



NUUSLETTER

of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

December Theme: Opening to Joy

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

December 5

“Room for All the Feels”

**Susan Panttaja and W.A. Ann Jacobson, with
Guest Music Director Amanda Thomas**

The winter holiday season is a joyous season for many, but it can also hold outsized expectations or memories that generate feelings of loneliness, grief, guilt, alienation, or depression. Today we will acknowledge the mixed feelings of the season and create space to hold them all.

December 12

“A Multigenerational Solstice Celebration”

DRE Erin Forstein and Susan Panttaja

Our multigenerational holiday celebration will focus on the Winter Solstice, the time of year when, down through the ages, people have turned to community and ritual to find warmth and hope for brighter days. Let us do the same, as we mark this milestone on the journey around the sun.

December 19

“Sing and Rejoice! - Music Sunday”

**Susan Panttaja, Camille Hatton, Lucy Faridany &
the UUCMP Community Choir**

For our annual winter holiday Music Sunday, Camille Hatton, Lucy Faridany and our UUCMP

Religious Exploration

is available via Zoom each Sunday
for children (pre K – 11) at 10 a.m., for teens
(12 – 18) at 12 p.m. and young adults (18-35)
1 p.m.

Community Choir will share songs of Celebration and Praise. The service will include exciting works for piano by Florence B. Price and Margaret Bonds, two early 20th century African American composers. Come let your spirits be lifted by music!

December 24

5:00 p.m.

“Christmas Eve Candlelight Service”

Susan Panttaja and W.A. Ray Krise

Join us for stories of the season, readings, carols, and candlelight.

December 26

“Enjoying Memories Together ”

**Lee Hulquist, Sue Ellen Stringer, Erin Forstein,
Camille Hatton**

Come join as we revisit some favorite recordings from our virtual vault of past services. We will include our fabulous Christmas parade from 2020 and splendid musical numbers from our choral collection. Let's end the year in community as we share some beautiful memories together.

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See the calendar at
www.uucmp.org



Sabbatical Minister's Message Susan Panttaja

As the countdown to winter begins, I find myself restless. I love long days and evening walks. The shift to shorter days is challenging for my inner rhythm. It makes me feel like I have to cram all my daylight activities into a too-short time.

Not everyone shares my frustration at the change. As Karen Brown recently put it, "When the sun goes down at 5:00, it makes me appreciate 3:00 and 4:00 more!" That certainly gave me a new perspective!

As we enter this 2021 holiday season, concerns about spreading the coronavirus are still with us. Some of us may be willing to risk crowds or large gatherings of family and friends, while others are much more cautious. Each of us must weigh the potential cost of celebrating with others or reaching out to feel less alone, and most of us are opting for far less personal interaction than in our pre-pandemic lives. Although this can be frustrating, perhaps the loss of some festivities and rituals can make us appreciate what we do have even more.



This year, UUCMP will offer many beloved traditions as we did last year, via Zoom. The holiday multigenerational service, Music Sunday, and Christmas Eve candlelight service will all take place, as usual, via our now-accustomed Zoom format. For the Christmas Eve service we ask that you once again participate in the passing of the flame as we did last year: please take a picture of yourself holding a lit candle, whether alone or with family, whether in daylight or in the dark, and send to me (to sabbaticalminister@uucmp.org) by December 19th. The worship team will incorporate all the images we receive in the Christmas Eve Service we create, to keep aglow our congregational holiday spirit.

I also offer you a challenge: Think of someone you haven't seen at services for a while and give them a call. Perhaps this can be a new holiday ritual, one that keeps strong the fabric of this community.

At this nexus of expectation and caution, may we reassess what matters most to us. May we find joy and hope in community, in small comforts, in the beauty of nature. May we find rest and renewal for ourselves, that we may have more love and compassion to give. Isn't that what this season (and maybe every season) is all about?

