



NUUSLETTER

of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

Theme: Practicing Resistance Sunday Services at 9:30 a.m. in person and via Zoom and 11:15 a.m. in person

January 4

“The Turning of the Year”

**Rev. Axel Gehrman and Worship Associate
Allysson McDonald**

The beginning of a year offers us an opportunity to reflect on events of the year past and our hopes for the future. A lot has happened in 2025. Some experiences we may be happy to put behind us. Others we remember fondly and will cherish for years to come.

January 18

“Getting in Good Trouble”

**Rev. Elaine Gehrman and Worship Associate
Annan Patterson**

The late Congressman and activist John Lewis was inspired by civil rights activist Rosa Parks to get in "good trouble, necessary trouble." What are ways we might need to get in good trouble these days? How can we honor and carry on the legacy of these leaders and that of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?

January 11

“How We Can Change the World”

**Rev. Axel Gehrman and Worship Associate
Be Astengo**

Every Sunday, we end our worship services with unison words that remind us of our ongoing effort to be the presence of love in the midst of fear, the voice of hope in the face of despair, and the hands of justice restoring a world worthy of our children. Striving to change the world is a tall task. Where do we even begin?

January 25

“Resistance Through the Ages and Sacred Calling”

**Worship Associates Jon Czarnecki and
Lauren Keenan**

These days we face strong headwinds in our journey to create and maintain a free and just society. This service reminds us that we are not alone, and never have been. Our search for meaning has been a persistent theme in human endeavors throughout the millennia. Resistance includes fighting, focusing on physicality. Resistance also includes persisting, focusing on morality. Aristotle, Jesus, Buddha, Gandhi and King are just a few of those who accompany us while resisting.

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See the calendar at
www.uucmp.org

Religious Exploration

Children (pre K - 11) and teens (12-18) attend our worship service on Sundays at 11:15 a.m. and go to their respective Religious Exploration classes following the Story for All Ages.



Ministers' Message Rev. Elaine Gehrman

A new year is a good time for visioning, and imagining, all that we might strive to accomplish in the coming year.

I am a great admirer of Lynn Ungar, who attended Starr King School for the Ministry with me, and who has become the unofficial UU poet laureate. She has given me permission to share this thoughtful poem, written at the beginning of the pandemic lockdown, which captures some of what I hope we might still imagine for the coming year--

Imagine

Imagine with me for a moment-

don't worry, I'm not saying it's real. Imagine, if you can, that there has been not a calamity, but a great awakening.

Pretend, just for a moment, that we all so loved our threatened earth that we stopped going on cruises, limited international flights, worked on cherishing the places where we already are. In this pretty fantasy, everyone who possibly can stops commuting. Spends the extra time

with their kids or pets or garden. We have the revelation that everyone needs health care, sick leave, steady work. It occurs to us that health care workers are heroes. Also teachers. Not to mention the artists of all kinds who teach us resilience and joy.

Imagine, if you will, that we turned to our neighbors in mutual aid, trading eggs for milk, checking in on those who are elderly or alone. Imagine that each of us felt suddenly called to wonder in this moment, what does the world

need from me? What are my gifts?

Yes, I know it's just a fantasy. The world could never change so radically overnight.

But imagine.

Lynn Ungar 3-20-20

lynnungar.com

Wishing you a 2026 full of imaginings and wonder, resilience and joy!

See you in church,

Elaine

Celebration of Life Service

In honor of

Darold Skerritt

Saturday, January 10, 2 p.m.



Men's Breakfast

Saturday, January 10, at 8:30 a.m.

The men's monthly breakfast is continuing as hybrid. Our next meeting is Saturday, January 10, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the Fireplace Room. People will bring 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 from the pulpit are due by 9 a.m. on Wednesdays.

ARTICLES for THE WEDNESDAY WEEKLY NEWS-LETTER email are due by noon on Tuesdays.

MONTHLY NUUSLETTER articles are due by the 16th of each month.

SCHEDULED EVENTS

Adult Community Choir meets every Thursday, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Board of Trustees meets on Wednesday, January 21, 5:30 p.m.

