



"WE SEEK SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN A WELCOMING AND CARING COMMUNITY"

KALEIDOSCOPE

October 1–15, 2009

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara

Editor: Bruce Hanna

Sunday Morning Services

9:30 AM and 11:30 AM

October 4

After the Fall

The Reverend Aaron McEmrys

Forgiving is often difficult. Forgiving the people who wrong us can be hard, and forgiving ourselves can be even harder. But what about when there is no one to forgive, nobody to hold responsible for our suffering: when tidal waves wipe out whole villages, children get cancer or are struck by lightning? How can we forgive when there is nobody to hold responsible—except perhaps (gulp), god? Whether we believe in a divine being or not, sooner or later we all shake our fists at the unjust and silent skies above us—feeling in our very bones that we have been wronged, that some deep and unspoken law has been broken—and that god is to blame. Or the Universe, or the stars or whatever it is that lies just beyond the horizon or at the end of every rainbow. How can we do this? Can we? Should we? Will we? Please join us as we delve deep into the heart of darkness, looking for a glimmer of light as we contemplate what it means to forgive god.

and... Board Hosts Brunch Break Oct. 4

The Board will provide brunch at 10:30.
(see Brunch Break article on page 4)

October 11 Services

Jumping in the Pond Together

The Reverend Lindi Ramsden

Peter Hale, Service Host

We are celebrating an amazing step forward on the path toward justice. California Unitarian Universalist support helped pass the first human-right-to-water bill in any state in the nation. By linking north and south, mountains and coastal UUs, we are able to speak more powerfully for our values of equity, justice, and respect for the earth. Together, we can build respect for the natural limits of California's water and waterways, while helping the most impoverished among us secure access to safe affordable water from their tap. In an era of drought, conflict and climate change, UU values are profoundly important. When we jump in the pond together, we make a bigger splash! Guest minister, the Rev. Lindi Ramsden, serves as Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry, CA.

Fall RE Programs Start

W*ellspring Wednesdays*, our new Adult Religious Education program, starts October 7th. To read more about our exciting fall course offerings visit our website www.ussb.org or stop by the Adult Religious Education table on Sunday mornings during coffee hour. New courses include *Our Unitarian Universalist History* with our very own Rev. Aaron McEmrys, *Parenting for Positivity, Ease, and Joy* with Melissa Block, and *Natural Nourishment for Radiant Health* with Amy Bacheller.

F*ilm Series* resumes Friday, September 25 at 7 PM in Parish Hall for screening and discussion of the film *Young@Heart*. The "Young@Heart" chorus, a group of New England seniors, average age 80, has gained international acclaim for their performance of rock songs by James Brown, Coldplay, Sonic Youth, and others. Documentary filmmaker Stephen Walker followed the ensemble for seven weeks as they rehearsed for a hometown concert. The riveting result will lead you to think twice about the maxim: "every generation has its own music."

C*alling all Humanists!* At 6:30 PM starting October 12, a Monday book discussion group in La Paz with LeeAnn Williams will focus on William Murry's work *Reason and Reverence*. Answering the critics who find humanism lacking the power to inspire, William Murry brings a new vision of religious humanism—one that evokes compassion, spirituality and a language of reverence while grounded in reason, community, social responsibility, science and ethics.

RE Meeting

C*oming of Age* (COA) Parent/Youth meeting will be Sunday, September 27th at 10:30 AM in Blake Lounge. Come hear about the program, social justice projects, and Vision Quest weekend. This is also an opportunity to meet the COA teachers. Last year's Coming of Agers will be on hand to share their experiences.

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RE Class Topic Schedule

Want to know what your child will be learning in RE this year? Check out your child's class calendar on our website: www.ussb.org. Go to "For Families" page and locate your child's grade level. Click. And there you have it! You will find a brief description of the topic your child will be exploring on Sundays this year.