Yours in faith,
Susan

OFFICE HOURS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the UUCMP office is open for limited hours: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays. However, you can email the office or leave a telephone voicemail message at any time and we will get back to you as quickly as we can. Thank you for your patience. — Ray Krise

Life Enrichment

The Life Enrichment catalog is currently on hiatus. If you have questions, please get in touch with Carol Greenstreet, LE committee chair.

People of Color Group

Do you identify as a person of color? Join us for conversation and camaraderie! The UUCMP POC (People of Color) Group provides a framework of support and acknowledgment for members and friends of UUCMP who have lived experience as people of color. At our meetings, we will gather as an intentional, accepting fellowship of POC UUs to explore and reflect on our individual experiences, intersectionality, and UUism.



The UUCMP POC Group meets at 7 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month, and at noon on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month. Feel free to drop in and join us at any of these times! Meetings will be virtual at <https://tinyurl.com/uwf8rdjf> until in-person meetings at the church resume.

Men's Breakfast Group

Saturday, December 11, 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.

If you have questions, please contact Douglas McLain dmclain@hotmail.com

To attend the breakfast, click [here](#)

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. Newsletter articles are due the 16th of each month.

SCHEDULED EVENTS

Adult Community Choir meets Thursdays, 7 - 9 p.m. via Zoom.

Anti-Racism Book & Film Discussion Group Tuesday, December 7, 7 p.m. via Zoom. See page 9.

Board of Trustees meets Wednesday, December 15, 5:45 p.m. via Zoom.

Buddhist Sangha is every Wednesday at 7 p.m. via Zoom. See page 8.

I-HELP is supported by financial donations to UUCMP, providing monthly meals. 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, December 22, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Men's Breakfast Group meets Saturday, December 11, 8:30 a.m. via Zoom. See article at left.

Music Committee meets Wednesday, December 1, 5 p.m. via Zoom.

NUUsletter deadline for the January issue is Thursday, December 16.

People of Color (POC) group meets Saturdays, December 4 and 18 at noon, and Mondays, December 6 and 20 at 7 p.m. at <https://tinyurl.com/uwf8rdjf> See article to the left.

Program Council meets Tuesday, December 7, 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. For questions contact Lauren Keenan programcouncil@uucmp.org

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

Social Justice meets Sunday, December 5, 12 p.m. via Zoom.

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

T'ai Chi Chih meets Tuesdays at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary. See page 9.

Women's Discussion Group will not meet in December. See page 12.

Zumba meets Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

President's Corner — Bud Smith



ANYTHING GOOD WE CAN SAY ABOUT COVID?

This column needs to be turned in to newsletter editor Carol Collin by the middle of each month, so as I write this, Thanksgiving is still a week and a half in the future, and, for you the reader, it's a week ago. I certainly hope that you were able to find lots for which to be thankful. Something for which I am thankful is the slow but steady progress we are making in getting us back to our sanctuary. Many of you have made a start, attending one of Susan Panttaja's Open Houses or one of her contemplative worship services. Following protocols, other small groups may also now meet inside the church. With any luck, God willing and the creek don't rise, the improvements to our ventilation system will have begun by the time you read this. We appreciate the wise guidance of our Reopening Task Force in getting us back safely. So there is much to be thankful for despite COVID.

Is it possible that there is anything about COVID itself for which we should be thankful? Last month I suggested you make a practice of paying attention to the little delights in your life as a counter to some of the not-so-delightful goings on during this Time-of-COVID. But is there anything actually delightful about the restrictions imposed on us by COVID? Anything we've learned? Any practices or attitudes we'd like to keep from these Strange Days?

I came across this beginning list compiled by the USA Today staff:

1. Celebrate our teachers, healthcare workers and everyday essential workers. They deserve all our respect and appreciation.
2. Take extra care when it comes to cleanliness. (Wash those hands! Wipe down shared surfaces! It's just good practice.)
3. Work from home when we want to.
4. Schedule telemedicine appointments instead of in-person doctors' visits when possible.
5. Acknowledge all the little blessings in our day-to-day lives.

I think I'd add:

6. Appreciate the amazing adaptability and creativity of our UUCMP people.

Think about this for a while. What would you add?