Buddhist Sangha is every Wednesday at 7 p.m. in person in the Sanctuary. Zoom is available. See page 10.

Committee on Family Ministry meets Sunday, January 18, 12:45 - 1:45 p.m. in the Fireplace Room.

Communications Committee meets on Sunday, January 25, at 12:30 p.m., in the Conference Room.

Friday Game Night is Friday, January 9, 6:30 p.m., in the Fireplace Room.

I-HELP for Men is Sunday, January 11, 5 p.m. Sign up on the Meal Train (page 11) or contact Greg Simmons if you can help.

I-HELP for Women is Sunday, January 25. For more information contact Mibs McCarthy.

Membership Committee meets Wednesday, January 28, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Men's Breakfast Group meets Saturday, January 10, 8:30 a.m. in person and 9 a.m. via Zoom. See article at left.

Music Committee meets on Tuesday, January 27, at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

NUUSletter deadline for the February issue is Friday, January 16.

Program Council meets on Tuesday, January 6, at 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. Contact Mibs McCarthy programcouncil@uucmp.org

Social Justice meets Sunday, January 4, 12:45 p.m. in the Sanctuary and via Zoom.

Stewardship meets Wednesday, January 7, 1 p.m. via Zoom.

T'ai Chi Chih meets Tuesdays at 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary. See page 10.

Youth Music will be on the 1st and 3rd Sundays between the services in the Conference Room. If you are interested, please send Jorge an email: music@uucmp.org

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Happy New Year, RE Families!

As we step into a brand-new year together, we send warm wishes to you and your loved ones. May the months ahead bring hope, curiosity, connection, and a sense of adventure—both within and beyond our community.

Even in our milder coastal climate, winter makes itself known in gentle and beautiful ways. The mornings feel a bit cooler, the light shifts, and the earth offers quiet reminders of the season through bright green mosses and mushrooms sprouting along tree trunks and forest floors. Winter invites us to slow down, notice what is growing beneath the surface, and tend carefully to what sustains us.

January in Religious Exploration is a time of settling in, reconnecting after the holidays, and grounding ourselves in familiar rhythms. Our children will continue exploring stories, practices, and experiences that nurture wonder, kindness, and belonging during these quieter winter weeks.

A reminder to families that the **Committee on Family Ministry (CoFM)** will meet on **Sunday, January 18, from 12:45 – 1:45 p.m. in the Fireplace Room**. All are welcome, and we are grateful for the ongoing care and collaboration that supports our children, youth, and families.

As we move through winter together, may you find moments of rest, reflection, and unexpected beauty. We look forward to sharing this season with you and your children.

With warmth and gratitude,
Shannon

Shannon Morrison (she/her)
Director of Religious Exploration

Activities & Events in January
Mark your calendars - you won't want to miss out on the fun!

- * January 9 - Second Friday GAME NIGHT!
6:30-8:30, Fireplace Room
- * January 12 - Second Monday La Leche League Meeting, 11:30-12:30, Nursery and via Zoom.
- * January 18 - CoFM 12:45-1:45 p.m., Fireplace Room
- * January 19 - Martin Luther King Day - Watch weekly news for events



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Church members *without* little ones are encouraged to lend a hand so caregivers can have a chance to connect with our wonderful community. We appreciate your help whether working directly with our kids or making our UUCMP campus a safe and fun place to be!

THANK YOU! We have been so lucky to have helping hands in RE - thank you to our December volunteers Jorge Torrez, Karen Brown, Rebecca Irwin, Suzanne Schmidt, Zeana Bey Davis, Jake and Alina Bagley, Ali Shappard, Angela Skerritt and everyone who helped make our Winter Pageant a success for all your contributions this month.



Nancy Baker Jacobs died suddenly on May 5 after a fall in her home in Pacific Grove, California, at age 80.

Nancy entered the world in Wisconsin during World War II. Her father's work kept the family on the move until they finally put down roots in the Twin Cities region of Minnesota. The oldest of three, she excelled in school as an honors student and National Merit Scholar, and she threw herself into high school theater. She went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism and mass communication from the University of Minnesota, followed by an MFA in writing from the University of Southern California.

