



NUUSLETTER

of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

July Theme: UU Sources

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

July 5

“Conflagration: The Prospect of a Second America Civil War”

Rev. John Buehrens & W.A. Bob Sadler

Before the Civil War, African American activists in the North refused to celebrate July 4 as “Independence Day.” They met on July 5, the anniversary of the day New York finally abolished slavery. Protests about institutionalized racism this summer have been compared to those of 1968. Dr. Buehrens heard his call to ministry then. As a historian, he would also compare this moment to the polarization in America over race going back to the 1850s, when both Unitarian minister Theodore Parker and black abolitionist Frederick Douglass were calling for a Second American Revolution. He will give an analysis of the prospects for revolutionary change now in 2020.

July 12

“Sources of Our Living Tradition: Episode 2”

Karen Brown, Robin Jensen & Katharina Harlow

All the world's religions give us wisdom, inspiration, and spiritual guidance. In this service, we will look at the influences of several of these on our very personal UU beliefs and our UU traditions. Join Karen Brown, Katharina Harlow and Robin Jensen as we look at Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, and others.

July 19

“Sources of Our Living Tradition: Direct Experience of Transcending Mystery and Wonder”

Rev. Steven Edington & W.A. Katie Hamilton

What is a religious experience? "When we are stunned beyond words we are finally starting to get somewhere." -- Anne Lamott. This Sunday we'll explore some of the meaning behind the words of the first Source of our Living Tradition--Direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder.

Rev. Steve Edington is the Minister Emeritus of the UU Church of Nashua, and the author of *God Is Not God's Name; A Journey Beyond Words*. He has offered several guest minister sermons at UUCMP over the years and we look forward to him joining us again.

July 26

“Finding Jesus”

Rev. Dennis Hamilton and W.A. Mary Kay Hamilton

I grew up with a Catholic Jesus. As a young atheist, I walked away from Christianity, and Jesus, whoever he was, was in my rear-view mirror. As a Unitarian theologian though, finding the historical Jesus became a holy quest, partly to dispel all the false beliefs about this figure, but, like Thomas Jefferson, it became about finding “diamonds in the dunghill.” And as a Buddhist I began to recognize the signs of an “enlightened” person.

Ministerial Summer Hiatus

Following General Assembly, and through early August, your ministers traditionally spend the summer on study leave and vacation. While the pandemic will curtail our travel plans, we do hope to devote the summer to rest and renewal. We will be available for emergencies, and the church office will always know how to reach us.



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See the calendar at
www.uucmp.org



Ministers' Message

Rev. Elaine Gehrman

Many of the events of recent weeks seem to be showing us, once again, that in our country we live in very different worlds of experience depending on the color of our skin. America's history and legacy of racial injustice has been further revealed, and it is painful and ugly and continues to treat some people as less than fully human, as expendable, as not worthy of care or concern.

Some of us have been concerned about, and working on these issues for a long time, while others are only newly awakened to the work that needs to be done. One of my favorite protest signs of recent weeks says, "I'm sorry I'm late, I had a lot to learn."



It's not our fault. Those of us who are white have not been adequately educated by our school systems, our media, or our national mythology, about the realities of racial injustice in our country. It can be very upsetting and disorienting to realize how much we didn't know, or weren't aware of; how incorrect were our assumptions, how misinformed we have been.

Some of us may still not understand why we say "Black Lives Matter" instead of all lives matter, or what "Defund the Police" really means, or why some protests seem less than peaceful. I hope that you might be curious about the answers to these questions, and be willing to be open to the possibility of learning more about these important issues.

As a congregation we hope to provide more opportunities for facilitated conversations around these issues, but in the meantime, there is a lot you can do on your own. We are very fortunate to have many

resources available to us here in Monterey to learn more about racial inequities, and what we might do about them. *Whites for Racial Equity* is our local Monterey Chapter of the national organization Showing Up for Racial Justice. There are monthly workshops, book and film discussions held at our church, and more. Check out the website whitesforracialequity.org and their Facebook page also. (You can also get involved in other local groups like COPA, NCBI, NAACP and Community before Cops.)

