



NUUSLETTER

of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

September Theme: Imagination

Sunday Services begin at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom online meeting

September 6

“Virtues of a Virtual Life”

Rev. Axel Gehrmann & Susan Panttaja

In the course of recent months, we have learned the value of wearing masks, washing hands, and maintaining physical distance – for the sake of everyone’s safety and to avoid spreading a dangerous disease. Many of our physical, face-to-face meetings have been replaced by virtual meetings via computer or telephone, and our bustling Sunday morning services have been replaced with virtual worship, virtual singing, and virtual social time. Amazingly, we remain a vibrant religious community. Why? Perhaps both the spiritual and the physical are bound together in a virtual world we create together . . .

September 13

“Play Like a Four-Year-Old”

Susan Holland and W.A. Sue Ellen Stringer

“Children see the world differently from us grown-ups, because their expectations about how things ‘should’ be have not solidified yet!” *LEGO Build Yourself Happy - The Joy of LEGO Play*

Are you stuck in “adult” thinking that play is unproductive and a waste of time? Maybe you feel guilty when you play or feel you have to borrow a four-year-old to make your playing appropriate. Let’s explore changing our mindsets, especially during this time in history, where play has become essential for our wellbeing.

Religious Exploration

is available via Zoom for children (pre K – 11) at 10 a.m. and for teens (12 – 18) at 12 p.m.

September 20

“The Act of Creation”

Rev. Axel Gehrmann & W.A. Kathleen Craig

Of the countless names humans have used to describe God, one of the most universal and ancient is “Creator.” Making something from nothing, changing this into that, making old things new, transforming death to new life – these are the seemingly miraculous powers associated with the divine. Some imagine a divine spark within every individual – it may well be the creative impulse. Where do we find creativity in our lives? And how can we put it to good use?

September 27

“Visions of Utopia”

Rev. Elaine Gehrmann & W.A. Ken Cuneo

Many writers, artists, and filmmakers have portrayed compelling visions of utopia – an ideal place, a future perfect world. How might some of these visions help us to move closer to our goal of imagining and creating the world we dream of living in?

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Ministers' Message

Rev. Elaine Gehrman

You are never too old to set another goal, or to dream a new dream.
--C.S. LEWIS

September always feels to me like a time of new beginnings. Even though it is the end of summer, it is the beginning of autumn, with a new school year and a new church year and new plans and goals and dreams. After a quiet summer break, it now feels like an exciting time for new ventures, classes, activities, and connections.

Although the pandemic is still limiting our in-person gatherings, there is much activity taking place online – to educate and inform us, to enlighten and inspire us, and most of all, to keep us connected to one another. Please check out the various offerings in this newsletter and in the weekly e-news. There are interest groups, chalice circles, many anti-racism and other social justice opportunities, and more! Don't see what you're most interested in? Create an interest group or class or activity yourself; our Life Enrichment Committee is always looking for new offerings to publicize!

Also, the Worship Associates team is always looking for new members, as are many other committees; try one out and see how it feels! Keep your eyes open for news about our upcoming annual Connections Fair, where you can learn more about our various church committees and activities and see how you can get involved! (If you are having trouble accessing on-line offerings or needing new equipment or tech assistance, please let us know!)

While we long for the day when we can return to face-to-face gatherings, in the meantime there is much we can do – to learn, grow, and build our community connections.

Please be in touch – give us a call, drop us an email, message or text or snail-mail us – we'd love to hear from you – and find out how you're doing and what's on your mind this fall! We look forward to connecting with you, as we each pursue our new goals, dreams, and visions!



See you in (virtual) church,

Elaine

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE MONTEREY PENINSULA

Welcoming all, we worship together with loving hearts and open minds, promoting peace, equality, and respect for the Earth. Questioning, reflecting, learning, leading . . . we change ourselves as we change the world.