Nancy built a trailblazing career at a time when few women held her roles. She stepped into male-dominated newsrooms and classrooms and set new expectations simply by being there. She wrote six nonfiction books and thirteen crime novels, winning national recognition. She taught journalism, edited newspapers, reported stories from the field, administered college programs, and even worked as a private detective. Nancy preferred simply doing the work over talking about it. She rarely spoke about her achievements; others had to draw them into the light.

Her devotion to the people she loved never wavered. She lovingly championed her late husband, Jerry Jacobs—an acclaimed broadcast journalism producer and professor—and guided her mother through a long neurological illness with fierce compassion. She supported her son, Bradley Baker of Oakland, through every chapter of life. Nancy tended friendships across decades and distance, and she welcomed new ones generously. She and Jerry regularly opened their home for holidays and gatherings, making a joyful community of the people they cherished. Direct and discerning, she gave her time to what mattered and to whom mattered.

Nancy applied her intellect and curiosity to confront social injustice. Her writing exposed the harms of racial and religious bigotry, attacks on women's rights, child abuse, greed, and the stakes of illnesses such as breast cancer. Even in retirement, she kept contributing her voice and her skills to causes she valued, including writing for the League of Women Voters of Monterey County. Nancy was an active member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula where she led the Women's Discussion Group for many years.

According to her wishes, Nancy's ashes will be scattered in the sea she loved in a private family gathering. If you wish to make a donation in Nancy's memory, she was a longtime supporter of The Food Bank for Monterey County: <https://foodbankformontereycounty.org/>

Nancy leaves behind a far-reaching circle of people grateful for her presence in their lives: former students, colleagues, readers of her many books, and dear friends. She is also survived by her son, sister, brother, two granddaughters, extended family, and beloved chosen family. The term "survivors" may imply her absence, yet Nancy continues to live vividly in the conversations, stories, humor, and integrity she inspired.

-- Bradley Baker, son, Judith Moll, sister, and Peggy Hansen, friend



January Shared Plate Recipient

Women Rising International

The shared plate recipient for January 2026 is Women Rising International. Co-founded by Elise Young, a former Director of Religious Exploration at UUCMP and Andrea M. Bertone, PhD. Women Rising International is a global network of development professionals united by a commitment to reimagine how international development is done. They advance equity-driven models of partnership, mentorship, and financing that shift power and resources more directly to women-led and youth-led organizations and social enterprises, their families and communities.

Their mission is to partner with women-led and youth-led organizations and social enterprises across Africa — co-creating, resourcing, and amplifying locally-led solutions that advance education, health, food security, and economic power. They envision a world where women and youth have the power and resources they need to achieve meaningful, lasting, community-driven change.

Their approach ensures that women, girls, and their families have equitable access to quality health care across all life stages. We seek to strengthen community health systems to deliver essential maternal and child health services, safe childbirth, and vital vaccines, while expanding access to reproductive health care and information. Working with women-led local partners, we seek to bring mobile and community-based services to underserved areas and promote health education, prevention, and early intervention.

They also advocate for integrated services for survivors of gender-based violence and expand access to HIV and STI prevention, care, and treatment. Our approach is grounded in dignity, inclusion, and women's leadership—creating safe, stigma-free spaces where women can seek care and advocate for their health and rights.

Through partnerships with strong, women-led organizations, Women Rising strengthens local food systems by supporting smallholder farmers, cooperatives, and women entrepreneurs in agriculture and food processing.

The organization promotes climate-resilient farming practices, community gardens, re-seeding land, equitable access to markets and finance, and community savings groups that enable investment in local production. By investing in local capacity and equitable food systems, Women Rising advances communities' ability to achieve lasting food security and better nutrition for all.

Elise Young will be at UUCMP the weekend of January 17 and 18 to speak from the podium and meet with those interested in hearing more about this valuable work.



Elise Young

Please donate generously to this worthy organization.

