

Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (UUCD)
April Soul Matters Journal:
Liberation from Climate Crisis & UUCD Liberation:
From Isolation to Community Come Together (Online)!



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The April Journal was intended as a special edition honoring the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day and highlighting the voices of some of our youth concerning the climate crisis. The pandemic of COVID-19 has shifted our attention. Yet, there is something to be said for balancing comforting each other with keeping our focus on the issues that await us when we have come through the other side of this crisis.

The April Journal offers a balance of following the course of our intended topics on the Soul Matters theme of Liberation and adding ways we can connect (online). In this publication and in the weekly bulletins, you'll find the website resources for our congregation: <http://uudavis.org/covid-19-response/>

What we offer will change over time, so please continue to check the listing.

We will get through this—together. Please be safe and continue to follow the State and County orders to stay in place at home and restrict interactions with others.
— Rev. Beth Banks, Senior Minister

Poem by Rev. David Miller (*reprinted by permission*)

*Excuse me
for stating
the obvious.*

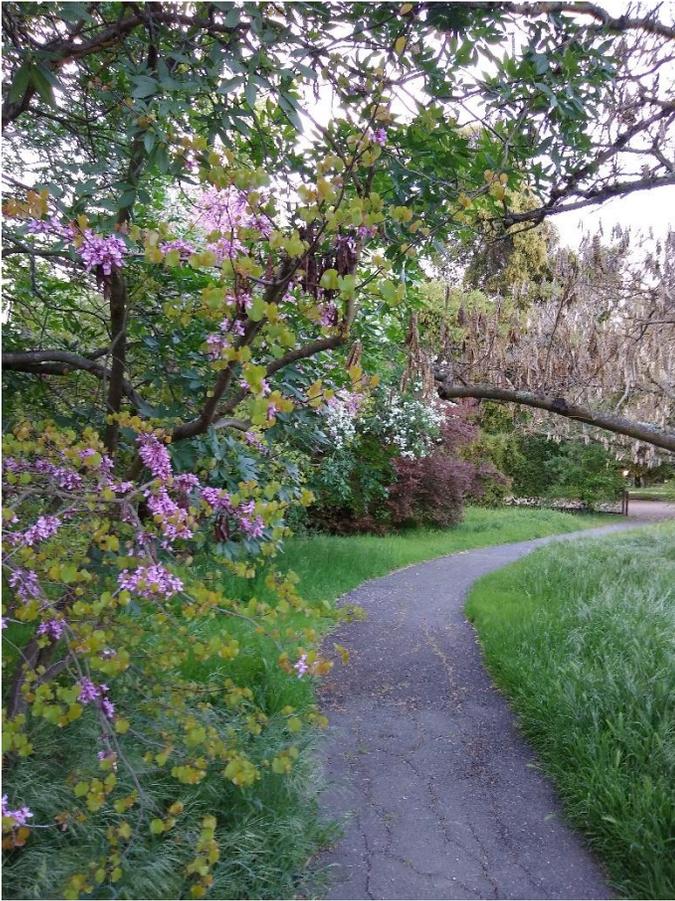
*This pandemic
has no false borders
between countries.*

*It sees
no imaginary
constructs of race.*

*It does not discriminate between
the powerful,
those who have made fortunes
or
struggle to put food on their table.*

*It will not cede to
our
illusion of control.*

*It treats us all as if we are one,
one human entity,
one fallible,
fragile,
and irrepressible family,
which if we could ever recognize,
like this virus does,
maybe
someday
we
could
become.*



2 UUCD Grounds, March 2020, Chris Hendrix-Chupa, Facilities Manager

Special Edition: Liberation from Climate Crisis

Robin Datel created questions for members of UUCD's UUNIQUE (High School) youth who are in the Environmental Club at DaVinci High School. Rev. Beth Banks interviewed or received answers from Alannah Griesmer, Aislinn Murray, and Karina Li. This is an abbreviated version of their answers. Although there is a common theme of a commitment to addressing climate crisis, each person's response was unique.

We hope to share their full response on our Earth Day Easter service.

How does the Climate Crisis make you feel?

