



# NUUSLETTER

of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

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

## February 1

**"If at First You Don't Succeed, Try, Try, Again.  
Learning to Embody Resilience"**

**Worship Associates Ray Krise and Sundeep Gupta**

When times are tough, can we take a setback and still keep going? How do we learn to practice, live, and embody resilience? How do we find the courage to face adversity for what it is - the ground of growing and becoming our better selves and working to deliver a better way for the world about us.

## February 8

**"Tips and Tools for Resilient Living"**

**Rev. Axel Gehrman and Worship Associate  
Annan Paterson**

In the course of our lives, we each encounter our fair share of challenges, setbacks and failure. In the wake of trials and tribulations, we find ways to carry on. We seek to put into practice the proverb that says: "Fall down seven times, stand up eight." What are some of the ways we can get back onto our metaphorical feet?

## February 15

**"Stewardship Sunday: Amish Barns, African Windmills, and Ant Colonies-- The Power of Collective Action"**

**Rev. Elaine Gehrman and Worship Associate  
Bjorn Nilson**

This morning we will be reminded of the importance of collective action-- our ability to accomplish much more together than we could ever do alone, and the many ways we can contribute to the larger whole, to increase our communal strength and resilience! Please join us for this timely message as we kickoff our Annual Pledge drive and Stewardship Campaign!

## February 22

**"The Art of Plasticity: Living in Chaotic Times"**  
**Worship Associates Charlotte Bear, Christina Zaro  
and Allysson McDonald**

As part of the month's theme about Embodying Resilience, this worship will reflect upon the human ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

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See the calendar at  
[www.uucmp.org](http://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. Axel Gehrmann



“Celebrating Love, with Room for All” – this is the motto of our Stewardship operating fund drive. This year’s effort will officially kick off on Sunday, February 15, however our hard-working Stewardship Team has been busy for several months in preparation and planning. Perhaps you have read some of their communications in recent newsletters. Maybe you have heard a few Stewardship Testimonials during Sunday services. (If not, please check them out!)

This year’s Stewardship Team, which considers itself an N-HAC - a “non-hierarchical autonomous collective” - includes Robert Brunson, Carol Collin, Katie Hamilton, Gretchen Hausman, Steve Johnson, Bjorn Nilson, and Jo Ann Novoson, and is supported by dozens of volunteers. Please be sure to thank these diligent and dedicated folks, when you see them around!

Our annual Stewardship efforts provide us with opportunities to reflect on the value of our vibrant and thriving caring community, and the many programs and activities that enliven our religious home.

UUCMP is a precious place, which offers a much-needed “shelter from the storm” – especially in these troubling and challenging times. We provide an amazing breadth of programs that promote social justice, through study groups, hands-on support for the homeless, workshops and partnerships with community organizations such

as Meals on Wheels, The People’s Oral History Project, Breast Cancer Assistance Group, Guitars United, Equal Justice Initiative, the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County, and many more.

We have beautiful, well-cared-for facilities and grounds – providing a meeting place not only for congregational worship, religious exploration, meetings, and social gatherings, but also for community groups that work for racial justice, women’s rights, environmental justice, immigrants’ rights, GLBTQ+ support, and resisting authoritarianism. At UUCMP folks can attend Sunday worship, but also join our Sacred Earth Circle, or our Buddhist Sangha, or our Tai Chi Group.

We have a wide variety of small groups – Chalice Circles, Men’s Breakfast, Grief & Growth - that provide opportunities for personal connection, relationship building, and mutual support. We have a multitude of teams and committees that provide opportunities for engagement – from music to children’s programs, from building & grounds to membership, from finance to social action. And our Caring Network and Pastoral Associates do a wonderful job offering support to many of us in times of need, providing a helping hand and an understanding ear.

UUCMP is an amazing place, doing important work, serving both those within and beyond our religious home! I often return to the words of our Mission Statement, which were written by members a few years before Elaine and I arrived in town: “**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.**”

-- continued on page 3

Our efforts to fulfill our mission of justice and love are desperately needed in this day and age! And thanks to the gifts each of us bring – the strength of our hands, the reaches of our hearts – I know we are making a meaningful difference. We **are** changing ourselves as we change the world.

In the weeks ahead, we encourage you to think about the resources UUCMP needs to do our good work – to maintain our building, to support our programs, to pay our staff – and what level of financial support you can provide. Eve-

ry year, costs go up. We hope you can increase your support, so we can maintain our current levels of programming and activity – or even enhance them. (Elaine and I will continue our practice of contributing 5% of our earnings to UUCMP and 5% to other worthy causes.) Whatever level of support you can provide, please know that every single contribution, regardless of size, makes a meaningful difference – and is greatly appreciated! Thank you!!

See you in church,

*Axel*

## Ordinary People. Extraordinary Change

That’s the subtitle of the 2025 film American Agitators, IMDB says is “The story of activist Fred Ross, who helped invent modern organizing. He and his son, Fred Ross, Jr. left a legacy and a set of techniques that are still used today.” They recruited and trained Cesar Chavez and Delores Heurta, among others. **Join us on Tuesday, February 10 at 6 p.m. at UUCMP to view a screening of the film**, followed by discussion with former State Senator Bill Monning and An McDowell about their experiences with Fred Ross and his son, and their relevance now. There will also be an opportunity to meet other community members to talk about how the message reverberates in your own life today. Are ordinary people still capable of extraordinary change?

**COMUNITES ORGANIZADOS FOR COPA A RELATIONSHIP OF POWER IN ACTION**

# SCREENING OF AMERICAN AGITATORS

The story of ordinary people who decided they had had enough and made history, and the organizer who helped them get there.

With guest speakers An McDowell and California State Senate Majority Leader Emeritus Bill Monning who both had the pleasure of working with Fred Ross

Refreshments provided

**Tuesday, February 10 th | 6:00 pm**

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula, 490 Aguajito Rd, Carmel 93923

509 832-3325 • www.COPAiaf.org • COPA.iaf1@gmail.com

**COMUNITES ORGANIZADOS FOR COPA A RELATIONSHIP OF POWER IN ACTION**

# PELICULA: AMERICAN AGITATORS

La historia de gente común que decidió que ya había tenido suficiente e hizo historia, y del organizador que los ayudó a lograrlo.

Con los oradores invitados An McDowell y el líder emérito de la mayoría del Senado del estado de California, Bill Monning, quienes tuvieron el placer de trabajar con Fred Ross

Con Refrescos

**Martes, el 10 de Febrero | 6:00PM**

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula 490 Aguajito Rd, Carmel 93923

509 832-3325 • www.COPAiaf.org • COPA.iaf1@gmail.com

## Men's Breakfast

**Saturday, February 14, at 8:30 a.m.**

The men's monthly breakfast is continuing as hybrid. Our next meeting is Saturday, February 14, 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](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.



## PUBLICATION DEADLINES

ANNOUNCEMENTS for SUNDAYS 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 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.

**American Agitators film** is Tuesday, February 10, 6 p.m. See page 3.

**Board of Trustees** meets Wednesday, February 18, 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, February 15, 12:45 - 1:45 p.m. in the Fireplace Room.

**Communications Committee** meets on Sunday, February 22, at 12:30 p.m., in the Conference Room.

**Concert-- Songs of Love & Light** is Saturday, February 21, 2 p.m.- 4 p.m. in the Sanctuary. See page 6.

**Environmental Justice** meets Sunday, February 9, 10:40 a.m. in the Fireplace Room.

**Friday Game Night** is Friday, February 6, potluck at 5:30 p.m., games at 6:30p.m. in the Fireplace Room.

**I-HELP for Men** is Sunday, February 8, 5 p.m. Sign up on the Meal Train (page 13) or contact Greg Simmons.

**I-HELP for Women** is Sunday, February 22. For more information contact Mibs McCarthy.

**Membership Committee** meets Wednesday, February 25, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.

**Men's Breakfast Group** meets Saturday, February 14, 8:30 a.m. in person and 9 a.m. via Zoom. See article at left.

**Music Committee** meets on Tuesday, February 24, at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

**NUUSletter deadline** for March is Monday, February 16.

**Program Council** meets on Tuesday, February 3, at 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. Contact Mibs McCarthy [programcouncil@uucmp.org](mailto:programcouncil@uucmp.org)

**Sinners** film February 3, 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary. See page 15.

**Social Justice** meets Sunday, February 1, 12:45 p.m. in the Sanctuary and via Zoom.

**Stewardship** meets Wednesday, February 4, 1 p.m. via Zoom.

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

**Valentine Dance** is Saturday, February 14, in the Sanctuary. See page 9.

**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](mailto:music@uucmp.org)

# RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



February!



February is here—a short month centered around love, and perhaps a hint that warmer weather and brighter days are on their way after January. **Our theme this month is *Embodying Resilience***, something especially poignant in these turbulent times.

We will take time to honor and center **Black History Month**, celebrating the resilience, creativity, and leadership of Black communities past and present. February is also rich with religious holidays and cultural celebrations. We begin with **Imbolc** on February 1, welcome the **Lunar New Year** (Year of the Horse!), and later in the month observe the beginnings of **Lent** and **Ramadan**. A more extensive list of February events can be found [here](#).

**Imbolc arrives today** - the halfway point between the Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox. For centuries, humans from climates that experience four seasons noted that the natural world begins to stir once again at this time. It feels like a perfect moment to turn our attention toward stories of resilience—stories of returning light, rekindled warmth, and the quiet strength that carries us forward. Celebrate by lighting a candle or perhaps sowing seeds for your garden. The Earth Circle will be celebrating today after the second service.

Please also note that our **Committee on Family**

**Ministry (CoFM)** will meet on the third Sunday this month. Be sure to watch the weekly newsletter for additional updates and details.

With warmth and gratitude,  
Shannon

**Shannon Morrison (she/her)**  
Director of Religious Exploration

## Activities & Events in [February](#)

**Mark your calendars - you won't want to miss out on the fun!**

We celebrate and focus on Black History this month!

February 1 - Imbolc

February 2 - Groundhog Day

February 6 - First Friday Game Night & Potluck  
5:30 – 8 p.m.

Watch the weekly Newsletter for More 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 to make 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 January volunteers Karen Brown, Rose and Mike Lovell, Rebecca Irwin, Suzanne Schmidt, Ali Shappard, and Jorge Torrez** for all your contributions this month.

# SONGS OF *Love & Light*



*Gary Meek*  
SAX & PIANO

*Rebecca Sayre*  
VOICE



*Bruce Forman*  
GUITAR



*Saturday, Feb 21st*

*2-4 PM*

A jazz concert to benefit the  
Unitarian Universalist Church  
of the Monterey Peninsula

Get TICKETS online through PayPal at [uucmp.org](http://uucmp.org) (Donate, Concerts)  
or at Bookmark Music, or at the door

**\$25 / \$20 for Students/Seniors/Military**

UUCMP is located at 490 Aguajito Road, Carmel CA - For more info: 831-624-7404



## February Shared Plate Recipient *Bridge Community Services of California*

Bridge Community Services is a California-based nonprofit committed to providing enhanced care management, housing navigation, and advocacy to individuals and families facing complex life challenges. Our mission is to support the whole person through a trauma-informed, client-centered approach, addressing both immediate needs and the systemic barriers that contribute to housing instability, domestic violence, justice involvement, and generational trauma. We walk alongside those we serve with dignity, compassion, and accountability, empowering individuals toward long-term stability and self-sufficiency.

Bridge Community Services currently serves over 245 members, the majority of whom are in need of housing placement, rental assistance, or stabilization services. Many of the individuals we serve are Central Coast Alliance for Health members, and we are contracted with Central Coast Alliance for Health to provide enhanced care management and supportive services throughout the Central Coast. This partnership allows us to coordinate care more effectively and ensure our members receive comprehensive, wraparound support.



One recent story reflects the heart of our mission. A mother and her young child came to us while fleeing a domestic violence situation. With great courage, she made the difficult decision to leave her abuser in search of safety and healing. Through housing navigation, advocacy, and care coordination, Bridge Community Services was able to help secure a safe and stable home, allowing her and her child to begin a new chapter free from fear. For safety and privacy, identifying details are withheld, but her story represents the life-changing impact of trauma-informed care and community support.

This past Christmas season, Bridge Community Services hosted a community Christmas drive, distributing over 400 presents to our members and their families. For many, this was the first time in years they were able to provide gifts for their children during the holidays. These moments served as reminders of hope, dignity, and the power of community coming together to serve those in need.

Bridge Community Services is deeply grateful for partnerships with faith-based organizations and community supporters who share our commitment to compassion, justice, and restoration.

Please consider supporting this worthy cause.

## UUCMP Grief and Growth Circle

The UU Grief and Growth Circle will meet in the **Fireplace Room** at the church on **Wednesday, February 4, from 10-11:30 a.m.** We share our hearts, stories and resources with any and all dealing with loss. We can explore what we are feeling and might be doing differently now. Text or call Sharon Miller 831-601-0403 for more information.





## Stewardship

To borrow a theme from Woody Guthrie, “This church is your church; this church is my church . . . This church was made for you and me.” We enjoy a legacy from dedicated visionaries, who grew UUCMP from a living-room gathering in 1953 to the wonderful home in the woodland where we celebrate today.

At UUCMP, we learn from each other, support each other in times of need, and work together for personal enlightenment, a healthy planet, and a just society.

This community of kindred spirits exists only thanks to the commitments of attention, time and treasure we offer to each other. We will soon be asking how you want to define your own commitment to our common well-being.

Please watch in early February for a Congregant Packet of information about this spring’s campaign. Your Stewardship team will be sending packets to UUCMP members and friends by email or by paper copy. Please give the packet thoughtful consideration when you receive it. You may be contacted by a volunteer Steward, for a conversation about what UUCMP means to you. We hope you recognize this chance for you to continue the legacy, for the benefit of those who will follow as well as for ourselves, today.

Reverend Axel’s column on page 2 in this newsletter thoughtfully identifies the members of your Stewardship team (aka “N-HAC”). Please see any one of us if you have questions or suggestions, and you can always reach us by email sent to [stewardship@uucmp.org](mailto:stewardship@uucmp.org).

## Musical Offerings



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 ([music@uucmp.org](mailto:music@uucmp.org)). We are currently preparing for two services per month and we are always looking to expand our choir size!

The UUCMP Community Choir is preparing to sing two services a month. This month, the choir will be

singing for the 9:30am service on February 8th and 22nd.

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 to be added to our email list! [music@uucmp.org](mailto:music@uucmp.org)



The special guest musician this month will be Rebecca Sayre, bringing some original musical selections for the February 15th 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. services!

-- Jorge Torrez

# VALENTINES DANCE

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS TODAY!  
CALL OR TEXT 707-684-9539

SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 14

UUCMP 490 AGUAJITO RD.

6-9 PM



With your hosts DJ Scooter and Rocking Ricky



Call or text us for more info

707-684-9539

Join us at this FUNdraiser for our church on Valentines Day 2026!

Dance to Motown, Rock, Disco and other classic tunes.

Children and teens welcome with parents/guardians.

\$10 per person and \$25 per family  
No one turned away.

Snacks and nonalcoholic refreshments provided.

Everyone welcome!

## Join Our Church!

In these challenging 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 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 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.

## Art News

### Paola Berthoin and Christine Watten

#### NATURAL ELEMENTS

Friday, January 16th -- April 3, 2026



**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.

## Vegetarian Recipe

### Good Luck Black-Eyed Peas

The "Complete Holiday Cookbook" lists this "Good Luck Black-Eyed Peas" among its recipes for a New Year's Buffet. Let's assume that we can keep getting good luck from black-eyed peas throughout the year; they'll certainly provide lots of nutrients.

2 Number 2 cans black-eyed peas, drained  
1 cup vegetable oil  
1/4 cup vinegar  
1 large clove of garlic  
1/4 cup thinly sliced onions  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon pepper

Place peas in mixing bowl; add remaining ingredients and mix well. Store, sealed in quart jar, in refrigerator for at least 2 days or up to 2 weeks before serving. Garlic may be removed after 2 days, if desired. Yield: 10-12 servings

*Nan's notes:*

*2 number 2 cans is 5 cups of black-eyed peas. Of course you could use frozen ones, or cook them from dry first.*

*I used olive oil the last time I made this.*

*I prefer unseasoned rice vinegar for the vinegar.*

*I use much more garlic, and mince it.*

*I like to use red onions, and I use much more than 1/4 cup.*

*You might want to use less salt; salt to taste.*

*The longer this sits, the better it tastes. I like to put it on top of green salad.*

*-- Nan Foster*

## Cook in the New Year! Men's I-HELP Program at UUCMP Next Meal February 8, 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](mailto:Gregs2001@gmail.com), text, email or phone call, all methods are welcome.

Our next meal is February 8, 2026, 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](mailto: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:

February 8 Meal train Link: <https://mealtrain.com/4gvmm>

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 January wanes, February arrives with its usual paradox: winter still holds us firmly, yet something in the air portends change. The cooler weather and chance of wind and rain persist of course, the nights remain long, and yet there is that subtle shift. My father used to proclaim each year on the day of the winter solstice, with a kind of quiet triumph, "From here on out, the days are getting longer." It was his annual reminder that even in the deepest dark, the turning toward light had already begun.

I find myself returning to that memory even in deepest winter. The earth's slow tilt toward spring mirrors our own slow, hopeful leaning toward renewal in the social and political realms. We are certainly not there yet, but I believe that only the light of faith, resilience, and resistance can move us forward.

February also brings Valentine's Day, a holiday whose origins lie in the life of a third-century Christian saint, Valentinus, remembered for acts of compassion and courage in a turbulent time of his own, the reign of Emperor Claudius II. Whatever the historical details, the heart of the story is of steadfast love expressed not through sentiment but through service, conviction, and care. Our wider culture, of course, has taken St. Valentine and wrapped him in the consumerism of lacy cards, chocolate hearts and the beauty of obligatory floral displays. The bright red hearts that fill store shelves point toward romantic love, and there is nothing wrong with celebrating affection and partnership. But in our religious tradition, the heart has always symbolized something deeper. Our hearts murmur with a love that is transformative rather than transactional, resilient rather than decorative, a love that calls us to practice compassion, to build community, to meet the world's ache with courage.

This deeper love is the center of our faith. It is the force that carries us through difficult times and the compass that points us toward the future we long to create. As winter slowly yields to spring, may we feel ourselves drawn forward by that love—steadied, strengthened, and renewed. May the growing light find each of us, and may love - deep, abiding, and brave - lead us on. In gratitude, hope and resolve,

Ray Krise  
President, Board of Trustees  
The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula



Free Showing Feb 3 - 6:30-9pm  
Unitarian Universalist Church  
490 Aguajito Rd., Carmel

**Ryan Coogler's latest film *Sinners* is fun as hell, but it tells some hard truths. It is an urgent rumination on race, past misdeeds, and unhealed wounds that still devour our body politic.**

*Sinners* is set in Jim Crow-era Mississippi, following twin brothers played by Michael B. Jordan who return home to open a juke joint, only to face a supernatural uprising of vampires, blending Southern Gothic horror with themes of colonialism, trauma, and Black culture. The story centers on the brothers' quest for a fresh start and freedom clashing with ancient evils, as their cousin's music accidentally attracts vampires who turn the juke joint's patrons, leading to a bloody battle for survival.

The movie *Sinners* is **rated R** for strong bloody violence, significant sexual content, and intense language, including frequent use of the F-word and the N-word.

Movie trailer: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jouECTx\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jouECTx_U)



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

**Office Hours**

The office is open for limited hours:  
10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Wednesdays and  
Fridays.  
Email to [office@uucmp.org](mailto:office@uucmp.org)

**Co-Ministers**

the Revs. Elaine and Axel Gehrman  
[minister@uucmp.org](mailto:minister@uucmp.org)

**Director of Religious Exploration**

Shannon Morrison  
[dre@uucmp.org](mailto:dre@uucmp.org)

**Church Administrator**

Amy Razzak  
831-624-7404 x 2105  
[admin@uucmp.org](mailto:admin@uucmp.org)

**Office Assistant**

Karina Briseno  
831-624-7404 x 2104  
[office@uucmp.org](mailto:office@uucmp.org)

**Music Director**

Jorge Torrez  
831-624-7404 x 2101  
[music@uucmp.org](mailto:music@uucmp.org)

**Pianists**

Lucy Faridany  
Kiefer Taylor  
Teruyo Petrocelli

**Caring Network**

[caringnetwork@uucmp.org](mailto:caringnetwork@uucmp.org)

**NUUsletter Editor**

Carol Collin  
[newsletter@uucmp.org](mailto:newsletter@uucmp.org)

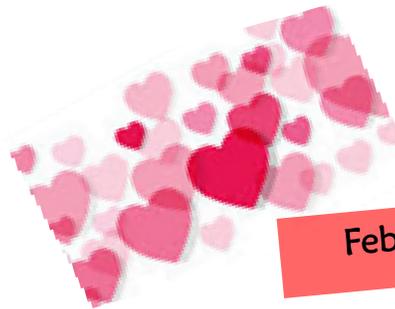
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