



# NUUSLETTER

of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

May Theme: Creativity

Sunday Service at 10:30 a.m. in person and via Zoom online meeting app

**May 7**

**“The Creative Process”**

**Rev. Axel Gehrmann and W.A. Micah Forstein**

Is creativity a skill or a talent? Is it innate or carefully acquired? Are creative people a small group of artists and inventors - or is creativity a gift we each have been given? This morning we will explore the experience of creativity and how we might nurture our very own spirit of creation.

This morning’s service will include a recognition of new members who have joined the church this past year. And following the service, we will gather for our Congregational Annual Meeting. We encourage all our members to participate in this brief, but important gathering.

**May 14**

**“Creative Parenting, Nurturing Creativity ”**

**Rev. Elaine Gehrmann and W. A. Corey Brunson**

On this Mother's Day we will consider the many ways one can creatively parent and also ways to nurture creativity. The creative process is such an important outlet for our inner dreams, feelings, and imaginations. How can we support it in our children and ourselves?

**May 21**

**“Celebrating Religious Creativity and Exploration”**

**Rev. Axel Gehrmann and W.A. Elizabeth Granado**

Ours is a community of religious learning and exploration, of creativity and care. This spirit of community is most apparent in our activities that involve all ages. This morning’s multi-generational service will celebrate this year’s Religious Exploration program: the children, youth, and adults who have participated. We will also be honoring in a Bridging Ceremony those among us who are graduating from high school and transitioning into young adulthood.

**May 28**

**“Co-creating With the Universe”**

**Ray Krise, Bjorn Nilson, and Lauren Keenan**

When we consider the concept of creativity, we tend to think first of the arts: music, painting, dance, literature, architecture, on and on. But creativity is central to the very fact of life itself. Creativity defines our very being. With evolution as a paradigm for change, can we as self-described sentient, conscious creatures humbly find our role as co-creators with the universe, driving the future toward the positive moral goals of justice, hope, and love? Is our every breath imbued with the incredible creative possibilities of the spirit of life? How do we connect with the life-giving flow of creativity in our everyday lives?

## Religious Exploration

Children (pre K - 11) and teens (12-18) attend our worship service on Sundays and go to their respective Religious Exploration classes following the Story for All Ages.

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## Ministers' Message

Rev. Elaine  
Gehrman

Well, the January, February, and March showers have definitely brought April and May flowers! Hope you've had a chance to get out and see some of the blooming beauty nature has to offer!

There is lots blooming around church as well! It's hard to believe we have been meeting back in person for over a year now . . . Attendance is up, pledging is up, and there is a palpable energy on Sunday mornings, with many filled seats, heartfelt voices lifted in song, new visitors, and we are still reaching several dozen folks virtually each week as well.

May is always an exciting month for UUCMP—beginning with the first Sunday, May 7, after church when we hold our Annual Congregational Meeting, where we will elect new board members, and adopt the budget for the coming year. This is our democratic process in action, all active members of the church are encouraged to attend and vote, either in person or virtually.

May is also the month where we celebrate our Children & Youth Religious Exploration program. On Sunday, May 21, we will celebrate our graduating high school seniors, thank our RE volunteers and more; please plan to attend this wonderful service.

May is also when we will have a chance to further discuss some upcoming denominational issues, like the Article II Study Commission report and recommendations, and other items that will be on the table at our annual UUA General Assembly happening June 21-25. Our congregation is allotted five delegates to General Assembly—please let Axel or me or one of the Board members know if you would like to be considered to be a delegate, either in person in Pittsburgh, or by attending virtually.

The summer promises a wonderful diversity of

worship experiences as planned by our terrific Worship Associates Team. They will be holding their semiannual Worship Retreat on Saturday May 13, to plan the next 6-8 months of worship services—please consider submitting your ideas and suggestions to any of them for consideration. (You might even consider becoming a Worship Associate!)

It is looking like we will be returning to two services after the summer, to accommodate all of our in-person attendees and to make room for more! At this point we think that we will plan to again have choir and closed captioning (and now Zoom) for the first service at 9:30 a.m., and Children's Religious Exploration classes during the second service at 11:15 a.m.