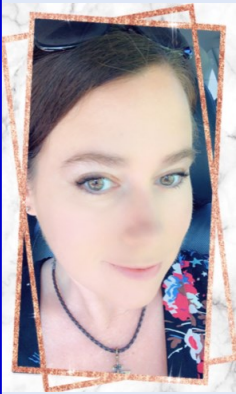


Meanwhile, I hope you had a chance to fill out the Reopening Task Force's survey, which will help guide us as we move toward gathering together once again.

Take care and be well.

— Bud

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



Opening to Joy

Our Soul Matters theme for December is “Opening to Joy,” and I cannot think of a more joyous time! I have always loved this time of year. The holiday lights and other fun decorations, the holiday music playing nonstop on the radio, the sense of magic in the air. Everything is always so polished and sparkly, and I am the kind of person that gravitates to the sparkly!

I love the California coastal Christmas with the fabulous light parade in Pacific Grove and the decorated boats in the Monterey harbor and the giant Christmas tree on the wharf/ And I love the winter white blanket of snow that covers up the meadows and dusts each tiny twig on every tree with powdered sugar in my Kansas forest home. I just completely love the holidays!

This year though, is special; this year we might possibly be preparing to leave this horrible and long lasting pandemic behind. At least a lot of us can breathe a little better knowing that our children can finally get the protection that they so desperately need. All humans aged 5 and up can be vaccinated. Finally! Of course, this doesn't mean we can't get the virus, as there are now so many strains, but it does mean that even if we do catch it, our risk of serious illness is greatly reduced. My children are all at least partly vaccinated, with my youngest to receive her second dose on December 1st, which will ensure that she is fully vaccinated by Christmas. Already, I am feeling some of the tension let up. Perhaps I will feel like my old pre-pandemic self again in a few weeks. I am SO open to this. I have worked so diligently to protect my children until a vaccine was ready. And now, or

very soon, the world outside my property will not be viewed with distrust, and yes, with fear. The fear is dissipating though. The tension is leaving my eyes, which is allowing me to open them wide and see the beauty of the woods, and feel the magic of the season, and experience the peace of a well-slept night, allowing the beauty, peace and joy to re-enter my soul.

Of course, the other fantastic outcome of children getting vaccinated is that our beautiful church might be reopening its doors for something similar to what we experienced before this whole awful mess. Perhaps soon, our Religious Exploration classes will begin to meet in the RE wing, during services, once again. Our Teen class is meeting in person at 12:30 now, outside and distanced, but perhaps soon the children will meet in person again too.

Vaccine trials are currently underway for children and babies as young as 6 months: “In September, Pfizer and BioNTech released early data from vaccine trials including children as young as 6 months and up to 11 years old. They estimated that key data would be available about the vaccine efficacy and safety for children ages 6 months to 5 years by the end of the year or early 2022.”

This brings me such incredible joy. Too many children have been lost to this terrible pandemic. The vaccine will ensure that our babies can grow up to have their own babies someday.

My hopes and dreams for the holiday season and the new year are for all of us to Open To Joy and get our vaccinations. Let's do this, so that we can meet again. I will make a promise to you, my dear RE and UUCMP family. When RE is able to open once again for in-person classes in the RE wing during services, I will get on a plane and fly out to celebrate with you all!

— Erin Forstein
Director of Religious Exploration



December Shared Plate Recipient *Food Bank for Monterey County*

The Food Bank for Monterey County is working to end hunger and transform the health of our community through good nutrition. We are the largest, most comprehensive provider of emergency supplemental food in our community. Monterey County is the childhood poverty capital of California with a 30.3% childhood poverty rate, and we have more homeless students than San Francisco & San Jose combined. The Food Bank serves as the central distribution 'hub' providing high-quality food, fresh produce, and educational and nutritional resources to more than 160 local nonprofit network members.



