

VISION FOR DRUUMM'S FUTURE

by Sana Saeed, DRUUMM President and Ayanna Kafi, DRUUMM Vice-President

What a time it is to be a Unitarian Universalist of color! The prophetic and powerful work that has been done by our black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) youth and elders is creating transformation in our faith, from the association to our congregations. This is what inspires our DRUUMM vision.

DRUUMM was born out of decades of movements of racial justice in the 20th century. That same prophetic word is what leads us today. Through twenty years of volunteer ministry, DRUUMM has nurtured spaces for the experience of Unitarian Universalism people of color while forging deeper relationships with allies and working to contribute to the larger public expression of our faith.

Our vision for DRUUMM is rooted in the work that has been done by our BIPOC youth, elders, and ancestors. Those that have come before, charged us with the knowledge that it is sacred work to mold dreams into vision and vision into theologically rich environments that make room for spirit and growth.

Our vision is committed to this holy messy work of creating spaces for healing, joy, transformation and connection for our membership that centers people of color. We vision to move DRUUMM from being an organization that is surviving to being an organization that is thriving. *(Continued on Page 2)*

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#TBT



Dr. Norma Poinsett, circa 1972. UUA Distinguished Service Award, 2004. Courtesy of the Sankofa Special Collection.

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We recognize that as we imagine and dream of what our community can be, it takes all of us to co-create and grow from a place of grace and compassion for each other and for ourselves.

Co-creation is a sacred practice in this holy work, this ministry for people of color. Co-creation means being able to practice - prayerfully - naming the things that limit our imagination, those things which cause us harm and to do it in transparent and accountable ways. But, practicing co-creation also means naming our dreams, and what makes us feel alive and whole.

Our vision is committed to the disruption of systems of oppression in our institutions and congregations. We commit to disrupt the ways internalized oppression manifests in DRUUMM spaces, as well. We refuse to fall into the trap of scarcity thinking.

We embrace a vision that there is a place for us all in Unitarian Universalism and that place doesn't have to just be a place of trauma. That it can be a place of dance, joy, lamentation, celebration, hope, rigor, and trust, too. Our place can be all and everything.

Grounded in this vision, we met as a Steering Committee in New Orleans in November 2019.

After days of hard work, difficult conversations and intentionally reflecting on the past and present DRUUMM, the steering committee voted to adopt the following goals to guide us as a committee.

Our strategic goals for the next two years are:

- Re-evaluate our organizational structure and operating procedures to maximize efficiency, strengthen our ability to carry out our mission and ensure our survival and stability.
- Create a tech hub: renew our website and create a hub for our membership to access resources including podcasts, tools for organizing locally, access to virtual gatherings, liturgical materials for POCI that center POCI, digital archives and more.

Our five year goals are:

- Financial independence and sustainability by establishing an endowment of 1 million dollars.
- Focus on the spiritual formation of our membership through developing spiritual tools for religious education that center POCI.

Lastly, our distant goal as a steering committee is to eventually dream into reality a DRUUMM farm and retreat center. These goals encompass our vision as leaders and guide us as a steering committee to move into this new year with momentum to create a thriving DRUUMM.

- Sana & Ayanna

ALTARS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

By Joseph Santos-Lyons

One of the blessings of getting to know other Religious Professionals of Color in our faith tradition has been experiencing the ways we cultivate our spirit, ground our intentions, and shape our religious practices. My earliest memories of being in fellowship together at DRUUMM Gatherings in the 1990s hold vivid moments of co-created altars that centered our community worship and held our sacred space. They called forth our ancestors, on whose shoulders we stand. The altars, and the process of creating, collectivized the offerings, the touchstones, and the symbols that generated healing, hope and memory. Altars have, for me, been one of the unique aspects of our DRUUMM and UU Communities of Color that I have brought into my personal and familial spiritual life.

In our family, we have made altars around the Catholic religious holiday of Undas, or All Saints Day in the Philippines, and have co-created altars together with our children around the seasons and around themes that help guide our way. In the new cohousing we are building, we have a dedicated space for an altar year-round. Right now we are working on a new altar around home as we prepare for a big move. I asked colleagues if they would share photos of their altars recently, and was inspired to see the sixty responses we received. They have graciously given permission to share and we have curated several here. I hope you enjoy and are inspired by them. - *Rev. Joseph*



Undas, All Saints Day, The Philippines
Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons



NeoPagan Ancestor Altar centered around Senior Santo Nino de Cebu!
Kevin Mann

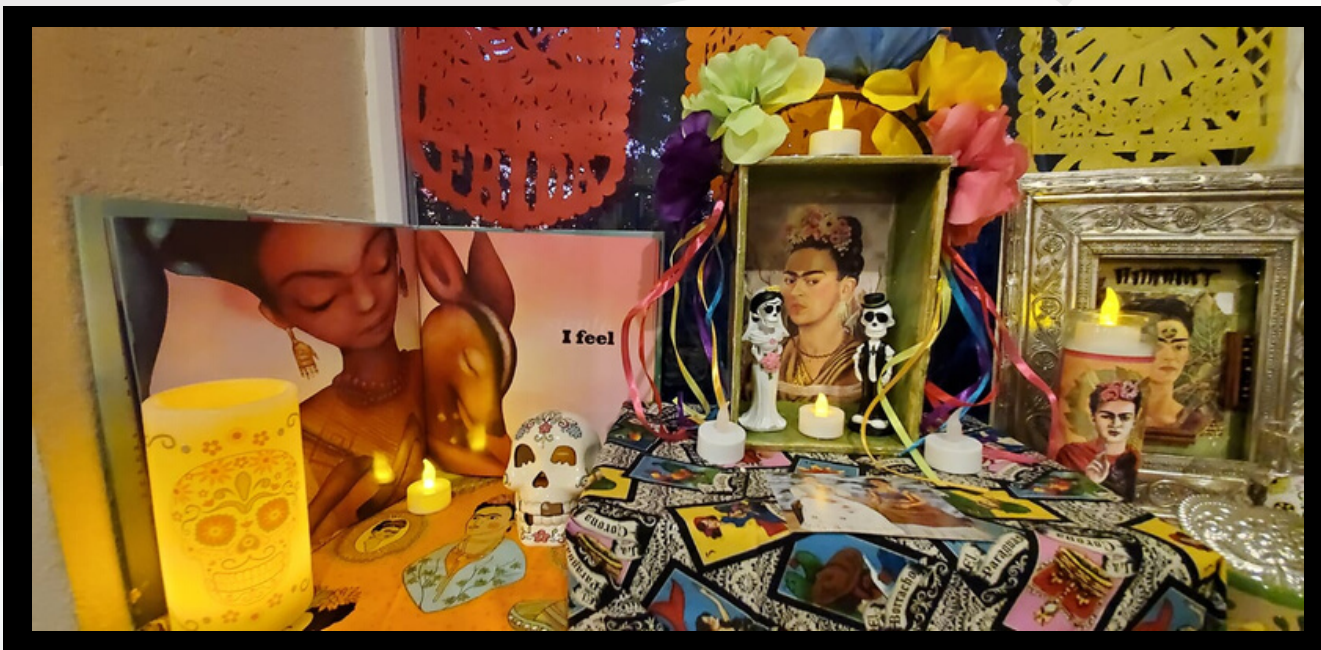
ALTARS



Clockwise from upper left:

San Martín de Porres, protector de nuestros nahuales; Chile, September 11, 1973 -Remembering the Disappeared: ¡Presente!; Viva Frida!

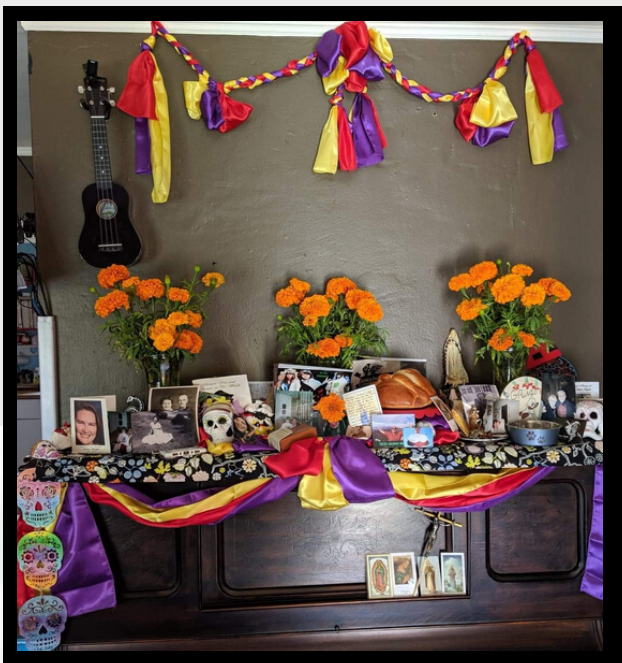
- Rev. Dr. Maricris Vlassidis



ALTARS



Community Altar
Starr King Unitarian Universalist Church in Hayward, CA
Rev. Dr. Maricris Vlassidis



Dia de Los Muertos Ofrenda
Tie Resendiz de Perez



The Ancestors are our intercessors between the past and the future, between memory and hope. Placed upon a simple white cloth are the images of my blood Ancestors (Grand Parents, Great Grand Parents, and Great Great Grandparents), and a small votive image of an Ancestor of Spirit (Bayard Rustin). They each are given routine offerings of water, black coffee with sugar, cigarettes, and liquor.