Welcoming as Spiritual Practice

Hospitality Workshop Saturday, Oct. 10, 9-11:30 AM Parish Hall with Rev. Aaron McEmrys, Nancy Edmundson, and Jen Stroh, Membership Coordinator.

Childcare and refreshments are provided. Everyone is invited to participate in this important and reflective workshop, and our Sunday morning Hospitality Teams are especially encouraged to join in!

We'll "tune up" our welcoming practices as we focus on our increased outreach, growing numbers of new members and the upcoming holidays, when many visitors are with us, and we welcome long-time members of all ages. And most importantly, we'll look at how this work is important to our own faith development, building our community and service beyond our "comfort zone."

Women's Choral Group Starts!

By popular demand and to diversify our musical program, we have formed a Women's Choral Group. This group will center on personally-enriching music, ranging from world music to current mainstream selections. We expect to develop our own style and sound as we evolve based on the abilities of our participants. We want this to be an effective voice for USSB not just for Sunday worship services, but also for musical healing and outreach to other venues (e.g. hospice facilities, community and social justice events).

The Women's Choral Group is open to all women in the congregation, especially those who have wanted to sing with the choir but couldn't attend regular Thursday choir rehearsals. This group may start small but after a certain date will not be open for new membership so we can make stronger musical decisions for the upcoming year. This is the first of several steps to expand our musical program with small-group participation that allows more singers to be involved with the USSB Music Ministry.

Interested? Have questions? Ready to sign up? Please contact Ken Ryals at [see directory for email](mailto:see_directory_for_email) or by phone: 805-965-4583 x240. P.S. The Women's Group also seeks an accompanist, with either piano or guitar.

Special thank you to the Unitarian Society !

ANNUAL STARR KING RUMMAGE SALE AND SILENT AUCTION

Each year the USSB kindly postpones, relocates, or cancels any number of meetings and activities ordinarily held on the USSB campus to accommodate the week-long set-up, sorting, and sale dates for the Starr King Parent Child Workshop. This is an amazing gift of support and commitment to the parent child workshop founded here at USSB 61 years ago by Rev. Berkeley Blake and USSB member Sarah Foot. The Starr King Parent Child Workshop is a preschool dedicated to early childhood learning and parent education, supported in cooperation with Santa Barbara City College Continuing Education and USSB. The move-in and set-up of the sale will begin Sunday, October 11 at 1 PM.

The Rummage Sale & Silent Auction is a Santa Barbara tradition the whole family can enjoy. There is always a varied selection of quality toys, clothes, fine clothing, furniture, books, housewares and treasures on display. Many shoppers return year after year to the sale for the great values. The Starr King Silent Auction features packages from local businesses with all proceeds to benefit this popular Santa Barbara institution [Starr King Silent Auction: Friday, 9:30-4:00; Saturday, 9:30-12:00]. Shoppers can also look forward to enjoying a gourmet lunch (11:00-1:30 Friday; 11:00-1:00 Saturday) with refreshments and, to top things off, home-baked goodies are for sale alongside tasty treats donated by local eateries.

The funds raised by this annual event help keep tuition low so that families of all backgrounds can participate. Call (805) 966-1325 for more information. To make a tax-deductible donation of lightly-used items, drop items off on Sunday October 11, 2:00-5:00 PM at La Paz alley behind Jefferson Hall and get your tax deduction receipt.



USSB Restatement of Bylaws

All voting USSB members have been mailed a notice of a congregation meeting on November 15, 2009 to vote on approval of proposed restated bylaws. The mailing includes the current proposed draft bylaws and an announcement of discussion meetings and the revision process. Please mark your calendars and plan to participate in the discussion process:

Discussion meeting: Sunday, Oct. 11, 1 PM, Parish Hall
Discussion meeting: Sunday, Nov. 1, 1 PM, Parish Hall
Congregation Vote: Sunday, Nov. 15, 1 PM Sanctuary

All in the Family

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names and birthdays removed from web version

Welcome Rob Brown, Building Manager

We offer a warm welcome to our newest staff member. Rob Brown joined our staff September 10 as our new Building Manager. We are excited to have Rob join our staff team, and want you to know that we selected Rob from a very talented pool of qualified candidates. Robert Brown comes with excellent references, a skill set uniquely qualified for our Building Manager position, and availability to provide the hours when USSB most needs them. Rob is a licensed contractor and certified building/property inspector with over 30 years experience in construction, maintenance and repairs of both commercial and residential property. Rob also provides building management and facility support for the United Cerebral Palsy's Santa Barbara Accessible Housing Complexes.

