Upcoming Sunday Services

December 7: Help for the Holidays
Rev. Theresa Novak, Worship Leader

The winter holidays can be difficult for many of us. There is so much pressure to spend more money than we have. There is so much pressure to be happy and to have fun. For those of us who are grieving the loss of loved ones, for those of us whose families are not as healthy or as warm and as accepting as we might hope, this time of year can be particularly challenging. It is important to remember that we are not alone in our complicated emotions. It is important to remember that we too can experience joy.

December 14: How the Unitarians Saved Christmas
Rev. Theresa Novak, Worship Leader

There was an earlier war against Christmas, and the Unitarians won. This will be a fun service and a fascinating history lesson.

December 21: The Longest Night: a Solstice Ritual
Rev. Theresa Novak, Worship Leader

This will be an intergenerational service as we ritually leave behind some of what now longer serves us. We will embrace the dark and its healing powers.

Special Wednesday Service
December 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 5:00 PM
Rev. Theresa Novak, Worship Leader

This will be an intergenerational, and fairly traditional, Christmas Eve service which will include a liberal interpretation of the Christmas story and lots of carols.

December 28: New Year Wishes
Holly Harwood, Worship Associate

More details on this last service of 2014 to come soon! Please see www.bfuu.org.
Dear BFUU Members and Friends,
From November 9-11th, I had the opportunity to attend the Unitarian Universalist Association’s (UUA’s) first ever conference for developmental ministers in Denver, Colorado. The weather wasn’t great as it dropped to 10 degrees on our second day there, but it was one of the best and most useful meetings I have ever attended. Unitarian Universalist national level staff in attendance and giving presentations included: The Reverend Sarah Lammert, Director of Ministries and Faith Development, the Reverend Keith Kron Transitions Director, and the Reverend Nancy Bowen, Regional Lead for the Pacific Western Region. Most exciting was the opportunity to hear in detail about the experiences of our Boulder, Colorado congregation that completed 5 years of developmental ministry and was recently named a “breakthrough congregation” by the UUA because of how much they have grown – both in numbers and in spirit. Four lay leaders of that congregation gave a presentation to us as did one of their intern ministers. The Reverend Howell Lind, their Developmental Minister was with us the entire time as he shared his wisdom and experience. The sixteen of us in attendance listened closely and peppered them with questions throughout.

I was particularly struck by some of the similarities between Boulder and BFUU. When Rev. Lind first went there, it was an aging congregation that owned a building that was in very bad shape. They had a budget deficit and were drawing down their endowment. There were so many rentals that they had little space available for their own programming. Although it was located in a liberal college town, very few young adults were in attendance.

Five years later, they have an attractive building, a net increase of close to 200 new members, many young adults involved in leadership, and a budget surplus.

Rev. Lind’s first two years there were extremely rocky. He made significant and immediate changes to the Sunday worship services, which he described as having the flavor of a disorganized social club. Within a week he eliminated spoken joys and sorrows and all announcements from the service attempting to make them more spiritually satisfying and attractive to new comers. There was a lot of push back, but he stood firm. The reaction he and the lay leaders described was much more intense than what happened at BFUU when I made some very similar changes to worship. Interestingly, Rev. Lind had negotiated a five year contract that had a provision that if they asked him to leave before the five years were up, he would be paid for the entire 5 years. He said he needed that in order to have the freedom to do what needed to be done. He was called an autocrat and worse. The board was disparaged as his puppets. It was very ugly for quite awhile, but they held onto the vision and are now so happy they did.

continued next page
Dear BFUU Members and Friends (continued from p. 2)

I am so glad that I am at BFUU rather than at Boulder 5 years ago! We have had some bumps, and some conflict, but in general, most of the congregation seems more than ready to move on into a future where BFUU’s light really will shine. You were already on the path when I arrived.

At the wonderful welcoming celebration you held for me on November 16, Moses Channels sang the Holly Near song, “I Am Willing.”

I am open and I am willing
To be hopeless would seem so strange
It dishonors those who go before us
So lift me up to the light of change

May the children see more clearly
May the elders be more wise
May the winds of change caress us
Even though it burns our eyes

There is hurting in my family
There is sorrow in my town
There is panic in the nation
There is wailing the whole world round

Give me a mighty oak to hold my confusion
Give me a desert to hold my fears
Give me a sunset to hold my wonder
Give me an ocean to hold my tears

I’d asked him to sing it (and teach the congregation the chorus) before I went to the Denver meeting, but guess what we sang at our opening worship there the first evening?