- Byron Tyler Coles

ALTARS

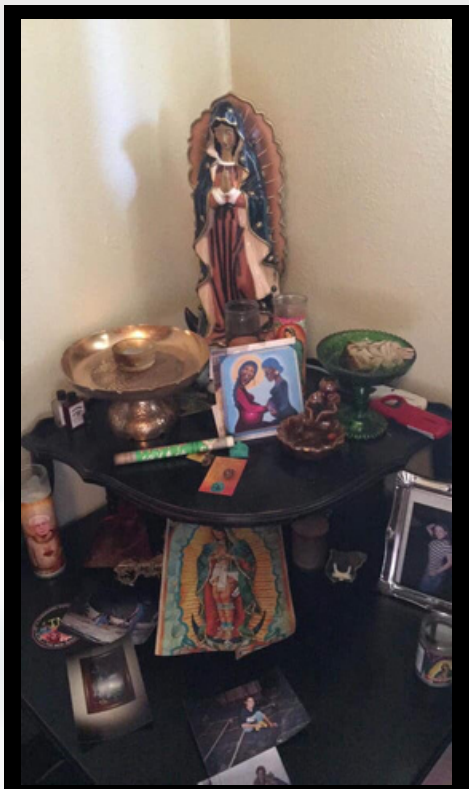
Honored - The Blessed Mother, St. Teresa of Avila, Padre Pio, Saint Kateri, Yemaya, Gaia, the actual earth, recent ancestors, lost ancestors, our marriage, each of our kids, our mothers.

Offerings - Cornmeal, salt, rose petals, lavender, tobacco, coin, cloth, braids, oil, a crucifix that scares my children, costume jewelry, scapula, silks, my grandfather's "legend" cassette.

Tools - Baskets, basket saw, pinch pots, mortar and pestle, groceries, tarot cards, corn, hair, wedding vase, shells, rocks, chimayo dirt, sage, written prayers, chalice, seeds, barriers and candles, osha, palo sagrado, sweetgrass.

Antithetical - A locked door on the front of the cabinet. We use it as an altar / medicine cabinet / toolbox.

- Tie Resendiz de Perez



Rev. Marisol Caballero



Winter
Rev. Lindasusan Ulrich

WHY I DON'T GO TO CHINESE CHURCH

Ai-Ling Louie

I am a Chinese-American. My father Peter Dung Ock Louie was born in Guangdong, China which is geographically situated across the bay from Hong Kong. My mother, Li, (full name) was born in Neah Beach, Washington in the United States to Chinese parents.

I was born in New York City, but I don't belong in a Chinese Christian Church. The reason why? First of all, I believe in the Unitarian Universalist Seven (7) principles, not the Holy Trinity nor the Bible as the word of God. Second of all--and this is very surprising to most non-Asian Americans--there are deep divides within the Asian American community.

Let me explain.

Discrimination against Asians under US law. Until 1965, there were very restrictive US laws keeping Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian Americans from coming to these shores and naturalizing as citizens. We were seen as an undesirable race--too different in appearance, and un-Christian in values. As a result of these laws, there were very few Chinese American families in the United States before 1965, and an increasing number of families from Asia after 1965. According to the 2017 Pew Research Center's Report, 73% of current adult Asian Americans were born outside of the US[1]. The Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 stopped the de facto discrimination against Asians and other non-Europeans. After its adoption many people of Asian descent were allowed to enter the country to reunite with their families, as professionals, and as self-supporting students.

Because I was born in the United States, I don't share common experiences of most Asian Americans. I don't speak Chinese. Most second-generation immigrant children do not have a strong grasp of their grandparents' native language. This is also true of Asian Americans. This is a surprise to most non Asian Americans and, indeed, to most Asian Americans. When Chinese-Americans at a gathering chat in Mandarin, I am left out.

As a result, Asians in the United States tend to think less of me, demanding accusingly, "Didn't your parents teach you Chinese?" and then begin shaking their heads. Descendants of German or Italian grandparents are not expected to speak those languages. But this is a common struggle for many American-born Asian children. I have a Chinese face, and I am castigated for not speaking Chinese.

WHY I DON'T GO TO CHINESE CHURCH

Continued...

There are class divides based on social status. My great grandfather came to the US in the 1890s to build the southern railroads, and my paternal and maternal grandfathers worked in the salmon canning, restaurant and laundry industries. Clearly they were not upper-class or scholars.