UUCMP Grief and Growth Circle

The UU Grief and Growth Circle will meet in the **Fireplace Room** at the church on **Wednesday, Jan. 21, from 10-11:30 a.m.** We share our hearts, stories and resources with any and all dealing with loss. As we start a new year, we can explore what we are feeling and might be doing differently now. Text or call Sharon Miller 831-601-0403 for more information.





COMING SOON . . . CANVASS 2026-27

Happy New Year! As we welcome in calendar year 2026, we are gearing up quickly now for our 2026-2027 FISCAL year plans. Please join us for CANVASS 2026-27!

Our congregation-wide canvass kicks off at the Sunday service on February 15. As always, this year's congregational conversation will be rich with opportunities to share our hopes and dreams for this Beloved Community as we make our dollar commitments for the coming fiscal year. Your Stewardship Committee, and the Board, thank you in advance for your thoughtful input as well as your financial support. We cannot run our programs, pay our staff, or maintain our buildings without your participation.

"Celebrating Love, With Room for All" is our stewardship theme for the 2026-2027. With our doors wide open for two services on Sunday mornings, we are creating the space for more people, more connection, and more love. Our annual canvass empowers and directs the Board to create the template for the coming year, which we members will then discuss and vote upon at the Annual Meeting in May.

Might you be looking for a simple (and time-limited) way to help make this congregational conversation more meaningful? Please consider joining the canvass team of stewards, each one contacting three or four members. The Stewardship Committee is hosting a mid-January training and "Appreciation Celebration" party with fellow stewards and board members . . . a very special way to start your new year off right, and enrich your ties and connections within the church.

Thanks again to all our stewards, old and new. If you'd like to be a steward, just let us know at stewardship@uucmp.org
And thanks to all of YOU! We will be in touch soon.

Your Stewardship Committee

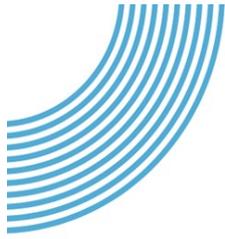
HARK, YE BARDS & BARDLETS!!

Come to WANDA SUE PARROTT's poetry reading (an item in the recent auction) from her book "MAY THE MUSE BE WITH YOU" Sunday, January 25, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the Sanctuary. A few copies will be available to purchase. Proceeds from donations will benefit UUCMP. We'll gather in a circle for a read around/discussion. Bring your favorite short poem.

More details can be requested from amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com



Pacific Western Regional Assembly is Coming this Spring!



REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

2026 APRIL 10-12TH

UU SOCIETY OF SACRAMENTO
"RISING RESILIENT"



Regional Assembly Details

Location: UU Society of Sacramento, CA or Online! The event will be multi-platform.

Dates: April 10-12, 2026

Theme: Rising Resilient

In times like these, what does it mean to be a spiritually resilient Unitarian Universalism? Times of rising authoritarianism and dehumanization call us to lean into our UU Values more than ever: not just to protect those targeted, but also to protect our ability to stay grounded, interconnected, and spiritually alive. RA 2026 will feature speakers, workshops, music, worship, and interactive games to help us all live into this moment with beauty and life-affirming power. Registration will open in January 2026, and a call for workshop proposals will open in January 2026 as well.



LA LECHE LEAGUE OF MONTEREY COUNTY

FREE LACTATION SUPPORT GROUP

JOIN US IN-PERSON OR ONLINE
EVERY 2ND MONDAY @ 12 PM
EMAIL LLLMONTEREY@GMAIL.COM FOR THE ZOOM LINK!

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF MONTEREY PENINSULA
NURSERY ROOM
490 AGUAJITO RD. CARMEL, CA

ALL NURSING, BREASTFEEDING, CHEST FEEDING, PUMPING, PREGNANT PARENTS AND THEIR PARTNERS WELCOME
BABY AND CHILD FRIENDLY



Musical Offerings



The Adult Community Choir continues to grow and meets **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 (music@uucmp.org)! We are currently preparing for two services per month and we are always looking to expand our choir size!

Choir rehearsals will resume on Thursday, January 8th, 2026.

The UUCMP Community Choir will normally be preparing to sing two services a month. This month, the choir will only be singing on January 25th, and we will resume two services a month in February.



