

Bending the Arc: a Social Justice Quarterly April-June 2017

From the Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis, CA



UUCD Dove & Serpent group with Melinda Simo, our Transylvanian partner

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The First Quarter of 2017 was Filled with Social Justice Activities:

- More than 300 Love Your Neighbor signs (created by our former intern minister, Laura Thompson) have been placed on lawns and in windows and in downtown Davis. They have been carried in vigils and protest marches, including the Women's March on Sacramento. Signs are still available for a donation.
- Jan. 10, Feb. 14, and Mar. 14, UUCD volunteers set up and served at Davis Community Meals, under the leadership of Kathy Boyajian.
- Jan. 15, the Special Collection went to Cool Davis, which promotes energy and water conservation and sustainable lifestyle practices in Davis and the region.
- Jan. 15 and 16, the Free Range Singers marked Martin Luther King Jr. Day with concerts at UUCD benefitting Empower Yolo.
- Jan. 16, UUs volunteered at Farm Davis, Grace Garden at Davis United Methodist Church, and on our own grounds, in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- Jan. 20, UUCD members joined the Inauguration Day Vigil at the Sacramento Dharma Center, which Lorraine Visher helped coordinate.
- Jan. 21, Rev. Beth Banks and Campus Minister, Elizabeth Assenza, joined with others in the Muslim Student Association's 5K run/walk fund raiser to support access to clean drinking water both in the U.S. and abroad. Registration fees and an online fundraiser raised over \$20,000 for the two organizations MSA chose to support.



- Also on Jan. 21, members of UUCD joined with UUs from Sacramento, Grass Valley and Auburn and thousands of other people in the Women's March on Sacramento, sister event to the Women's Marches on Washington, San Francisco, Oakland, and many other places throughout the nation and beyond.
- Jan. 22, In a program sponsored by Uniting for Racial Justice, Marty West led an after-church discussion of Bryan Stevenson's book, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. It accounts the work of his Equal Justice Initiative, which is dedicated to defending "the poor, the wrongly condemned, and those trapped in the furthest reaches of our criminal justice system." Stevenson will be the Ware lecturer at General Assembly this June.
- Jan. 27, Rev. Beth Banks and other UUs were among hundreds at Davis Central Park for a community prayer in support of The Islamic Center of Davis, the recent victim of hateful vandalism, and all Muslims in and around our community. Our members also signed a card of support and contributed to a special collection for the Islamic Center, which Reverend Beth and church leaders delivered in February.



- Jan. 27-28, members and friends of UUCD participated in a weekend retreat at the UU Society of Sacramento, initiating this year's Beloved Conversations, a series of discussions designed to help participants become more effective in multi-cultural, multi-racial relationships. Rev. Ashley Horan, a leading social justice voice in the Midwest (and one-time UUCD intern) acted as trainer for the retreat. Elizabeth Assenza and Barbara Clutter, a Beloved Conversations graduate, facilitate this session of Beloved Conversations.
- Jan. 29, Rev. Horan, who has been involved in Black Lives Matter and coordinated trips to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, shared with us her passion for building a just society in her Sunday sermon.
- Jan. 29, David Breaux, who experienced homelessness, led a workshop on compassion: providing context for our hosting of the Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter, which began that same evening.
- Jan. 29-Feb. 4, our members welcomed people experiencing homelessness in Davis to eat, socialize, and sleep at UUCD as part of the Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter. Lindsay Weston coordinated the activities of UUCD cooks, drivers, cleaner-uppers, and hosts.
- Jan 29, people of all faiths—and those who call themselves agnostic or atheist—gathered for the annual Celebration of Abraham to engage in guided discussions and to learn more about one another's perspectives. John Ashby provided UU leadership in the planning of the event.
- Feb. 11, local UUs joined with others in demonstrations at the Planned Parenthood clinics in Woodland and Vacaville to protest threatened defunding.

- Feb. 26 and Mar. 1, Lorraine Visser facilitated meetings to hear congregants' ideas on reinvigorating our environmental ministry. A short report of the outcome of these meetings appears later in this quarterly.



- UUCD members contributed \$270 to buy art materials for a weekend retreat by SPEAK, a university student-run organization that focuses on supporting and empowering undocumented students.

- Mar. 7, Robin Datel spoke at the Yolo County Board of Supervisors meeting which passed a resolution to Affirm Yolo County as a Safe and Welcoming Community. This resolution was sponsored by Supervisors Don Saylor (UUCD member) and Jim Provenza. Rev. Beth Banks wrote a letter in support, and she and Intern/Campus Minister Elizabeth Assenza, as well as other UUCD members, attended the meeting. Several UUCD members are among a group that met with Supervisor Saylor as he prepared the resolution and continues to meet with him to follow up on specific ways of making our county safe and welcoming.