Our new Building Manager position is a 15 hours a week position with responsibilities focused on the care of our physical facilities. Rob will work most mornings Monday through Friday. Rob's email is <building@ussb.org> or you may leave a phone message with Carol at 965-4593 x224 (until we have Rob's extension.)

If you become aware of a building issue, we want to know about it! You will find pink colored "Facility Report" forms in the box outside the Director of Administration office. Please complete this form (or email Rob) and we will take appropriate action on a prioritized basis. Please help us be the ears and eyes of our beautiful campus! A reminder...Rob will not handle room or facility use reservations! Please continue to contact Administrative Assistant Carol Doose for your room use needs at 965-4583 x224 or <assistant@ussb.org>

Service Auction Forms Due 11th

Hey Groovy guys and gals! By now you have marked your calendars for our congregation's largest fund and FUN raising event of the year! Saturday November 7 we will transform our Parish Hall into the 1970's Disco Club

October 11 is the deadline for donations so please submit your donation forms now! Forms are available in the reception office or from our website at www.ussb.org (follow the links for Disco Fever). Need Donation Ideas? Contact Donnis Galvan <*see directory*> for ideas, e.g. ways to combine your interests and talents with others in the congregation. Interested in helping follow up on donations, or with planning and executing the party the night of the event? Contact Nancy Edmundson, Director of Administration 965-4583 x225 or <director@ussb.org>

Save the Dates

Saturday, October 17

5:30 "3rd Saturday" all member potluck, Parish Hall

7:30 Live in Concert Tony Ybarra & Ken Ryals Sanctuary

Saturday, October 24 9 AM, Parish Hall

Lifespan Religious Education (LRE) Start-up Workshop

LeeAnn Williams joined our staff on August 1 as our Director of LRE. Help form a vision for our Program.

Brunch Breaks Are Back!

Our congregation's popular Brunch Breaks will resume on October 4, thanks to our first hosting group: the USSB Board of Trustees.

What is Brunch Break? The USSB Program Council strives to recruit a USSB Program or Committee to offer delicious brunch offerings on the first Sunday of each month. Members, friends, visitors and families alike join together in Parish Hall following the 9:30 AM worship service, contribute \$5 per person or \$10 per family.

This offers our beloved community an opportunity for fellowship, to be nourished, to learn more about specific programs that offer the brunch, and to contribute to the general fund of USSB.

Would your group like to be among the highly appreciated programs or committees that offer a Brunch Break this year? Please contact Susan Neufeldt, Program Council, <see directory for email address and phone #> to schedule an upcoming date.



All Member Potlucks Third Saturday

Did you try the monthly potluck last year?

Come join in Sat. October 17th for the monthly 3rd Saturday potluck in Parish Hall. We all help set-up at 5:30 PM, and we eat at 6:00. All are welcome: friends, families... bring a dish for 10-12 people (half that if you are single).

After the meal we have the opportunity to attend the music concert offered at 7:30 by Ken Ryals, choral director. (USSB members attending the potluck are invited to the concert for the bargain suggested donation of \$5!) Questions? Willing to help? Our Program Council is building a coordinating committee now! Contact Catherine Birtalan, Program Council, <see directory for email address and phone #> .

The Program Council encourages you all to celebrate and thank Bruce and Beverly Hanna who were instrumental in beginning our monthly potluck dinner program, just last year. Thank you Bruce and Bev!

