

Living with Integrity, Nurturing Wonder, Inspiring Action



Kaleidoscope

August 2023

The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara

www.ussb.org

Sundays in August Services at 10:00 AM

Sunday, August 6

Rev. Julia Hamilton

“On Flags & Faith”

Written in 1791, the very first words of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution are: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” But today, the way our nation defines the bedrock concept of “the separation of church and state” is changing. How do we, as a progressive, liberal faith that supports religious freedom, navigate these changes and respond to the growing power of Christian Nationalism?

Sunday, August 20

Rev. Dr. Colin Bossen

“I Ask No Monument: The Legacy of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper”

Dr. Bossen’s second sermon is devoted to Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825–1911). A Unitarian and an abolitionist, Harper was the first African-American woman to publish a short story in the United States. Her legacy, like Robert Wedderburn’s, disrupts notions that Unitarian Universalism is an intrinsically White theological tradition and, instead, calls for questions about why our institutions have so long been predominately White.

Sunday, August 13

Rev. Dr. Colin Bossen

“Suffering for Blasphemous Libel: The Ministry of Robert Wedderburn”

In the first of two sermons devoted to reimagining our Unitarian Universalist roots, the Rev. Dr. Colin Bossen will explore the life and theology of the Rev. Robert Wedderburn (1762–1836?). The Rev. Wedderburn was the first Unitarian minister of African descent. Active in London from roughly 1802 to 1828, his work leading multiracial, working-class congregations in the very heart of the city is not widely known. Examining it challenges us to reconsider the nature and limits of Unitarian Universalist theology.

Sunday, August 27

Ellen Broidy

“We Are an Angry, Angry People”

Join us for our final “Summer of Pride” service — a reflection on this moment in the struggle for LGBTQ+ equality. How do we balance our need to glitter and shine with the reality of the fight for justice and recognition?

About our guest speaker: **The Rev. Dr. Colin Bossen** has served, first in an interim and now in a developmental capacity, as the Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston since 2018. He earned his PhD in American Studies from Harvard University and his MDiv from Meadville Lombard Theological School, and has held non-residential fellowships with Rice and Princeton Universities. A scholar and a social justice activist, he’s pleased to be back in Santa Barbara. You can read his blog and find out more about his current projects at www.colinbossen.com.

UUs Welcome Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt as UUA President

It is with great enthusiasm that the Unitarian Universalist Association welcomes the **Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt** as the tenth UUA President! We also note that this is not the first time the Rev. Dr. Betancourt has served as leader of the Association. She was appointed co-president for an interim period in 2017 and provided guidance and care during a significant moment in our history. This time, she will be in the presidential role for a six-year term and we are eagerly anticipating her leadership, working together to continue to advance Unitarian Universalism and live our values deeply in the coming years.

Her presidency comes with a number of historic firsts: she is the first openly queer person and first woman of color to be elected UUA president. She has served Unitarian Universalism for more than twenty years as a religious educator, minister, scholar, and member of the UUA national staff and many volunteer committees at the regional and denominational levels. She most recently served as Resident Scholar and Special Advisor on Justice and Equity at the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Rev. Dr. Betancourt holds a Ph.D. in Religious Ethics and African American Studies from Yale University as well as an M.Div. from Starr King School for the Ministry, where she also served on the faculty. She is the author of *Ecowomanism at the Panamá Canal: Black Women, Labor, and Environmental Ethics* (2022). You can learn more about her in a

new Q & A with *UU World* magazine, including how early life experiences shaped her path to ministry.

As significantly, she also brings to the role theological depth, a commitment to communal care, and a pledge to continue to organize for justice. She has also expressed an appreciation for the diverse voices and leaders in our community as well as for the hard work that UUA staff does every day. We know that Unitarian Universalists across the country and UUA staff will all benefit from her experience, wisdom, and sense of care.



Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt

Carey McDonald, our Executive Vice President, expressed his keen anticipation in this way: “We are excited to have the Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt at the helm as UUA President to lead us in the next chapter of our faith’s journey. We are already inspired by her deep theology and commitments to community care and imagining the way forward together.”

We are entering an exciting time for both the UUA and Unitarian Universalism. Rev. Dr. Betancourt’s presidency and the General Assembly vote by delegates to continue consideration of changes to the Article II bylaws mark a key moment in our faith tradition. With her leadership, we are positioned

to move forward in faithful community, in recognition of our shared values and the important work ahead.

Follow Rev. Dr. Betancourt on Facebook and help us warmly welcome her as the tenth President of the UUA!

