



NUUSLETTER

of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

Theme: Pluralism

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

May 5

“More Than the Sum”

Rev. Axel Gehrmann and Worship Associate Corey Brunson

May 19

“Weaving Wisdom”

DRE Sharyn Routh and Rev. Axel Gehrmann

We celebrate the diversity of belief among us: humanists and Christians, Buddhists and Pagans, Hindus and Jews, theists and atheists worshipping side by side. This may lead some to wonder, what is it we hold in common? Do we collectively settle on the lowest common denominator we share? Our faith is based on the opposite assumption: together we can reach greater heights than any of us would reach alone.

Ours is a community of religious learning and exploration, all of us teachers and learners weaving our wisdom together, so that together we might find greater truths. This spirit of exploration 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.

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 26

“Can You Hear Us Now? How Do We Connect In a Pluralistic World?”

Worship Associates Shannon Morrison, Bjorn Nilson and Ray Krise

May 12
“Vibrant Coexistence”
Rev. Elaine Gehrmann and Worship Associate Max Cajal

We UU’s are known for being tolerant of a wide spectrum of beliefs, but tolerance can mean “putting up with,” or “live and let live.” What might an emphatic embrace of our differing beliefs look like? Can we practice not merely a passive toleration, but a vibrant, engaged co-existence?

Pluralism celebrates diversity, encourages dialogue, and recognizes the value of multiple perspectives. Religious pluralism acknowledges the coexistence of various religious traditions and beliefs. It promotes mutual respect, dialogue, and understanding among adherents of different faiths. Sounds like us Unitarian Universalists doesn’t it? But how do we reconcile a respect for pluralism, while also wanting to share our mission of love with the world? How do we human beings connect with each other? What makes us feel entwined on a common path? What is the nature of religious communication in today’s world?

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www.uucmp.org

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.



Ministers' Message

Rev. Elaine Gehrman

Five years ago, in January 2019, we embarked on an ambitious Strategic Plan that envisioned three areas of expansion—“(1) to increase membership numbers, involvement and demographic diversity, (2) to ensure staffing adequate to evolving congregational needs, and (3) to explore completion of Phase III of our Building Campaign – a new sanctuary.” We began with a lot of energy and enthusiasm -- increasing staffing, focusing on outreach and inclusion, and making significant progress toward the designing of the next phase of our building expansion. And then in March of 2020 the world shut down. Unanticipated events required a change of plans.

Some of our goals were accomplished; others were put on hold. We survived the Covid years remarkably well, however we are still in the process of rebuilding and re-imagining who we are and how to move forward in these post-pandemic times. To do so, we engaged in a new congregational planning process last fall.

This has been a valuable process of assessment and visioning, involving many members and friends of UUCMP—reflecting your ideas and interests, your values and priorities—clearly showing where you'd like us to focus our energies in the next three years at UUCMP. We firmly believe that UUCMP can do whatever it puts its hearts and minds to do.

On Sunday, May 5th, UUCMP members will have the opportunity to approve this next UUCMP Three Year Strategic Plan! Check it out here <https://uucmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/SPTF-Tablev9.pdf>

Our Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) — Mike Lovell, Mibs McCarthy, Meredith Harrill, Jon Zarnecki, Be Astengo, Lauren Keenan, Max Cajar, and Rev. Elaine — helped us to begin our process of creating this plan back on September 16, when many of us participated in a Workshop of Imagination and Sharing with Annie Scott, Congregational Life Staff for the UUA Pacific Western Region. Many wonderful ideas and visions were generated, and these were compiled by the SPTF and then sent out to you in a survey, for your prioritization of the many worthwhile suggestions.

Three primary areas emerged as clear priorities—(1) Religious Exploration for Children and Families, (2) Welcoming/Advertising/Outreach to New People, and (3) Connection and Involvement for Members. The SPTF continued to solicit your input, as to specific ideas in each of these areas, with actual 'buckets' to collect suggestions in the Welcome Hall and virtual 'buckets' on the website.