- Mar. 12, Lucas Frerichs, Rich Rominger, and Don Saylor described effective advocacy at the Social Justice Coordinating Committee workshop, Promoting UU Values through Advocacy. Notes from the workshop are on the UUCD website at <http://tinyurl.com/SJ-Notes>.
- Mar. 11, UUCD was among the sponsors of the Yolo Interfaith Alliance for Climate Justice Conference held at Davis Community Church. Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Theological and Social Ethics Professor at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, spoke on "Climate Justice and Hope: A Spiritual-Political Calling," followed by breakout groups led by community leaders.
- Mar. 15, Rev. Beth and 25 others from UUCD joined with those of other of faiths at the Interfaith Convening About Sanctuary to share resources to work for the safety of undocumented persons in this climate of fear of violence, detention and deportation. More information appears later in this quarterly.
- Mar. 24, UUCD welcomed UC Davis Humphrey Fellows from Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, and Tunisia, to discuss the challenges of climate change in their countries. Organized by the Yolo Interfaith Alliance for Climate Justice; also sponsored by the Social Justice Coordinating Committee.
- Mar. 26, A screening of Ken Burns' documentary, Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War, was attended by about 20 individuals. The film, which tells of a courageous UU pastor and his wife who left the safety of their home to help refugees during the World War II, struck all viewers as profoundly relevant today.
- Throughout January, February and March, UUs were encouraged to sign the UU Declaration of Conscience, a statement of UU values and the importance of action drafted by UUA and UUSC. (www.uua.org/action/show-love/declaration-conscience) The UUCD Board and many individuals within UUCD have signed the Declaration.

Here are ways you can help bend the arc in the second quarter of 2017:

- Plant a “Love Your Neighbor” sign in your front yard. If you already have one, get one for a friend, relative, or neighbor. Available in the Social Hall before and after services; a donation of \$5-10 is appreciated. The sign is ideal for protests and vigils. Get yours soon!
- Take a stand for UU principles. Sign the UUA and the UU Service Committee’s Declaration of Conscience at www.uua.org. Participate in a discussion on Sunday, April 30 (12:45-2pm), focusing on whether we wish to endorse the declaration as a congregation. That vote will be taken at the annual meeting on June 4.
- Deepen our relationship with local refugees by volunteering with the Sacramento office of the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Last fall, we put together Refugee Welcome Kits for IRC. We are developing projects that involve our church and IRC’s New Roots urban farm in West Sacramento and smart grocery shopping in Sacramento. Meanwhile, you can join fellow UUs and other community members at the New Roots farm April 8. RSVP: David Visher, visher@visher-consulting.net
- Eat and connect at “Power of Community,” an Interfaith Community Family Potluck, Friday, April 7, 7-9pm, at UUCD. Sponsored by Uniting for Racial Justice. Questions? Alex Lee-Jobe, aleejalee@yahoo.com
- Hear Tom Andrews, Director & CEO of the UU Service Committee (UUSC), address issues of activism. April 8, 10am-noon, UU Oakland. Andrews is a social change strategist who brings passion, savvy, to the UUSC.
- Volunteer to set up and serve at Davis Community Meals on the second Tuesday of the month: upcoming dates are April 11, May 9, and June 13. Contact Kathy Boyajian, katboy@gmail.com
- Nominate a nonprofit organization to receive a 3rd Sunday special collection during church year 2017-18. Nominations are due by April 15. The form is posted at <http://tinyurl.com/UUCD-SC>
- Participate in a UU Justice Ministry of CA-sponsored Sacramento Area Regional Justice Training, Saturday, April 15, 9am-3pm, UU Society of Sacramento, 2425 Sierra Blvd. Please bring a bag lunch. Presenters include Katia Hansen, President and CEO of UU Refugee and Immigrant Services and Education (UURISE). She will discuss immigration issues under the new administration and how UUs and others are responding. Amanda Ford and Angelica Ruiz of the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water help participants learn about how to support communities fighting water injustice in California. Learn about UJMCAs’ Action Teams and opportunities to become involved with legislation pending at the Capitol. Details & registration: <http://uujmca.org/events/sacramento-area-regional-justice-training-2017/>. Or Beverly Boido, Beverly@uujmca.org, 916-441-0018. Carpooling: see contact info for Robin and Stefan at the end of this *Quarterly*.
- Attend the 5th Annual Fundraiser/Dinner for YIIN (Yolo Interfaith Immigration Network). Apr. 26, 5:30-8:30pm, Davis Veterans Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St. Suggested donation: \$40/adult; \$20/student; 12 & under, free. Mexican buffet, speakers, Mariachi Puente music, raffle & silent auction. Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/YIIN5> and from Ramon Urbano.
- Attend the UU Pacific Central District’s annual assembly, May 6, Mt. Diablo UU in Walnut Creek. The three candidates for the UUA presidency are speaking. Ask them about their stands on social justice issues. Register: <http://www.pcduua.org/events/district-assembly/>. More details from Mari Perla or Steve Burns.
- Participate in Immigrant Day at the Capitol, May 15, 8:30am-4pm. For over 20 years, the California immigrant rights movement has convened annually at the state capitol for a day of advocacy, to champion the rights of the community, and to celebrate immigrants as part of the fabric of our state. The UU Justice Ministry of CA participates with many state & local advocacy organizations. <http://uujmca.org/events/immigrant-day-2017/>. Carpooling: see contact info at end of *Quarterly*.
- Take a Walking Tour of Sacramento’s Oak Park neighborhood, May 20, 10am-noon. Tour emphasizes sites important in Sacramento’s African American history. Two spots available. Let Robin know if you’d like to attend.
- Attend the June 4 Annual Membership Meeting. In addition to other business, we vote on whether to endorse the Declaration of Conscience as a congregation (www.uua.org).