President's Corner — Jon Czarnecki



“We Want An Immediate End To Police Brutality and Murder of Black People.” That’s Point #7 of the Ten-Point Program of the Black Power Movement and Black Panther Party. I became intimately familiar with these points when an Af-

rican American soldier thrust a written list of them into my hands, a young immature company commander in the middle of his first tactical operation, with these additional words, “We don’t follow white men’s orders anymore.” (The rest of that war story I’ll reserve for telling some other time.)

The point resonates today with utter frankness. Yet those words first saw the light of day in 1966, and the incident I describe happened in 1972. The other nine points have a similar and uncomfortable relevance to current events and the situation facing this country – about housing, education, service in the military, jobs, freedom from exploitation, imprisonment. In the original list, the points are interspersed with modernized extracts from our Declaration of Independence. The Ten-Point Program is a revolutionary document, a call to action and a call to arms.

We who lived through those times, and especially those who are African American may say, mostly to themselves, “Wait a minute, we solved those problems back then. We passed laws, implemented and enforced regulation to end discrimination, to provide for civil rights for oppressed minorities.” Why are seemingly solved problems resurrecting themselves from the grave and overwhelming us like the undead from some zombie apocalypse?

Of course what we did not address fifty years ago was the institutional racism – that’s what we called systemic racism back then – we did not fully consider that social change requires social system change. And a social system includes structure, process/behaviors, and environment. Through the laws and regulations of the late 1960s, our country changed its structures and processes for dealing with racial issues; it never changed or really dealt with the environment of rac-

ism. We assumed that the environment would evolve in response to the structural and processual changes we had made. The assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. should have been a wake-up call to the fragility of that assumption. It was to the African American community, many parts of which embraced the Black Power movement. But, such revolutionary fervor requires a tremendous amount of social energy, of personal commitment, and over time, as the illusionary rising tide of American affluence penetrated even to the low-paid working class, and welfare benefits extended to the humblest of us, that energy waned.

Over time, the environment in which American racism survived, persisted, and slowly poisoned us would push back, evincing a social malevolence that has culminated in our present condition. What is this “environment” to which I refer, that pervades our entire social life? Nothing less than the dominance of white privilege in every aspect of our living. Most especially for me, an educator, is its pervasiveness in the very fabric of our learning systems: our history of who we are as a nation and how we came to be. We call this the myth of the American Dream, or American Exceptionalism. I believe it is time we called it as James Baldwin would write it, the American Lie. For truly it is a dream betrayed. Our Dream became a Lie early in our history, within the first two decades of our settling these shores with the institution of Black (but not White) slaves as chattel, according to historian Carl Degler.

We can almost hear the betrayal in a refrain from Bruce Springsteen’s classic song, “The River.”

Now those memories come back to haunt me
They haunt me like a curse
Is a dream a lie if it don’t come true
Or is it something worse?

Our national curse is systemic racism; it will haunt us for as long as we exist as a nation, and yes, eventually become something worse, for an oppressed people will not forever consent to be oppressed.

Continued on page 4

— President's Corner continued

What can we as a small community in such a large nation do to end this curse? A colleague and friend who is one of a handful of African American faculty on my campus has advised our faculty with this: "Begin with listening." Listen to the experiences of a people who have a very different life than we, the dominant social element, have even in similar life circumstances. For listening to be effective, it must also be informed so that we can understand just what we are hearing. At this month's board meeting, one key item for discussion is the adoption of the UUA's "Beloved Conversations," a learning series of workshops on race and ethnicity designed for Unitarian Universalists. Stay tuned for more details on the accessibility of this program to our members; we need to begin anew to solve the systemic racism problem in our country. Once more and for all time.

See you next time.

You

Susan Panttaja, Intern Minister, would like to get to know you!

In other times, we'd have more face to face ways to meet Susan and for Susan to meet us, coffee hour together after Sunday service, or gathering for a picnic as some of us did with Amy Carlson, our prior Intern Minister. But, now we rely on Zoom to give us the opportunity to be together. If you'd like to gather on Zoom with Susan in a small group setting, please send her an e-mail at intern@uucmp.org. Her schedule may not allow her to gather with everyone who is interested, but we hope you will reach out.