The **Music Committee** meets every 4th Tuesday of the month; please let our Music Director know if you would like to be part of the Zoom meetings by joining our email list! music@uucmp.org

-- Jorge Torrez

Social Justice

Shared Plate Non-profit Organizations for 2026

Each year we nominate non-profit organizations for Shared Plate. Half of the cash collected and checks made to UUCMP with the name of the organization in the memo line will be given to the Shared Plate organization each month.

All In Monterey – Karen Judkins - December
Alzheimer's Association – Karen Hunting - August
Bridge Community Services of California – Allysson McDonald - February
Center for Farmworker Families – Elaine Gehrman - June
Golden Connections – Doris Beckman - September
Interim Inc. – Judy Therrien – October
Mujeres en Acción – An McDowell - March
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte – Carleen Whittelsey - April
UNRWA – Gregg McKee - July
UUs for Justice in the Middle East (UUJME) – Elaine Gehrman - May
Watsonville Law Center – Mibs McCarthy - November
Women Rising International – JT Mason – January



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)

Please join us!

Life Enrichment Programs Affinity Groups

Some groups meet in January both face-to-face and via Zoom.

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

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.

Art News

Paola Berthoin and Christine Watten

NATURAL ELEMENTS

Friday, January 16th -- April 3, 2026

Artists' reception will be January 31st from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.



Paola Berthoin was born in London, England, and came to Carmel Valley in 1965 with her mother and three sisters. She is a graduate of Carmel High School and California College of the Arts where she specialized in printmaking, handmade paper and animal drawing.

Paola's deep commitment to living in Carmel Valley over sixty years and tending the land she lives on for the past fifty years has led Paola to be involved in a variety of endeavors over the past forty years. From being a pastry chef and owning and running a restaurant with her mother when she was twenty-four years old to establishing the organization, RisingLeaf Watershed Arts in 2001, completing the award-winning book *Passion for Place: Community Reflections on the Carmel River Watershed* in 2012, and organizing community arts events focused on the Carmel River Watershed since 1990, many seeds of ecological awareness through the arts have been and continue to be planted locally and globally.

Additionally, Paola documented the historic San Clemente Dam removal from 2014-2016 through thirty-five plein air paintings, photographs, video and sound while the project was taking place. She also collected rebar and other metals from the dam and created the historic public art sculpture "Transformation in Restoration" with metal artists Richard Schrader and Fred Saunders. It is installed at the Palo Corona Regional Park.

Paola continues to document vanishing landscapes of Carmel Valley and the former Fort Ord in plein air paintings. In 2019, she started creating paintings of the 389 climate-threatened and endangered birds of North America, according to the Audubon Society. These bird portraits feature birds Paola has seen in her gardens as well as further afield in Carmel Valley and beyond.

Paola's Statement: My art is about love of the land and rivers. By living in one place for fifty years, that place has come to reside in me. Ephemeral light, patterns, shapes, movement, relationships of colors inspire me to respond to the innate urge to create, to be actively engaged in the dynamics of the natural world.

She says, "Spending time outside reminds me of our place in the grand scheme of things. We live in a more-than-human world. My art encompasses a dedication to protecting what I can, through active caring for the land and through expressing my imagination through creative endeavors. In sharing a commitment for healthy watersheds, it helps foster a cultural shift where the natural world becomes integral to people's lives."



-- Art News continued

CHRISTINE WATTEN

While living with my family in Asia my early experience making art started with painting and dyeing fabric. Later it moved to drawing figures and landscapes in oil pastel and oil sticks, then to working in ceramics and plein air landscapes. I have loved the process of kiln form glass art, collage and printmaking in recent years as well.

The artwork I gravitate towards making is that which expresses energy of color, shape and shadow. For me these are laden with meaning. Observing and interpreting natural forms is a visual grounding rod for me and the place I begin. Sometimes I use drawings from my landscape plans for collages as well.