I learned a lot at the conference and I will be sharing more about it with you as time goes on. Most of all, however, it inspired me to keep on doing the work we are doing together. It is good work, and already people are coming forward with great ideas on how we can improve things here at BFUU - including ideas to enhance our worship services, spruce up the building, and raise more money so we can better serve our mission.

We are open and we are willing.
To be hopeless would seem so strange
It dishonors those who go before us
So lift us up to the light of change

Rev. Theresa

Regular Committee Meetings

**Social Justice**
*1st & 3rd Sunday at 12:30 PM in the Fireside Room*

**Sunday Services**
*2nd Tuesday at 7 PM in the minister's office*

**Finance**
*3rd Thursday at 4:30 PM in the Fireside Room*

**Religious Education**
*3rd Sunday at 12:30 PM (after services)*

**Hospitality and Membership**
*4th Sunday at 12:30 PM (after services)*

**Buildings & Grounds**
Meets once per month, contact Ben Burch
President's Report

Happy Holidays! We will have a Christmas Eve Service on December 24. Bring cookies.

Our event to welcome Reverend Theresa Novak to Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists was a lovely success. There was a bit of pomp and circumstance with the Minister's Procession to the stage. There were thoughtful and inspiring speeches and beautiful singing by the BFUU Choir and by Moses Channels. A sumptuous Mediterranean Feast was catered by Chris Planellas and Kathy Riehle. A huge THANKS go to everyone who helped make it such a success.

The evening before this event, the Social Justice Committee held its annual big bash, fundraising and awards event, which was also a success. They raised money and everyone had fun. Chris and Kathy also catered this event. Kudos to SJC and to Chris and Kathy.

As we bring 2014 to a close, BFUU continues on its path to a stronger, healthier future. We have many opportunities for growth with new members eager and willing to pitch in and help in many ways: music, fund raising, finance, hospitality and more.

In January we will send out Pledge payment statements. The minimum required Pledge is $89 per year, which our cost to the UUA and PCD. If your Pledge is below that, please consider raising it. Also, when you plan your Holiday giving, remember BFUU.

We recently received a much appreciated bequest of over $95,000 from a former beloved member, Tracy O'Kates. If you are considering leaving an endowment bequest to BFUU, please contact Treasurer Ben Burch.

Remember, bring cookies to the Christmas Eve Service.

Susan Singh, President

Building and Grounds Report

A lot of work has been done on the buildings and more is coming! The Building and Grounds committee has worked with our Building Manager and outside firms to keep the short- and long-term building maintenance, repairs and improvements moving along.

**Completed:**

*Fellowship Hall (FH) interior*
- Painted wainscot
- Window by ramp room: installed window sill, repaired frame, prepped sill for paint
- Bathrooms: Installed new toilet seats and jacket/purse hooks
- Floor: repaired
- Kitchen remodel: drawings underway

*Exterior and Grounds*
- Gutters/downspouts cleared (Grateful Gutters)
- Weeding: Bonita sidewalk cracks weeded
- Bike parking area: continued R&D, finalized design, sourced and delivered concrete squares.
- Removed all wood in pile behind garden boxes.
- Roof replacement: obtained one estimate.

**In Process:**

- Bike parking area: install concrete squares, order and install bike rack.
- Roof replacement: seek additional estimates from roofers
- Seismic retrofit of Fellowship Hall: seek estimates
- Weeding: weed garden box edges and trim around base of redwood tree

**Proposed Work:**

- Paint: touch up ramp, stairway walls, rails, R. E. entry door
- Storm windows for Minister's office
- Kitchen remodel: complete and submit design work
- Misc: repair windows & h/w and add new toilet seat in FH, add deadbolts, clean skylights & ceilings.
News from the Religious Education and Exploration Committee

"The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence." Denis Waitley

Dear BFUU Community,

It is so much fun to get to be a part of the BFUU community this year. As we approach the holidays and the long, cold, and hopefully rainy nights, I wish you health and happiness and time to reflect upon your life and year with an eye to being true to yourself and your own personal covenant.

We are building a Religious Education and Exploration program that spans the whole lifetime of human experience, and we hope that you join us where you are. Because we are Unitarian Universalists, we get to ask questions about ethical behavior, belief, and practices as well as how to be in a world that is not always embracing of our liberal religious values.

Whatever your age, gender, background or ability, whoever you are, you are welcome.

If you have any concerns, desires, or ideas to share, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Below please find other events and announcements about BFUU RE events and happenings.

Warmly,

Nanci Armstrong-Temple

BFUU RE Committee Chair

We continue with two classrooms: kindergarten through fourth grades using the Love Will Guide Us curriculum and fifth-sixth grades using the Amazing Grace curriculum.