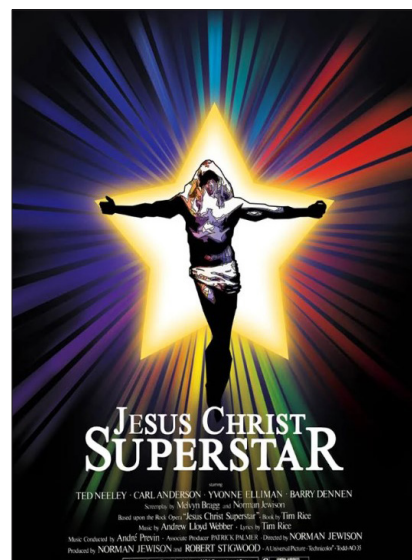
Hosanna! What's the Buzz? Everything's Alright! It's a “Jesus Christ Superstar” Singalong!

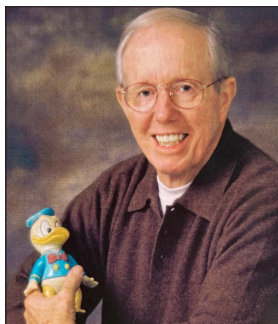
Saturday, August 5 at 6:00 PM in Parish Hall

We have rescheduled the Jesus Christ Singalong auction event (previously postponed due to pandemic) and opened it up to the congregation. All are welcome! You are also welcome to bring friends and family. This is suitable for all ages. Lemonade and wine will be provided.

For questions contact **Doug & Jody Thomas**.

If you want to refresh your memory, the songs are available on YouTube and other music platforms.





All in the Family

A memorial for longtime USSB member **Don Bushnell** will be held on Saturday, August 5 at 2:00 PM in the Unitarian Society sanctuary. Reception will follow in Parish Hall. All are welcome.

You can read Don's obituary in the *Independent*:
www.independent.com/obits/2023/07/24/don-bushnell/

Connection Circles: Belonging Through Listening and Sharing

In Connection Circles, we slow down and take the time to listen to one another. Whereas in other meetings we may have a task to accomplish, here we don't have to organize anything or plan anything or achieve anything other than to give each member of the group the gift of our attention. There is nothing to prepare or bring, no expertise is needed and eloquence is not an expectation. There is an understanding that each of us is valued for being who we are. Our worth and dignity is a given. Come as you are!

In this respectful space, we come to experience ourselves as part of a greater whole.

A willingness to listen and to try something new are all it takes for us to build trust, make connections and find belonging.

For the fall session, our starting points will be the monthly themes:

September: Welcome

October: Heritage

November: Generosity

December: Mystery

January: Liberating Love

Connection Circles are open to USSB members and those who are exploring membership. Circles meet twice a month for five months, and each meeting is an hour and a half. We offer in-person and Zoom groups. Signups begin August 6 at <http://tinyurl.com/FallCC23>.

CAROL SCHWYZER AND BECKY BLAKE,
CONNECTION CIRCLE CO-FACILITATORS
CAROLSCHWYZER@GMAIL.COM
BUCKYBLACK@AOL.COM

USSB Annual Auction: Your Help is Needed!

One of the most beloved congregational events of the year — and one of the most fun ways to get involved — is coming up in October: our Annual Auction!

Our auction is a social and fundraising event which raises funds to support our congregation's mission and vision. Parties, events, games, outings, and services are donated to the congregation and placed for bid at the auction and fill the social calendars of members and friends throughout the year.

We are in need of a team of folks to assist in the planning and implementation of our auction this year. This is a great opportunity for new and seasoned members alike to get involved to raise important funds toward our mission — and have fun while you're at it!

Are you a natural cheerleader? Are you great with decorations? Can you help congregants

dream up their auction item donations? Do you like event planning? We have space for all skill sets to contribute to this year's event. If you are interested in joining this year's auction team — we've got a role for you!

Please complete this auction interest form to get involved, or email **Erin Wilson** at erin@ussb.org to find out more. We will hold a coordinating meeting in mid-August and get this party started!



The 2019 auction theme was "Black & White Ball."

Methane: A Global Warming Monster

Carbon dioxide gets most of the attention when we think about the causes of climate change, but methane, the main component of natural gas, does a far better job of trapping heat.



One of the dangers of carbon dioxide is that it lasts for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, continuing to trap heat throughout its long life. While methane does degrade after about seven to 12 years, during its life span it is over 80 times more potent than

carbon dioxide in warming the planet. This means that methane has a proportionately large contribution to short-term global warming. Reducing methane emissions would reduce temperature increases even more rapidly than removing carbon dioxide.

Sadly, global emissions of methane have continued to increase at record-breaking levels. Acting now to reduce methane is critical.