Thank you! Susan Hocevar, chair, Intern Committee AND Susan Panttaja, Intern Minister.



PUBLICATION DEADLINES

ANNOUNCEMENTS for SUNDAYS in the Order of Service or Welcome and Announcements from the pulpit are due by 9 a.m. on Wednesdays. ARTICLES for THE WEEKLY NEWS email are due by noon, Tuesdays.

SCHEDULED EVENTS

Anti-Racism Book and Film Group Tuesday, September 1, 7 p.m. via Zoom. See page 10.

Board of Trustees meets Wednesday, September 16, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Buddhist Sangha is every Wednesday at 7 p.m. Sheltered in Place. See page 10.

Community Choir meets Thursdays at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Dances of Universal Peace will not meet in September.

Equal Exchange will not be available in September.

Friday Night at the Movies will not meet in September.

I-HELP for Men and I-HELP for Women will be supported for now by financial donations to UUCMP, as the I-HELP directors want all food prepared in certified kitchens. We will still continue to provide monthly meals. If you can help, please consider sending a check to the church or clicking the DONATE button on the UUCMP website and indicating that the donation is for I-HELP.

Membership Committee meets Wednesday, September 23, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Men's Breakfast will not meet in September.

Music Committee meets Wednesday, September 2, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

NUU'sletter deadline for the October issue is Wednesday, September 16.

Program Council is Tuesday, September 1, 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. For Zoom information contact Lauren Keenan programcouncil@uucmp.org

Sing Along will meet on Wednesday, September 9, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Social Justice meets Sunday, September 6, 12:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Stewardship does not meet in September.

Women's Discussion Group meets September 10 and September 24, 2 p.m. via Zoom. See page 10.



A Message from the Intern

In my first week as your Intern Minister, I have been getting to know trees. As I settle into the studio apartment on the UUCMP grounds, the trees are my nearest neighbors, and it's always polite to meet your neighbors! They have greeted me with shade, oxygen, plenty of pine needles to track into my room, and a deep, rich presence that feels like *love*.

It's no wonder I feel that sense of love from the trees on this land. It is clear that they are well loved, by all of you.

I have heard a deep connection to this land from many of you this week.

Carol Collin told me how much she misses the trees, and quoted the poem "Great Trees," by Wendell Berry. She said, "I'm sure he hasn't been to the UUCMP campus, but we still think the song was written for us." I think I know what she means. Now when I walk these grounds, I hear, "Great trees, outspreading and upright, Apostles of the living light."



I have also had the pleasure of walking these grounds with Brian Jacobson, who pointed out many different types of trees, plants, and lichen, and described his sustainable forest management philosophy. He also showed me the redwoods planted along the south side of the property, and recalled fondly the people they were planted to honor.

This summer, I took a class called "The Ecology of Awakening." One assignment was to spend a couple of hours each day engaging with the natural world near home. I have walked almost daily in my neighborhood of 20 years, and have always appreciated my surroundings. But I don't often take it slow, allowing myself to be pulled in whatever direction my senses dictate and to really notice what's there. In the two weeks of the course, I did just that. In the process, I recognized my deep interdependence with the more-than-human beings I live among: the beautiful cork oak I hadn't noticed before, a green heron moving oh-so-slowly while hunting in the marsh, the fox living in the hedge row, and so many others.

With that same level of attention, I am finding connection with these forested acres and, by extension, with you. You who have loved and tended this land for years. While the church is closed and worship services are online, I will walk these grounds frequently, giving some love to the trees on your behalf. It's the least I can do in gratitude for creating such a beautiful temporary home for my internship.

In the coming weeks, I hope you will find your own bit of land, in your back yard or near where you live, and reconnect with your more-than-human neighbors, your hallowed place in the world. In this time marked by long-term social distancing, fire danger, and smoky air, it is helpful to notice what is alive around and within you.