I can also recommend to you a number of excellent books –
White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide by Carol Anderson
Between the World and Me, and We Were Eight Years in Power by Ta-Nehisi Coates
White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism, by Robin DiAngelo
How to be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi
So You Want to Talk About Race? by Ijeoma Oluo
Me and White Supremacy by Layla Saad

You can also listen to this terrific podcast series "Seeing White" - <https://www.sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/>

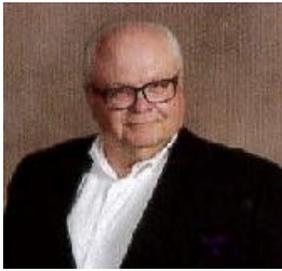
Sometimes the most important step to learning something new is realizing all that we don't know. It's not our fault that we weren't taught accurate information about our country and its history, and its present day realities, but it is our fault if we don't work at educating ourselves, now that our eyes have been opened.

I am so encouraged by the word cloud we generated during our June 21st service, showing our most important values. (See page 9.) Let us put them into action, "changing ourselves as we change the world, through love, learning, and service to others."

See you in (virtual) church,

Elaine

President's Corner — Jon Czarnecki



Hello. I'm Jon (short for Jonathan) Czarnecki, your incoming Board of Trustees president.

As I have said several times in the announcements I've given over the past two years, I am both honored and humbled to be your trustee, and now your president. For my first column, I thought I'd share with you a short version of my spiritual journey so you can get a sense for the kind of spirituality I will bring to the presidency.

Many of you know that I was raised in the Roman Catholic faith; some of you know that I left that faith after a spiritual crisis in undergraduate college, and eventually drifted, an apt term, into the UU faith through my first wife, a life-long Unitarian. In this regard, my initial spiritual development in UUism began with my wife's dad, an avid practitioner and reader of Unitarian related literature, and Rev. Max Coots, who taught sociology and management at my college, as well as acting as an informal chaplain.

My initial military service after graduation provided the fire for the steel of my faith; it was a difficult time for the country and my own experiences were typical of the times. Eventually my wife and I became active in the faith after my service, during our graduate studies at the University of Buffalo, New York. When we began our professional careers in Albany, New York, we embraced and were embraced by the First Unitarian Society of Albany, under the ministry of John Corrado. Reason, tolerance, and humanness were the virtues that formed the bastion of our Society's small corner of UUism. I assisted in worship services, taught RE, worked with church finances, and participated in our church's food coop. I most reluctantly left Albany in the wake of a failed marriage, lost employment, and new horizons in the U.S. Army in the halls of the Pentagon.

My time in and around the Washington area was one of professional tumult and success as I moved through the corridors of earthly power. I became spiritually mute during these years. I tried to find a spiritual home locally, but I sensed there was still a reservoir

of bad feeling for the military in the UU churches and communities I visited; it didn't feel like an accepting home. Any spiritual growth that I had during those years came from within, through meditative walks, hikes, and practice even in the drab cubicles of staff officers. I also expanded widely my spiritual knowledge. It was during these years that I became familiar with the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr and Martin Buber, and deepened my knowledge of Thomas Hobbes, Thucydides, Epictetus, and Lao Tzu, all of whom have become spiritual guides for my behavior.

The latest phase of my spiritual development began with my relationship with Mel, who would become my second (and final, I hope!) wife. We married in Alexandria, Virginia, and shortly thereafter left the East Coast for Central Coast California.

Our new marriage, our move and new jobs constituted great changes in our lives, especially with four children between us. Big changes at midlife are stressful. These stresses made us seek answers from within ourselves and from our community, especially concerning our faiths. We have different ways of seeking the infinite: hers is the Church of Latter-Day Saints. Mine is... well, you know. I had visited UUCMP three times before finding my answer. In September 2013, I had found myself again in a spiritual crisis; that of a persistent and morbid fear of death and dying. I decided to try once again visiting UUCMP. John Buehrens was in the pulpit. I cannot for the life of me recall the specifics of his sermon, but it left me crying. Crying for the lost years of my faith and crying for joy that I had found a home.

Over the next four services, I had the same reaction. Shortly thereafter I signed the book and began my work within our beloved community. And so I continue to grow through service in faith and love and respect for all of you.