We serve 1 in 3 children and 1 in 4 county residents. Our programs are designed to not only assuage hunger but to

also address the unique nutritional concerns faced by our varied client demographics, which include growing children, seniors, veterans, and homeless persons. They cannot afford to consume fresh produce and other items containing vital nutrients and our programs, which include free farmers' markets and year-round produce delivery programs, are often their sole source of these critical foods. Our service is unduplicated and our commitment to the community is unwavering, but our resources are not unlimited.

We are now serving 60,000 families every month at drive up sites. The Covid19 pandemic has hit our community hard, and the demand for food has quadru-



pled. In the face of a pandemic, with high rates of unemployment and food shortages, we have quickly mobilized to serve the growing needs of our county. We have implemented strict safety protocols, focused on effectively serving the most vulnerable communities, and worked with the National Guard to distribute food.

Thanks to the tremendous support of the agricultural community, grocers and local retailers, we recover millions of pounds of nutritious food each



year that we are able to provide to our community, saving huge quantities of nutrient-packed fruits and vegetables from going to waste.

We connect grocers and local retailers with one of our food safety trained partners. Each partner collects edible, unsalable food and nonfood items on a daily, weekly, monthly or on-call basis. Every partner has cold, freezer, and ambient storage to safely accept and store donations.

100% of your gift stays local to help our most at-risk communities through this emergency.

Please donate generously to this worthy organization.

Musical Offerings

Music creates a psychological impact on composers, performers, and listeners alike. It exercises the brain, while simultaneously tapping into our nostalgic or recollective consciousness. It can bring our emotional and spiritual experiences into focus. Perhaps this is why the ancient Greeks believed music was a gift from the gods or the muses.



According to Heiner Gembris' research, "musical learning and changes in musical abilities, music experience, interests and activities can potentially take place at any stage in life." He continues by examining systems of cognitive plasticity, developmental life stages, and cultural and generational influences in both professional and amateur interactions with music. Irrespective of either category, he postulates that "benefits from music-making like vitality, happiness, and connectedness to other people are among the most important goals in human life," concluding that "musical activities can make a significant contribution to the quality of life, regardless of musical genre or skills."



Researchers at John Hopkins University state, "listening to music can reduce anxiety, blood

pressure, and pain as well as improve sleep quality, mood, mental alertness, and

memory." The structures involved in the music "boost" the brain. They discuss using music to recall old memories. Next, they advise checking in with our bodies and using various musics to either unwind or generate energy. They also specifically recommend listening to music outside of our comfort zone (which they identify as typically the music we listened to in our

Sing Along with Shawn

2nd Wednesdays
5:30-7 PM



All Meetings via Zoom

ID: 828-761-1715

Password: music

All Are Welcome :-)



teens and 20s). These brain twists force our minds to adapt, which positively impact our mental acuity. They studied how music sits in our bodies in different ways and makes our brains and bodies healthier along the way.

As we lean into a month of "Joy" and wane into a new year, why not check out what our music department can do for your health? We offer a children's choir, a monthly sing along, and an adult choir. In addition, we have space for you to explore instrumental music making. If you'd like to know more, join us for any of our ensembles or email me with your ideas music@uucmp.org. I'd love to share space with you soon!

— 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 resonate 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 Membership Committee chair Maren Martin (membership@uucmp.org).

Please join us!

Life Enrichment Programs Affinity Groups

Most groups will not meet face-to-face in December. 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: Doug McLain See page 3.

Women's Discussion Group will not meet in December. 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 December. Contact: John Freeman for any questions.

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

POC (People of Color) Group meets at 7 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month, and at noon on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month at <https://tinyurl.com/uwf8rdjf> See page 3.

T'ai Chi Chih meets every Tuesday at 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary. See page 9.

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 Sabbatical minister.

We Care, We Share –



December is a time of holidays, gathering together, giving, and sharing. And it is also a time for receiving. But the best gifts that have been given and received during this year have little to do with purchased goods wrapped in colorful paper.