Karina, Aislinn and Alannah agreed that they're always aware of the climate crisis. They are stressed and upset to think about the planet changing in ways that may be irreparable. To some degree, each person is frightened of what this means for the future. There is frustration and confusion: *Why aren't people of all ages willing to be inconvenienced or change their habits for the good of the earth?*

How did the Climate Crisis become important to you?

Alannah—*I started to research the Climate Crisis and was immediately drawn to trying to make a change. Watching a documentary called "Cowspiracy" showed me some of the changes we need to make.*

Aislinn—*It started with my family spending a lot of time with the land and raising animals. My mother grew flowers, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, built raised beds for leafy vegetables, and created CSA boxes. We raised chickens, rabbits, goats and show pigeons. When our family learned about climate crisis, we were shocked.*

Karina—*When I was lucky enough to travel with my family to Australia, I heard about how nature has been changing for the worse. I've started to notice things about the environment a lot now. The ice caps are melting and the weather is extreme. Like Alannah, watching the documentary, "Cowspiracy," made me more committed. Now, I think about recycling and the micro-plastics consumed by many living beings, from the animals in the ocean to what humans eat.*

What are you doing about it?

Karina—*I joined The Environmental Club at DaVinci and I've chosen to bike to school. I'm thinking much more about recycling, composting and caring about our water use. I'm concerned about how much material is used for packaging.*

Aislinn—*I was one of the founding members of the Environmental Club at school. I'm an intern volunteer with Tree Davis, (programs in Woodland & Davis) and I love working with Tree Davis Executive Director, Erin Marineau. (Erin happens to be a UU!) One of my goals is to get other kids excited about the Environmental Club and to join us for enthusiastic conversations about stopping climate change.*

The Environmental Club is creating videos they hope will be shown in classes by their teachers. One video is about becoming vegetarian. We know that animal agriculture is a major contributor to climate crisis. Some students in the Environmental Club eat plant-based diets and others are omnivores. I'm respectful of the many choices people make about food. What our Club members have in common is our passion to care for the earth. Everyone is involved in some project to help the earth.

Alannah—*I organized a climate strike. I've also decided to be a vegetarian. I'm one of the founding members of The Environmental Club.*

What would you most like to see our church do about climate crisis?

Alannah—We could raise money for organizations that act against the companies that create the most damage to the environment. We could focus on renewable resources of energy and plan more vegetarian/vegan meals.

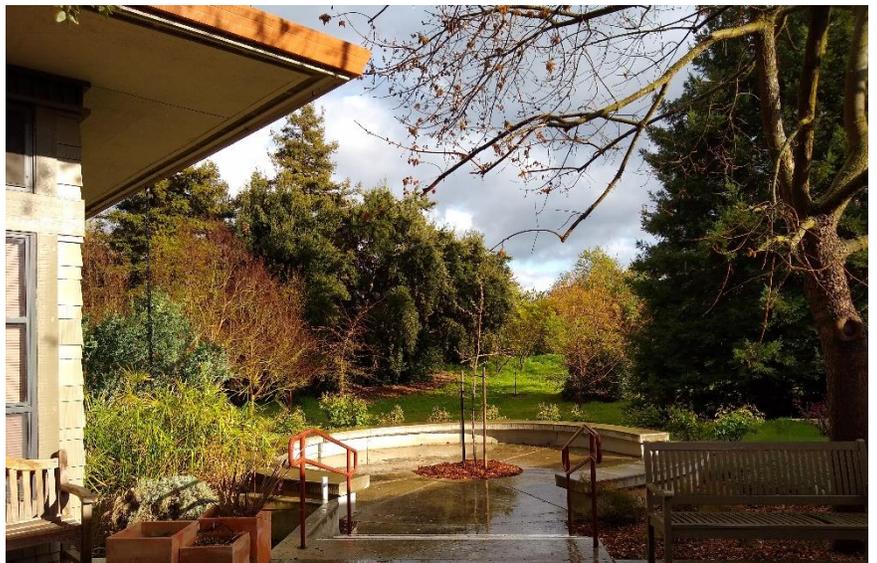
Aislinn—I'd like the church to make the climate crisis more central in its programming. It would be exciting to have a display showing that this is important as soon as everyone walks through the front door. We could also get involved in programs like Tree Davis. We'd be working with others to reach important goals.