There is some interest in a Spring OWL class-the sexuality education curriculum for our faith; please let us know if you would like to be involved or help coordinate that.

The young adult group, Pub Theology, meets on the third Friday of the month at Au Coquelet, from 7-9 pm. Please contact our RE program coordinator Lincoln Statler for more information Lincoln.statler@gmail.com

SpiritUUal Contemporaries at BFUU, an open covenant group for self-defined middle adults, welcomes those who would like to experience open covenant small group worship. We meet in the Benji room, upstairs in the annex, on the first Thursday of the month from 7-9 pm. Please contact Nanci Armstrong-Temple for more information. 510-301-5073 call/text or fraggle94@gmail.com

All are welcome to the RE meeting, which generally meets the third Sunday of the month outside on the playground, in order to accommodate families with children. This Month we will meet on Sunday, December 21st. All are welcome, and please feel free to bring an item to share for our potluck.

T’ai Chi and Qi Gong with Gene Herman takes place at 4pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. Please see the BFUU calendar for updates.

For more information on these events, or to request or suggest other RE activities, please contact the committee chair Nanci Armstrong-Temple at fraggle94@gmail.com
Many BFUU members and friends as well as local clergy attended the celebration on November 16. Chris Planellas catered the delicious refreshments following the service and Andy Jamieson, Moses Channels, and the BFUU choir led by Dominic Jeffries provided the music. The following covenant was part of the worship service:

**Covenant Between The Reverend Theresa Novak and BFUU**

Susan Singh: As the president of the Board of Trustees of this congregation, I affirm that our board has entered into an agreement with the Reverend Theresa Novak to be our minister and to help us catalyze the transformation of the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists into a sustainable and vibrant congregation, capable of thriving in a challenging future.

The Reverend Theresa Jane Novak: I enter into this ministry with energy and enthusiasm. I promise to do my very best to hold you and love you as together we move boldly into the future we will create here. There is so much history, so much hope, and so many people with open and loving hearts and minds that we cannot, we must not, fail to meet the challenge with steadfast courage and hard work.

Susan Singh: In order to meet the challenges facing us, the relationship between our minister, the Board of Trustees, and the congregation must be grounded in open communications, mutual trust, and good faith. Will the members of the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists please now rise in body or spirit?

Please join me in reading the words printed in your order of service.

Members of the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists: Our Board of Trustees has asked you, Reverend Theresa, to be our Minister. We welcome you to dwell among us, living and speaking the truth in love as best as you are able. We recognize your call to ministry and do hereby pledge to you our respect, hope, faith, and love. We know that we are human and that you are human too. We pledge to honor that humanity with patience, love, and charity toward each other and toward you, our minister. You will be our minister in times of sorrow and of trouble, and in times of joy and of celebration. This promise and covenant comes from our hearts.

The Reverend Theresa Jane Novak: I have chosen you, the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists to be the congregation that I will serve as a minister. I am honored to be among you, living and speaking the truth in love as best as I am able. With humility, I do hereby pledge to you my respect, hope, faith, and love. I know well that we are all human. I pledge to honor that humanity with patience, love, and charity toward each other and, yes, also towards myself as your minister. I will be your minister in times of sorrow and of trouble, and in times of joy and of celebration. With my mind, body, soul, and most of all with my heart, and sustained by all that is holy and all that is human, and with your help in small things and in great, I commit myself to this ministry.

Susan Singh: Will all present here today please now rise in body or in spirit and join with me in reading the words printed in your order of service.

All: We recognize and celebrate this new and sacred relationship between the Reverend Theresa Novak and the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists. With faith in the redeeming power of love, we bless this day.
Correction and Apology to Norman Frank

I'm so sorry I transposed your name in the last issue! Of course I know better than that and it will surely not happen again. I have corrected the version on the website and trust that our folks knew it was my error and wished you a happy birthday out loud or in their hearts. We are all keeping you in our thoughts and I am wishing you a happy belated birthday and hoping that your year gets brighter as each day passes.

Susan Macke, Office Coordinator

Social Justice Watch and Benefit Dinner Report

Deep gratitude to the whole community for their support of our Hal Carlstad SJC Awards Dinner benefit. Special thanks to Chris Planellas for exquisite catering, presentation, generosity and efficiency. Thank you as well to our awardees: MECA, Dr. Michael Parenti and Planting Justice.

Kudos and cheers to Phoebe Sorgen for her work on Measure P and to Wyndy Knox Carr and Tom Luce for their work on Prop 47. We're glad Meas. D passed and regret that Prop R didn't.