Race Matters

From small to large, efforts to engage race matters are underway. The Social Justice Coordinating Committee is building on the work of Uniting for Racial Justice: soon our Black Lives Matter banner will be lit and visible at night. Our second year of participation in Beloved Conversations is underway, with UUCD leadership by Barbara Clutter (who took the course last year) and Intern/Campus Minister Elizabeth Assenza. Members of the UU Society of Sacramento and UUCD are again taking the class together. Using a curriculum developed by The Fahs Collaborative at Meadville Lombard Theological School, the course is designed to enable deep explorations of race and ethnicity.

Nationally, a hiring decision has triggered a tremendous outpouring of concern about racism and white privilege in the operations of the Unitarian Universalist Association. One of the results of this controversy is the resignation of Rev. Peter Morales as UUA President, effective April 1. Read about these events: <https://www.uuworld.org/>. There are several relevant items, listed in the sidebar on the right column of that page.

A UUCD Trip to the Arizona/Mexico Border

We are planning a trip to the Mexican border under the auspices of the UU College of Social Justice. Goals include deepening our knowledge of border, immigration issues, and our commitment to social justice. Dates: Nov. 7-12. Read about UUCSJ's philosophy of educational travel shared by members of the same congregation, as well as about its Arizona/Mexico border trips: <http://uucsj.org/congregational-journeys/>. More information about the trip will be forthcoming, and soon you'll be able to register for the trip on the UUCSJ website.

The Undocumented, Deportation, and Sanctuary: Things You Can Do Now

Following the March 15 interfaith meeting on sanctuary, Rev. Beth Banks asked the Committee on Ministry and the Co-chairs of the Social Justice Coordinating Committee to form a Sanctuary Discernment Team to coordinate our congregation's work on sanctuary. The Sanctuary Discernment Team will be organized by early April. We expect the team will schedule an open discussion (likely the first of many) with the congregation later in April.

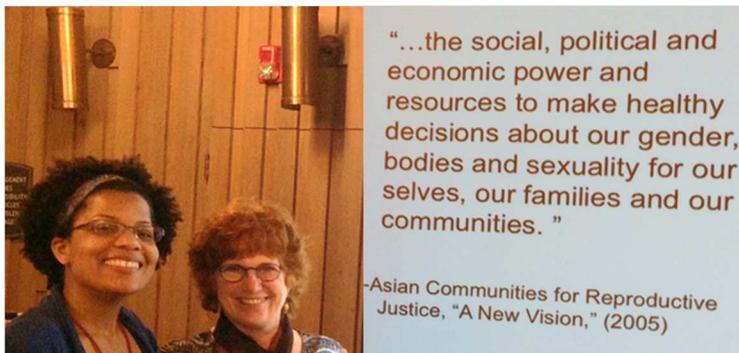
In the meantime, there are a number of resources you may wish to explore. The UUA, UU Service Committee, UU College of Social Justice, and UURise have published background fact sheets, toolkits, and webinars. <http://uucsj.org/tools-for-sanctuary-solidarity/>. Your Social Justice Coordinating Committee Co-chairs, Rev. Beth, and the members of the Committee on Ministry especially recommend the Sanctuary Toolkit.