I look forward to getting to know all of you, and to participate with you in the busy life of this church. I am praying for your good health and safety.



Yours in faith,
Susan

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



School in the Pandemic (A Tongue-in-Cheek Approach?)

It is time to go back to school! Time to gather up your school supplies, pens and pencils, shiny happy new notebooks, the wonderful rubber band ball, just because, and head to school! The commute is a bit shorter this year. Children walk from their bedrooms, or the kitchen table fresh from breakfast, to their own special learning place. It might be a desk, a table, the couch with a coffee table set up with a laptop, maybe it's nice outside and they head to the picnic table on the patio. Regardless of where they head, it is no longer to a traditional classroom. Maybe our traditional classroom will happen again in the future, but for now, it's *Remote Learning* for the win!

Art class is fun. The dining room table has become a rainbow painted, textured piece of "art." Maybe it should be shellacked and preserved this way?

PE or Games class is also fun! Bowling with grapefruit down the hallway is a DRE prescribed way of venting stress, and working on your aim. Bonus points if you and the kids can knock down the several hampers of dirty laundry placed strategically at the end of the hall!

Science class can either be quite calming, perhaps going outside to sketch and label the different parts of your (double income with no kids) neighbor's beautiful and perfectly groomed flower garden. Or, it could be more along the lines of figuring out the specific measurements of plant food to begin to regrow that once beautiful garden after the chil-

dren finished "sketching and labeling," from up close.

Music is always fun, at home, school or in the car! May I suggest Kids Choir with Camille on Sundays at noon? Seriously here, Camille really is awesome!

Math is, well . . . why in the world did the school system change the basic fundamentals of division? How is this helpful? Math is . . . well, possibly hiring a tutor for yet more fun online screen time for the kids, or maybe just for the parents. Maybe for both. The kids can just teach us, it's easier that way. And hey! It's all good! The kids can catch up next year with the rest of their classmates, right? Right?

Spelling lists and tests. Come on, seriously? Every device has spell check anyway!

History is lots of fun!! May I suggest Ancient Aliens on the History Channel? A lot of good info there!

Reading, now that is a joy. Read to your child and let them read to you. Find the most wonderfully comfortable place in your house, snuggle up (once the temperature drops) and engage in an hour of quiet reading a day. At least.

The children will eventually move on and go back to school, move away and go to college, or just be busy with their own things. Don't stress about remote learning. We are in this together. Enjoy this time with your kids and go grapefruit bowling!



Erin Forstein

Director of Religious Exploration



September Shared Plate Recipient

NAACP Monterey County

It seems very appropriate that during these times of renewed calls for racial justice, that our Shared Offering is the Monterey County Branch of the NAACP. Founded February 12, 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization. Its more than half-million members and supporters throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, campaigning for equal opportunity and conducting voter mobilization. The mission of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination.

The history of the NAACP in Monterey County involves the founding of two branches – the Monterey Peninsula Branch and the Salinas Branch. The Monterey Peninsula Branch was founded in 1932 and its primary founder was the Reverend Wellington Smith, Sr., then pastor of First Baptist Church of Pacific Grove, the oldest Black church in the Central California Region. The Salinas Branch was formed seven years later in 1939 and its primary founder was Mr. William Greenwell. The two branches were responsible for bringing awareness to the fact that racism and racial discrimination in all their forms were rife, virulent, and institutionally entrenched. Under the leadership of these two bold presidents, barriers for Black people and other minorities in housing and employment began to break down. Both branches took strong stands against racist police practices directed toward Black people and others that often culminated in taunts,

threats, beatings, and wrongful incarcerations. Leaders of both branches, especially the two presidents, endured long periods of threats to their persons as well as the lives of their families, but they and the members of the branches never faltered in their struggles to rid this county of its most abject forms of racism and discrimination.