Coming in January: the film "Pay 2 Play" on Jan 8 and our annual Tom Paine Awards on Jan 31.

Ferguson: There are next steps and strategies so collaborate with us and the UUA to stand strong.

View From Rooms@bfuu.org

Blessed Be the Rain Falling Down!

While we get our heater at home ready for seasonal use, our facilities are being used just about to their max. December has many concerts & recitals plus a puppet show! SJC continues their Conscientious Projector series, and Berkeley Transition also has their monthly get-together.

I've spent many hours getting 2015 schedules set for our regular and new room users. Come January we'll have many young Russian scholars in the R.E. building during the week.

Plus I'd like to extend a personal invitation to the first public performance of my Berkeley Dulcimer Orchestra on Saturday, Dec. 13th, 2pm. Free to the public, donations gladly accepted. This is the most fun I've ever had playing the dulcimer! Co-director is my teacher, Steve Eulberg. All are welcome!

And we have our annual offering from Ventrul Rinpoche -- the Festival of Lights, on Dec. 16th. He cooks a Tibetan dinner for BFUU in gratitude for the space we give each week to the Center for Tibetan Culture.

Finally, Christmas Eve will be celebrated in the Hall! A lovely ending to 2014 for all of us. As Tiny Time says, "God Bless Us! Every one!"

All the best,

Deborah Hamouris
Event Space Coordinator
**Featured BFUU Events**

**Screening the Green Film Series: Happy**

*Thursday, December 4, 6:30 PM potluck, 7:00 Film in the Fellowship Hall—1924 Cedar St.*

Transition Berkeley invites you to join us for a delicious vegetarian pot luck dinner, a joyful green song fest with Hall Hammer and Nancy Schimmel from Occupella, and HAPPY, an uplifting movie about human beings at their best. Our featured film HAPPY takes us on a journey from the swamps of Louisiana to the slums of Kolkata in search of what really makes people happy.

Please join us for locally grown snacks at 6:30. The film will start promptly at 7:00.

Contact: info@transitionberkeley.com

This event is co-sponsored by Transition Berkeley and the BFUU Social Justice Committee.

Suggested Donation $5-10. No one turned away for lack of funds!

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**Conscientious Projector Film Series:**

**These Storied Streets**

*Thursday, December 11 at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall – 1924 Cedar St.*

This film explores the real and compelling stories of veterans, families, and young adults who struggle every day with living on the streets. The film questions the easy stereotypes as homelessness rates are growing in unprecedented numbers only in the United States.

Suggested donation $5-10. No one turned away for lack of funds.

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**BFUU Open Mic with , Featured Artist Sharyn Dimmick**

*Friday, December 12 at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall—1924 Cedar St.*

Join us for BFUU's monthly Open Mic night. Sign-ups begin at 6:30 PM and the featured artist performs at 8:30 PM.

Our Featured Artist Sharyn Dimmick plays acoustic folk, drawing on traditional hymns and ballads, in addition to the work of contemporary composers. She has a CD called "Paris" available for purchase on cdbaby at http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/SharynDimmick.

December's host is Holly Harwood, who is a Poet and peace activist. She is currently serving as the Chair of the BFUU Social Justice Committee and Coordinator of Code Pink Golden Gate Chapter. Holly is also Dozo the Clown at various Bay Area locations. Holly understands the power and influence of good poetry and song in creating meaningful community, wholesome values, and achievable visions. Join Holly Harwood as our host and team create another unique and memorable monthly open mic! http://hollyharwood.com.
Recurring/Ongoing BFUU Events

T’ai Chi & Qi Gong with Gene Herman
Mondays and Wednesdays, 4-5 p.m. in the Connie Barbour Room-1606 Bonita Ave.
This practice is appropriate for people of all ages. It improves health and well-being at any age.

Elders' Circle
Tuesday December 2, 11:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall
The BFUU Elders' Circle meets at 11:00 AM on First Tuesdays in the Fellowship Hall.

BFUU SpiritUUal Contemporaries
Thursday December 4, 7:00 PM in the Benjy Room–1606 Bonita Ave.
SpiritUUal Contemporaries at BFUU, an open covenant group for self-defined middle adults, welcomes those who would like to experience open covenant small group worship. Please contact Nanci Armstrong Temple for more information.

Wind Song West Cafe
Friday December 5, at 12:00 noon in the Fireside Room—1606 Bonita Ave.