During this past year we have been demonstrating genuine concern for each other and for those in the community at large. Those who need assistance have reached out, and others have come forward to provide meals, rides, help moving, home repairs, and companionship and listening ears. We have listened to weekly joys and concerns and reached out to each other in times of celebration, need, or sorrow. We have worked together to find ways of providing assistance to those in the greater community, where employment and finding food and housing are often a challenge.

The challenges of isolation, limited space and ability to meet together in person have presented real barriers to keeping up the spirit of the church. Yet people have met regularly to keep committee work going and to maintain the work of the church. People have contributed time, music, new ideas, and innovations to keep us going and to move us forward. And the pledges that were paid have made it possible to maintain the building, purchase needed supplies, and support the staff.

We are a generous congregation that cares – about UUCMP, about each other, about the environment, about the community at large. We are a generous congregation that shares – our time, our ideas, our listening, our talents, our material wealth. What a wonderful community we have. Thank you for being a part of it.

The Stewardship Committee

Konny Murray, Chair

Carol Collin, Gretchen Hausmann, Steve Johnson, Judy Lind, Harry Nagel, Jo Ann Novoson

Save the Date!



Mark your calendar for Sunday, December 12th, at 2 p.m., for a virtual concert with gifted singer/songwriter Shannon Warto and inspiring flautist Camellia Latta, who have been guest musicians during services at UUCMP. Come and celebrate the holidays with this rousing and spirited performance of seasonal songs interwoven with more modern winter pieces. There will be a requested donation to attend. See page 11.

T'ai Chi Chih Returns to UUCMP Sanctuary

T'ai Chi Chih sessions return in person to the church Tuesdays at 4 p.m. starting December 7, 2021.

Led by certified teacher Julie Anongos, T'ai Chi Chih is a mindfulness moving meditation. The movements are gentle, flowing and easy to learn. The benefits may include peace of mind, better health and joy.

No experience is needed, and newcomers are welcome.

Each person is invited to donate \$5 to the church for use of the building. All Covid protocols will be observed.

For questions, Contact Mary Kay Hamilton marykayhamilton@att.net



Why I Support the UU Service Committee's Guest at Your Table Program

by Mibs McCarthy

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is a nonprofit, nonsectarian organization advancing human rights together with an international community of grassroots partners and advocates.

They focus their work on intersecting roots of injustice to defend rights at risk due to criminalization and systemic oppression of people based on their identity. They support self-determination and defend the rights of people displaced due to climate, conflict or economic hardships; and they respond to humanitarian crises as partners with people whose access to aid is most limited.



Striving to center the voices of people most affected by injustice, UUSC creates eye-to-eye relationships with frontline grassroots movements across the world that support marginalized communities in determining their steps for the future.

Guest at Your Table is UUSC's annual intergenerational program to raise support for and awareness about key human rights issues. Since UUSC works in more than 20 countries, with over 60 grassroots partners, there are thousands of individuals involved in and who benefit from the work that our members make possible.

This year's theme is "Now is the Time for Courageous Change." The injustices and crises of the past year have underscored the importance of our shared goal – a world free from oppression, where all can realize their full human rights.

To meet the enormous challenges of today and build a more just future, we need big ideas and bold change. We must fundamentally transform the way things are, so that we do not perpetuate systemic inequities and repeat the harms of the past. UUSC members believe that the transformational solutions we need come from communities most directly impacted by injustice.



The ways in which our congregations and families come together may look different, but the beloved tradition of Guest at Your Table is here and needs your support. Donations to Guest at Your Table help advance community-led human rights initiatives around the world. I have set up a monthly donation. You can donate online at uusc.org/givetoguest or mail a check to UUCMP with Guest at Your Table in the memo line. Donations of \$150 or more are eligible to be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY.

Please give generously.

WINTER CHRISTMAS CONCERT

SHANNON WARTO & CAMELLIA LATTA



We invite you to join us on Sunday, December 12th, at 2 p.m., for a virtual concert with gifted singer/songwriter Shannon War to and inspiring flautist Camellia Latta, who have been guest musicians during services at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula (UUCMP). Come and celebrate the holidays with this rousing and spirited performance of seasonal songs interwoven with more modern winter pieces. There will be a requested donation to attend. Please check the events section of the UUCMP [website](http://uucmp.org) (uucmp.org) for the concert link.

