



# NUUSLETTER

of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula

Theme: Paying Attention

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

March 1, 2026

**“Our Mindful and Mindless Moments”**  
Rev. Axel Gehrman and Worship Associate  
Jon Czarnecki

Every minute of every day, it seems, news and social media, advertisement and entertainment industries - not to mention countless digital devices – are competing for our attention. According to economists, human attention is a scarce commodity – a pearl of great price – worth billions of dollars a year. Powerful forces seek to capture and control our attention. Ultimately, however, how we choose to pay attention is up to us.

March 8, 2026

**Remember set your clock forward one hour for Daylight Savings Time!**

**“Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.”**  
Rev. Elaine Gehrman and Worship Associate  
Christina Zaro

The poet Mary Oliver shares these three commands in her poem "Sometimes." This morning we will explore the challenges and rewards of these life-sustaining actions-- helpful suggestions for all of us throughout our lives.

March 15, 2026

**“Different Kinds of Attention”**  
Rev, Axel Gehrman and Worship Associate Allysson McDonald

As Unitarian Universalists, we celebrate the diversity of beliefs, cultures, and experiences among us. We say, “We embrace our differences and commonalities with love, curiosity, and respect.” This affirmation also extends to how our human brains are set up differently – our neurodiversity. Traits that in times past were considered deficits or disabilities, today are often better understood simply as differences – each deserving love, curiosity and respect.

## 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.

March 22, 2026

**“The Sacred in the Ordinary”**  
Rev. Elaine Gehrman and Worship Associate  
Ray Krise

Humans throughout history have divided life into the elevated or sacred, and the secular or mundane. Is this dichotomy useful, or even accurate, and how might we transcend these traditional artificial divides?

March 29, 2026

**“Paying Attention”**  
Worship Associates Bjorn Nilson and Be Astengo

Humans have the unique ability to be aware of being aware—sometimes known as “meta cognition.” We will explore this concept. Its origins through history, its development in the individual and how our increasing understanding may help escape the trap of what has come to be known as the dopamine nation. A society that has lost, some might say sold, its most valuable asset, the ability to pay attention.



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## Ministers' Message

Rev. Elaine Gehrman

These are challenging times, when the events in our larger world, and also in our personal lives, can feel very stressful and anxiety-producing.

Spiritual practices can help us cope with anxious times, by grounding us, and helping us find our center, our deeper principled self, our connection to the larger pulse of life. For some of us, we seem to naturally incline to certain spiritual practices, including meditation, prayer, yoga, tai chi, journaling, and more. And then there are some of us (myself included) who need some external prompting, and even a change of pace, to engage our spiritual selves to go deeper.

Over the past several years, I have subscribed each February to Sharon Salzberg's "Real Happiness Meditation Challenge" in which she sends a short meditation practice every morning for the four weeks of February. It's so easy; the lessons pop-up in my email in-box, and I just hit "play" and for about 5 minutes I am led by her soft soothing voice in a variety of meditations.

As I mentioned in a recent service, I also participate in the annual ritual of "#UU Lent Photo a Day Practice" – where a wonderful calendar is provided online with a different word for each day of lent, and the spiritual practice is to intentionally reflect on the daily word, carry the awareness throughout the day, and then capture a photo that represents the word for us. We then share our images on social media with the hashtag #UULent.

I also signed up this year to participate in a group spiritual direction, led by a UU seminary student who is studying to be a Spiritual Director. This group has focused on using tarot cards as spiritual practice, which was very new to me, but I have gotten a lot out of the group, and appreciate just having to show up and be guided to reflect on the various cards and their pos-

sible meanings and significance for my spiritual life.

And while it might seem a bit of a stretch, I even consider my weekly volunteer shift at the Monterey Bay Aquarium as a kind of spiritual practice—I just have to show up, and pay attention, and I get to marvel at the amazing variety of life-forms that live in the sea, and feel a connection to our larger universe of interdependent life.

I love that our Unitarian Universalist faith encourages us each to find what works for our own spiritual path, and I love that we can share our discoveries and opportunities with each other, to add to our collective pool of possibilities.

Whether you have a long-term committed spiritual practice, or if you are more of a smorgasbord spiritual practitioner like me, I encourage you to find what works for you, and make time for it, especially during these times of unrest and uncertainty. The universe is waiting for you to tap into it, and there are so many opportunities to find that live pulse and plug in, accessing the spiritual power we need to rise to the challenges of our lives.