Alliance Meeting

Everyone is invited to the monthly Alliance meeting in Parish Hall on Friday October 2 at 2:00 PM. Julie Lopp, an active member of the Unitarian Society, will be the speaker. Her subject: *The Crazy Quilt of My Life and the Stitches that Keep it Together* covers some of her interests and the related activities in which she has been involved. Among these are: participation in the recent Senior Olympics, Director of a non-profit group that aids seniors in finding work, recent participation in and completion of a triathlon, survivor of pancreatic cancer, and owner of several businesses including a "Bed and Breakfast" in Santa Barbara. She will be available to answer questions from the audience. Refreshments will be provided by Alliance members (I thru Z).

Tony Ybarra & Ken Ryals Live! "Elements of Jazz...Live" CD Release Concert Saturday October 17th 7:30PM, Sanctuary

Vocalist Ken Ryals and guitarist Tony Ybarra will be releasing their NEW CD: "Elements of Jazz...LIVE". This performance was recorded June 17th at the Unitarian Society. The CD captures the soul and elegance of Ken Ryals' voice and Tony Ybarra's guitar work and features the works of Ellington, Jobim, and Ybarra and Ryals own composition.

Ken Ryals has performed all over the world in musical venues ranging from cabaret/dinner theatre to Grand Opera. Ken has been performing on stage since 1969 when he toured for two years with the Tucson Boys Chorus. In addition to performance and musical direction, Ken has his own voice studio and works with young singers to develop vocal skills that will make them better performers. Ken's recent performances include the title roles in Meecham's *Tartuffe* and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* as well as Don Alfonso in Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*. Ken holds a Masters degree in vocal performance from the University of Arizona.

Tony Ybarra is an active guitarist, composer, and international performing artist. Tony has four CDs under his own name and has established himself as one of the foremost flamenco guitarists in Southern California. He has performed with Doc Severson, Maria Schneider, and Adam Del Monte. A Santa Barbara native, Tony has a Masters in Guitar performance from the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California. He is a highly-sought soloist and recording artist in many styles and his music has been featured in television and film productions.

Sketches . . . by Aaron

Merging of the Waters

Unitarian Universalists can often be a little leery of rituals and ceremonies. This makes some good sense, given how frequently we have seen the power of ritual misused and abused in this troubled world of ours.

But we do have a few important rituals, and one of them is the one we have just celebrated, as we do to mark the beginning of each congregational year – the Merging (or Blessing) of the Waters.

This ritual, which has become such an important part of so many Unitarian Universalist congregations, was created in 1980 by Carolyn McDade (songwriter who has written “Spirit of Life”, among other great songs) and Lucile Shuck Longview. They were asked to create a ritual for the Women and Religion Conference at East Lansing, Michigan, in 1980; their service was intended to speak to the worship needs of women, which some felt had not been widely included in the movement up to that point. As McDade, social activist and songwriter, recalls, “It was a strong service, about community taking power...about creating a political and liberating theology.”

McDade and Longview shared a vision of justice both for women and for the environment that made working together easy. At Lucile’s house, they spent many rewarding hours brainstorming and writing the service. Everything they produced held up nature and community. McDade believes that this ritual “broke the long silence of laywomen. The creation of a sacred space for and by women happened with a circle and a simple bowl.”

This “celebration of connectedness,” as McDade calls it, empowered women instead of calling them to serve others. The water symbolized the birth waters, the cycles of moon, tides and women, and all the waters of this small blue planet. Each woman attending the conference was invited to bring a container of water with her. McDade recalls that “It was very moving, the women bringing water from places of spiritual importance.” This ceremony was also designed to demonstrate solidarity with women globally, as women the world over traditionally draw and carry water.¹

This was how it all began – but it was only that, a beginning. Today, twenty-eight years later, there are as many versions of this ritual as there are congregations, and as many ways of understanding and experiencing it as there are people participating in it. And this is as it should be.