Contact: shannon.e.warto@gmail.com

Environmental Action News

California State Senate Bill 1383 (SB 1383) requires the reduction of organic waste disposal in landfills. Organic waste is comprised of food scraps and food-soiled paper from kitchens and yard waste such as gardening and landscape waste, and wood waste.

According to the EPA, organic waste accounts for a significant portion of California's waste stream. Left to decompose in landfills, the organic waste releases methane, a gas that contributes to global warming. To address this issue, in 2016, then-governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 1383 into



law. This statewide law demands that jurisdictions provide residential collection services for all forms of organic waste.

Beginning January 1, 2022, Monterey County residents' green yard waste bins can include food waste destined for composting. Initially, this will include only food waste such as fruits, vegetables, bread, eggshells, and flowers. Any liquids, raw meat, and paper,

plastic or cardboard will not be allowed at this time.

Depending on where you live in the county, the waste will be taken to Salinas Valley Recycles or the Monterey Regional Waste Management District (MRWMD) and will be composted. Last year the MRWMD took in 5,000 tons of food scraps through their existing commercial collection.

An educational outreach effort that will include flyers, social media and new labeling for the green carts is underway. Stay tuned!



WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

The Women's Discussion Group fosters friendship and sharing of ideas among women in UUCMP and the wider community. To enrich our lives, we explore a variety of interests and experiences in an open and accepting atmosphere and cover a wide range of topics.

We welcome all women to our monthly meetings, which are now taking a break but will resume on January 27, 2022 via Zoom. To be added to the email list, please contact me at pgauthor@comcast.net or the church office at 831-624-7404.

—Nancy Baker Jacobs, Facilitator



The Celebration of Life service for Marlys Maher has been postponed until some time in the spring, date to be determined.





We are reaching out to ask your support...

COPA's mission is to develop leadership in ordinary people so they can engage effectively in public life and work together to make the Central Coast an even better place to live, work and raise our families. COPA is a democratic organization in which member institutions set the priorities. COPA has focused on affordable housing, healthcare, immigration, education, safety and economic development. Yet some of the same problems still face us in new forms, and other problems, such as the pandemic, have emerged.

Below are some examples of how COPA has organized in 2021 to better serve our families:



Community Health Workers Breaking the Chain of Infection in Monterey County

In September, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to approve continuation of the Virus

Distribution of Aid Project, VIDA, through March of 2022 and to assure approval of the \$927,000 of remaining funds. COPA originally proposed the VIDA Project last December which the County funded with \$4.9 million. This is a program which brings together Community Health Workers from ten community-based organizations around the County to provide testing, education, and supportive services to communities hardest hit by the virus and to go where traditional health services do not always reach—to the undocumented, the uninsured, and the poorest communities in our County. This program served as a model for other communities across the country when it was recognized by the U.S. Health Services Administration with matching support of an additional \$4 million.

Board President Askew thanked COPA for originally proposing the program, which has had marked success in bringing vaccine levels up in the County's most vulnerable communities to the Countywide average rate of 75%. Before the program was begun many of those communities had had the lowest vaccination rates and the highest incidence of the virus.



COPA worked diligently before the meeting marshalling support for the program by meeting with County supervisors and bringing in residents from their districts to speak about the continuing need for the program. COPA also brought firsthand stories told by Community Health Workers whose agencies are COPA members about the critical work they are doing to provide supportive services of food, and shelter to stop the spread of the disease

by responding quickly to cases of exposure to the virus with rapid testing at pop-up testing sites. There has also been capacity building of the community health workers themselves 78 of whom received State certification. In total the program has had 339,000 client interactions and delivered 8,000 vaccinations since the start of the program in February of this year.