See you in church,

*Elaine*



#UU Lent "Heart"



## Pacific Western Regional Assembly April 10 - 12

### REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

**2026 APRIL 10-12<sup>TH</sup>**

UU SOCIETY OF SACRAMENTO

"RISING RESILIENT"

We hope to see you online or in Sacramento for Pacific Western Regional Assembly 2026- *Rising Resilient*- April 10-12! This will be our first Regional Assembly as a fully integrated independent non-profit and we will celebrate with the Pacific Western Region of the UUA Board of Trustees. Volunteers and staff are working diligently to make this a wonderful, meaningful, and fun event for all. You will find in this email links to registration, housing, and program information. There will be good food, swag, community, excellent worship, and so much more!



All programming will be multiplatform and take into consideration all the time zones we serve. For example, the Saturday program will start midday so that our Hawai'i and Alaska siblings do not need to get up before dawn to join us online. We will have a youth track,

religious education opportunities for children, and nursery- families are welcome!

In these trying times, we need one another and we hope this will be a great opportunity for connection, hope, and resilience. We look forward to being with you in community in April!

For general information registration, housing and program details, please visit the Pacific Western Regional Assembly website, by [clicking here!](#)



### 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."

## Men's Breakfast

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

The men's monthly breakfast is continuing as hybrid. Our next meeting is Saturday, March 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 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 Wednesday, March 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, March 15, 12:45 - 1:45 p.m. in the Fireplace Room.

**Communications Committee** meets on Sunday, March 29, at 12:30 p.m., in the Conference Room.

**Environmental Justice** meets Sunday, March 8, 10:40 a.m. in the Fireplace Room.

**Friday Potluck dinner and Game Night** is Friday, March 6, potluck at 5:30 p.m., games at 7 p.m. See page 8.

**I-HELP for Men** is Sunday, March 8 and March 29, 5 p.m. Sign up on the Meal Train (page 13) or contact Greg Simmons. For March 29, contact Steve Smaby.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Stewardship** meets Wednesday, March 4, 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](mailto:music@uucmp.org)

# RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



## Paying Attention



“Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.” — Simone Weil

March invites us into the spiritual practice of *Paying Attention*, and our Religious Exploration program will spend the month exploring just how powerful our attention can be. When we slow down and notice more deeply—ourselves, one another, and the world around us—we discover new pathways to connection, compassion, and justice.

This month, our youth will explore five “Powers of Paying Attention”:

- Paying attention to our impact on others
- Paying attention to inequality
- Paying attention to the present moment
- Paying attention to our relationship with water
- Paying attention to the wisdom within

March also offers some wonderful calendar connections that help bring these themes to life. We’ll begin with *World Compliment Day*, inviting children to notice and name the good they see in others. We’ll then honor *International Women’s Day*, learning from inspiring Unitarian Universalists Emily Stowe and Lucy Stone. Later in the month, *World Water Day* will help us explore gratitude, stewardship, and our interdependence with water in playful and meaningful ways.

Our sessions also connect closely with core UU values. In particular, as we explore mindfulness and the power of the present moment, we’ll draw on Buddhist wisdom and reflect on our UU commitment to Equity—using our time, attention, and care to build inclusive communities where everyone belongs.

I’m also excited to share that we will begin *Our Whole Lives (OWL) for Grades K–1* this month. This eight-session, age-appropriate program supports children and families in learning about bodies, relationships, identity, and safety, with a required parent orientation and opportunities for continued conversations at home. Registration is required, with a suggested \$25 donation.

Finally, please note that our Committee on Family Ministry will meet on the third Sunday of the month—watch the weekly newsletter for details.

With warmth and gratitude,  
Shannon  
**Shannon Morrison (she/her)**  
Director of Religious Exploration

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

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

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

K1 OWL Classes will begin this Month  
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!

## Chalice Circles / Small Group Ministry

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 about 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 may choose to meet in person with the option to also attend via Zoom.

If you would like to learn more about Chalice Circles, please reach out to any of the contacts below, or email the ministers at [minister@uucmp.org](mailto:minister@uucmp.org). Also, when there is sufficient interest, new groups may be formed.

Currently we have three ongoing groups:

### **Second Monday Afternoon**

Second Mondays, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., in person

Contact: Kathleen Craig

### **Fourth Monday Evening – OMNIA**

Fourth Mondays, 6:45 p.m. – 8:45 p.m., via Zoom

Contact: Sharon Miller & Kerry Sisseem

### **Third Thursday Afternoon**

Third Thursdays, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., via Zoom

Contact: Rose & Mike Lovell



## Upcoming Hike Saturday, March 21, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Ford Ort National Monument Creekside Trailhead

The UU Hikers are going to the Fort Ord National Monument this month. It will be a moderate-level hike for about 2 hours through maritime chaparral and oak woodlands. Dogs on leash are welcome.