For me, the merging of the waters affirms both the beauty of our uniqueness as individuals and the sacred and life-giving power of community. All of us are like so many little tributaries, creeks, rivulets and waterfalls – each special, unique and never to be seen again. And yet we simultaneously remain part of the great unified sea of

life, the interconnected web of life of which we are all a part. As the Sufis say, we are simultaneously single drops and the whole of the ocean.

This ritual is not one in which we are required to cry out to a remote supernatural being, although many people do find something much larger than themselves along the way. The meeting of the waters is one in which we celebrate, affirm and nourish one another and the flowing together of our beloved community.

People bring little containers of water from Zanzibar and Bali; Aspen and Cape Cod; from beaches, islands, waterfalls, bathtubs and garden hoses. We bring the water of our lives, each of us, and pour it into the common bowl of our community, from whence it trickles, cool and refreshing over our hands – a manifestation of the nurture and care we have for one another and of the gifts we pledge to share.

And for those who have no water to bring? No worries! Ours is an abundant community! We have plenty in our hearts and in our church home for every person of goodwill who holds out her hands.

I love hearing about all the amazing places our water comes from and the beautiful stories that come with them. But in the end, where the water comes from is much less important than what it means. When it is given with love, water from the tap becomes every bit as sacred as water from the holy Ganges herself. No matter where it comes from, once it is merged and poured out on out-stretched palms it is saturated with holiness—a precious gift of love from each of us, to each of us. From the whole congregation, to the whole congregation.

As I stood at the chancel on InGathering Sunday, I was struck to the core by the depth and beauty all around me. The sounds of trickling water, the smiles and tears on faces of all sorts: old and young, worn and smooth, grief-stricken and brimming with joy. I rejoiced in the feeling of the pitcher in my hands, the texture of people’s hands, and the low sounds of shuffling feet, trickling water, and quiet murmuring voices floating on the clear crystal notes of Marcia’s harp:

“May you be refreshed. May you be nourished. May you be refreshed. May you be nourished.”

One woman, after touching her cool wet hands to her eyes and cheeks, looked at me with eyes wide open and brimming with tears. “I do this every year,” she smiled. “it makes me cry every single time. I look around at everybody and I feel the water they have brought pouring over my hands – and I think to myself – this is communion – this is what it feels like when we truly come together!”

May it be so.

THE REVEREND AARON MCEMRY, PARISH MINISTER

¹. FROM “THE STORY OF THE WATER SERVICE”, BY ELIZA BLANCHARD.

Calendar

Thursday, October 1, 2009

7:00 - 9:00 PM Choir, Sanctuary

Friday, October 2

6:00 - 7:30 AM Early Morning Exercise, with Linda, Parish Hall
 2:00 - 4:00 PM Alliance General Meeting, Parish Hall
 6:00 - 7:00 PM Danceaway Committee, Parish Hall
 7:30 - 10:30 PM DanceAway, Parish Hall

Saturday, October 3

7:00 - 8:30 AM Early Morning Exercise, with Linda, Parish Hall
 9:30 AM- 3:30 PM Choir Retreat

Sunday, October 4

9:30 & 11:30 AM Worship Services
 9:00 - 9:30 AM Youth Choir, Jefferson Hall
 9:00 - 12:45 Childcare, Starr King
 9:30 - 11:00 AM Coming of Age, Blake Lounge
 9:30 - 10:30 AM Children's RE Classes, Classrooms
 10:30 - 11:30 AM Community Social Hour, Parish Garden
 10:30 - 11:30 AM Brunch Break, Parish Hall
 4:00 - 6:30 PM High School OWL, Blake Lounge

Monday, October 5

6:00 - 7:30 AM Early Morning Exercise, with Linda, Parish Hall

Tuesday, October 6

7:00 - 8:30 AM Toastmasters Club #5, Parish Hall
 5:30 - 7:30 PM USSB Exec. Committee, Blake Lounge
 6:00 - 8:00 PM RE Council Meeting, Classroom I