Karina—I'd like to have an all-generation project that can help us share new awareness as a congregation. I liked our Meatless Monday program because everyone was doing it together and learning together. We measured our progress by adding beans to a jar and every week we watched the jar get fuller. We knew all-ages were doing this project together.

Is there anything else you would like our church community to know?

Alannah—I'd like the older generations to become active allies with our younger generation. The youth feel discouraged by the apathy of many adults. I'd like to see adults committed to the youth being able to experience a beautiful, and thriving earth in their future.

Aislinn—I wish that everyone treated climate crisis as an emergency, because it is. I want to encourage everyone to know that it's easier to make a difference than it may sound. Don't let the shocking statistics scare you into becoming inactive. All the little things you can do really do add up. Try not to be overwhelmed and just begin.



3 UUCD Grounds, March 2020, Chris Hendrix-Chupa, Facilities Manager

Deepening our Connections, Cultivating our Community

—Sharon Hale, Stewardship Chair

We were in the middle of our Annual Giving Drive, the time of year when we ask our members and friends to make a pledge toward next year's church budget, when most of us were told to go home and stay there. The stewardship program was going really well, too. As I reported to the Board for their March meeting, more than two-thirds of the pledges that we had received at that point had increased their pledge. I find that phenomenal. If you have made your pledge, thank you so very much for your generosity. If you haven't yet done so, please take a moment (and for some of us, we seem to have more of those available to us right now) to send in your pledge form or to contact the church office and make your pledge. How liberating, to be able to check one thing off of your to do list! And, because life has its ups and downs, please remember that if you find that you must change your giving to our church, we understand; just let us know. We all give one way or another. Giving and receiving, sharing, is one of the many ways we cultivate our community. Sometimes you can give more and sometimes not as much, but either way, feel free to let us know. Thank you.

<http://uudavis.org/pledge-form/>

After reading this month's journal, including the McKibben piece (below), please think deeply and creatively, even radically, about the following questions:

1. *What would you most like to see our church do in response to the climate crisis?*
2. *How do you see yourself participating in that effort?*

You will likely be asked, maybe more than once, to share your answers with the congregation in the weeks and months ahead.



4 UUCD Grounds, March 2020, Chris Hendrix-Chupa, Facilities Manager

NOTE TO CHURCHES: NO TIME FOR NORMAL

Author: Bill McKibben

The rise of religious environmentalism has been welcome and helpful – but climate change is essentially a race, and at this point faith communities aren't pitching in fast enough or with sufficient heft to help change the outcome.

Thirty years ago it was understandable that churches didn't make climate change a priority. It was a new topic, appearing out of the blue – and in progressive denominations it at first seemed a bit of a luxury, to be addressed after hunger and war. (In conservative denominations environmentalism seemed – and in many tragic cases still does – like a waystation on the road to paganism.) That's shifted: From the pope's remarkable encyclical *Laudato si'* to the pastors willing to get arrested blocking pipelines, there's been serious commitment to change.

Still, given the scale of the challenge – which by any measure is the largest crisis human beings have yet stumbled into – it's not been the response we need. The world is on fire, but the church isn't. And that's particularly strange since, as three decades of close and careful reading have revealed, the scriptures are full of the messages we need.

Actually, close and careful reading is barely required. The first page of the book is basically an environmental screed. God makes a beautiful world, pronounces it good, and turns it over to us to safeguard. We are told to dress it and to keep it. A few pages further on, when we screw up, God drowns the planet but makes sure to preserve a breeding pair of every creature on earth. It's Greenpeace on steroids.

And the gospel is just as clear. If our transcendent job is to love our neighbor, then what does it mean that we are drowning them, sickening them, turning their farms into desert and forest into ash? It means we are not doing what we have been called to do.