See you next time!

Jon

Virtual Memorial for Joan Hopkins



Beloved long-time member Joan Hopkins passed away peacefully in her home on April 5. Her family will be conducting a Virtual Memorial celebrating Joan's life on Saturday, July 11th, at 10:00 a.m.



Anyone interested in attending can contact Joan's son, Chris Hopkins, at CelebrateJoanH@gmail.com and receive a link to the live, online event.

SCHEDULED EVENTS

Anti-Racism Book Discussion Group will not meet in July.

Anti-Racism Film Group will meet virtually on July 2 at 7 p.m. See information and link to the left.

Board of Trustees does not meet in July,

Buddhist Sangha is every Wednesday at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Contact Rev. Dennis Hamilton.

Community Choir does not meet in July

Dances of Universal Peace will not meet in July.

Equal Exchange will not be available in July.

Friday Night at the Movies will not meet in July.

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 DO-NATE button on the UUCMP website and indicating that the donation is for I-HELP.

Membership Committee meets Wednesday, July 22, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Men's Breakfast will not meet in July.

Music Committee will not meet in July.

NUUsletter deadline for the August issue is Thursday, July 16.

Program Council will not meet in July.

Sing Along will meet on Wednesday, July 8, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Social Justice meets Sunday, July 5, 12:00 p.m., via Zoom.

Stewardship does not meet in July.

Women's Discussion Group does not meet in July.

Life Enrichment Programs Affinity Groups:

Most groups do not meet in July.

Anti-Racism Book Group will not meet in July.

Anti-Racism Film Group will meet virtually at the Monterey Public Library on July 2 to discuss the film *Just Mercy* about Bryan Stevenson. Click this link to register and watch the film free ahead of time. <https://montereypl.libcal.com/event/6811860>

Men's Group Breakfast

Will not meet in July. Contact: Marsh Pitman

Women's Discussion Group

This group will not meet in July. Contact: Nancy Baker Jacobs.

T'ai Chi Chih No meetings in July.

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

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

Dances of Universal Peace

Will not meet in July. Contact: Barbara Bullock-Wilson if you have any questions.

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



We'll Build a Land

July Newsletter
We'll build a Land

Do you remember a time that you received Legos as a holiday or birthday present? Or maybe you gave them to your children? The knowledge that when you shook the present and heard the super satisfying clatter of hard plastic blocks bumping into one another that there were Legos inside. LEGOS!! Oh, the imagination can run wild with Legos! There is so much to build! The ideas are endless! A magical hall filled with potions and animals, a towering castle to guard special treasures, a fairy bower of flowers and trees, super high tech space ships and UFO's with crystal lights (that had many different amazing powers and abilities), giant pyramids, houses and more!

The concept of the Lego brick is so simple, a small 2x4 plastic brick, with a hollow underneath and pegs in the top to lock into place onto another brick. Such a simple creation. One Lego brick. But what if you added another brick? Life just got a little more interesting . . .

Alone, one Lego brick is not exactly fun. It doesn't do much, or anything really. It just sits there. Silently discarded, maybe lost under a bookcase or in the back of a drawer. But one little Lego brick has potential. It has the potential to change into something else.

Here's an idea to ponder: What if everyone in the world was given one Lego brick. There are some people that would hold tight to their brick. They would not want to let go of their one and only Lego. Others, however, might come together to see what happens when a couple are shared and combined. A pyramid for all to share is much more fun than one little block of plastic. A super high tech space ship is way more exciting than just one little brick. Once the Legos are

combined, we suddenly have something bigger! Something significant! Something much more powerful than a single lonely brick.

While many of us may not have more than one brick to share, a little part of our own individual resources, together we can create something better. A community. What can we build if we pool our resources instead of hoarding what we have?

Find your lost Lego, and add it to your neighbor's. Come together, and build something amazing.

This reminds me of the UU Hymn #121, *We'll Build a Land*. Let us allow the song to guide us through these stressful times. Let us build.

We'll build a land where we bind up the broken.
We'll build a land where the captives go free,
Where the oil of gladness dissolves all mourning.
Oh, we'll build a promised land that can be,

We'll build a land where we bring the good tidings
To all the afflicted and all those who mourn.
And we'll give them garlands instead of ashes.
Oh, we'll build a land where peace is born.