Over the years, the two branches began more and more to work in tandem to confront and resolve increasingly similar issues. For many decades, these two NAACP branches were seen as the two foremost organizations that were consistently at the forefront of all struggles and movements to defend and extend the political, social, and economic rights of all those who were the victims of injustice. It became clear that it made more sense to have one large branch to carry out the mission and work of the NAACP for the entire county. In 2006, after much discussion and deliberation, the membership of both branches unanimously voted to merge the two branches into one Monterey County Branch of the NAACP.

This month we encourage you to give generously to the Monterey County Branch of the NAACP, and look for ways that you can get involved in this historic multiracial organization that continues to serve great needs in our community and to work tirelessly for racial justice.

Please give generously to this worthy organization.

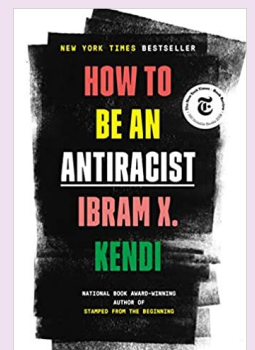
Book Discussion on “How to Be a Unitarian Universalist in 2020”

Dates: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays (September 15 - December 15)

Time: 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. via Zoom

We are living in extraordinary times. The current pandemic, a heightened awareness of racial and economic disparities, and an increasingly polarized political climate provide an abundance of social and personal challenges. What kind of religious response can Unitarian Universalism provide? Please join Rev. Axel for a book discussion of the current New York Times bestseller *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, as we grapple with these important questions.

Please acquire a copy of the book and read the introduction and first chapter for our first session, on September 15. Please contact Rev. Axel (minister@uucmp.org) if you have questions, need help with Zoom, or plan to attend.



Musical Offerings

Want to make some socially-distanced music together?
We have a few options for you!



Our Adult Community Choir is open to everyone, members and nonmembers alike, to explore singing together. As an ensemble, we prepare special music for various Sunday services per month. We meet **every Thursday from 7-9 p.m.** This month we will be meeting via **Zoom** for rehearsals. No experience nor commitment necessary, and all are welcome!

Our Children's Choir is also open to all children. While it is geared toward children in 1st-5th, all are welcome. If you are interested in having your child sing with us, contact me today.



If you are looking to just join other voices in a cacophonous karaoke style sing-along, then you are in for a treat. Sing Along with Shawn will be available in a fun, interactive manner via Zoom and YouTube. We will meet on **Wednesday, September 9, from 5:30-7:00 p.m.**

All music meetings will convene via this Zoom link:

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://cccconfer.zoom.us/j/8287611715>

Or iPhone one-tap (US

Toll): +16699006833,8287611715# or +13462487799,8287611715#

Or Telephone: Dial: +1 669 900 6833 (US Toll)

Meeting ID: 828 761 1715

Password: music (case sensitive)



Unfortunately our other ensembles will be on hold until we can resume in person. However, if you like to sing or play an instrument and are willing to try some technological experiments, I am open to hearing from you.

Finally, if you have other ways you wish to contribute to the music here at UUCMP, just let me know! music@uucmp.org

— Camille Hatton





Being part of a Chalice Circle is a great way to:

- ◆ **Get to know** other members and friends of the church better
- ◆ **Develop** supportive relationships in an accepting and nurturing atmosphere
- ◆ **Explore** the “big questions” of life’s meaning and purpose with people you trust
- ◆ **Deepen** your understanding of our Unitarian Universalist values
- ◆ **Discover** and use your gifts in service to our church and the wider community

Meeting via Zoom

This year, the vast majority of our church meetings are being conducted “virtually” via Zoom. Likewise, our Chalice Circles will be meeting via your computer or phone line. Please contact Rev. Axel if you have any questions or concerns about getting connected!

What are Chalice Circles?

Chalice Circles consist of 6-10 people who meet at least once a month for about two hours to explore meaningful topics together. A typical meeting begins with opening words and a check-in, followed by sharing and discussion on a specific topic. The meeting concludes with a check-out and closing words.

