signing up](#) – welcome! You will join a team of experienced and trained volunteers! If you are a returning volunteer – thank you! We look forward to working together again. Friends and family are more than welcome to join you in this project – spread the word! You don’t have to be a member of the Unitarian Society to participate.

If you have any questions, please [contact Linda Beers](#), our volunteer Hospitality Team Coordinator this year. We look forward to working with you in support of the Warming Centers this year!

If you want to know more about the history of the Freedom Warming Centers, including how they got their name, you can read about it here: ussb.org/justice/fwc

DECEMBER OUTREACH OFFERING



In December, we share our Outreach Offering with **Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism** (BLUU), in recognition of our congregational affirmation of the 8th Principle and in our commitment to the work of anti-racism in our nation, our community, our congregation, and our individual lives.

BLUU is an organizing collective formed in 2015 to provide support, information and resources for Black Unitarian Universalists, as well as to expand the role and visibility of Black UUs within our faith.

Specifically, BLUU is committed to:

- Expanding the power & capacity of Black UUs within our faith
- Providing support, information & resources for Black UUs
- Justice-making and liberation through our faith

BLUU's vision:

BLUU harnesses love's power to combat oppression and foster healing as a spiritual and political imperative. We know the power of love to be life changing, inclusive, relational, uncomfortable, unconditional and without end.

In the spirit of this shared vision, please give generously to support the work of BLUU. For more information:

<https://blacklivesuu.org>.

More about 8th principle: <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>

PERSONAL BLESSINGS

ABOUT PERSONAL BLESSINGS

There are so many occasions when there is a desire to say “Thank You” or “Bless You” for some kindness, or a wish to acknowledge a birth or the passing of a loved one. At this time of year, the holidays invite expressions of gratitude.

Birthday party invitations often say “NO gifts please!” And yet a desire may linger to acknowledge the event, or do something.

Personal Blessings are a unique way to honor an individual or a special event, a way to celebrate the season, or a “Just because...” at the same time providing important financial support to our cherished community at USSB.

Donation envelopes are available in the USSB reception office, in the Narthex on Sundays, or use our online form at www.ussb.org/personal blessing.

On receipt of your gift,

- USSB will contact you and confirm that the gift has been received and clarify with you anything that may be needed for acknowledging your gift. For online submissions, you will receive a confirmation email.
- Your honoree will receive a card from a Personal Blessing volunteer announcing your gift.
- All gifts are fully tax-deductible.

Personal Blessings will be featured in the monthly Kaleidoscope.

Thank You!

The Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara

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Alfonso Trejos, Media Specialist alfonso@ussb.org

Heather Levin, Accompanist

Gwendolyn Kilfoyle, Justie Choir Lead justicechoir@ussb.org

Rev. Kenneth Collier, Minister Emeritus

The office is open Sunday mornings and Monday - Thursday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Email ussb@ussb.org, or call (805) 965-4583

Deadline for the January 2024 Kaleidoscope issue: **Monday, December 18 by 5:00 PM** Email: kaleidoscope@ussb.org

Join us Sundays at 10:00 am on Zoom or Facebook,
or use your phone to dial in and hear the service live.

Call 1-669-900-6833, and then enter meeting ID 960 0363 8223# and you will be able to listen to the service on your phone. You may call in starting at 9:55 AM.

Zoom and Facebook links are sent out in the Friday email, in a special Sunday morning email, and are always available on our website, www.ussb.org.

Contact our office at ussb@ussb.org if you'd like to be added to our email list.

Can't be with us when we're live Sunday morning? View past services at www.ussb.org/worship/archive.