WHERE DOES THIS METHANE COME FROM?

1. Agriculture is the largest source of human-caused methane emissions, and in the US, this results primarily from manure management and raising cattle and other livestock, which produce methane as they digest plants.
2. Close behind are emissions from coal, oil, natural gas, and biofuels.
3. The decomposition of landfill waste is another key source of methane emissions.

Reducing methane levels quickly is vital if we are to keep global temperatures from exceeding the critical 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

WHAT CAN WE AS INDIVIDUALS DO?

- Electrify our homes and vehicles, thus reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and improving our health. Swap out your gas appliances—stoves, furnaces, washing machines and dryers—for electric ones. Rebates are available to make this transition easier. New studies show that most methane emissions from gas stoves occur from leaks when the stove is turned OFF!

- Reduce or avoid consumption of beef, which would reduce methane emissions (and water use) and would free up agricultural land.
- Minimize food waste and compost what you can. An estimated 30–40% of the food produced in the United States is lost or wasted, resulting in methane emissions as it decomposes.

Come visit us on Sundays during the coffee hour at the Earth Advocates' courtyard table. During August and September we'll be focusing on how we can reduce methane emissions.

For more information, see:

<https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/methane/>

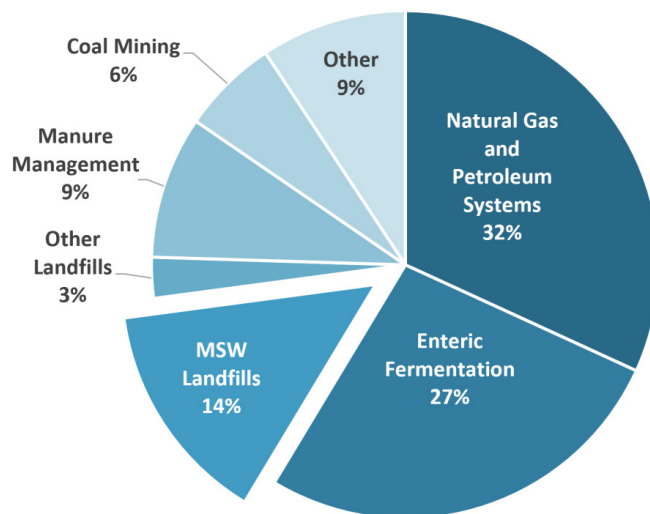
<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/increase-in-atmospheric-methane-set-another-record-during-2021>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/US-Methane-Emissions-Reduction-Action-Plan-1.pdf>

<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

<https://news.stanford.edu/press-releases/2022/01/27/rethinking-cooking-gas/>

2021 U.S. Methane Emissions, By Source



Children's, Youth & Adult Religious Exploration

New & Returning Adult Religious Exploration Opportunities Coming this Fall

We're excited to bring back some beloved programs and introduce some new Adult Religious Exploration (ARE) opportunities. Watch for more information on all of these programs in upcoming Friday emails. In the meantime, take a peek at what's coming this fall!

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FORUM RETURNS

Contemporary Issues Forum (CIF), the successor to the Great Decisions program, will resume monthly lectures and discussions in Parish Hall beginning September 12. For more information about this exciting effort, see the accompanying article on CIF on page 7 of this issue of the *Kaleidoscope*. Mark your calendars for the second Tuesday of the month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM in Parish Hall, beginning Tuesday, September 12. Co-directors are **John Warnock** and **Jack Eisenhauer**.

HARVEST THE POWER

Are you interested in exploring and strengthening your leadership skills? We are fortunate that we have so many committed and talented people at USSB who contribute their time, energy and skills to creating a strong and healthy congregation. And . . . we can always use more!

Harvest the Power is a UUA curriculum designed to develop leadership skills within a framework of intentional faith development. The program guides leaders to cultivate a "we" culture in our congregations, with relationships and covenant at the center, rather than an "I" culture of autonomous individuals. Skills learned in the class can be applied in one's personal, community and/or professional life. Harvest the Power will be taught by **Chuck Flacks**, **Deb Karoff**, and **Onolee Zwicke** on six Sundays following the service. Precise dates TBA.

ENVIRONMENTAL FILM SERIES

Beginning in October the USSB Earth Advocates team will host a monthly film series to educate and inspire us to act and do our part for the environment. Mark your calendar for Wednesday, October 4 at 7:00 PM in Parish Hall for the first film, "The Story of Stuff." **Julie Lopp** and the Earth Advocates Team are excited to facilitate this educational film series.