More recently, I have had the daily practice of discovering surprising images in the foam of my coffee cup. Sometimes they seem representational, and often can be humorous to me. This practice keeps me in the present moment, and, almost like mini oracles, I am using these as inspiration for painting, serigraph and stencil monotypes.

I have a BA in studio art, and have shown painting, printmaking and ceramics in juried and group exhibits in the San Francisco and Monterey Bay Areas. I taught art in public and private schools, and have received awards in ceramics, painting and landscape design.

KAZU Underwriting

We are continuing to advertise UUCMP on KAZU Public Radio, FM 90.3. A number of us who already regularly contribute to this local public radio station, instead pool our money, by giving it to the church, which then gives it to KAZU. Then UUCMP gets underwriting spots, one for each \$30 contributed. KAZU gets our money, and UUCMP gets our message out to the community.



Please consider contributing to this effort. Make sure your check is clearly labeled “KAZU Gift” in the memo line. These donations will not earn any of the thank you gifts that KAZU sometimes gives. However, they will give UUCMP greater visibility in the community and help us implement our mission of “Changing ourselves as we change the world.”

Save the Date!

Songs of Love and Light

Jazz vocalist Rebecca Sayre with guitarist Bruce Forman and Gary Meek on sax & piano.

Saturday, February 21st, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at UUCMP.

The show promises familiar jazz standards, original compositions, and plenty of spontaneous laughter!



Cook in the New Year! Men's I-HELP Program at UUCMP. Next Meal January 11, 2026

Each second Sunday, UUCMP hosts Men's I-HELP (Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program) welcoming up to twenty-five men with dinner & a safe night's rest. I-HELP is the only emergency shelter open every night in the Monterey area for men & women: a hot meal, a safe place, & a caring community. There are many ways you can help: You can help by donating cooked food, joining us in the kitchen & sharing the meal, or even taking on sponsoring a meal as a group.



Volunteering Options

Join the kitchen team to cook nourishing meals for the men.

Cook something at home or purchase prepared food & drop off on the Sunday of the meal.

Help set up tables & stay with the men to share the meal.

Join the organizing team & lead a meal night or organize a group to sponsor a meal.

Great opportunity for a volunteering or service-learning project through school programs .

Your generosity makes a real difference. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Greg Simmons.

602-361-1015, Gregs2001@gmail.com, text, email or phone call, all methods are welcome.

Our next meal is January 11, and we need your help to provide donations of food for meals. Even more than food donations, we are requesting help from the congregation for the kitchen and setup volunteers. We also really need more help to keep this program going so we are also seeking volunteers to become more involved with UUCMP I-HELP Team to help plan and organize the meals.

Food contributions can include a main course, rotisserie chickens, vegetables, potatoes and other sides, bread, drinks and desserts. We are using the meal train website to help organize or you can communicate with me directly to let me know what you are thinking about contributing or have questions. Please, to ensure we can use all the food that is provided, and that we can serve the men a healthy meal, we request no unsolicited food items be provided.

Please contact Greg Simmons if you wish to volunteer to work with I-HELP, want to know what is needed for the next meal, and learn how to make food contributions.

For questions, ideas, or comments: gregs2001@gmail.com, 602-361-1015. Text, email or phone calls are all fine.

Thank you for supporting this important mission of our church!

The details:

January 11 Meal train Link: <https://www.mealtrain.com/potlucks/92o98o>

Drop off food Sunday morning or by 3:30 p.m.

Please label all food with Men's I-HELP

Setup and kitchen volunteers can arrive after 3:00 p.m.

If you prefer to donate money, funds are used to purchase staples and some meal items.

To donate: put Men's I-HELP in the memo line of your check or use this link:

<https://uucmp.org/connection-overview/donate/> & specify Men's I-HELP Meals.

Please sign up for Meal Train by Saturday before 5 p.m.

President's Corner



Dear Members and Friends of UUCMP:

As we step into the new year, I am filled with gratitude for the strength and devotion of this congregation. Time and again, you have shown that our church is not simply a building, but a living community sustained by the generosity of those who give their time, talent, and treasure. Whether through teaching, singing, organizing, repairing, or simply showing up with open hearts, you make our church a positive force in the wider community.

I am pleased to report that our financial status remains stable, providing a strong foundation for the work we do together. This stability is not taken for granted: it is the result of careful stewardship and the ongoing support of members and friends who believe in the mission of our church.

Our programs continue to thrive thanks to the dedication of your volunteerism. From hospitality to outreach, from worship to governance, each effort reflects the spirit of service that defines us. Religious Exploration remains a vital part of our life together, offering a path steeped in reason and enriched by the many spiritual paths that gather us into one circle. In classrooms and conversations, our children and adults alike are invited to explore, question, and grow.

As we look ahead to 2026, let us resolve to carry forward the energy of this devotion. May we continue to nurture resilience, justice, and love, and may our sanctuary remain a place where all who enter find shelter, inspiration, and belonging. Together, we embody the promise of a Blessed Community—rooted in gratitude, flourishing in service, and blossoming in love.

In hope, appreciation, and resolve,
Ray Krise

President, Board of Trustees
Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

Celebration of Life

There will be a Celebration of Life service in honor of longtime member Darold Skerritt on Saturday, January 10, at 2 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Donations of finger foods and help with the reception afterwards are welcome; contact Carol Collin or Mibs McCarthy.



Vegetarian Recipe

I Can't Believe It's Not Chicken (Super-Savory Grated Tofu)

by Nisha Vora, NYT Cooking

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 servings

1 to 1½ cups/190 to 285 grams uncooked white or brown rice (or 3 to 4½ cups/425 to 650 grams cooked white or brown rice)

FOR THE TOFU

1(10- to 12-ounce/280- to 340-gram) package super-firm tofu (see Tip)

1½ tablespoons neutral-flavored oil of choice

4 scallions, sliced at an angle (reserve dark green tops for garnish)

1 to 2 Thai chiles (or 1 small serrano pepper), thinly sliced (optional, for spicy!)

3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 tablespoon roasted black or white sesame seeds

FOR THE SAUCE

3 tablespoons/52 grams tamari or soy sauce

1 tablespoon Chinese black vinegar (see Tip for a gluten-free substitute)

1 teaspoon organic cane sugar, pure maple syrup or agave nectar

1 tablespoon gochugaru (Korean chili flakes); see Tip

1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil

FOR SERVING

1 handful cilantro leaves and tender stems, roughly chopped (optional)



PREPARATION

Step 1 -- Start by cooking the rice using your preferred method, or get out your leftover cooked rice.

Step 2 -- Make the tofu: Wrap the tofu in a thin dish towel and gently squeeze with your palms to remove some water but don't squish it. Using the large holes of a box grater, grate the tofu. If small pieces break off, slice them very thinly.

Step 3 -- In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. After a minute or two, add the scallions, chiles (if using) and garlic. Cook, stirring frequently, until the garlic is slightly golden and the scallions are softened, about 2 minutes.

Step 4 -- Add the grated tofu to the pan and toss to coat it in the oil. Cook undisturbed for 2 minutes, then stir. Cook, stirring every 2 minutes, until the tofu is golden brown in some spots, a total of 10 to 14 minutes.

Step 5 -- Meanwhile, make the sauce: In a small bowl, whisk together the tamari, vinegar, sugar, gochugaru and sesame oil until well combined.

Step 6 -- Pour the sauce into the pan — it will bubble rapidly — and stir with a silicone spatula to evenly coat the tofu. Cook for 1 minute. Remove from the heat and sprinkle with the sesame seeds.

Step 7 -- Serve over cooked rice and top with the reserved scallion tops and cilantro. Store leftovers in an airtight container in the fridge for 4 to 5 days.

TIPS -- Super-firm tofu or “high-protein” tofu makes for a very convincing meat substitute, but if you don't have it, use extra-firm tofu and press for 10 minutes; grate the tofu, then dab with towels to remove water. Don't have gochugaru? Sub with 1 to 1½ teaspoons of Sichuan chili flakes or sriracha. For GF-- Most Chinese black vinegar is fermented with grains. Substitute 2 parts rice vinegar to 1 part aged balsamic vinegar.

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January 2026

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