On January 7, the SPTF held facilitated small group discussions after church for members and friends to discuss the three areas, and the ideas generated so far. We added to the lists of possible action steps, along with our personal commitments to help with these ideas.

Having elicited a great deal of information from members and friends, the SPTF then organized the collected ideas and shared its first draft of a plan with the Board of Trustees, who discussed and made some additional suggestions for organizing the data. The SPTF revised the plan and again presented it to the Board, who at their April meeting approved the plan.

Rather than a plan for huge new initiatives, the proposed Strategic Plan is one of 'enhancement and fortification'— focusing on our basic core functions, of religious education, outreach, and involvement. All three of these areas are important, and each could be even better with our additional care, attention, energy, and focus.

We encourage you to carefully read this Strategic Plan, our guideposts for our efforts over the next three years, and think about where you might like to help. What would you find rewarding, how could you make a difference in making UUCMP an even better place—to learn, to worship, to build community, to change the world? It's going to take all of us to make UUCMP the best it can be!

See you in church,

Elaine

Environmental Justice



It's A Piece of Cake!



Short on time but want to take actions to support our planet and future? No time to draft letters to regulators or legislators?

In 2021, the Climate Reality project launched the Climate Action Now app to make climate activism easy, fun, educational and even addictive by offering actions for people to take directly on their smartphones.

This app enables people to:

- Take five meaningful actions each day in only about five minutes.
- Take the five daily suggested actions or choose from a library of actions.
- Get the background on why the issue is currently of importance.
- Earn points that add up to trees planted through the EarthLungs Reforestation Foundation.
- Be an activist while enjoying morning coffee, evening beverage or piece of cake!

Download the Climate Action Now app and take planet-saving actions on your phone! Questions? See members of the Environmental Justice Committee.



<http://www.climateactionnow.com>

Save the Date!

Make sure you have marked your calendar to attend the UUCMP Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, May 5, at 12 p.m. after the service, in person and on Zoom. We will vote on the budget for fiscal year 2024-2025, the Strategic Plan, and on new Board members and other elected positions.

**ANNUAL
MEETING**

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

Men's Breakfast

Saturday, May 11, at 8:30 a.m.

The men's monthly breakfast is continuing, as hybrid. Our next meeting is Saturday, May 11, 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 so that we will have an idea of how much food to bring. If you have any dietary restrictions, please bring your own food.



PUBLICATION DEADLINES

ANNOUNCEMENTS for SUNDAYS in the Welcome and Announcements from the pulpit are due by 9 a.m. on Wednesdays. ARTICLES for THE WEDNESDAY WEEKLY NEWSLETTER email are due by noon, on Tuesdays. MONTHLY NUUWSLETTER articles are due by the 16th of each month.

SCHEDULED EVENTS

Adult Community Choir meets Thursdays, 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary and via Zoom.

Annual Meeting is Sunday, May 5, at noon after the service. See page 3.

Board of Trustees meets Wednesday, May 15, at 5:45 p.m.

Buddhist Sangha is every Wednesday at 7 p.m. in person in the Sanctuary. Zoom is available. See page 12.

Environmental Justice meets at noon, Sunday, May 12, in the Sanctuary and via Zoom.

First Friday Game Night is Friday, May 3, 6:30 p.m. in the Fireplace Room.

I-HELP for Men is Sunday, May 5, 5 p.m. Sign up on the Meal Train (page 9) or contact Steve Smaby if you can help.

I-HELP for Women is Sunday, May 26, Contact Lee Hulquist if you can help.

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

Men's Breakfast Group meets Saturday, May 11, 8:30 a.m. in person and 9 a.m. via Zoom. See article at left.

Music Committee meets Tuesday, May 28, 6 p.m. via Zoom.

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

Program Council meets Tuesday, May 7, 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. Contact Mibs McCarthy programcouncil@uucmp.org

Social Justice does not meet in May due to the Annual Meeting.

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

T'ai Chi Chih meets Tuesdays at 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary. See page 12.