We also hope you will start thinking about where you would like to see UUCMP put its energy and resources over the next few years. In September, we are planning to hold an All-Church Imagination Gathering facilitated by UUA Regional Field Staff Annie Scott. We will be exploring new opportunities to reconnect and explore what we want our “new normal” to look like. We hope you will plan to join us this fall for this Imagination Gathering with time for fun, joy, exploration, reflection, and sharing of what the future might hold for our beloved UUCMP, laying the foundation for our new strategic plan. Stay tuned for more info as September draws closer, and be thinking about your dreams for the future of UUCMP.

See you in church,

*Elaine*

## 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 the third Monday of every month at 7 p.m. via Zoom. There is also an in-person potluck meeting at church on the 3rd Sunday of each month after the service. Feel free to drop in and join us.



Due to recent tech issues, please contact Patty Pai [sing-](mailto:pai@uucmp.org)

## Men's Breakfast

**Saturday, May 13, at 8:30 a.m.**



The men's monthly breakfast is continuing as hybrid. Our next meeting is Saturday, May 13, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., in the Fireplace Room. People will bring in food of their choice to the in-person meeting. If you prefer, you can join us via Zoom from home at 9:00 a.m.

Zoom Meeting ID is: 975 5961 1965. Passcode: 408070  
On a phone (call 669-900- 9128)  
Or with a computer - simply click on this link:  
<https://zoom.us/j/97559611965>

The breakfast is open to all who identify as male or gender fluid. Our conversation is confidential. If you are joining us in person, please RSVP to Mike Lovell [lovellmike50@hotmail.com](mailto:lovellmike50@hotmail.com) so that we will have an idea of how much food to bring. If you have any dietary restrictions, please bring your own food. Hope to see you there.

## 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

**A Course in Miracles** meets Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Conference Room.

**Adult Community Choir** meets Thursdays at 7 p.m. in person and via Zoom.

**Board of Trustees** meets Wednesday, May 17, at 5:45 p.m. via Zoom.

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

**Environmental Justice** meets Tuesday, May 9, 3:30 p.m. via Zoom.

**First Friday Game Night** is Friday, May 5, 6:30 p.m. in the Fireplace Room.

**I-HELP for Men** is Sunday, May 14, 5 p.m. Sign up on the bulletin board if you can help.

**I-HELP for Women** is Sunday, May 28. Contact Lee Hulquist if you can help.

**Jam Session** is Thursday, May 11, 5:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

**Membership Committee** meets Wednesday, May 24, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom,

**Men's Breakfast Group** meets Saturday, May 13, 8:30 a.m. in person and 9 a.m. via Zoom. See article at left.

**Music Committee** meets Wednesday, May 10, at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

**NUU'sletter deadline** for the June issue is Tuesday, May 16.

**People of Color (POC) group** will meet Monday, May 15, 7 p.m. via Zoom and in person Sunday, May 21. after the service in the Conference Room.

**Program Council** meets Tuesday, May 2, 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. For questions contact Mibs McCarthy [programcouncil@uucmp.org](mailto:programcouncil@uucmp.org)

**Social Justice** will meet on Sunday, June 4, at noon in the Sanctuary and via Zoom; no May meeting.

**Stewardship** will meet Wednesday, May 3, 1:30 p.m. via Zoom.

**T'ai Chi Chih** meets Tuesdays at 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary. See page 7.

**Youth Music** meets Sunday, 10 a.m. in the Conference Room.

## President's Corner — Carol Greenstreet



The English Proverb, “March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers” has been quite accurate this year. In the last few weeks, I hiked in Pinnacles National Park, Toro County Park, Garland Ranch Regional Park, Point Lobos State Reserve, and a few other locations. The results are in: California is having a bonanza of wildflowers. They seemed to start slowly, and then the contiguous days of sunshine have allowed them to burst into full color. California poppies blend with Sky Lupine, yellow Johnny Jump-Ups defy their violet family heritage, Blue-eyed Grass mixes with pink Checker Bloom. It is hard to say which is my favorite: the California Poppy or the Douglas Iris. I planted both in my yard many years ago and they are flourishing. I took a “Gardening with Wildflowers” class last year and took home seeds of various species. The leaves have sprouted: I can’t wait to watch them bloom.