BFUU Second Sundays Potluck
Sunday December 14, after service (around 12:30 PM) in the Fellowship Hall–1924 Cedar St.
Come one, come all! Whether you have a dish to share or not, we in the hospitality and membership committees invite you, on behalf of all our membership, to join us as we break bread in the spirit of loving community. If you can, please help us set up/clean up.

POETS ON POLITICS

LEFT CENTER RIGHT
RED BLUE GREEN
POETS ON POLITICS
BE HEARD BE READ BE SCENE
Host: Holly Harwood MC: Gene Herman

Third Thursday Taizé
Thursday December 18, 7:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall
Taizé music originated in the Taizé Monastery in France as an opportunity for people of various religious faiths to unite in spirit and song. Come join us each third Thursday at 7:30 in the Fellowship Hall as BFUU takes its place in the growing Taizé community.

Pub Theology
Friday December 19, 7:00 PM at Au Coquelet
BFUU’s young adult group meets monthly at Au Coquelet. Please contact Lincoln Statler for more information.

Singing For Social Justice
Friday December 26, 6:00-9:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall – 1924 Cedar St.

Not happy about what’s been going on in Ferguson? Neither are we! This is an all music event in to raise money for Michael Brown’s parents to help pay for any potential legal fees, damages, etc that they might have suffered from. There will be several local musicians who will be performing and leading the audience in song. There is a suggested $10 or more donation, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. There will be food as well, including vegan and gluten free options.
Other Community Events held at BFUU

T’ai Chi Ch’uan with Karina Epperlein: The Principles and Art of Slowing Down
Mondays, 6-7 PM in the Connie Barbour Room — 1606 Bonita Ave.
Breath, sound, movement, qi gong, imagination and intention, standing and walking meditation, balance, centering and grounding. Karina brings to her 37 years of teaching an extensive background and training in T’ai Chi Ch’uan, dance, physical theater, music, voice, breath and meditation. Ongoing. $90 per month. Please call in advance to register: 510-559-8892. Visit www.karinafilms.us for more information.

Dancing Life From Your Core: CoreConnexion Transformational Arts®
with Eva Vigran, MA Psych
Wednesdays, 6-8 PM in the Fellowship Hall—1924 Cedar St.
Starting in the NOW, we will listen to body and soul, following movement that emerges from moment to moment. Through playful connection with ourselves, others and nature, we can illuminate our individual and authentic aliveness and strengthen our inner nature and resources. Participants will gain access to the wisdom and joy at their core. First class is free! www.coreconnexion.net

The Little Match Girl
Saturday, December 13 at 7 p.m. in the Connie Barbour Room—1606 Bonita Ave.
Saturday, December 20 at 2 p.m. in the Connie Barbour Room—1606 Bonita Ave.

Tibetan Festival of Light
Tuesday December 16 at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall—1924 Cedar St.

Ventral Rinpoché, who teaches reading and writing to Tibetan children on Sunday afternoons at BFUU, offers this gift in gratitude for the community’s help with the Tibetan Resettlement Project. Everyone is invited to come for homemade soup and cookies with butter tea or sweet tea. Chanting & meditation are optional. Rinpoche-la pays for all the food and cooks it himself, over a three-day period, as his gift to the community. Please come and accept the Tibetans’ generosity.

Chanukah Celebration and Vegetarian Potluck
Sunday December 21 at 4:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall – 1924 Cedar St.

Rabbi Michael Lerner of Beyt Tikkun Synagogue will tell the story and Achi Ben Shalom will provide music for this celebration of the victory of the Maccabees over the imperical forces of Greece.
Admission: $10 and please bring a vegetarian dish to share. Candle-lighting will be around 4:30 PM.
# Fellowship Calendar December 2014

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### HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

- **Wed 12/24 noon - 3 PM**
- **Thu 12/25 Closed**
- **Wed 12/31 noon - 3 PM**
- **Thu 1/1 Closed**

**Newsletter Deadline/Changes:**

*denotes Fellowship event

EARLY DEADLINE FOR JANUARY ISSUE! Due to holidays, the deadline for the January Communicator is **December 17**. Please have all submissions in by the end of the day. Thank you!

Beginning with the January 2015 Communicator, the default distribution of this newsletter will be email. Please contact the office by December 19 to stay on the list for the black-and-white printed version.
BFUU OFFICE HOURS
Monday - Friday: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

BFUU STAFF
Rev. Theresa Novak, Development Minister
Phone: 510-841-4824, ext. 2
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EARLY SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR NEXT COMMUNICATOR: December 17
Please email newsletter@bfuu.org with submissions.

Address Correction Requested
Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists
1606 Bonita Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94709