Youth Music will be starting again. If you are interested, please send Jorge an email: music@uucmp.org

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



As we plan for the church and school year's coming to a close later this month, I've also been looking ahead to next fall and the kinds of programming that would best serve our youth in their faith development. After considering many possibilities and gathering input from others, we have decided to use the *Crossing Paths* curriculum this coming fall for our middle school and high school youth. While you may not have heard of *Crossing Paths*, you may recognize its predecessor – the *Neighboring Faiths* youth program used in many UU congregations.



Why Crossing Paths? The curriculum's focus on religious pluralism, this month's worship theme, is particularly important in our society of increasing diversity. My hope is that the *Crossing Paths* curriculum will help our youth to not just tolerate differences, but to actively seek out understanding across lines of difference. This kind of interfaith engagement and emphasis on pluralism is one of the things that drew me to UUism as an adult, after thinking that organized religion was not a good fit for my personal values and beliefs.

Later this month, we'll be asking for a team of volunteers to commit to teach our *Crossing Paths* classes next fall and spring. I hope you'll consider how facilitating these classes a few times per month can not only help our youth become better grounded in their faith, but also the adults teaching the class. I encourage you to consider how YOU can help create a beloved multigenerational community at UUCMP: where the wisdom and power of elders, the resources and capacity of middle-aged adults, the vision and energy of young adults, and the prophetic voices and faith of children and youth can co-create the kind of church that attracts, supports, and sustains all of us!

Upcoming events:

- First Friday Game Night on May 3rd at 6:30 p.m. in the Fireplace Room
- RE Sunday is on May 19th. If you have a child who plays an instrument and would like to perform during the service, please let me know.
- UUCMP Nature Camp from June 10-14 : Registration link is on the UUCMP website!
- Be sure to check the weekly UUCMP newsletter for info on other upcoming all-ages and RE events!



Sharyn Routh
Director of Religious Exploration
dre.sharyn@uucmp.org

President's Corner



Good Changes

UUCMP is having a very good year. Attendance and energy levels are up, committees are active, many visitors are becoming members, and our programs are moving forward with enthusiasm. Our worship experience continues to be meaningful with worship associates and ministers working to bring us messages that inspire and challenge. We have also installed a new database system, Breeze, to help us better keep track of our membership information. (Thank you Steve Johnson.)

Many members participated in our Strategic Planning process through our Imagination Gathering, survey, and follow up gathering. A task force organized, prioritized, and communicated this information to the Board of Trustees, eventually resulting in a new collaborative Strategic Plan to be presented to the congregation for approval. The plan focuses on three areas:

1. Enhance and Enrich Religious Exploration for our Community
2. Improve Welcoming, Advertising, & Outreach
3. Foster Connection & Involvement for Members

This is meant to be a plan to re-engage our congregation following a challenging pandemic era experience, and to be enacted while maintaining financial and program stability.

Having more in-person meetings has been very rewarding this year. We've had more people in-person for worship, committee meetings, affinity groups, potlucks, choir rehearsals, game nights, and other events, and it is great to see more faces in our community.

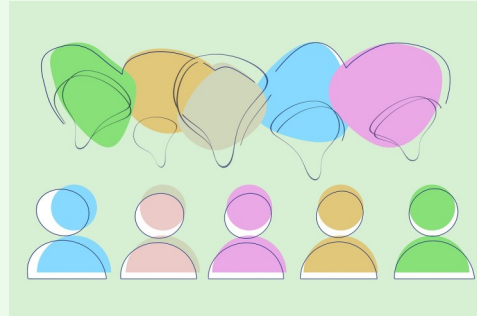
Our Board of Trustees and ministers had a challenge to review our financial situation and develop a plan to "live within our means" following the expiration of the "Big Gift" funding that had accompanied our last Strategic Plan. The Board reviewed our situation, had serious dialogue regarding possible staff cuts, but due to our congregation's response to our stewardship drive, including the matching fund initiative, and an additional "Big Gift," no staff reduction is suggested for next year's budget.

I am very pleased and grateful about the progress of UUCMP this year. We have a shared commitment to be the best we can be.

-- Mike Lovell

Would You Like to Join a Chalice Circle?

Chalice Circles provide an opportunity for members and friends of the church to develop deeper connections and wider service within our community through small-group conversation. Chalice Circles consist of 6-10 people who meet at least once a month for about two hours to explore meaningful topics together. Some Chalice Circles meet via Zoom, others meet in person, and others meet in person with the option to also attend via Zoom.



If you would like to learn more about Chalice Circles, contact the ministers at minister@uucmp.org.

Currently, there are openings in these ongoing groups:

Second Monday Afternoon

This group meets at church in the Fireplace Room on second Mondays from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you are interested in joining, please contact Kathleen Craig at kathleen@craigdesignassociates.com

Second Monday Evening

This group meets at church in the Fireplace Room and via Zoom on second Mondays from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. If you are interested in joining, please contact Kat Morgan at katmorgan13@gmail.com

Fourth Monday Evening - OMNIA Group

This group meets via Zoom on fourth Mondays from 6:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. If you are interested in joining, please contact Sharon Miller at bmcclane@redshift.com or Kerry Sisseem at kerrysisseem@earthlink.net

The Work Parties Continue!

Please join us on Saturday morning, May 18, 9-12:30, as we assemble to pull weeds and genista, clean solar panels and very importantly, to brighten our large wooden sign at our church entrance. We will have indoor tasks as well.

Snacks will be provided.

See you then!

Contact Lauren Keenan if you have questions.





Ohana Monterey campus

May Shared Plate Recipient *Ohana Monterey*

“Ohana” is a Hawaiian word meaning “family” in its broadest sense – not just immediate and extended family but the community of love and support surrounding every individual. In the spirit of Ohana, everyone is family, and caring for the whole family is the heart of the Ohana model.

There is an urgent need for mental health care for the youth in our area with a recent student survey in the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District revealing that one in three students suffered depression-related feelings and one in six students considered suicide. Ohana aims to help the children, youth and parents of our community by offering multiple services. These include free classes, workshops and support groups for children, teens, parents, teachers and community members and a large number of resources aimed at building the mental fitness of parents and their growing children and youth.

In addition, they offer outpatient care delivered by a multidisciplinary team including child psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, social workers, occupational therapists, art and music therapists and others. They also have after school treatment, full day treatment and residential programs if more intensive treatment is needed. Their executive director, Dr. Susan Swick states that, “In addition to effectively treating illness, if we can partner with caring adults to build mental fitness, we will be contributing to the greater health in children and well-being in families.” Ohana strives to help create a community in which every child can flourish because they and their families have the knowledge, skills and support they need to grow into healthy and resilient adults.

On a personal note, as a pediatrician in our community I have seen many of my children and youth affected by mental health concerns and crisis and the top-notch resources and services provided by Ohana have been invaluable to their care and recovery. Please consider donating to this worthy organization.

Their emergency stabilization programs are in a youth-friendly setting with services that focus on supporting the full family through a crisis.

Thank you.
Andrea Rivas

Men's I-HELP for May 5th Change of date, this month only!

On May 5th UUCMP will host and provide meals for Men's I-HELP (Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program.) We are planning for about 20 guests.

We need your help to provide the donations of food for the meals. We can also use your help with setting up, preparing food and greeting the men. Please sign up on the link below.



[Men's I-HELP May 5th](#)

You can sign into Meal Train with your Google account or Facebook, you do not have to create a new account unless you want to do so.

Food donations may be left in the church kitchen after the morning worship service on Sunday. PLEASE LABEL all food with Men's I-HELP. Food may also be brought to the church after 3:00 p.m., but no later than 4:00 p.m. on that Sunday. Please use this Meal Train link to sign up by the Saturday before at 5:00 p. m. so we know where we stand for donations, since our goal is to have all items donated.

If you just want to tell us what you are bringing, contact Rose and she will sign you up.

[Men's I-HELP May 5th](#)

If you would rather contribute monetarily to support this important mission of our church, please mark your check donation in the memo line for Men's I-Help Meals.

[Donate financially](#)

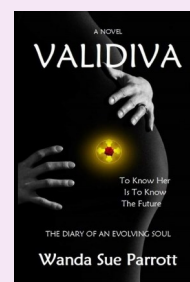
If you have difficulty using the Meal Train program, please let Rose Lovell know: lovellfamily5@gmail.com

Please let Steve Smaby know if you have suggestions or questions: pilot.smaby@gmail.com

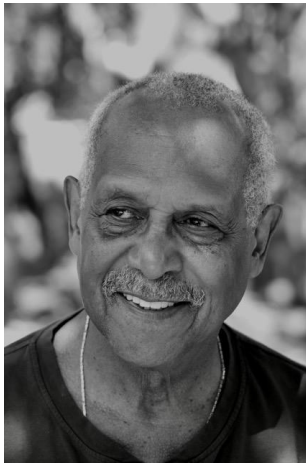
Thank you for supporting this important mission of our church!
Rose Lovell 214-228-6665

Books for Beds

In February, limited editions of Wanda Sue Parrott's novel, *VALIDIVA--The Diary of An Evolving Soul* raised nearly \$600 toward a fundraiser for UUCMP's I-HELP fund for homeless men and women. Those who were unable to pick up their copies may do so after services on Sundays, May 12 and 19 in the Welcome Hall. Copies of the signed limited-edition work will be available for a suggested donation of \$20. The book is a sort of sexy science fiction romance about a blind musician who regains her vision illegally after a nuclear accident nearly exterminates life. Is it about reincarnation? Here's a hint from protagonist Validiva, "One thing I learned, Once I could see, Was that all primates Looked like me." The vibrations are mostly good! Some are funny. First come, first served!



Art News

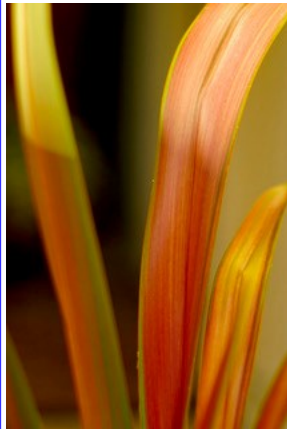


Macroflora -- An Inward Look Richard Cannon

March 30, 2024 – May 31, 2024

Reception: April 13, 2024, 2:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.

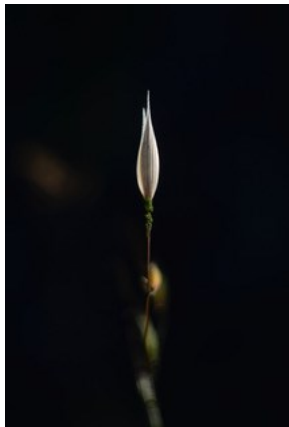
I was born in San Jose, CA in 1946. While growing up during the 1950s, the Santa Clara Valley was still very agricultural, and even though my family lived in the city, there were plenty of opportunities to engage with nature. As kids, my friends and I spent many wonderful days exploring nature, wandering along Coyote Creek and going fishing at the nearby lakes and streams. This appreciation of nature has stayed with me all of my adult life and influences my photography immensely.



Phormium

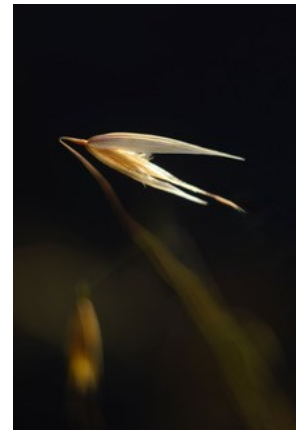
Along the way, I attended San Jose City College, and eventually received a BA and MA in behavioral science from San Jose State University.

I served in the US Army from 1966-68 and spent most of my career at Lockheed Martin in human resources management. Upon retirement in 2004, my wife, Bette, and I moved to the Monterey Peninsula where I became involved in the arts community. I am a member of the Image-Makers of Monterey and have served on the boards of the Center for Photographic Art and the Carl Cherry Center for the Arts.



Seed Husk

My photographs have been exhibited in a number of galleries, including the Avery Gallery, the Monterey Convention Center, the Triton Museum, the Carmel Foundation, the Center for Photographic Art, the Pacific Grove Art Center, the Carl Cherry Center for the Arts, and the Harvey Milk Center for the Arts. Several of my images are also on permanent display at the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula.



Seed Husk

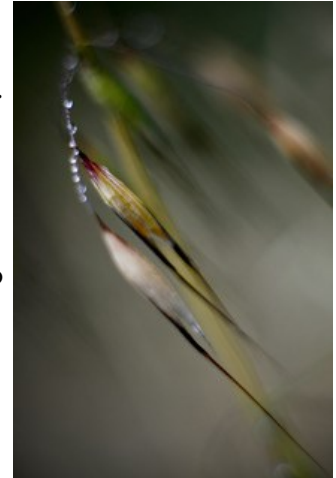
All of the photos in this exhibition were taken in 2021, near the height of the Covid pandemic. Not much good can be said about the pandemic, save for the fact that the isolation many of us experienced created time for a great deal of introspection.

-- Continued on page 11

--- Art News continued

During those intense days, the age-old maxim, “it’s the little things in life that matter,” suddenly took on more meaning and importance for me. This externally imposed solitude created the time and the motivation to look more closely at “the little things” around me and I began to notice attributes that had previously gone unappreciated. This inward way of seeking easily migrated into my approach to photography and sent me on a fun and fascinating photographic journey into the world of wild grasses, grass seeds, flowers and other flora. I felt a true love for what I discovered and remain in awe of the elegant, delightful, intriguing and sometimes mysterious ways in which the Life Force continually expresses itself.

-- Richard Cannon



Grass seed

Musical Offerings



by harmonious songs!

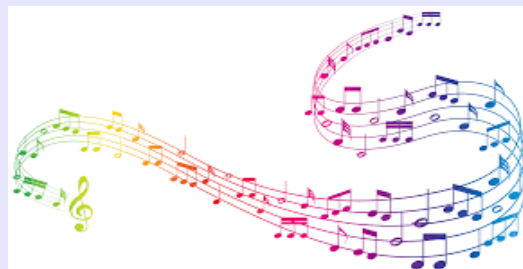
If you have any other ways you wish to contribute to the music department, please feel free to contact me via email! We would love your involvement in this fun program. Also, if you would like to be added to the choir email blast (you will receive information on all rehearsals and upcoming singing events), please email our Music Director, Jorge Torrez

music@uucmp.org

The Adult Community Choir continues to grow and meet **every Thursday from 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. in the Sanctuary**. This choir is open to everyone, members and nonmembers alike, to explore singing together. No prior experience is needed. Send me an email or just stop by! We are currently preparing for two services per month.

Choir Sundays this month will be May 5 and May 19.

CHOIR POTLUCKS: We are having monthly choir potlucks on the **FIRST** Thursday of each month from 6 p.m. - 7 p.m. followed by rehearsal. Bring something to share and join us for a bite followed



-- Jorge Torrez

Join Our Church!

Even in these post 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)

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 but not via Zoom this month. Contact: Mike Lovell. See page 4.

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

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.

SOCIAL  **JUSTICE**



**St. Mary's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church
& COPA invite you to:**



**“Yes, in God’s Backyard”
Informational Forum**

A discussion on facilitating the development of affordable housing through YIGBY

**Tuesday, May 14th at 2pm.
All are welcome & it’s FREE!**

**St. Mary’s by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, Edwards Hall
146 12th St. Pacific Grove**

Panel participants will include:

*Kate Daniels, Monterey County Supervisor
Geoffrey Morgan; President and CEO of Chispa Housing
Anastasia Wyatt, Housing Manager to the City of Monterey,*

Seating is limited, R.S.V.P.’s requested

Call 831-373-4441
or email cooleylaura17@gmail.com

JOIN US TO ANSWER GOD’S CALL!



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The office is open for limited hours: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays.

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Hamilton, Meredith Harrill, Bjorn Nilson

Ministers Emeriti:

The Revs. Fred and Margaret Keip

Return Service Requested



May 2024

About UUCMP Publications

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

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

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

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