The May theme is “The Path of Creativity.” As I was skimming the *Soul Matters Small Group* discussion guide for the month, I noticed that one of the options was to do a treasure hunt for art at a museum. Monterey County residents don’t need a museum: we have the treasure of beauty right outside our doors. Whether your treasures are plants, birds, rocks, beaches, crashing waves, iconic Cypress trees, or stunning vistas, I encourage you to take a few extra minutes on a walk to enjoy the magnificence of the area around you. Ponder the meaning of creativity with respect to the natural world. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, the author,

Robin Wall Kimmerer, was asked why she wanted to be a botanist during her freshman intake interview. In her prepared response, she said that she chose it because she wanted to learn why Asters and Goldenrod look so beautiful together. Her creative question, discounted by the advisor as uneducated, has a distinctly scientific explanation. As she learned later, the beauty lies not just in the eye of the human beholder, but also with the visual acuity of bees. Creativity abounds in many aspects here: the striking contrast of these purple and yellow wildflowers draw the pollinators to their New England meadow. Now I hope to have a more nuanced perspective when I admire our purple Lupines and golden Poppies together in our California meadows, and the other tiny blossoms awaiting to be admired.

Carol



## RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



Hello Everyone!

I'm so happy to be back at UUCMP with all the warm, friendly faces. It's exciting seeing everyone again, and even more exciting to introduce you all to our new little UUCMP baby. We spent a lot of time recovering at home, and then we went to visit family in Texas for a few weeks. I want to thank everyone who was part of the Meal Train and brought us some very delicious meals. It was a big help, and I ate every bit of it! Some even came to our house to take care of Paix and give Martin and me a break. We have truly felt so supported and blessed by everyone's generosity and thoughtfulness. I also want to thank Sharyn for holding down the fort while I was away. She did an excellent job keeping up with all the DRE duties and even organized some fun new activities for RE. It's been a good transition back to work with Sharyn's help.

We will be saying goodbye to Becky Gutshall, our nursery assistant, this month. She will be moving to Montana for an internship at a national park. We wish her well in her studies and all her future endeavors and are grateful for her work at UUCMP.

We are preparing for our end of the year activities this month. We are getting ready for our RE Sunday on May 21<sup>st</sup>, and I would love for

you to join us on that day. We will hear from our youth, teachers, and volunteers. We will recognize our Bridgers, those graduating high school and moving on to college and the workforce.

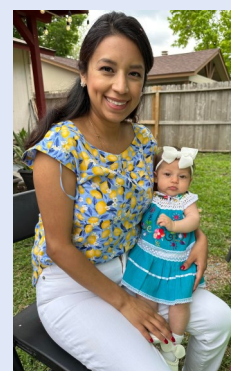
**Nursery Volunteers:** We need some "on-call" nursery volunteers who are willing to be an occasional 2nd adult in the nursery when any babies or toddlers show up on Sundays. Volunteers must complete the church's Safe Gatherings training before volunteering. If you are interested, please get in touch with DRE Elizabeth Granado.

If you have kids or grandchildren, we are hosting Friday after-school art classes in May at UUCMP from 4-5 p.m.

Don't forget our monthly First Friday Game Night on May 5th at 6:30 p.m. Please feel free to invite friends or bring snacks! Hope to see you there.

Please watch the UUCMP weekly newsletters and the monthly RE newsletter for upcoming RE events. Also, swing by our RE table every Sunday in the Welcome Hall.

Happy Mother's Day!



Elizabeth and Paix

Elizabeth Granado  
Director of Religious Exploration

# Musical Offerings



This month, come join the music department in creating great music together!

The Adult Community Choir meets **every Thursday from 7-9 p.m. in the Sanctuary**. This choir is open to everyone, members and nonmembers alike, to explore singing together.