Beloved Conversations: Within

Join the ranks of the 50+ USSB members who have taken part in Meadville Lombard's Anti-racism Program,

Beloved Conversations. Registration for "Beloved Conversations: Within" is open from August 1 to 31. "Within" focuses on the internal work that each of us needs to do as we engage in deeper personal understanding and explorations of race and racism. Read more about this important program starting on page 7.

AND MORE!

Stay tuned for information about Good Things Growing events and more Religious Exploration opportunities coming in the weeks and months ahead. Do you have an idea for a class or workshop you'd like to facilitate? Contact Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration **Charla Bregante** at charla@ussb.org.

Important Dates in Children's Religious Exploration

In Children's Religious Exploration we celebrate summer with our Makerspace Program all the way through September 3. Children can look forward to several more weeks to explore their creative impulses on Sunday mornings. To help you prepare for Fall RE, here are a few important dates to put on your calendar:

- 8/27, 3:00 to 5:00 PM: CRE Pool Party at Charla's
- 9/10, 10:00 to 11:00 AM: Multigenerational In-gathering Service
- 9/15, 6:00 to 8:00 PM: Pizza Church in Parish Hall
- 9/17, 10:00 to 11:00 AM: First Day of Fall CRE
- 9/17, 11:15 AM to 12:00 PM: CRE Registration & Parent Meeting
- 9/27-10/1: RE Campout at Lopez Lake

New Time for YoUUth Group this Fall

Teens can sleep in on Sunday mornings! YoUUth Group will meet on the first and third Sundays of the month from 4:00 to 5:30 PM in Blake Lounge. Most months will also include an additional social or social justice activity to be planned by the youth and their facilitators. We're looking forward to some relaxing self-care Sundays, fun social events, and engaging social justice opportunities, including another service trip to Mexicali! YoUUth Group begins Sunday, September 17, from 4:00 to 5:30 PM in Blake Lounge with a concurrent parent orientation and registration in Classroom D.

CHARLA BREGANTE
DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION
CHARLA@USSB.ORG



August Outreach Offering: Our Local LGBTQ Partners

The August Outreach Offering supports our local LGBTQ partners, including Pacific Pride Foundation (PPF), Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), and Santa Barbara Transgender Advocacy Network (SBTAN). These organizations provide services and advocacy for the gay and transgender community, which come at a time of great need in our local and wider communities.

PACIFIC PRIDE FOUNDATION

The Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara has had a long-standing relationship with the Pacific Pride Foundation (PPF). We turn to them for resources and education as we seek to develop our understanding of the current needs of the LGBTQ community. Our own spiritual journey is enriched by our work with Pacific Pride, and we have stood with PPF in the public square to advocate for justice and celebrate our progress!



PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS
PFLAG describes itself as “the extended family of the LGBTQ community.” Its membership consists of LGBTQ individuals and their family members, friends

and allies. PFLAG provides peer-to-peer support, publications, tool kits, and other resources to support LGBTQ family members. This allows families to further support, affirm, and advocate on behalf of their LGBTQ loved ones.

www.pflagsantabarbara.org



SANTA BARBARA TRANSGENDER ADVOCACY NETWORK
SBTAN educates individuals and organizations on best practices for transgender and gender expansive clients, patients, students, congregants and families. SBTAN creates and develops spaces, actions, and policies that advance the welfare of transgender and diverse gender non-conforming individuals, their families, and allies in California's Central Coast communities. SBTAN has provided training to workplaces, schools, medical providers and social service agencies, including Cottage Health Emergency, UCSB Faculty and staff, and Santa Barbara public and private high schools.



www.sbtan.org

Contemporary Issues Forum

Unpacking Our Complex World

Today's world is complex, challenging, and often confusing. The many factors that contribute to issues such as climate change, artificial intelligence, economic inequality, or democratic stability deserve a better understanding of the global context and underlying forces at work. Simple black and white solutions are usually inadequate for addressing multifaceted problems, yet many politicians and advocacy groups promote solutions that are stark and polarizing.

Recognizing this, USSB is restarting the Contemporary Issues Forum (CIF), a monthly event that promotes understanding, enlightenment, and engagement around complex societal, technological, economic, and political issues that shape our world. Each month we will explore a contemporary issue to build a better understanding of the current state of affairs and implications for the future. Recognized experts and progressive thinkers will be invited to share their knowledge, the state-of-the-art of research, the context in our society, current and future challenges, and possible paths forward. Employing a combination of lecture, Q&A, and facilitated discussion, we will seek to improve our knowledge and explore strategies to overcome challenges to achieve productive outcomes.