We urge everyone interested in current immigration and deportation issues to take the UndocuAlly Training for Educators, conducted by the AB540 and Undocumented Students Center at UC Davis. The training, offered for UCD faculty, educators, and community members, gives insight to the special circumstances of those who need to live in the shadows. To date, about 10 members of our congregation have taken this training.

Upcoming trainings: April 12, 9am-noon & May 10, 10am-1pm, Student Community Center on the UCD campus. Sign-up: Hector Gamero, *Education and Training Coordinator* hegamero@ucdavis.edu

The Third UU International Women's Convocation, at Asilomar, Feb. 16-19, 2017 www.intlwomensconvo.org

Rev. Morgan McLean, Melinda Simo (our Transylvanian partner), and Peg Swain attended the Convocation, which featured feminist scholar bell hooks, all UUA president candidates, and program streams focusing on reproductive justice, education, violence against women, leadership, and economic empowerment. Hundreds of woman-identified folks and a few men gathered from around the globe. Rev. Morgan's February 19th service on UU Women highlighted bell hooks' Convocation message to unpack and confront "imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy." Melinda Simo, a UU women's group leader whose transportation to the Convo was provided by our congregation,



reported that she felt “her batteries were recharged.” Peg, the Convo group leader on Reproductive Justice, was fortunate to recruit these extraordinary speakers: Dr. Zakiya Luna (pictured); Dr. Rica Lamar; Rev. Darcy Baxter; and Layidua Salazar. Our group concluded that there is a strong, underused, recent UUA congregational study action issue (CSAI) tool on reproductive justice that should be adopted and implemented, congregation by congregation with cultural sensitivity and autonomy: <http://www.uua.org/reproductive/choice/calling>. (Peg Swain)

Quilting Bee

The Quilting Group's main project continues to be twin-sized quilts for boys living at Progress Ranch, two group homes in Davis for boys age 7-13. In February, a quilt was blessed and presented to a very pleased Progress Ranch boy. This was the 32nd quilt given to a Progress Ranch boy by UUCD. There is a sudden increased need for quilts now because Progress Ranch recently purchased a second house, thus doubling its capacity. Group members appreciate and enjoy the opportunity to make quilts for these boys, and quilters are currently sewing three more twin-sized quilts that will be blessed and presented at the June 4 church service. In addition, in the last couple months, the group gave six small quilts and several pillowcases to Quilts for Kids (for children at the UCD Medical Center) plus three child-sized quilts to the International Rescue Committee (IRC), for children in families being resettled in our region. UUCD is working with IRC in other ways, including the New Roots Farm in West Sac.



UUCD's Environmental Ministry

Social Justice Coordinating Committee co-chairs, Robin Dattel and Stefan Harvey, asked Lorraine Visser to facilitate two gatherings at which participants could consider the future of our Green Sanctuary Committee. First, let's recall the history of this committee.

The Green Sanctuary Committee name comes from the Green Sanctuary accreditation earned by our church in 2007. To be recognized as such, a church must be actively involved in healing the Earth across all facets of congregational operation, including worship and celebration, sustainable living, religious education, and environmental justice. We have used the term “Green Sanctuary” to refer to the committee that not only successfully earned UUCD that moniker, but continued the church's environmental ministry in numerous ways, through advocacy at local and state levels, education (of our congregation and beyond), demonstration of how to eat, drink, and move more gently on Earth, and much more. Our congregation owes a great deal to the volunteers who have been part of this committee, and especially to Judy Moores and Lynne Nittler.

Our discussions in February and March came up with a new model for supporting environmental ministry activities. Rather than a permanent committee meeting on a monthly basis, the idea is to constitute a shorter-lived task force when a project requires one. For example, a task force could be created to investigate installing solar panels on our church property and on the homes of congregants. The task force would disappear when its work was done. Another environmental ministry project, such as hosting a regional conference, would call into being another task force. Meanwhile, smaller one-off events could be sponsored by the umbrella Social Justice Coordinating Committee. This is the plan that SJCC is considering presenting for Board approval. If you have input, please contact Robin or Stefan.

Your leadership is needed

We continue to look for:

- A contributing writer for UUCD's *Bending the Arc*

- Policy coordinators (develop an advocacy agenda: petition signing, letter writing, public testimony and witness) for one quarter or more – mentoring available. One way to begin is to visit the UU Justice Ministry of California website: <http://uujmca.org/>.
- Two at-large member positions on the Social Justice Coordinating Committee
- Interested in learning about these opportunities or anything else in this publication? Contact Robin Dattel, rddd@dcn.davis.ca.us, or Stefan Harvey, stefh2002@yahoo.com.



Written and edited by Elli Norris, Robin Dattel, and Stefan Harvey.