We are currently preparing for two services per month. Our rehearsals are currently hybrid. If you would like to

ZOOM into our rehearsals, feel free to email our director at: [music@uucmp.org](mailto:music@uucmp.org)

If you want to have fun with folk songs and popular tunes, come check out our Jam Session with Rodney Smith! This group is open to



anyone with any instrument to play or sing along. You can bring music or use the music other people bring. This group does not perform in services. The group meets the second Thursday of each month from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. This month we will meet on May 11.

Our youth music program continues to play hand chimes together **every Sunday from 10:00-10:20 a.m. in the Conference Room**. Students are encouraged to come out and sing and explore these wonderful hand chimes. Please ask me if you have any questions about this fun opportunity for our youth!

If you have any other ways you wish to contribute to the music department, please feel free to contact me! We would love your involvement in this fun program.

Jorge Torrez, Music Director

## Save the Date!

Concert with classical pianist Michael Allen Martinez  
Saturday, May 6, 3 p.m. at UUCMP

Michael Martinez has a talent that began blossoming at a young age. He started playing piano at age 11, and soon thereafter began composing captivating melodies. Michael's astonishing command of melody and emotion began to be noticed and attracted acclaimed New Age pianist Jonathan Lee. At age 13, Michael subsequently became his protégé. In 2004, Michael took over Lee's position as The Grand Piano Man for the Big Sur International Marathon. He has played annually for thousands of runners on the nine-foot concert grand piano at the famous Bixby Bridge turnout ever since. Michael's style is a blend between New Age and Classical, which has been described as heartfelt, cinematic and reflective.

See page 10.

Admission: \$20 regular, \$15 seniors and students, and children under 12 free with paying adult.



## 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 ministers. ([minister@uucmp.org](mailto:minister@uucmp.org))

Please join us!

## Life Enrichment Programs Affinity Groups

**Some groups will not meet face-to-face in May. Some will meet via Zoom.**

**Men’s Breakfast Group** meets second Saturdays 8:30 a.m. in person at church and at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. Contact: Mike Lovell. See page 3.

**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 May. Contact: John Freeman for any questions.

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

**POC (People of Color) Group** meets via Zoom at 7 p.m. on the 3rd Monday of every month and in person at UUCMP on the 3rd Sunday of each month after the service. See article on page 3 for meeting link.

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

## 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 Know You Have Stories to Tell!

The Worship Associates at UUCMP bring a variety of experiences and perspectives to our weekly services!

If you think it might be fun to help plan and participate in worship services, please talk to one of our ministers about joining our team. Enthusiasm is required, experience is not.



## May Shared Plate Recipient **K.I.N.D.** **UNICEF USA**

The Kids in Need of Desks (K.I.N.D.) campaign, launched in 2010 by UNICEF USA and MSNBC's Lawrence O'Donnell, aims to provide that missing piece of classroom equipment that can make all the difference for young learners. In Malawi, more than half of all students do not have a desk or a chair. Instead, they attend class by sitting on the floor or on the ground.

In addition, K.I.N.D. also provides secondary school scholarships to Malawian girls who are most in danger of missing out on an education. In Malawi, girls don't typically get the chance to attend secondary school — in part because



of secondary school fees. In a country where more than half the population lives on less than \$2 a day, the cost of a girl's secondary education is prohibitive for most families. Happiness, 15, was able to stay in school thanks to a scholarship provided through the K.I.N.D. Fund. Asked what would happen to her if school fees were not paid, Happiness replied, "Here in Malawi, girls marry at early ages. So at 15, maybe I would have been married by now."

A K.I.N.D. scholarship can make all the difference to a girl who wants more education. Since the program started it has raised over \$38 million and benefitted more than 1.1 million students across the country.



Please support this worthy program generously.

## UUCMP Super Flea Market is coming again!

September 1 and 2, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Save your best treasures, price them at home, and be ready to set up at church August 30 -31. All proceeds will benefit UUCMP, and sellers will take away unsold items when the event ends. Cashiers and bake sale contributors will be needed as well, and contributors can team up and share a table if needed. Mark your calendar, and get ready to join the fun! For more information, contact Mibs McCarthy at [mibsmccarthy@comcast.com](mailto:mibsmccarthy@comcast.com).