The "why" of our inaction hinges, I think, on questions of power. We've tended to do those things that we can do without confronting essential facts about our society. New insulation in the sanctuary? Solar panels atop the parsonage? Not a problem. But for at least some denominations and congregations, going further has meant an unacceptable level of tension. Episcopalians and Unitarians have divested their holdings from fossil fuels; Presbyterians and Methodists have refused; the Vatican hasn't acted either, despite the pope's fine words. Even the fact that oil companies have lied for decades about the reality of climate change is not enough for us to confront them – the tension is too high.

But we've got to get outside our comfort zones. Because the planet is outside its comfort zone – way outside. We need bishops wearing collars going to jail to block fracking wells; we need parochial schools suspending classes to join the magnificent school strikes spreading across the globe. We need a relentless moral challenge to the powers and principalities currently taking our planet if not to hell then to someplace of a remarkably similar temperature. This is a social challenge, not an individual one: At this point we can't make the math of climate change work one household at a time. It's not the job of the sexton.

None of the good that we do adds up to the scale of the damage now occurring. Combine every animal that the Heifer Project ever sent overseas, and every irrigation pump and every hospital built by every church aid program, and it can't match the damage that comes from what we've done: There are whole nations now on the edge of disappearing beneath the waves.

If "normal" on earth is now disappearing, it's time for normal in the church to vanish too. This is the great challenge and emergency of our time on earth, just as the fight against fascism was the great challenge of the 20th century. We don't need to kill or be killed to meet this crisis, but we do need to be mobilized. We don't need bystanders.

And if we do – well, there's the chance for renewal that always comes with faithful witness. To let young people see the church at the forefront of the fight they care about the most would be to present them with fresh evidence that religion is not just what they've come to believe. Scientists have done their job and provided us with a warning. Engineers have done their job and provided us with the technologies that could conceivably rescue us – the solar panels and windmills that provide true hope. Time for the people of faith to do their particular job and fight like heck for the future.

*Author and environmentalist Bill McKibben is a founder of 350.org, the first planet-wide, grassroots climate change movement, which has organized 20,000 rallies around the world. His 1989 book *The End of Nature* is regarded as the first book for a general audience about climate change. His latest book, *Falter: Has the Human Game Begun to Play Itself Out?* (Henry Holt), was released in April.*

Bill McKibben, "Note to Churches: No Time for Normal," *Reflections* (Spring 2019),
<https://reflections.yale.edu/article/crucified-creation-green-faith-rising/note-churches-no-time-normal>



Reading McKibben & Making Changes

The article by Bill McKibben means more to me now in our current health crisis than when I read it before. I've been challenged and inspired by McKibben's work since being introduced to his books in a college class. I agree with him that it is past the time for something radical to occur. Since having Myrtille, I have felt extreme grief and concern about how the climate crisis will manifest in her lifetime. The climate scientists say we need to act radically by the time she gets to kindergarten or we will be past the point of no return. What will be left for her? Will there be affordable drinking water in California? How will she help climate refugees? What about the world my grandchildren will inherit?

The spread of this novel corona virus shows us how truly connected we all are. What affects people we will never know on the other side of the globe, will surely affect us. I'm hoping that this world-wide pause in production and consumption will inspire people all over the world to change their patterns. There have been before-and-after pollution maps of the U.S.A., China, and Italy showing how much impact human movement and activity has, and how quickly a sudden turn in events can reduce pollution. If you haven't seen—look them up! When we're not commuting daily, or demanding cheap factory products, or flying without thought, we can actually change the world, and maybe save ourselves in this climate crises. That's the most hope I've felt since reading the UN report on Climate Crisis in October 2018! We can STOP: look at us, we have! We've done business online. We didn't head to stores out of boredom. We can turn to local resources for food and plan our meals according to what's available. We can have fun and make meaning locally with games in the living room. We can visit with friends around the world on video, laugh, and share our lives. We have proven that we can act together for the good of all humanity. That's what's required for the climate crisis and this difficult time has proven a good way to start. When we have the "all clear" to go back to business as usual, I hope we don't. For me and my family, we're making big lifestyle decisions for the good of all. Please join us!