We'll be a land building up ancient cities,
Raising up devastations from old,
Restoring ruins of generations
Oh we'll build a land of people so bold.

Come build a land where the mantles of praises
Resounding from spirits once faint and once weak;
Where like oaks of righteousness stand her people
Oh come build the land, my people we seek.

Come build a land where sisters and brothers
Anointed by God, will then create peace:
Where justice shall roll down like the waters,
And peace like an ever flowing stream.

Thank you,
Erin Forstein

Director of Religious Exploration

Stay connected during quarantine — Zoom together!

During this challenging time when we are all sheltering in place, the UUCMP building is closed, but there is definitely a lot going on! Do you receive the electronic UUCMP Weekly News? It is sent out on Wednesdays, with lists of events, and on Fridays, with links for the Sunday service. If you are not receiving these emails, please send an email to office@uucmp.org and request that you be added to the email list. Then you can read about all the great things we are still doing. They are also posted to the [Website](#). Check the lower left corner for the link.



If you are a UUCMP committee chair, special events coordinator, affinity group leader or other church member and wish to use the church Zoom account to conduct your church meeting virtually, please be sure to contact the church office to make sure that we have properly placed your meeting on the church calendar, the Zoom calendar and the online calendar, which appears on the church website. The church office wants to make sure that meetings are not double booked and that you and your group members have all the information you need for a successful Zoom experience. Thanks for your help in making Zoom the important tool for church life that it has become in this pandemic era.

Sunday services and other meetings are accessed through Zoom, an electronic meeting program. It is not difficult to use. **To join a Zoom meeting:**

- ◆ Click on the ZOOM Meeting address given. If you have not already downloaded ZOOM, you will be prompted to download and install ZOOM. After that you click to join the meeting.
- ◆ Be sure your speakers are on and the volume is high enough for you to hear. This is adjusted under your computer's settings. Some people like using headphones to get better audio sound.
- ◆ You may also join a ZOOM Meeting by phone. This is done by dialing one of the phone numbers provided in the invitation and then enter the **Meeting ID** number. (Some meetings may also require a Password number. A Participant ID is not needed.)
- ◆ Please use the mute button when you are not speaking to minimize background noise. The mute icon is in the lower left-hand corner of your screen. Next to the mute icon is the icon for video, you can keep it on or off.
- ◆ Further to the right side is a chat bubble icon. There might be times in the service where you'll be invited to share in the chat.

Accessing the UUCMP Sunday Worship Services, 10:30 a.m. Pacific Time (US and Canada)

To join the Sunday service electronically please click here.

Meeting ID: 763 641 438

Password: Sunday (NOTE: Password is case sensitive)

To join via phone, simply call: 1-669-900-6833 (San Jose) When prompted, provide the Meeting ID: 763 641 438. (Participant ID is not required.)

If you have questions, we are here to help. Please contact the [office](#) for any needed assistance. See you on Zoom!!



July Shared Plate Recipient

Rice plus Project

We feed people in need

Rice plus Project is a humanitarian nonprofit organization made up of volunteers that feeds, clothes and supports people who need help with the necessities of life.

About twenty years ago in our living room one fifty-pound bag of rice was packed into gallon sized plastic bags to be distributed to families in need of food. At Christmas time that year we started packing more rice and added beans as well. Then the next year we wrapped many gifts for children too. A couple of years later we bought the beans, rice and 500 gifts for children through donations from friends. This project slowly expanded from once a year in December to a regular monthly project of 2500 to about 4000 lbs. of rice and beans. This food is directly distributed to needy families in Monterey County. During the winter months when the work in the fields is scarce, often times this food is the *only* source of food for some families. This past year alone, we packed and distributed in excess of 15 tons of rice and beans.

Once a month, we pick up 2500-3000 pounds of rice, beans and other food items. We unload the rice and beans by means of a human chain into Vista Lobos room in Carmel. More volunteers form

into teams opening the rice bags, filling them into grocery sized bags, some twisting ties, and some other putting 8-10 grocery bags into sacks. These sacks are brought out again in a human chain. The packed rice and beans are distributed to needy families.

Our project includes warm blankets, jackets in the winter months and baby clothes all year. We distribute canned goods, cereals, nut and dried fruits, peanut butter, and other nutritious food items.

Your donation will help to purchase food staples and other needed supplies. Please give generously to this worthy organization.

More information at:
<https://www.riceplusproject.org>

(Sandhya Kolar, PO Box 1264, Carmel, CA 93921;
ammassandhya@gmail.com)

1 501(c)(3) IRS Tax Exempt Non-profit Public Charitable Organization

2 Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we provide the food every month from our house to the groups who then distribute it to the needy families.

Opportunities to Help Create Worship

Want to give worship creation a little try? THIS MONTH, July, we are looking for people who might want to record a brief piece about how a world religion has inspired you. This is for the July 12th service, so contact Karen Brown (karenb1115@yahoo.com) if you'd like to help. ASAP. (This service does not include Judaism,

Christianity, or earth-centered traditions.)

There are many ways you can be a part of worship services. The Worship Associates Committee needs techies, speakers, planners, idea people, meeting participants, PR people. Contact the ministers if you are interested.

— Karen Brown

Musical Offerings



Choir takes a break in July

Have you wanted to get to know other choir members better? While we are taking a break from traditional choir rehearsals, we are meeting up for choir social hour each Thursday from 7-9 p.m. All are welcome.



While a majority of the musical offerings will be taking July off, we will still have our monthly *Sing Along with Shawn*. This is a fun way you can sing and share some of your favorites songs with others. Come with a list of two or three songs you would like others to sing along to or simply show up to sing other people's favorites. *Sing Along with Shawn* will be available in a fun, interactive manner via Zoom and YouTube. We will meet on **Wednesday, July 8, 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





Parting thoughts from the outgoing UUCMP Board president

Hello Gentlepeople:

I have been thinking a lot over recent weeks about the society in which we live, the protests that continue in the wake of the killing of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, and the militaristic response of law enforcement to peaceful protest. I have been mulling over my part in the white supremacist and privileged society in which I live. It's a bubble, isn't it? Fragile, isolated, but most importantly, if you know bubbles, permeable. That last is perhaps the best part about bubbles. They are permeable, which is why they dissolve or pop in midair without brushing against a thing. I think this pandemic has made our society's bubble of white privilege permeable. It is why this time when people are protesting yet another needless, brutal killing at the hands of the police, that we are seeing more and more and more people coming out and saying "no more" and pushing for real, lasting change.

I could write another dissertation on the whitewash, literally, of our nation's ugly history around race, white privilege and white supremacy. I knew about the massacres at Tulsa, the destruction of Rosewood, sundown towns, and how the Ku Klux Klan altered the course of national politics in the wake of the civil war. I know the history of the genocide against the First Nations, and the ongoing devastation that history has wrought. I know that in the town where I grew up, San Jose, California, that the thriving Chinatown was burned to the ground in the 1920's and that local law enforcement did *nothing*. As a person who studied history in depth as part of her education I thought I had a pretty good grip on the facts. That much is true. I do have a good grip on the facts. And the other fact is that for much of my life I knew *nothing*. So, what do I mean by that? I mean that while I knew the history, the facts, I lacked understanding of the experiences of people, of the true, insidious nature of the legacy these facts had and still have. These injustices, cruelties large and small, resonate still like the tolling of a bell. I have spent a lot of my life trying, with varying degrees of success, to dismantle the white supremacy, privilege, and the racism that is baked into the cake of American life, of my life. We have all eaten it, some of us just notice the bitter aftertaste sooner than

others. Some of us let our bubble be permeable.

So, I'm not going to spend this time talking about what I've done in my life to dismantle and to continue dismantling the white supremacy and privilege in my world. The struggle for justice and equality belongs to all of us, but there are voices far more important and relevant than mine that need to be heard. I have had some interesting conversations in recent days on this subject. I have lost some friends, or supposed friends, over this. But I will tell you what I have had to say about it all: Be willing to have the difficult conversations, to let your bubble be permeable.

Listen more and talk less: when people are telling you their life experiences it isn't necessarily about you. Your role is to educate yourself, to take in what is being said. It's rather like being an hour late to a four-hour long lecture class. You get to stand in the back until you find a seat, and you get to make up the lost time with independent study: no cribbing from other's notes unless they are willing to share. And, if they do, you don't get to critique how they write, feel, understand or act on their own experiences. Your role is to be permeable to their experience. To bear witness. Finally, you get to be a megaphone for the voices that have been ignored, silenced, or told "if you were just a little more polite . . ."

There will be those who question this faith community's support of Black Lives Matter and its ongoing work to dismantle white supremacy inside and outside its walls. They will question whether it is polite, or politic to take this stand. I will tell you the one thing that history has taught me well: being polite alone rarely changes the world.

As we continue to move forward I hope that you find courage and strength in witnessing the changes already starting in response to the ongoing protests. I hope that if you cannot participate in marches or protests that you find other ways to support efforts to bring forth a more just and equitable world, to dismantle the social structures that perpetuate white supremacy in this society. I hope you find a way to burst forth from the bubble into a larger, more whole world.

As always, I wish you all peace, courage, and strength.

— Page Galloway

SOCIAL JUSTICE



UUCMP COPA House Meetings And Frequently Asked Questions About COPA

On Sunday, June 21, the COPA Core Team hosted a Zoom meeting attended by 29 church members and friends. It was led by Rev. Elaine, who introduced Arturo Aguila, the new lead organizer of COPA.

Arturo, born in Mexico, came to this country on his own when he was just 15. After obtaining his college degree in finance, he worked for Wells Fargo Bank for 13 years to become a Senior Vice President. After a significant change of heart, he started as an organizer with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) at One LA, the largest IAF in CA. He is married with three children who have families of their own, and lives in Salinas with his wife. They recently moved here from Phoenix where he was lead organizer for the IAF affiliate. Before that he served in the same roles in El Paso, and San Antonio.

Arturo explained the main purposes and activities of COPA and how it complements our Unitarian Universalist values: justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; use of the democratic process; and the goal of world community with peace, justice, and liberty for all. COPA also can help us develop our self-interest in power and action AND engage in public life.

Arturo introduced house meetings as a primary tool that COPA uses. COPA's House Meeting Strategy identifies social justice issues through the groups that gather to tell their stories. "They talk wherever people feel comfortable to come together," Arturo said, "and feel safe enough to show their vulnerability." Priorities for this organizing coalition are set by hearing about the issues people are facing in their lives, in their families, and among their close friends.

Another goal of the House Meetings is to identify potential community leaders, like our own teacher Elizabeth Granado of Seaside. She became active in COPA after attending a house meeting during her own housing crisis; she became inspired to speak up

at a city council meeting, has been an activist ever since, and is now co-chair of our COPA Core Team. Once identified, leaders are trained to create lasting change.

COPA's purpose is to influence community leaders and elected representatives to act effectively in ways beneficial to vulnerable communities on the issues affecting them. COPA's previous key issues have been housing, health care, behavioral health care, and immigration. However, priorities are always subject to change because of the democratic nature of the organization. Arturo described COPA as "broad-based organizing" and "... a vehicle, a venue, to act, to make something happen. The ability to be at the table when decisions are made. We teach leadership skills that are important in public life." He said that before he was trained in COPA techniques, he would go to marches and protests, but after learning broad-based techniques for communicating, he gained "the ability to articulate anger and struggle, how to use dialogue rather than just complaining."

We then met in four facilitated 20-minute house meetings. Following are some of the issues that arose across groups:

- ♦ Housing, homelessness and isolation, anxiety and other mental health issues brought on by Covid-19 and Shelter in Place.
- ♦ Mental health issues and the need for dental care for so many who have suffered through drug addiction.
- ♦ People who do not agree with each other must learn to talk, to negotiate.
- ♦ Institutional racism is a major problem that must be addressed, especially policing and the gun-oriented segments of society.