The format of the meetings helps participants set aside daily distractions, reflect on their lives and beliefs, and make meaningful connections with one another.

Chalice Circles provide an opportunity for members and friends of the church to develop deeper connections and wider service within our community through small-group conversation. Similar groups have been called Covenant Groups or simply small group ministry.

Join a Chalice Circle

If you would like to join a Chalice Circle, sign up [here](#) , or contact the ministers, [Revs. Axel or Elaine](#).

Interest Groups Are Open for Joining!



Some of the Interest Groups that grew out of the recent church survey have been quite active! Most are open for new people to join; contact [Membership Committee](#) if you would like to connect with one of the groups.

Groups are:

Sharing Recipes
Books Enjoyed
Parenting
Politics

Gardening
Movies Watched
Games
Environmental

Countering Isolation
Exercise
Spirituality
Take-Out Places



Exciting Social Justice Virtual Workshop "Faith in Action"

On Saturday, September 19, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, we will have the opportunity to participate in a **Faith in Action** workshop via Zoom. This will explore how we can better organize in order to harness the power at the intersection of faith and justice. It also provides a framework that will help us better understand our justice work, ensure the work is done in an effective anti-oppressive manner, and firmly root the justice work in Unitarian Universalism and the mission and vision of our church.

This workshop is designed for congregational groups (including social justice committee members, ministers, board members and religious educators) wanting to ground their work more firmly in Unitarian Universalism while deepening their impact.

It will be co-led by Heather Vickery of the UU College of Social Justice, and Rev. Ranwa Hammamy, Director of the UU Justice Ministry of California. Registration is limited to 20 people, please register here - <https://www.tfaforms.com/4833638>

Questions? Speak with Rev. Elaine.

WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

We welcome all women to our twice monthly meetings – the second and fourth Thursdays from 2-3:30 p.m. Because of the current shelter-in-place restrictions, we're meeting via Zoom. We plan to hold the following discussions in September:

On Sept. 10th, Diana Martinetto will lead our discussion of "I'm Not a Racist."

On Sept. 24th, Carol Greenstreet will lead our discussion of "The Vote Forward Project."

Watch for the emailed notices for these events. They will contain the Zoom link and password.

—Nancy Baker Jacobs, Facilitator

Life Enrichment Programs Affinity Groups:

No groups will meet face-to-face in September. Some will meet via Zoom.

Anti-Racism Book and Film Group First Tuesdays, 7-9 p.m. via Zoom

Men's Group Breakfast
Will not meet in September.
Contact: Marsh Pitman

Women's Discussion Group
Second and fourth Thursdays, 2 – 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. Contact: Nancy Baker Jacobs. See page 10.

T'ai Chi Chih No meetings in September.

Buddhist Sangha will continue via Zoom Wednesday evenings, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Contact: Rev. Dennis Hamilton

Friday Night at the Movies will not meet in September. Contact: John Freeman for any questions.

Dances of Universal Peace
Will not meet in September. Contact: Barbara Bullock-Wilson if you have any questions.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD WORSHIP ASSOCIATES!

We need talented, dedicated UUs who want to contribute to the quality of our worship services. Worship Associates support all Sunday services and sometimes provide leadership at those services as well. If you think you'd like to try your hand at this vital part of church life, please contact the ministers.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

COPA Civic Academy on Covid-19: Breaking the Chain of Infection Thursday, August 13, 2020