– Rev. Morgan McLean, Congregational Life Minister

Your Program Team's Work: How has UUDC implemented the Board's 2019 focus on "Deeping connections within our community"? The Program Team (professional staff, lay leaders & Ministers) developed goals around that focus. First they assisted us all to get more electronically connected to each other and to our UUDC programs using our new data base management program REALM, and currently almost half of households are signed on. They prioritized bringing us together on a multi-generational level by captivating us with the Sparklers Choir for all ages and abilities. Look for another great performance this Spring. (postponed). And let's not forget about the ever popular Deep Listening Circles. We had a great turn out in fall; in spring we doubled the number of people who want to be a part of this fun way to stay connected.

Your Program Team has set an intentional focus on our current climate crisis and staying connected by dedicating a worship service to Earth Day. They are looking forward to sharing some very hopeful messaging about what we can do together as a congregation to help battle this issue (including a special edition April Journal on the Environment). The board recommends reading, as we have, environmentalist Bill McKibben's article "Note to Churches: No Time for Normal."

<https://reflections.yale.edu/article/crucified-creation-green-faith-rising/note-churches-no-time-normal>

This spring, our children and youth will have fun learning about bees as they ask the church to join with them in supporting the Bee Haven. Families worked at Farm Davis to help grow food for the community. So you see.... There are so many ways that your Program Team is working tirelessly to insure that we all stay deeply connected. Watch for more updates in the coming months.

–Tamara Range, Board Member

Online Sunday Worship, April 2020

While our congregation follows the statewide stay-at-home order, worship and programming are being offered online. At the time of publication, worship services are posted on [UUCD's YouTube channel](#) Sundays at 10:30am.

You're invited to make a chalice and have it ready for the beginning of worship. Make a Chalice from items you have at home (clay, Legos,??) OR have a "Chalice Kit" delivered to your doorstep (and other RE crafts). [Fill out this form for delivery.](#)

You'll be invited to light your chalice when we light the chalice in our recorded worship. Take a picture of your lit chalice and send it to office@uudavis.org with permission to share it. Bring your brunch to worship! Invite a circle of friends to a coffee hour discussion on Zoom or Facetime following worship.

Although the church presence is constant, there may be adjustments to sermon topics or the emphasis of a service. We're all learning new skills, and we've discovered that circumstances can change quickly!

April 5, UU Campus Community UC Davis Students, Alex Haider-Winnett, Campus Minister 2019-2020

EvenSong: *our monthly Sunday evening services of singing, meditation, and readings, are postponed until a future month. We'll notify you when they return!*

April 12, *For the Beauty of the Earth*, Rev. Beth Banks, Rev. Morgan McLean. This year is the 50th anniversary of the first Earth Day. Our Easter holiday service will recognize the theme of hope that emerges from a time of hopelessness. We'll consider climate crisis and include representation from some of our UUCD youth. We need each other to live with hope. As our Board of Trustees says at the end of every meeting, "I join with you, to do together what I cannot do alone."

April 19, *Preaching from the Husetops*, Rev. Előd Szabó, Balazs Scholar; Rev. Morgan McLean, Worship Leader; Steve Burns, Worship Associate. The fiddler on the roof is a well-known symbol for the desire to find joy and happiness in uncertain times such as we are now experiencing. Likewise, a preacher on the housetop is a person who always remembers who sent him/her and the message to his/her people. How do Transylvanian Unitarians try to take the challenge and speak out?

April 26, *Ramadan: Opening the Gates of Paradise*, Rev. Beth Banks; Jaki Conklin, Worship Associate. Ramadan commemorates the month when the Qu'ran was revealed to Mohammed. We'll share important stories about Ramadan and its importance for practicing Muslims. Our service will include the thoughts gathered from members of Davis Engagement and Interfaith Network, DEIN.

In light of the corona virus pandemic, the Board of Trustees is giving additional consideration to the recipient of the April Offering. We'll notify the congregation with the name of the designated organization before our first service on April 5.

Listen to Past Services

Edited Sunday services at <http://uudavis.org/worship-2/past-worship-services/>

Special thanks to Kirk Ridgeway, who edits and posts all of these worship services!