## ALL WE NEED IS LOVE -- Wrap Up



Our recently completed canvass for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, was a success. Congregants pledged over \$373,000 with 106 pledges to keep our doors open and our programs going forward. Thanks to all pledgers.

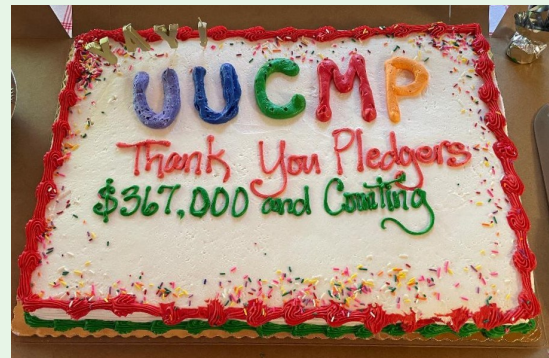
The Stewardship Committee is going more modern for next year's canvass. As much as possible, we plan to make it paperless! This cuts costs and will add efficiency to recordkeeping.

The church is procuring a new online church-management database service, Breeze, for recordkeeping. This new software will allow us to be nearly paperless in our canvass next year, and will allow us to personalize written email contacts. Between now and then, we have time to introduce it to everyone so that you will all feel comfortable pledging online. (Only 15 pledgers did so this year – we'll look for over 100 online pledges next year!) We will also offer online pledging support after worship during the campaign next time.

For those of you who do not want to participate online, we will make note of that and send you a packet via snail mail. We ask that you let

us know that this is your preference. You can email one of the Stewardship Committee members with your wishes.

Meantime, thank you again for your generosity in our *All We Need Is Love* campaign and for your continuing financial support of this community. We truly are proof that financial giving is a spiritual practice with its own rewards.



And many thanks to all those who support this congregation with time and talents. Without those who volunteer, coming together to make programs and events happen, we wouldn't get much done! We are truly a community that proves what love can do.

Your Stewardship Committee

Konny Murray, Chair; Steve Johnson, Secretary; Carol Collin, Gretchen Hausmann, Judy Lind, Harry Nagel (Treasurer), Jo Ann Novoson, with Rev. Axel Gehrman, spiritual support

## Save the Date!

Make sure you have marked your calendar to attend the UUCMP Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, May 7, at 11:30 a.m., after the service, in person and on Zoom. We will vote on the budget for fiscal year 2023-2024, and on new board members and other elected positions.

Be there and attend the meeting to learn what's happening, participate in the discussions, and to cast your vote on these important issues.

The words 'ANNUAL MEETING' are written in large, bold, block letters. Each letter is filled with a different color from the rainbow spectrum, creating a vibrant, multi-colored effect.

UUCMP PRESENTS

# Solo Piano Concert

with MICHAEL MARTINEZ



Saturday, May 6, 3p.m.

**Unitarian Universalist Church**  
of the Monterey Peninsula

\$20 adults \$15 seniors & students  
children under 12 free with accompanying adult

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula (831) 624-7404 490 Aguajito Road, Carmel, CA 93923

## Art News



### Tapestry

April 1 - May 25, 2023

[www.cherylkampe.com](http://www.cherylkampe.com)

[cherylkampe@mindspring.com](mailto:cherylkampe@mindspring.com)

Cheryl Kampe found an early interest in art from a joy and fascination with interpreting a visual scene onto paper.

Twenty years ago she finally had the chance to devote herself to her art and began systematically to learn the techniques of watercolor. She studied with several leading artists in the Bay Area, while at the same time painting daily and developing a personal style and increasing expertise with the medium. Working with a small group of other watercolorists she evolved her skills and soon found encouragement to begin showing her work.

She currently is showing her work at Venture Gallery, 260 Alvarado, Monterey, and has had solo shows at the Pacific Grove Art Center.

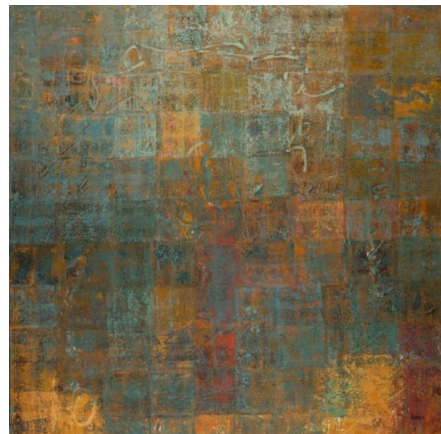
After painting for 10 years in watercolor she expanded to acrylics, pastel and finally oils. She studied with talented artists in the Monterey County area in California, working both on creativity and her skill level painting plein air, still life, landscapes, seascapes and abstracts.

This latest series is Oil and Cold Wax on canvas. These abstracts are inspired by tapestries and blankets made by her mother's family in Chimayo, New Mexico. When you mix the cold wax with the oils, it creates a texture and a softness that reminds her of textiles.

These oil and cold wax paintings are inspired by her family heritage in Chimayo, New Mexico. When visiting New Mexico as a child she was always aware of her mother's history in Chimayo. People travel from near and far for the healing properties of the sands of El Santorio.



The area is also known for the beautiful blankets woven by the locals, including her uncle Lawrence. These blankets have adorned their families' homes all her life and are the inspiration for these paintings.



## Environmental Justice

### Environmental Justice – Eating Less Meat or Being a Vegetarian

Being vegetarian or starting slowly with reducing meat consumption can help slow climate change and its effects on the environment.

Raising livestock animals for consumption creates more greenhouse gases than all of the cars and trucks in the world, so reducing livestock production greatly reduces these emissions. Reduced demand for meat leads to reduced livestock production.

Being vegetarian helps reduce pollution of our streams, rivers, and oceans. Pollution from livestock production largely comes from animal waste, which can runoff into our waterways and harm aquatic ecosystems, destroy topsoil, and contaminate the air – which all have harmful effects on wild animals AND humans. Reducing the demand for meat will ultimately reduce livestock pollution too! Water pollution can affect animals like our North American river otters, causing negative effects on appetite, pup survival, and reproduction.

Being a vegetarian reduces wildlife habitat destruction and deforestation. Thirty percent of earth's land surface is used for livestock and most of that land is used for grazing. The need for more grazing lands leads to the destruction of vital habitats for wild animals. Decreased demand for meat can help slow deforestation and protect the habitats of wild animals.

Our own Reverend Elaine Gehrman shares a list of Monterey County restaurants for vegetarian meals and the reasons they are her favorites below:

**Ambrosia Indian Bistro** – 565 Abrego St., Monterey – Great selection of very tasty Indian food—my favorite is their specialty “Bhindi Masala”- Fresh crisp okra, tossed with onion tomato and fresh ginger - it's terrific!

**El Cantaro** – 791 Foam St., Monterey - Fantastic all-vegan Mexican dishes – you won't miss the meat! Everything is fresh and tasty! (Closed Friday evenings and all day Saturday)

**Happy Girl Kitchen** – 173 Central Ave., Pacific Grove – Specializes in homemade organic soups, sandwiches and delicious baked goods, all vegetarian and/or vegan.

**Hula's Island Grill** – 622 Lighthouse Ave., Monterey – This fun Hawaiian/Asian-fusion spot has a whole separate vegetarian & vegan menu—with options of tofu, tempeh, and vegan 'chikin'

**Ike's** – 570 Munras, Monterey – a great sandwich shop with so many options—including 5 different plant-based proteins – all sandwiches served hot with 'dirty sauce' lettuce & tomato.

**Julia's** – 1180 Forest Ave, Suite F, Pacific Grove – the nicest all vegetarian restaurant on the Peninsula—I love the buffalo cauliflower wings, arugula salad, and Ethan's best pizza!

**Namaste Indian Bistro** - 538 Lighthouse Ave., Monterey – another great Indian spot—I love their veggie samosas, Palak paneer, and vegetarian biryani.

**Petra Café** - 435 Alvarado St., Monterey – Great middle eastern food—love the falafel, hummus and baba ghanouj, with tzatziki on the side and baklava for dessert!



# Environmental Justice

## Caramelized Cabbage & Walnut Pasta



### INGREDIENTS

YIELD: 4 Servings

¼ cup olive oil  
3 tablespoon unsalted butter  
2 teaspoon cumin seeds  
2 leeks, white and tender green parts, thinly sliced into rings  
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
2 pounds finely sliced green cabbage  
Kosher salt (Diamond Crystal)  
1 pound spaghetti or other long pasta  
4 ounces pecorino, grated, plus more for serving  
2 to 3 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper, plus more as needed  
3 to 4 tablespoons lemon juice (from 1 large lemon)  
1 to 1½ cups toasted walnuts, roughly chopped  
Handful of chopped chives (optional)  
\*We added red pepper flakes, thyme and oregano to add extra flavor.

### PREPARATION

#### STEP 1

Heat a large Dutch oven or pot over medium. Add the olive oil and butter. When the butter has melted, add cumin seeds and bloom for 15 seconds, then add the leeks, garlic, cabbage and 2 teaspoons salt, and stir for 3 to 4

minutes until wilted. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low and cook for 10 minutes without stirring. Check every few minutes to make sure the bottom is not burning. If needed, give it a stir.

#### Step 2

After 10 minutes, remove the lid from the cabbage and stir. Cover and cook for another 4 to 5 minutes, until it is super sweet and tender. Taste and season with kosher salt.

#### Step 3

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the spaghetti and cook according to package instructions. When the pasta is ready, do not drain, but use tongs to drag the pasta out of its cooking water and straight into the pot with the cabbage. Add about 1 cup of pasta cooking water, along with the pecorino and the black pepper. Toss well to combine.

#### Step 4

Add lemon juice. Taste, adjusting seasonings with more salt, pepper or lemon, if needed. To serve, scatter with walnuts and finish with more pecorino and chopped chives, if using.



-- submitted by Lauren Keenan



## CA IAF Organizations Meet To Develop Strategies for Low Income Families Facing California’s Broken Economy

by Luis Arreguin COPA Leader, Our Lady of Refuge, Castroville

On March 26, 2023, there was a statewide gathering of California IAF Organizations to learn about the economy in California and its impact on many families throughout the state, held at Fresno City College with warm words of welcome in Spanish from its president Dr. Robert Pimentel. All the participants were encouraged to keep the enthusiasm they showed at this event to continue helping our communities. Among the participant IAF organizations, One LA and COPA provided a critical analysis of the state of the economy in words of their lead organizers Robert Hoo and Tim McManus, respectively: the economy is broken!

There were two plenary sessions and three workshops on housing, jobs and workforce, as well as neighborhood infrastructure. At the end there was a Call to Action that was supported by the national leader of IAF, Joe Rubio. Some of the remarkable moments of this statewide session are covered in the following paragraphs.

Maria Elena Manzo from COPA and Rev. Vathanak Heang from Central Valley IAF co-chaired the 4-hour event. The participants enjoyed the original presentation of the successful action that the IAF achieved in Marin County to increase the wages of caregivers from \$16/hour up to \$26/hour. Through a play by MOC leaders, the audience learned how the Marin Organizing Committee fought to transform an initial proposal to increase only 10 cents an hour into an increment of around 10 dollars an hour for senior caregivers in that county of California.

**A very important message.** Robert Hoo, Lead Organizer for One LA-IAF, explained the state of the economy in California by using the notion of a natural disaster that Californians have had in their minds in recent days due to the unprece-

dent storms that brought flooding to many counties and affected tremendously the Pajaro community. He contrasted the notion of a natural disaster, an unpredictable event, with the notion of an economic disaster, usually the consequence of bad decisions made by humans. Economic disasters are the result of bad policies, which in turn are the result of politicians responding to other interests. The CA economy is broken because it is not working for the vast majority of its residents who are not wealthy.

Tim McManus, Lead Organizer for COPA as well as Central Valley IAF, built upon Hoo’s description of an economic disaster and the role that organizations such as IAF can play in keeping politicians accountable and thus prevent or mitigate the unwanted consequences in the economy. As an example, during this second plenary session, Tim McManus described how the chambers of commerce at the state level join forces every year to do continuous research on the bills that the California legislature develops. In this way, this arm of the private sector was able to counterattack bad policies –they call them “job killers”-- and act to prevent a high percentage of bills from being enacted as laws. In 2022 they identified 19 job threatening bills that resulted in only 2 of those bills being signed by the governor. Since 2010 the work the California Chambers of Commerce have been doing exhibit consistent results, a great achievement, McManus remarked, so these actions should inspire or reinforce our views about organizing and the power that organizations can hold.

**What’s going on?**

- Our economy has been **captured** (*The Captured Economy, Brink Lindsey & Steven Teles*)
  - Inequality more the result of state action than “invisible hand”
    - Key decisions shaped by powerful interests, often with little or no opposition
  - Rent – excess payment due to scarcity
    - Can be natural or artificial
    - Rent-seeking – efforts to distort markets to create this scarcity
  - Regulatory capture – private businesses coopt government power for competitive benefits
  - Finance – subsidies on debt financing and mortgage lending
  - Land Use – zoning



-- COPA continued

Tim McManus claimed that our economy has been “captured” because of key decisions of state and local governments shaped by powerful interests, and there has been no opposition to these actions. We can see, for example, how rents have skyrocketed, either naturally or artificially, and the cause seems to be a housing scarcity driven by those powerful groups that have distorted the housing market at their will. Thus, the private sector, the one that keeps an eye on the job killing bills, has also co-opted the government power for their own benefit, either in finance regulations, mortgage lending rules, land zoning, all of which might constitute a regulatory capture.

An analysis by region shows that the Central Valley has the highest poverty rate of the nation! Considering metropolitan areas, Los Angeles exhibits the highest poverty rate in the nation! Silicon Valley with its 76,000 millionaires/billionaires still needs assistance for 30% of its residents!! Since 2010, 40% of all jobs created paid less than \$40,000 a year!!! Who can live in California with that income?

Tim McManus concluded his analysis of the economy by pointing out that California has a “dual economy” with 20% of its population constituting an upper sector with finance, technology, and electronics as driving forces, and the other 80% of its population constituting the lower sector. One way out of this uneven economic system is organizing people through institutions and creating the so-called relational power. Then, McManus reminded to the participants of this event what the IAF does and how.

California IAF has 5 regional organizations that consist of 115 institutions with an annual funding almost reaching the \$400,000 through due commitments. One of these regional organizations is COPA and, according to Tim McManus, one of its most important wins is Esperanza care. This achievement would not

have been possible without the relational power that all its members are trying to increase every time they meet in micro sessions or civic academies, where they capture the stories they need to recapture their California dream.

## How is California’s economy working?

- 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world (\$3.35 trillion GDP in 2021)
- Gap between middle and upper wages is highest in nation
- Inequality is worse than Mexico’s
- Highest overall poverty rate in the US (adjusted for cost of living)
  - One-third of families are barely able to pay their bills
  - 28% of African-Americans in poverty; 1/3 of Hispanics; 2/3 of undocumented

He encouraged the participants of the event to make our organizations stronger by developing more networking, more civic academies, and more listening to the stories of the people of our communities to support the actions in which the power of our IAF organizations is brought to the table when talking with politicians and people in the government, especially those who make the decisions that impact our economy.

There were also workshops on jobs, infrastructure and housing. In the Housing Workshop COPA leaders from Castroville proposed that their organizations could very well be advocates of the tiny house movement, perhaps the only feasible option for those many families who want to move from being tenants to becoming owners.

In the workshop about jobs and workforce, Maria Elena Manzo and Maricela Acevedo from COPA, described how the organization became involved in the hiring of agricultural workers to switch to better paid jobs in manufacturing through apprenticeships.

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