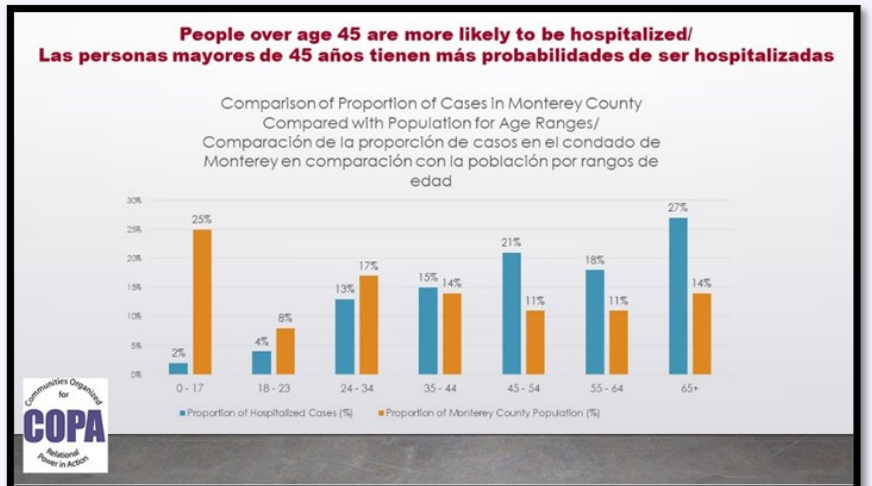
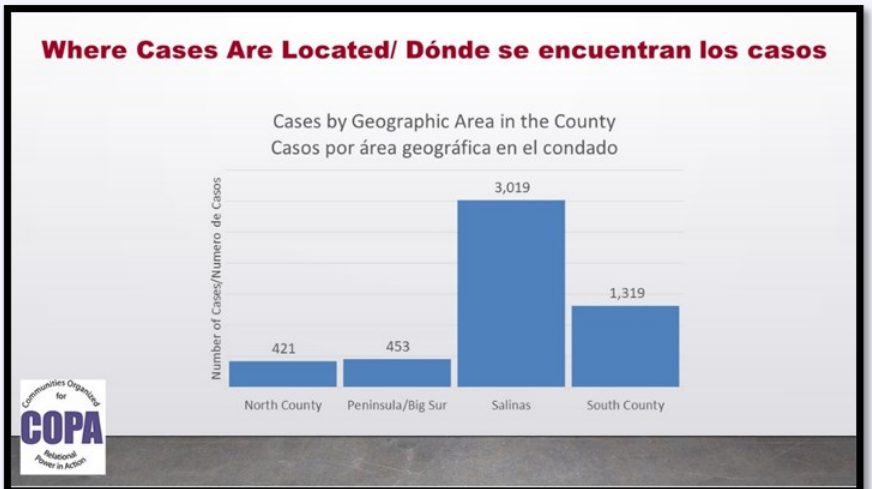
The Civic Academy on COVID-19 was attended by 36 people from churches around the Peninsula. Attending from UUCMP were Rev. Elaine, Doris Beckman, Audrey Doocy, Laura Nagel, and Wanda Sue Parrott.

COPA is planning a series of civic academies focused on how to protect families. There are two components: teaching and small group sharing. We hope to reach up to 500 persons. We began with a slide presentation on COVID-19 – its symptoms, how it is spread, and how to prevent its spread.

As part of the presentation we also reviewed recent data from the Monterey County Health Department showing that most COVID-19 cases have been in Salinas and South County. The data also show that older persons are far more likely to be hospitalized for COVID-19. The graph to the right shows that the proportion of cases for older age groups substantially exceeds their proportion in the population at large.

Meeting in small groups after the slide presentation, we heard how the virus has impacted families, including the loss of employment, and how those exposed are not able to safely quarantine because they are living in crowded households and risk infecting the rest of the family.

— Laura Nagel



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Closed for September.
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The Revs. Fred and Margaret Keip

Return Service Requested



SEPTEMBER 2020

About UUCMP Publications

Please send NUUsletter submissions as an email attachment by the 16th to newsletter@uucmp.org, and indicate UUCMP NUUSLETTER in the subject line.

Please send submissions for WEEKLY NEWS, the weekly announcements, to office@uucmp.org by Tuesday noon.

Check the WEEKLY NEWS and website for news throughout the month.

If you have any questions, call the office, 624-7404, or e-mail us at office@uucmp.org