The Creekside Terrace Trailhead is just off Highway 68 near the intersection of Reservation Road and Portola Drive in Salinas. Turn onto Portola Drive and continue onto Creekside Terrace. Let's meet at 9 a.m. at the gate at the end of the road, between the two parking lots.



For more information or to RSVP, contact Carol LeVa at [leva.carol.a@gmail.com](mailto:leva.carol.a@gmail.com) Rain cancels.



## March Shared Plate Recipient

*Mujeres en Accion*

Mujeres en Acción – Women in Action is a ten-year-old non-profit that has built a powerful grassroots movement led by women transforming their communities from the ground up. Through leadership development, mutual support, capacity building, and weekly mentorship meetings, Mujeres en Acción offers a trusted space where women can raise their voices, heal from shared struggles, build collective solutions, and develop the skills and resources needed for economic mobility. The organization seeks to empower women to succeed in everything from obtaining a driver's license or earning a GED to becoming an entrepreneur or enrolling in higher education. Mujeres en Acción acts as a bridge where participants become leaders and changemakers – sitting at decision-making tables and creating opportunities for women and their families.

When women lead, communities thrive. Mujeres en Acción is rooted in Salinas but serves women and families throughout Monterey and Santa Cruz County. Its founder and executive director is Maria Elena Manzo. During her time in our area, she has helped to change the lives of thousands. Manzo has been involved in programs such as Esperanza Care, a public health insurance program for low-income undocumented immigrants, and VIDA, a community health worker initiative that aided vulnerable communities during the Covid-19 pandemic. She was also a key intermediary working with Joby Aviation to secure public funding to create 400 jobs in the region. Manzo is also a leader with COPA, an empowerment organization made up of faith communities of which UUCMP is part. Our support for Mujeres en Acción is an investment in dignity, equity, and long-term community transformation.



Please donate to this worthy cause.

## UUCMP Grief and Growth Circle

The seasons come around again----green grass, budding flowers, and spring holidays. This can be a time of hope, but it can also be a difficult time as we remember those no longer here to experience it with us. If you are dealing with loss, please join us as we keep alive the stories of our loved ones and share strategies and resources that have proven helpful. This month we meet from 10-11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 18, in the Fireplace Room at the UU Church. Those who wish will also go out to lunch on another date. Contact Sharon Miller at 831-601-0403 for more information.



## FUN AND FELLOWSHIP POTLUCK

Join us on March 6th for a night of fun, food, and fellowship! We will **gather at 5:46 p.m.** for a potluck dinner of Salads and Fruits/Desserts, eat from 6-6:54 p.m. and join group activities that begin at 7 p.m. Activity options planned include a “pop-up” chalice circle, a fun for all-ages creative project, and games. We expect to finish up by 8:30 p.m.

We hope that you’ll save the date and join us! Take this link to sign-up:

[Fun and Fellowship Potluck](#)



Families with children are welcome and are encouraged to attend! If you would like childcare while you attend an adult-only activity option please contact Shannon Morrison no later than March 1st. ([dre@uucmp.org](mailto:dre@uucmp.org))



For any questions, contact Kathleen Craig ([kathleen@craigdesignassociates.com](mailto:kathleen@craigdesignassociates.com))

## 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

2 services a month. This month, the choir will be singing for the 9:30am service on March 1st (not March 8, due to daylight savings) and March 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)



-- Jorge Torrez



## It's PLEDGE DRIVE time, 2026-2027!

Perhaps by the time you read this, some of you have been contacted by one of your fellow congregants from the Stewardship team. Check your email, text messages, and voice mail, and please respond! If you have not been contacted and would like to be, let us know. [stewardship@uucmp.org](mailto:stewardship@uucmp.org). Or if you have received a packet in the US mail, please take a look, before it disappears into that vast "miscellaneous" corner.

Why? Because we want to hear from you, each of you, so that UUCMP's next fiscal year planning will align with your interests and priorities, and with your continued support. Your Board wants to know what is working well for you, and what is not. We want to know what particular interests you may have that perhaps need greater attention. And finally, we humbly ask for your financial pledge for the coming fiscal year, which is always adjustable if unexpected circumstances arise.

Our annual congregational meeting is on Sunday, May 3, and the Board needs the month of April to respond to your feedback, including the pledge total, in order to present a responsible and meaningful budget for the membership to adopt at that meeting. The democratic process, as set forth in our Bylaws, gives us this important vehicle for keeping this beloved community on track.

Please make your pledge before March 31, in order to support this important work of the Board.

How? Easy. Just go here

<https://uucmp.breezechms.com/form/3d1e809431>

Or here:



No need to log in. Just fill out the form and submit.

Or ask for help, either from your steward or someone at the Stewardship Committee table in the Welcome Hall after each service. Paper forms are available! We aim to make it easy.

No matter how you choose to respond, please let us hear from you by March 31. Or contact the Stewardship Committee with any questions or concerns, [stewardship@uucmp.org](mailto:stewardship@uucmp.org) **"Celebrating love, with Room for all."** Thank you!

Your Stewardship Committee,

Steve Johnson, Carol Collin, Katie Hamilton, Gretchen Hausmann, Jo Ann Novoson, Rev. Axel Gehrman

## 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 March 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.

## Anti-racism Film Series – “Songs from the Hole”

Tuesday, March 3, 6:30 – 9 p.m. in the UUCMP Sanctuary



Sentenced to life in prison at 15, musician JJ'88 finds hope by writing songs during solitary confinement in this award-winning documentary visual album.

## Cook in the New Year! Men's I-HELP Program at UUCMP Next Meal March 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 March 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:

**March 8** Meal train Link: <https://mealtrain.com/7gn8m2>

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.

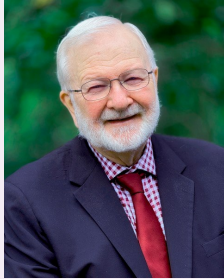
If you prefer to donate money, funds are used to purchase staples and some meal items.

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,

Recently I participated in a Unitarian Universalist “Wave Cohort,” a Zoom seminar led by Association facilitators on the topic of Worship. There were about thirty participants by Zoom from around the country and both small group and plenary conversations were employed.

What emerged was an energizing conversation about worship in the Unitarian Universalist tradition, with particular focus on the role of ritual. One of the most striking takeaways was the reminder that UU ritual is less about fixed forms and more about intentional practices that help us return to meaning, community, and shared purpose.

Participants named several dimensions of UU ritual life:

Ritual as grounding — the chalice lighting, moments of silence, music, and shared words that help us arrive fully in community.

Ritual as identity-shaping — practices like Water Communion, Flower Communion, child dedications, and covenanting that remind us of who we are and what we promise one another.

Ritual as adaptive and creative — unlike traditions with prescribed liturgies, UU ritual evolves in response to the needs of the moment, the season, and the community.

Ritual as communal meaning-making — our rituals work because we enact them together, not because they are handed down unchanged.

For me, this conversation affirmed that our worship life at UUCMP is strongest when we lean into ritual not as repetition for its own sake, but as a shared practice of connection, reflection, and renewal.

We are now fully engaged in our stewardship campaign, and its importance cannot be overstated. A successful campaign is essential to setting the 2026–27 fiscal year on a solid and sustainable footing.

I want to extend heartfelt thanks to everyone serving on the Stewardship Committee. Their dedication, creativity, and persistence make this work possible. I hope that each of us will consider how we can share our time, talent, and treasure to make UUCMP the beacon of love, hope, and justice which our society so greatly needs now and always.

As we look ahead, I believe the interplay of hope, resistance, and resilience must continue to shape our communal life. And these are not abstract ideas; they are practices we live together:

Hope as the discipline of imagining and building what is possible.

Resistance as the refusal to accept harm, injustice, or despair as inevitable.

Resilience as our capacity to return, recommit, and re-create community even in challenging times.

These qualities can guide us through the coming year as we deepen our mission and strengthen our congregation. As we move deeper into 2026, I am heartened by the strength, creativity, and generosity of this community. From our evolving worship life to our stewardship commitments, from our resilience in the face of change to our willingness to act in the face of adversity, UUCMP continues to embody a living, growing Unitarian Universalism. I look forward to our continued work together.

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

## UUCMP Spring Work Party

Yes, it is time to *mark your calendars* for Saturday, March 28, 9-11:30 a.m. for our *first UUCMP work party of the year*.

Spring brings new growth and new life to our church campus . . . as well as lots of grasses, weeds and thistles that need pulling or weed whacking before they get out of hand.

Genista will need to be pulled, our deck railings need scrubbing, mulch needs spreading, and leaves need clearing from the base of the buildings.

Inside the building we will sort and organize items in the kitchen and Welcome Hall closet. And there are a number of places that can be improved and refreshed by a little paint.



As we get closer to the date, I'm sure we will have thought of more tasks that we can tackle together. As several sermons have stressed recently, *we are stronger when we work together! And we have more fun too!*

Please save the date now: Saturday, March 28, from 9-11:30 a.m.

Please note the end time change due to the nationwide **No Kings** protests scheduled for March 28.

(Of course, if you ever have the urge to pull some weeds, feel free to stop by the church at your convenience anytime!)