Most of the Chinese who came after 1965 were people whose families could help them go to college in the United States, or who had a profession that was needed in the US. As with other cultures, the professional and scholarly class in all countries feel superior to the working class and in China, it is no different.

When I was in graduate school, there was a student who had just come from Beijing who told me that she and her cohorts were the “real” Chinese immigrants, and that my ancestors didn’t count. However, she sought to be included in my group project because she knew I was getting an “A”.

There is a divide between the US-born and recent immigrants. I have also seen divisions between immigrant and American born Asian Americans, generally, including the Japanese, Filipinos and Korean Americans, among others.

Asian Americans are not all the same, and we do not worship all together. I believe that despite the varying degrees of difference we experience, we can still come together and see the humanity in each others’ experiences.

1.Lopez, Gustavo, et al.”Key Facts about Asian Americans, a Diverse and Growing Population” Fact Tank, News in the Numbers, Pew Research Center, Sept 8, 2017



Ai-Ling Louie can be found online at Dragoneagle.com. She is the co-leader of POCI at Cedar Lane UU Church of Bethesda, MD.

HOLDING THE DOOR OPEN



By Linda Russell

Who are we to come through the UU doors, expecting to be seen and to be heard? We are the embodiment of the promise. Those who came before us need to know they are respected and their presence was neither temporary nor occasional but critical to our faith progressing.

As a child of the 60s, I know we have come a long way. As a woman in her 60s, I know we have a long way to go. And I have hope. We are not the dream unrealized. We are the reality unfinished. Our blended voices, People of Color from all corners of the globe, all ancestry, are ever-creating.

We are the blended voices bringing our faith to its true promise.

As we respond to people who do not yet understand our unique message, we must come to terms with the fact that some never will. But we must also hold the door open for the new souls who are entering, looking for a new way to experience their faith.

Several years ago, my minister, Reverend Leslie Takahashi, shared an image: Kintsugi, which is the art of repairing broken pottery with gold. This not only adds to the incredible artistry of the plate, but to its strength. We have to break open - to make room for new ideas.

We are the “gold joinery” in UUism. Our voices are central to changing the practices that no longer serve everyone.

We are making our faith inclusive, resilient and stronger.

Linda Russell, LMFT, Mt. Diablo UU, Walnut Creek, CA Board of Trustees; Beloved Conversations Retreat Leader/Facilitator; Chair, Beloved Commitments Task Force and Conversations on Death. POC voices are central to fulfilling the UU vision.

SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR THE DRUUMM STEERING COMMITTEE

Members of DRUUMM are invited to consider joining the Nominations Committee this Spring.

In this role spanning a few short months you will support the efforts of populating and conversing with applicants for the future Steering Committee which will be voted on during the 2020 General Assembly.

If you are interested in joining the Nominations Committee please contact Janell Hill (DRUUMM Secretary) via email at secretary@druumm.org.



Community Calendar

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 3 | Chicagoland POC Gathering |
| March 14 | Denver POC Gathering |
| March 15 | San Antonio POC Gathering |
| March 18-21 | Finding Our Way Home:
Gathering of UU Religious
Professionals of Color, Long Beach CA |
| May 14 | Virtual POC Gathering |
| May 15-18 | Thrive Youth of Color, Albany NY |
| June 13 | New York City POC Gathering |
| June 22-24 | UUMA Ministry Days |
| June 24-28 | UUA General Assembly,
Providence RI |
| July 8-12 | Thrive Youth of Color, Phoenix AZ |
| July 18-22 | The Well: Multiracial Families Retreat
Ferry Beach, ME |



Please send calendar items to editor@druumm.org

NOTATIONS

- Over 100 UU Religious Professionals of Color will be gathering the week of March 16 in Long Beach, CA for Finding Our Way Home. There is a pre-retreat on healing and care being co-led by Sana Saeed and India Harris.
- DeReau Farrar has been elected President of the Association of Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries.
- Anna Bethea was promoted to serve as Lifespan Faith Engagement Director with the UUA.
- DRUUMM has compiled a new directory of twenty-five local UU People of Color groups.
- The DRUUMM Organizing Project has currently raised \$20,000 for 2020 activities.
- We generally aim to publish monthly, however this is a Jan/Feb edition as we honored some time off for our volunteer newsletter team.



The DRUUMM Beat Issue 7, Volume 2

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Read online at www.druumm.org

COLOR/FULL



CASSIE MONTENEGRO

GOAL

Regeneration – spiritual regeneration. Connecting with other POC

GIFT

I like learning about other people's stories. And helping them communicate those stories.