Our first forum will explore the topic "Fixing Capitalism to Save Democracy" featuring **Dr. Richard Appelbaum**, Distinguished Professor Emeritus and former MacArthur Foundation Chair in Global and International Studies and Sociology at the UCSB, and **Dr. Richard Flacks**, Professor Emeritus of Sociology

at the UCSB. It will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 PM on Wednesday, September 13 in Parish Hall.

Our second forum topic will be "Trump vs. The US Legal System: Who Will Win?" featuring **Steven Zipperstein**, former U.S. federal prosecutor and Distinguished Senior Fellow at the UCLA Center for Middle East Development. It will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 PM on Wednesday, October 11 in Parish Hall. More details on each of these events and upcoming topics for November and December will be forthcoming.



The Contemporary Issues Forum builds on the popular Great Decisions Foreign Policy Discussion Group, which was active at USSB prior to the pandemic. The CIF was started as an offshoot of this work. The importance of analysis and opportunities to discuss contemporary problems compelled the change in our focus and hence our name.

The Contemporary Issues Forum is open to congregation members and their guests. Future speakers and topics will reflect the interest of the congregation and the changing events in the global landscape. Understanding how national and world issues intersect with our UU values will be an important element of each forum.

The CIF is being directed by USSB members **John Warnock** (johnwwarnock@gmail.com) and **Jack Eisenhauer** (jleisenhauer@gmail.com). Please contact either of them for more information.

Beloved Conversations: *Within*

“Within” is the first program of Beloved Conversations, and it focuses on the internal work that each of us needs to do as we engage in deeper personal understanding, explorations of race and racism, and work for racial justice. The Within program begins on September 19 and ends on December 5 (there will be a spring session for Within as well.) The first set of resource materials is released for participants on September 19; there is no actual meeting on that date.

There are three main components for the course: the resource materials, which are released every two weeks;

the Learning Pods (consisting of USSB members), which meet every two weeks to discuss the resource materials; and three Meaning Making sessions, which are virtual presentations by a small group of UU ministers about the spiritual dimensions of anti-racism work.

- Resource materials are self-paced and include an assortment of readings, videos, and activities. In my experience, everyone approaches the resource materials differently. Some people read and view everything, and others are more selective in what they

continued on page 8

Beloved Conversations cont'd.

read, view, or do — everyone has the freedom to decide how best to engage with the materials. The program developers recommend asking a close, trusted friend (not a program participant) to be a “critical friend” to discuss what you are learning and thinking about as you experience the curriculum. Each participant decides how frequently to meet with their critical friend.

- The Learning Pods are small groups of four to six people, and **Charla Bregante** and I will be organizing local USSB groups. The small groups meet roughly every two weeks and the schedule and format (Zoom or in-person) will be determined by group members. The Beloved Conversations program has a suggested format and series of questions for each Learning Pod session and members can select a facilitator from their group, if desired.
- The three Meaning Making virtual presentations are usually scheduled outside of typical working hours and are available for viewing later. They are 90 minutes long.

Some people ask about the time commitment for participating in the program. The answers vary by each individual; some participants have the time to read and watch all of the resources provided, but many do not! Many resource materials are short readings and videos, and any level of participation is acceptable. Participants can expect a time commitment of roughly three hours per week on average depending on individual choices and interests.

Program registration is open from August 1–31. If you register, please let **Deb Karoff** and Charla Bregante know as this will be how we organize the USSB Learning Pods! If you have questions, contact Deb Karoff at deborahkaroff.dk@gmail.com.

The Beloved Conversations website also has a lot of information (scroll down past the question form):

<https://www.meadville.edu/light/fahs-collaborative/beloved-conversations/within/>

DEB KAROFF





Personal Blessing

In memory of **Don Bushnell** from **Ron & Carole Fox**.

Visit www.ussb.org/personalblessing to make your own Personal Blessing donation.

SAVE THE DATE

**RE FAMILY
CAMPING TRIP**

September 30-October 1

Lopez Lake
Arroyo Grande

The Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara

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Erin Wilson, Director of Administration, erin@ussb.org
Charla Bregante, Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration, charla@ussb.org
Christina Boardman, Religious Education Coordinator, christina@ussb.org
Janey Madlani, Children's Religious Education Coordinator, janey@ussb.org
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Jon Diaz, Sexton, jon@ussb.org
Alfonso Trejos, Media Specialist, alfonso@ussb.org
Heather Levin, Accompanist
Rev. Kenneth Collier, Minister Emeritus

The office is open Sunday mornings and Monday to Thursday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Email ussb@ussb.org, or call (805) 965-4583

Deadline for the September issue: Monday, August 28
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? Every Sunday we post the video of that day's service on www.ussb.org/worship/archive.