COPA Assists Families to Enroll in Rental Assistance Program

COPA organized enrollment sessions for the Rental Assistance Program at six member congregations. In total individuals completed 374 applications at these events. COPA partnered with the City of Salinas and Hartnell College to process the applications. This project helped build leadership teams at each of the host institutions and strengthened relationships between institutions. The two Seaside congregations worked together on their enrollment events, as did the congregations in King City. Leaders from Castroville drove to Seaside and to King City to help with their events. Community health workers from the VIDA Program were on hand to help with this initiative. Through internet hookups they were able to complete the online applications.



Results of COPA Watsonville Police and Safety House Meeting

On October 28th the Watsonville City Council voted overwhelmingly to accept the recommendations of the Policing and Social Equity Ad Hoc Committee that COPA formed. Because of its earlier work on public safety in Watsonville in 2020, Former Mayor Rebecca Garcia and Chief of Police David Honda reached out to COPA to help strategize and create this committee.

Instead of jumping to policy issues, COPA insisted on obtaining information by listening to the actual stories of people. COPA organized and conducted 10 virtual house meetings or "listening sessions," to gather input on the community's experiences with safety and the Watsonville Police Department and make recommendations to the city on how to improve community trust and accountability. COPA completed 10 public Zoom House Meetings including community members, city officials, officers from the Watsonville PD and police union. About 340 people participated, with a range of 21 to 58 participants at each. Ages ranged from 12-60+ and involving eight local institutions and organizations.

New & Potential Member Institutions

In 2021 COPA added two new members:

- 1) St. John the Baptist Catholic in King City.
- 2) Our Lady of Refuge Catholic in Castroville.

We are finalizing membership covenants with the following two other potential institutions:

- 3) Mujeres in Action, a Monterey County nonprofit; and
- 4) St. Mark's Episcopal in King City.



Leadership Development

COPA has worked to strengthen Core Teams at new member congregations and trained approximately 350 leaders at five sessions, each with attendance of over 70 leaders.

Strategic Planning

At the end of October, religious leaders from member institutions met to formulate an Economic Recovery Strategy for the region. COPA's Regional Strategy Team has been meeting over the course of 2021 to do strategic planning for the organization and to evaluate the organization's performance at achieving its stated goals. This effort



made clear the challenges we face to serve a large area covering three counties; to work on a broad range of issues such as health care, affordable housing and economic recovery; and to build relations among and train grassroots leaders to take action and exercise their power. As a result of this planning, we believe our organization is better integrated from the ground level up through the Regional Strategy Team, within the issues we are seeking to address, and across the geographic areas we serve.

Successful Individual Donor and Sustaining Investment Campaign

Fundraising campaigns grow COPA's financial base. In its Individual Donor Campaign, COPA collected pledges from 51 community members, a 10% increase over the previous year; and in the Investment Campaign we raised \$38,559, a 25% increase over last year.

We can't do this without you!

We raise our budget each year from membership dues, Individual donations and foundations. In 2022 we hope to grow our staff so that we can act more broadly on the California Central Coast. We hope to raise \$50,000 in individual donations by the end of the year from at least 200 individual donors.

Help us create change you can measure & see!

COPA is a strictly non-partisan, broad-based organization of 27 religious congregations, labor unions, schools, and nonprofits.

Building power in the Monterey Bay region to act on the issues affecting our families.

We challenge ordinary people to identify problems facing their neighborhoods & communities, connect individuals and organizations to multiply their power, and mobilize people by the thousands to bring about measurable and effective change.

We are a 501c3 non-profit and affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation, the nation's oldest and largest multi-faith organizing network.

Sincerely,
The COPA Regional Strategy Team

Support us today!

[Donate online](#)
via our website

Write and send checks to COPA
95 Alta Vista Avenue
Watsonville, CA 95076

**Unitarian Universalist Church
of the Monterey Peninsula
490 Aguajito Road
Carmel, CA 93923**

Office Hours

During the COVID-19 pandemic,
the office is open for limited hours: 10 a.m.
to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays.
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December 2021

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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