Wednesday, October 7

6:00 - 7:30 AM Early Morning Exercise, with Linda, Parish Hall
 12:15 - 2:00 PM Long Range Planning, Blake Lounge
 5:00 - 6:30 PM Membership Committee, Blake Lounge
 6:15 - 7:00 PM ARE Ingathering, Parish Hall
 7:00 - 8:30 PM ARE UU History, Blake Lounge
 7:00 - 8:30 PM ARE Parenting with Positivity, LaPaz Lounge
 7:00 - 8:30 PM Natural Nourishment, Parish Hall
 7:00 - 8:30 PM Homework Hangout, Classroom One
 7:00 - 9:00 PM Wednesday Book Discussion, Classroom B

Thursday, October 8

7:00 - 9:00 PM Choir, Sanctuary

Friday, October 9

6:00 - 7:30 AM Early Morning Exercise, with Linda, Parish Hall
 6:00 - 8:00 PM Family Fun Night, Jefferson Hall
 7:30 - 10:30 PM DanceAway, Parish Hall

Saturday, October 10

7:00 - 8:30 AM Early Morning Exercise, with Linda, Parish Hall
 9:00 - 11:00 AM Hospitality Training, Parish Hall
 2:30 - 4:30 PM Esperanto Circle, Blake Lounge

Sunday, October 11

9:30 & 11:30 AM Worship Services
 9:00 - 12:45 Childcare, Starr King
 9:30 - 11:00 AM Coming of Age, Blake Lounge
 9:30 - 10:30 AM Children's RE Classes, Classrooms
 10:30 - 11:30 AM Community Social Hour, Parish Garden
 10:45 - 11:30 AM Youth Choir, Jefferson Hall
 1:00 PM SK Rummage Sale Set-up Begins
 4:00 - 6:30 PM High School OWL, Blake Lounge
 7:00 - 9:00 PM USSB Women's Group, LaPaz Lounge

Monday, October 12

SK Rummage Sale Set-up on lower campus
 6:00 - 7:30 AM Early Morning Exercise, with Linda, Parish Hall
 6:30 - 7:30 PM Reason and Reverence Book Discussion, LaPaz
 7:00 - 9:00 PM USSB Men's Council, Blake Lounge

Tuesday, October 13

SK Rummage Sale Set-up
 7:00 - 8:30 AM Toastmasters Club #5, Parish Hall
 5:30 - 7:30 PM Program Council, Blake Lounge

Wednesday, October 14

SK Rummage Sale Set-up
 6:00 - 7:30 AM Early Morning Exercise, with Linda, Parish Hall
 4:00 - 5:00 PM Finance Committee, Blake Lounge
 6:15 - 7:00 PM ARE Ingathering, Parish Hall
 7:00 - 8:30 PM ARE UU History, Blake Lounge
 7:00 - 8:30 PM ARE Parenting with Positivity, LaPaz Lounge
 7:00 - 08:30 PM Natural Nourishment, Parish Hall

Thursday, October 15

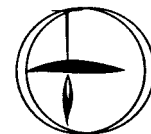
SK Rummage Sale Set-up
 9:00 - 10:30 AM Pastoral Care Committee, LaPaz Lounge
 7:00 - 9:00 PM Choir, Sanctuary

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Next Newsletter Deadline
 October 15-31, 2009
 E-mail: kaleidoscope@ussb.org

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 Aaron McEmrys, Parish Minister
 LeAnn Williams, Director of Lifespan Religious Education
 John Alexie Crane, Minister Emeritus
 Nancy Edmundson, Director of Administration
 Sunday Worship Services: 9:30 & 11:30 AM; Children's Program: 9:30 AM
 Nursery & Children's Care: Sunday, 9:00 AM-12:45 PM, Starr King
 Office Hours: Mon-Fri: 9 AM-4 PM; Sun: 10:00 AM-NOON



The Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara