



NUUSLETTER

of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

January Theme: Balance

Sunday Service begins at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom online meeting app

January 3

“Our Balancing Act”

Rev. Axel Gehrmann & W.A. Sue Ellen Stringer

We are at the beginning of a brand-new year, full of boundless possibilities and unimagined potential. And yet, the problems of the past year have not all been miraculously resolved. We will continue to be challenged on many levels: personal and political, spiritual and physical, emotional and intellectual. Weighing the diverse demands of the moment, how might we wisely respond?

January 10

“Finding Your Inner Octopus”

Rev. Elaine Gehrmann & W.A. Ken Cuneo

We often think of balance as a point between two opposites: work and play, happy and sad, pain and pleasure. This morning we will address the concept of balance not as a binary, but multidimensionally, and consider the many tentacles of our inner octopi.

January 17

“Leaning, Tilting, and Falling Forward ”

Rev. Axel Gehrmann & W.A. Karen Brown

In an ideal world, the scales of justice are perfectly balanced and unmoving. Alas, our world today is not ideal. The law of inertia maintains a status quo with a different kind of immobility. As religious progressives, we long to build a better world. This means moving beyond our familiar comfort zone, leaning into the unknown, tilting toward our dreams. Progress may involve moments when we feel strangely unbalanced, as we strive toward a world of greater love and justice.

January 24

“Me and We: Caring for Self While Caring for Others ”

Susan Panttaja & W.A. Ann Jacobson

Sometimes it feels like a dichotomy: with our limited discretionary time, we can either attend to our own needs OR address the needs of others. But is it really an either/or? In this service we will explore the balancing act we can experience as we attempt to care for ourselves while also caring for others and satisfying our own desire to make a positive difference in the world.

January 31

“Striking a Balance . . . Human Beings or Human Doings?”

Bob Sadler & W.A. Natalie Fryberger

Different traditions speak of an inner battle between two forces that are present in man: one being practical and more material, and the other raising our awareness to higher realms, “like fire that gives light and rises towards the divine.” This constant battle exemplifies the Human Being, the only creation with the ability to make a choice. To be born as a human being is to have a choice: either to allow the reactive need-driven self to take charge or our deeper self to direct our actions and the way we respond to circumstances. In this service, Natalie Fryberger and Bob Sadler will explore the challenges and options of finding the right balance between our need to get things done and our need to just fully experience the moment.

Religious Exploration

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

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See the calendar at
www.uucmp.org



Ministers' Message

Rev. Elaine
Gehrman

"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."

*--Marian Wright Edelman quoting Rev. Dr.
Martin Luther King, Jr.*

A new year feels full of promise and potential. Most of us are quite happy to be done with 2020, a year of so much grief, fear, isolation and hardship. As 2021 dawns, many of us look forward with hope — to containing the pandemic, a change in political regimes, and movements to heal our hurting world.

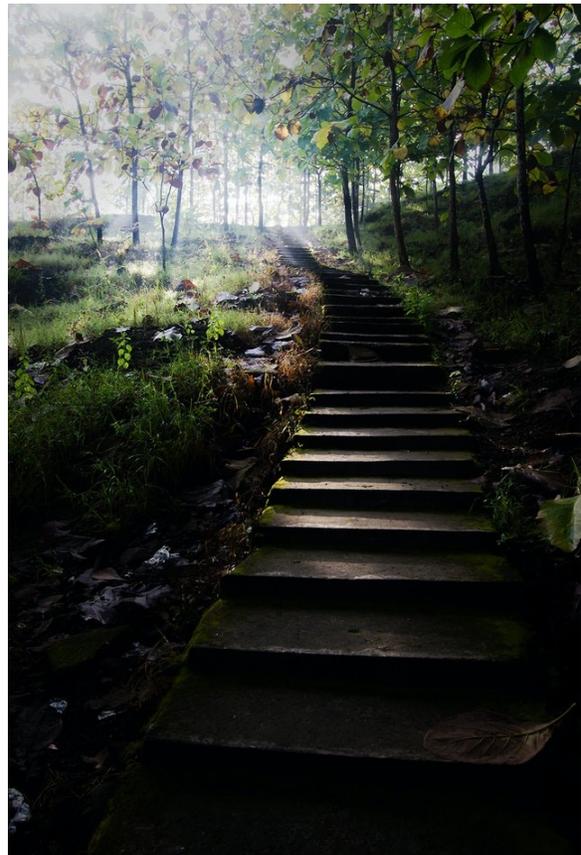
What new step might you be considering for 2021? What new skill, what new involvement, what new practice might you try? What new organization might you support, what new class might you take, what new persons might you meet?

Many of us are a little jaded about New Year's resolutions, having made and not fulfilled many good intentions over the years. However, there is still something about a new year that inclines us to setting new intentions, developing new habits, setting out on new ventures.

Our pandemic experience has opened up many new avenues of connection online: classes we can take without having to drive, people we can meet in other states and countries, concerts we can attend, books we can discuss, and more, all from the comfort of our own homes. Even as we hope to return to the world of in person gatherings, we can take this newly-acquired access with us — expanding our world and its possibilities.

This January, I encourage you to try something new, stretch your mind, body and spirit. Find fresh input to process; wrestle with a challenging

issue; seek inspiration in a recent book or film; meet a new neighbor; cultivate a fresh perspective; plant a seed that may yield unexpected delights.



Let us take the first step in beginning a new year, and trust that the stairway will reveal itself as we go forward, together.

See you in (virtual) church,

Elaine

Life Enrichment

The 2021 Winter Life Enrichment booklet has been published online at uucmp.org. To access it from the web site, click on the *Learning* tab and scroll down to “Adult Programs — Life Enrichment.” Check out all the great groups, classes, and activities that are available via Zoom.

For questions, please contact Carol Greenstreet, who is the LE Committee Chair.

Men’s Breakfast Group

Saturday, January 9, at 8:30 a.m.

All men are invited to the monthly Men’s Breakfast Group via Zoom. We encourage you to settle in at your computer or phone with a cup of coffee and/or breakfast food and join our conversation.



Please let Marsh Pitman or Rev. Axel (minister@uucmp.org) know if you will attend.

Our Zoom Meeting ID is: 966 8868 2550. You can join via phone (call 669-900-9128), or via computer - simply click on this link: <https://zoom.us/j/96688682550>

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 & Film Discussion Group
Tuesday, January 5, 7 p.m. via Zoom. See page 9.

Board of Trustees meets Wednesday, January 20, at 5:45 p.m. via Zoom.

Buddhist Sangha is every Wednesday at 7 p.m. via Zoom. See page 9.

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

I-HELP for Men and I-HELP for Women is supported now by financial donations to UUCMP. 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, January 27, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Men’s Breakfast Group meets Saturday, January 9, 8:30 a.m. via Zoom. See article to the left.

Music Committee meets Wednesday, January 6, 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.

NUUsletter deadline for the February issue is Saturday, January 16.

Program Council is Tuesday, January 5, 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. For Zoom information contact Lauren Keenan programcouncil@uucmp.org

Sing Along will meet on Wednesday, January 13, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Social Justice meets Sunday, January 3, 12:00 p.m., via Zoom.

Stewardship meets Wednesday, January 6, 1:30 p.m., via Zoom.

Women’s Discussion Group meets January 14, and 28, 2 p.m. via Zoom. See on article page 12.

President's Corner — Jon Czarnecki



When you read this, you will have noticed the annual cycle of the Sun returning; the days will have lengthened from that deep dark day of December 21st. But as I write this, you and I are still sharing that primitive dread, shoved into our ancient reptilian brain stem by evolution, of darkening days that might – this time – keep on extinguishing the light unto extinction. Lovecraft or Poe could not envision a more horrible fate for ourselves. No wonder this season introduces more suicides and depression than the others.



[This Photo](#) by

We create this narrative of desperation and depression. Being natural dramatists, we also create the ending of the story as well. Different cultures, different religions choose their own special endings. I very much like the Christian tradition; it's my old Roman Catholic upbringing working in my subconscious. In this tradition, the return of the Sun is marked by the birth of a child, a special child who would bring not only light, but hope and love into a forlorn world. A redeemer. The lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world, goes the old chant. This child does the work of bringing light, love and hope to the rest of us, relieving ourselves of that burden. The child saves our very souls. All we do is go along for the ride, believing in the doctrine and dogma of the several faiths generated from this story, and following their specific rituals and liturgy. It's a deal, I daresay, made in heaven. Tom Lehrer sang songs about it back in the 60s.

As UUs, we have come to believe that the child isn't out there, the child is in each one of us. We are the agents of our own redemption. We are the agents to bring light, love and hope to a darkening world.

We express this in our many individualistic patterns of belief but we always return to a central tenet of our religion: each of us is our own redeemer. If we want light in the world, we will have to make our own candles and light them. Another central tenet is that we are not alone; no man or woman is an island. Only through mutual love and respect can we power across the dark earth to reach dawn's horizon.

This is a difficult credal road to follow, for if we see failure on our journey to that horizon we must know that we are inextricably part of that breakdown. We need to be able to look at such wrecks and say to our fellow travelers, "so what? What can we learn from this? How can we do better?" In my former profession, a military officer, we called that "safe-fail training." We knew and know that we learn so much more, and so much faster from failures. Remember how you learned to ride a bike? By falling. If you were like me, you fell a lot of times. But now that we know how to ride we can still get on a bike and ride, even after decades of not riding.

Many of you know where I am going with this rambling line of thought. Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hannukah, whatever we wish to call this season, is a season of light and joy and redemption. And falling off new bikes. We all have just finished nine months of living in a deadly diseased environment; we all have just finished a corrosive political conversation that we in this country call an election; we all have experienced, directly or indirectly, the effects of a terrible economic and social calamity that pervades our country; and we Californians have just finished experiencing a fire season unlike any other in our history.

We are still here. Look, is that a lightening of the horizon? Come, let me help you get back on your bike. We have much work to do, and our journey is still long.

Pax Vobiscum (peace be with you)

Jon



A Message from the Intern

There's a Norwegian saying, "There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing." I pushed the limits of this statement many years ago, while doing research and camping in Antarctica. Brrrr!!! There I found that the right gear is essential for survival. Now here in balmy Coastal California, weather is no excuse for me to stay inside. This is an important point for me. You see, if I stay indoors for too long, I tend to get a little – er – cranky. I need some fresh air, movement, and nature to restore my equilibrium and renew my spirit.

Now that the holiday season is coming to a close, we face the heart of winter. This time of year, with its short days and cold, wet weather, can often be challenging, even without the added isolation that the pandemic requires. More than ever, we need to focus on the right "gear" – the right activities and practices – that can maintain the health of body, mind, and spirit. In Antarctica, the right gear included not only appropriate clothing, but also great companions and a sense

of wonder. Here, it means putting on some warm layers and my favorite wide-brimmed wool hat and heading outside. A little singing, a good belly laugh with my family, and some meditation and prayer nourish me, too.

I wonder what nourishes you, in body, mind, and spirit? What protects you from the elements of winter? What brings you a sense of joy and wellbeing? Perhaps it's a creative project, talking with friends, Sunday worship, bird-watching out the window, catching up on reading, or dancing in the living room. Whatever it may be for you, I encourage you to build a little time for it into your schedule this winter. If you are looking for practices and activities you can do with others, check out the offerings in the church newsletter and life enrichment catalog.

This winter, may you make good use of the right "gear" to protect you from the elements, nourish body and spirit, and warm your heart.

Yours in Faith,
Susan



Joanna Wallfish Virtual Concert

Join us on Sunday, January 10, 2021, at 2 p.m. for a virtual concert with gifted singer and songwriter Joanna Wallfish. A London born songstress, Joanna is a musician of the highest order. A quintessential renaissance artist, she has released five critically acclaimed albums of original music and arrangements, had a memoir published (UWA Press), and her documentary "The Great Song Cycle" is currently making the rounds in the international film festival circuit. Born into a family of classical musicians, (Joanna's mother, violinist Elizabeth Wallfish, was the concert master at the Carmel Bach Festival for eighteen summers) Joanna spent every summer from age six immersed in the musical vibrance. In this concert, Joanna will accompany herself on the baritone ukulele, guitar, piano, and a loop pedal with which she creates wondrous choral harmonies. Her lyrics are poetic, honest and poignant, taking the listener through landscapes of love, humanity, joy, sorrow, and nature. Don't miss this vibrant and engaging concert!



There will be a requested donation to attend. Please check the *Events* section of the UUCMP website for the concert link. (<https://uucmp.org/congregation-news/events/>)

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



Happy New Year,
World!

I think everyone is as excited as I am for 2020 to be over. I have hope that 2021 will be better in so many ways. 2020 was, of course, the year of the pandemic, but now there is a vaccine! Perhaps 2021 will be the end of this nonsense and the year of healing. The return of normalcy. I am hopeful! We have a new president! A good one finally! We have a vaccine! A few actually! I have hope that this strange madness of 2020 will be coming to an end!

When I am stressed, I like to make lists. I made a lot of lists last year. A LOT of lists. They helped me get through the day. Oh, I woke up! Check that off the list. Aha! I made breakfast for the kids! Check that off the list. Rarely would I write down “wear real clothes,” that would just be laughable, I am a realist after all.

2020 brought us a wild host of things. Some terrible, some good, some just plain weird. Here is a list of only some of what 2020 brought us:

- Australia caught fire.
- School children knitted nests for the displaced Australian animals.
- California caught on fire in multiple places.
- There was a huge locust invasion in Eastern Africa.
- There was a serious Coronavirus outbreak.
- The shutdown.
- The loss of far too many.
- Masks and anti-maskers.
- Zoom became a thing.

- A volcano erupted in the Philippines.
- Turkey’s earthquake.
- Kashmir’s avalanche.
- Indonesia’s flood.
- Brexit.
- The Olympics were postponed.
- The killing of George Floyd by police, and the demonstrations that ensued.
- There was a huge explosion in Lebanon.
- Murder hornets were discovered.
- Animals reclaimed cities that were in lockdown.
- The world began to heal as people stayed home.
- The Pentagon released UFO videos.
- The tiger king.
- A star disappeared from space, without a supernova. (Now, I’m not saying it was aliens, but . . .)
- The flight to nowhere sold out.
- Fire tornadoes actually happened.
- The wind in Australia created a reverse waterfall.
- Water was discovered on the moon.
- Mysterious car sized drones appeared in the Midwest night sky.
- A baby was born from a 27 year old frozen embryo.
- Saturn and Jupiter came together for the first time in 800 years on the Winter Solstice to create a Christmas Star!
- The monolith. ☺

Yes. The monolith. This is what I want to pause and meditate for a bit on. Is it a mysterious art installation on a global scale? Or something else? The monolith has allowed us a chance to breathe at the end of this seriously troubling year. It has allowed our minds to turn from the terrible virus, the natural disasters, the politics and the social injustices to something shiny for a moment. It has given us pause, and a chance for reflection.

No, not all of 2020 was bad, but I am done with that strange year and so happy it is behind us. Let us move forward now into a bright new year of vaccines, global healing, and kindness.

Erin Forstein



January Shared Plate Recipient

UNITE HERE Local 483

Unite Here Local 483 is the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, a diverse workforce of housekeepers, kitchen workers, servers, bartenders, etc. who work in the many area hotels, schools, and venues.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were 1,500 members strong. But with shuttered hotels 95% of those members have been laid off or furloughed due to COVID-19 restrictions (1,425 members). To stave off some of the unemployment pain, we have approached helping our members from several vantage points.

In April, through the generosity of our Union friends, we were able to start a General Assistance Fund. We distributed \$50 grocery cards to those members in need, approximately \$12,000 in Safeway cards, not to only our members, but also to other hospitality workers in our area who are in need.



Every Wednesday afternoon, hundreds of hospitality workers come by to "ALL IN" at Seaside High School, a food giveaway staffed by 10-15 union members. We load up boxes of dairy, produce and dry goods to the cars of the needy. More than 530 families pass through to receive goods on a typical Wednesday.

We were able to provide our members with 6 months of health insurance coverage until the funds ran low. Over 250 members saw their insurance lapse.



We responded with universal visa cards to help ease the burden a bit as members roll toward Medicare and Medi-Cal.

Finally, on our website we have compiled an extensive list of social agencies in the area who offer help ranging from rental assistance, to counseling, to medical assistance. It is virtually one-stop shopping for those in need of assistance at unitehere483.org.

We are grateful to the Unitarian Universalists and to our community; all our work is a derivative of your generosity. We are able to help our out-of-work members with groceries, rent assistance, gas, auto repair, clothing, and child-care. We also help the undocumented families who live in the shadows and who are generally not eligible for any service or agency; they are especially impacted by the coronavirus.



Though we may find ourselves in dark times, it's also the time we shine our brightest, helping each other to cope with daily burdens and continue to move forward.

We need your continued help! Please make donation checks payable to Action Council of Monterey County with "Local 483 Worker Relief Fund" in the memo line.

Thank you for your caring and generosity.

Musical Offerings

Come join the music department for another fun year of music and merriment.

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. We meet **every Thursday from 7-9 p.m.** This month we will be meeting via **Zoom** for rehearsals. No experience nor commitment necessary! We look forward to Zooming with you.

If you would like to be a song leader for hymns, let me know!



Our Children's Choir is also open to all children. While it is geared towards children in 1st-8th grades, all are welcome. We meet **every Monday from 3-3:30 p.m.** in the music Zoom room.



Also, if you are looking to just join other voices in a capophonous 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, January 13, from 5:30-7:00.**



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

Join Our Church!

Even in these pandemic times - especially, in these times - our church seeks to be a caring community and a welcoming place. We strive to deepen our religious lives and support the spiritual growth of all who join together here, working to build a better world beginning with ourselves.

If you find you are in sympathy with our principles and you are at least 16 years of age, then we invite you to sign our membership book.



Joining the church entitles you to vote at congregational meetings, at which we adopt budgets, elect officers, and direct the course of church programming. Above and beyond that, membership is a personal and public expression of your support of this religious community, the ideals it stands for, and the work it does.

If you are interested in becoming an “official” member of UUCMP, contact the ministers (minister@uucmp.org).

Please join us!

Life Enrichment Programs Affinity Groups:

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

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

Men’s Breakfast Group meets second Saturdays 8:30 a.m. via Zoom
Contact: Marsh Pitman or Rev. Axel

Women’s Discussion Group Second and fourth Thursdays, 2 – 3:30 p.m. via Zoom.
Contact: Nancy Baker Jacobs. See page 12.

Buddhist 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 January. Contact: John Freeman for any questions.

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

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.

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.



UUCMP: GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER

Happy New Year!

With the new year comes UUCMP's annual operating fund drive. This year's theme is **Growing Stronger Together** . . . a theme that feels appropriate for how we are standing up together through the challenges of the last several months.

Throughout these virtual times, we are keeping our flame going. We are generous with our time and our treasure to be of support of one another and our community. Congratulations to all of us! And it is important that we keep doing so.

The kick-off for our **Growing Stronger Together** operating fund drive is during our worship service on February 14 (without a yummy lunch). Please mark your calendars.

We will celebrate our generosity in the spring when we are able. Let us hope 2021 is a less dramatic year nationally, that we remain ever safe and well, and that our lives become less restricted soon.

See you at virtual church on February 14 (if not before).

Your Stewardship Committee,

Konny Murray (chair), Carol Collin, Fran Gaver, Gretchen Hausmann, Steve Johnson, Judy Lind, Harry Nagel, and Jo Ann Novoson, with staff support from Rev. Axel Gehrman and Intern Susan Panttaja.

Shared Plate Recipients

Here are the monthly assignments for the Shared Offering Recipients for 2021, and the names of the nominators for each one.

January – UNITE HERE local 483 - Mibs McCarthy

February – Black Lives UU – Rev. Elaine Gehrman

March – SPCA Pet Food Bank – Konny Murray

April – UU Ministry for Earth – Karen Brown

May – Home Match/COVIA – Doris Beckman

June – The Village Project – Wanda Sue Parrott & Mibs McCarthy

July – United Farm Workers Foundation - Mibs McCarthy

August – MC Fire Relief Fund – Lauren Keenan

September – Harmony at Home – Konny Murray & Peggy Hansen

October – MSF Doctors Without Borders – Gregg McKee

November – Dorothy's Place – Karen Brown

December – Food Bank for Monterey County – Olga Chandler & Lauren Keenan & Susan Hocevar

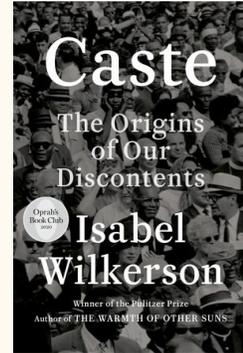


Unitarian Universalism for our Times - A Book Discussion of *Caste*

Dates: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, (February 9 - May 25, 2021)

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

The First Principle of Unitarian Universalism affirms the “inherent worth and dignity of every person.” It sounds simple and straightforward, and yet seems maddeningly difficult to actually practice. We continue to live in extraordinary times. The current pandemic, our heightened awareness of racial and economic disparities, and an increasingly polarized political climate provide an abundance of challenges. How can we as Unitarian Universalists best understand and address these issues? Please join Rev. Axel for an 8-session reading and discussion of *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by the Pulitzer Prize Winning author Isabel Wilkerson, as we grapple with these important questions.



Please acquire a copy of the book and read the introduction and Part One (p. 1-35) for our first session, on February 9.

From the book jacket: “In this brilliant book, Isabel Wilkerson gives us a masterful portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America, as she explores, through immersive, deeply researched narrative and stories about real people, how America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings . . . Linking caste systems of America, India and Nazi Germany, Wilkerson explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across civilizations, including divine will, bloodlines, and stigma . . . She points forward to ways America can move beyond artificial and destructive separations of human divisions, toward hope in our common humanity.”



Join Elizabeth for Zumba Livestream class every Tuesday at 5:00 p.m.

Check the UUCMP [Wednesday](#) E-News each week for the class link.

No experience needed! All fitness and dance levels are welcome. It's not about getting the right moves. It's about moving, having fun, and getting some exercise in. All moves can be modified and you're always welcome to take breaks. Many people enjoy Zumba while in their chair. Do what you can and most importantly get ready to have some FUN! Don't forget your water bottle and a towel for the sweat!

Benefits:

A total workout

Combining all elements of fitness – cardio, muscle conditioning, balance and flexibility

Boosted energy

A serious dose of awesome each time you leave class

“Hindsight, Humor, and Hope: Who, Me, an Elder?”

Meeting Dates: Six Mondays, from February 1 – April 19 (every first and third Mondays of the month)*

Meeting Time: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: Zoom

Susan Panttaja, Intern Minister, will lead this six-part exploration of the journey into elderhood. Sometime after the age of sixty, adults start to have the sense of moving into “older folk territory.” The transition to being an elder often comes before we are emotionally prepared for it, and it can be quite unsettling! This new phase of life can bring up deeply personal questions, such as “Who am I now?” and “What will I do that is meaningful?”

This course is for those of us who have reached the threshold of elderhood, whatever chronological age you happen to be. In this program, we will prepare ourselves to step into our elder years with grace and grit, reimagining them as a time of relevance, reflection, and possibility. Through discussion, journaling, and creative arts, we will explore the positive side of being an elder. We will support each other to claim the inner wisdom, spiritual richness, and adventure of being an elder.

The course is a “Tapestry of Faith” curriculum offered by the Unitarian Universalist Association. The curriculum will be modified to fit the zoom format.

Materials: In addition to a journal of some type, please assemble a “Hindsight, Humor, and Hope toolkit:” pen, pencil, eraser, and color pencils or multicolor *washable* (not permanent) fine-line markers.

*Specific meeting dates:

February 1, February 15, March 1, March 15, April 5, April 19

If you would like to attend, or have questions, please contact Susan Panttaja : intern@uucmp.org.

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. Due to the current shelter-in-place restrictions, we’ll be meeting via Zoom for the next few months. We plan to hold the following discussions in January:

On January 14th, Diana Martinetto will lead our discussion of “The Most Important Lesson from 83,000 Brain Scans with Dr. Daniel Amen.”

On January 28th, Darlene Boyd will lead our discussion of “We Can Adapt for Our Planet.” Darlene strongly suggests that participants in this discussion watch “Kiss the Ground” at <https://kisstheground.com/> and list at least five ways to act on this information before the discussion.

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

—Nancy Baker Jacobs, Facilitator

Unitarian Universalist Church of
Monterey Peninsula, proudly
presents

**LUNCH TIME
SONGS**

Joanna
Walfisch

"Joanna's crystalline voice brings to mind early recordings by that legendary songstress Joni Mitchell" — Wall Street Journal

**AN ONLINE CONCERT
JANUARY 10TH, 2PM**

online platform to be confirmed.

An online concert. Save the Date!

SOCIAL JUSTICE



COVID-19 Civic Academy: Making Greater Progress Together

by Laura Nagel and Elizabeth Granada

Special Guests

Jane Parker, County Supervisor of District 4 and UUCMP Member

Wendy Root Askew, County Supervisor-Elect of District 4

Dr. Brenda Eskenazi, professor at the School of Public Health at UC Berkeley and principal investigator of the Center for the Health Assessment of Mothers and Children of Salinas (CHAMACOS) study

Dr. Hester Parker, Environmental Studies at CSUMB's Applied Environmental Science Department and co-chair with Dr. Eskenazi of the Monterey County Farmworker Health Coalition

Dr. Miguel Tirado, Professor Emeritus of Health and Human Services and Dean of Graduate Studies at CSUMB, recognized for his lifetime of work on behalf of California farm workers that began with Cesar Chavez and the UFW in the Salinas Valley.

On Sunday, December 13, UUCMP hosted a virtual COPA Civic Academy with 119 participants, 32 of them from UUCMP. Rev. Elaine Gehrman served as co-chair with Rev. Martin Juarez from San Pablo Episcopal Church in Seaside. We also had attendees from the following churches: Holy Cross and Peace United in Santa Cruz, Our Lady of Refuge Catholic in Castroville, Sacred Heart in Salinas, Saint Mary's by-the-Sea in Pacific Grove, St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in King City, and Unity Church of Monterey Bay, and Mujeres en Acción groups in Castroville and Greenfield.

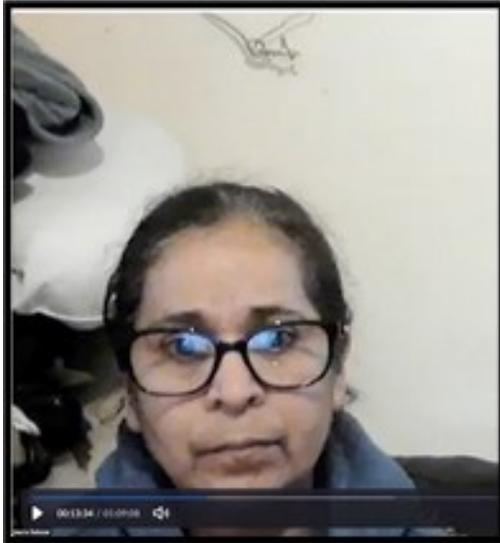
For this interfaith service Rev. Craig Scott led the opening prayer calling upon God "whom we call by many names, and no name." He lifted up prayers for the farmworkers, and the healthcare workers, and all those

workers who serve us. He asked to feel the holy presence felt in minds and hearts and that inspires to love and compassion.

Rev. Elaine introduced the program to hear about a COPA plan of action that had been approved earlier that week by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, to learn from infectious disease specialist, Dr. Sundeep Gupta his recommendations for how to make progress together against the virus, to listen to first hand experiences of how testing, tracing and supported isolation is failing in our community, to hear from our elected officials Jane Parks and Wendy Root Askew; to meet together in bilingual small groups to share stories about the impact the virus has had on each of us, our families, and our community, and to take up a collection to help assist two congregations affected by this pandemic.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

We heard stories that highlight the disparate impact of services and treatment of COVID-19 across Monterey County from Adriana Molina and Adriana Santana from Mujeres en Acción in Castroville; and from Maricela Acevedo from St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in King City.



Following is the story told by Maria Salazar who lives close to Gonzalez in a farm labor camp.

“Good afternoon. My name is **Maria Salazar**. My husband and I have three children. On November 30th we were both diagnosed positive for COVID-19 along with our son, who has asthma. He began to feel like he could not breathe. I called his doctor and she said I needed to send him to the hospital emergency room for x-rays. I told the doctor we were all positive for COVID and that none of us drives. She said to find a family member, someone we could trust and give them a signed paper giving them permission to take our son to the hospital. But I told her we didn’t know anyone who could help us. The doctor said to call the ambulance anyway and they took Ernesto to the hos-

pital. Later, the county called me to ask me how many days my son had been in the hospital. I said, “No, he’s only been there for a few hours.” They said it was okay, and they were collecting routine information and calling to advise us that we must isolate ourselves.

While I was talking to the county the hospital called to tell me we had to come pick up our son. I told them Ernesto had to be taken by ambulance because we are positive for COVID, we do not drive. and we were told to isolate. The lady told me that if we did not come they would call the police to take our son to social services. I asked why, if my son only went to get an X-ray, with my permission, in an ambulance, can he not be returned home in the same way. The lady told me parents were required to be with their children at the hospital.

I said I would somehow manage to get there. They asked how many minutes it would take. I said 25-30 minutes. They told me if I did not get there in 25-30 minutes the police were going to come to place our son with a social worker. I promised to go immediately. When I got to the hospital and I checked in and said I was there to pick up my son, they told me to wait. It took more than 10 minutes and he didn’t come out. I called again and let them know that I was outside waiting for my son. They said he was coming. My son came out alone from the hospital. How can it be that I sent him in an ambulance but they are going to send him to social services but they can let my son walk out of the hospital alone without anyone? My question is what went wrong for this type of action to take place, when they knew both parents were positive with COVID?”

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SOCIAL JUSTICE



COPA’s Breaking the Chain Program, Jack Herbig, co-chair of the *Breaking the Chain Team* of COPA

COPA has heard hundreds of stories such as these. We recently learned from a UC Berkeley study that 73% of those infected with COVID in the county are Latino and that 71% live in just six census tracts in the Salinas Valley. Though COPA acts in a political arena we are nonpartisan. Since March, we have been working in our institutions. After a couple of months newspapers began writing about life beyond COVID and we said, “Wait! It’s far from over!” We formed a task force, and started looking for experts. Over these months we have met with the Director of Public Health, the Farm Bureau, Hospitality, the Catholic Diocese of Monterey, Dr. Brenda Eskenazi, Dr. Miguel Tirado, the Community Foundation and community partners, including California Rural Legal Assistance, Building Healthy Communities, and the Center for Community Advocacy. It all came together one week before this Academy.



We made a proposal: family centered, messengers from trusted institutions, personal navigation from start to finish. Timing is everything, and the program is designed to identify people with symptoms and get them isolated. Support them to isolate quickly. 100 community health workers will be educators, and navigators. They will do outreach to get people to testing. We have arranged for large Catholic churches to be test sites. The goal of testing is to isolate those who are positive and allow others to get back to work. While people are at test site, we will introduce ourselves, and if they are positive, we will assure them we have their back. Can they isolate at home? If not we’ll give them alternatives. We talk with them about what they need: medical care, immediate cash assistance, how to apply for sick leave, and their rights as workers. This will allow them to isolate as we are asking them to do.

The second part of the proposal is a collaborative governance schedule. The first task is an overarching plan with metrics. We know it is a critical time between test results and getting to isolation. We need to know the percentage of people who are successfully isolated. Metrics will be publicly available. The team will include technicians, medical personnel, a logistics team, community based organizations, and the business community. This will not be a top down approach but designed to hear about experiences on the ground.

COPA quickly formalized the program proposal for a special meeting of the board before Christmas to appropriate funds to hire 100 community health workers. Now we have worked with partners to detail a \$4.9 million budget to hire community health workers. The Community Foundation has approached us to donate support services. After the Civic Academy, this proposal was sent to the board for a special meeting on December 21, where it was approved unanimously.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE

COVID-19: Making Greater Progress Together Sundeep K. Gupta MD MPH

UUCMP member Dr. Sundeep Gupta spent 15 years in Africa fighting HIV and Ebola. He spoke about the lessons distilled to help fight epidemics.

He cited Laurie Garrett's article in Foreign Policy where she characterized the pandemic as a catastrophe we need to go to war against. Large epidemics so disrupt society that they are too big for a government to handle alone. They last much longer than fires. HIV is special, so the response must be special. He explained the rule established of UN AIDS of the three ones: one coordinating authority; one monitoring and evaluation system; and one action framework.



Dr. Gupta gave numerous examples illustrating broad concepts with particular data both from experiences in Africa but also from other cities in the USA during the COVID pandemic. He focused on the particulars of the COPA proposal and talked about how they would work to break the chain of infection using testing, contact tracing and supported isolation. He particularly underscored the importance of contact tracing to breaking the chain, and gave illustrations to show its impact even though it might not have been immediately apparent to those working in the field.

He said that a stronger national approach in responding to the epidemic would have lessened the intensity of the process needed at the local level. Outbreak responses are dynamic and there is not a static playbook which can be used. They had a saying in fighting HIV – ‘What Got Us Here Won’t Get Us There’ – we needed to try to see ahead and plan for what was coming. In the U.S., instead of a proactive approach, we have seen across the country a pattern of wishful thinking and inaction or late action: when cases are low, we are okay, when cases are high, we are overwhelmed and hope the wave will pass, and then this cycle is repeating. Or if a vaccine is coming, we think we do not need to act. We have to stay humble as we do not know what will happen next. Hope is a good companion, but should not be our guide.

For example, using rapid tests, while less sensitive, has enormous advantages for achieving rapid isolation and preventing transmission. The refrain in his office was, ‘Whatever it takes.’ It kept their focus on the goal. The goal in breaking down barriers was to get the speed of decisions and actions to match the speed of transmission.

Finally, the Unitarian Universalist church also had a goal of using the civic academy as a fund raiser to assist people affected by the pandemic. And it just so happened that during the planning of this event, there was an ask made of COPA for donations. So far, we have raised over \$1500 which will be sent to COPA for these institutional requests.

A complete [recording of the Civic Academy](#) is available online.

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