— See next page.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

- ◆ The *Black Lives Matter* movement will be repeated in 50 years unless change is made now, especially in community policing. Instead of police dogs today the police are using rubber bullets on peaceful protesters.
- ◆ Grave concern for children and grandchildren unless young people can make the future hopeful.
- ◆ UUs who are peace-oriented but non-confrontational must learn to be activists.
- ◆ Connection and communication with students needs to be strengthened among generations.
- ◆ The economy: will it survive? Is there a chance now to build a “caring economy” that we all have wanted for so long that takes care of people’s basic needs regardless of their ability to pay?

Since COPA is a democratic organization, the next opportunity member institutions had to talk about these issues and strategies was at the annual Delegates’ Assembly on Zoom, Saturday, June 27.



FAQs About COPA

Q: I don’t find my issues reflected in COPA’s current priorities of housing, mental health,

health care and immigration rights. I feel like I am doing fine, particularly in comparison to the problems I hear about.

You are right to acknowledge that dissonance. Traditionally, COPA’s platform changes and adapts to its membership. Locally, that membership has often been communities who, for differing reasons, have not had easy access to the leadership and policymakers who shape their lives. Because of this, many of the issues which made it through the COPA process (see below) were serious health, safety, and quality of life problems. Most of our church community have easy access to policy makers, politicians, and business leadership which means the problems we face get addressed much more quickly or are addressed by the support structures around us without our even noticing.

We have two options as we move forward:

Get involved and start talking about your issues and they may become a part of the new platform. Though it is not readily accepted in our culture to discuss our problems, and they may feel frivolous considering the dire situations around us, we all have issues we would like to resolve. Community can help, and we may learn greater trust in each other in the process.

Or: As a community we can learn to develop our allyship; we can offer our access to decision makers, and our perceived political sway to benefit the leaders and platform of COPA.

And of course, a hybrid of these two may in fact be the best model. But this is uncharted territory, so we will not find out what works until we commit to participating.

— See next page.

SOCIAL JUSTICE



Q: How does the process of COPA setting priorities work?

COPA organizes to develop leaders with power to take effective action in public life. The organizing cycle starts with conversations to build trust, identify interests and most importantly, to identify leaders with a desire for self-development to take effective action on behalf of their community. One-on-one meetings are held by COPA organizers and other primary leaders while house meetings are groups of 8-10 leaders held within the member institution.

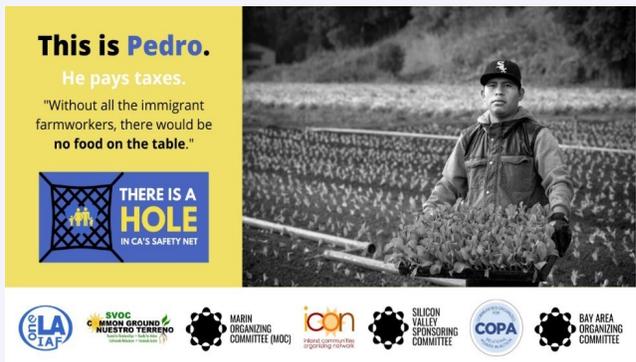
Based on issues identified through individual meetings and house meetings, strategy teams will then conduct Research Actions. The purpose of Research Actions is to build relationships with public officials or private sector leaders, understand their interests and explore possible solutions. A Public Action is a public meeting of COPA leaders and the officials or private sector leaders to make public a negotiated agreement and demonstrate an exchange of power around a particular issue and plan of action.

Following every action or meeting, leaders take time for evaluation as a means of learning and leadership development. Leaders reflect with the organizer on what was gained, what could have been done better, how did leaders change and grow, and strategize on the next steps.

Q: What are the higher levels of organization beyond COPA?

COPA is an affiliate organization of the Southwest IAF, which has affiliates across much of the United States. Metro IAF is also comprised of affiliates located on the East Coast. Southwest and Metro IAFs also operate together. Most recently they have held educational webinars on the situations we are facing during the pandemic. They held a seminar on testing, tracing, and supported isola-

tion by Professor Danielle Allen of Harvard that was attended by over 600 IAF leaders from across the country.



Last month in California, the seven IAF organizations across the State worked together to support funding undocumented workers who pay taxes by including them in the CA Earned Income Tax Credit, a proposal we have championed and which has made it through as a line item in the state budget now before the legislature.



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