Gratefully,  
Lauren Keenan, Building & Grounds

## T-Shirt Distribution



**BIG SUR**  
INTERNATIONAL MARATHON

It's now time to sign up for distributing t-shirts at the Expo before the annual Big Sur Marathon. We need to cover a few more shifts on April 24 and 25. All of the work will be at the Monterey Conference Center, co-located with the Portola Hotel at Del Monte and Alvarado in Monterey. UUCMP has volunteered to distribute shirts for several years, and receives a nice donation from BSIM for doing so.

Please sign up at [Click here to become a volunteer with BSIM](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Judkins or Carol Collin.

## Solar Beats Out Coal in Texas

Sure, coal had a comeback in 2025. But the year also marked the first time Texas got more power from solar than from the increasingly expensive fossil fuel.

By [Dan McCarthy](#) 16 January 2026

Texas just hit a huge milestone: It got more electricity from solar than it did from coal last year, a first for the second-biggest state in the country.

That's a big shift from a few years prior. Back in 2020, the Texas grid got just 2% of its electricity from solar power and 18% from coal, according to the

Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), which operates the grid for the vast majority of the state. In 2025, nearly 14% of ERCOT's electricity came from solar — and just under 13% was produced by burning coal.

Texas, long a leader on wind energy, has been building solar at a blistering pace in recent years. It's now the state with the most utility-scale solar capacity, beating out longtime champion California for the top spot.

It makes sense that solar has taken off in Texas. Two things it has in spades are sunshine and land, and ERCOT's competitive markets and fast interconnection processes are appealing to solar developers. In recent years, the state's solar boom helped create one of the nation's hottest markets for grid batteries, which in turn has strengthened the business case for installing even more solar.

Meanwhile, coal has been declining in Texas for more than a decade, knocked off balance first by a combination of fracked gas and cheap wind power. Overall, however, fossil fuels still produce the majority of Texas's electricity. The state got 54% of its power last year from coal and gas, with the latter fuel serving as Texas' biggest source of electricity by a long shot.

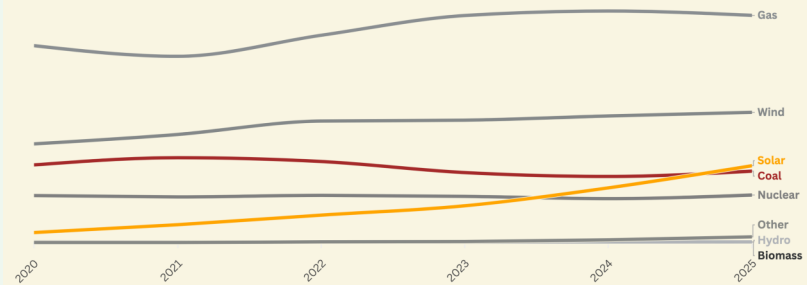
It's worth noting that solar beat out coal in what was a comeback year for the fossil fuel, in Texas and beyond. After two years of declines, coal generation jumped by 8% in Texas in 2025. But because solar grew so fast — by a staggering 41% last year — the clean-energy source eclipsed coal anyway.

Not everyone in Texas is happy about the rising tide of solar.

Some state Republicans have tried and failed, several times now, to limit the growth of clean energy. Instead, they'd like to see the construction of natural gas plants to meet the state's surging electricity demand. But Texas faces the same reality as the rest of the country: Solar and storage are simply too cheap and easy to deny.

**Solar beats out coal on the Texas grid**

Energy generation, in gigawatt-hours



Source: Electric Reliability Council of Texas • Chart by Canary Media

Made with Flourish - Create a chart

## Vegetarian Recipe

### Roasted Delicata Squash with Maple Syrup and Thyme

The skin of this squash is entirely edible, though you may find it preferable to eat the tender insides. Figure about a half squash per person, although smaller appetites may do with a quarter of a squash.

Prep Time 5 minutes

Cook Time 40 minutes

Total Time 45 minutes

Servings 6      Calories 100 kcal

Author Katie Morford

#### Ingredients

3 whole delicata squash

1 1/2 tablespoons butter (or olive oil for a vegan version)

1 1/2 tablespoons pure maple syrup

Salt and pepper to taste

6 sprigs fresh thyme or 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme



#### Instructions

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees

Wash the squash. Use a large, sharp knife to slice off the stems. Cut the squash in half lengthwise. Use a spoon to scoop out the seeds and string. Discard. Set the squash cut-side-up on a baking sheet.

Put a dab of butter in the center of each squash. Drizzle the maple syrup into the cavity of each one.

Sprinkle salt and freshly ground black pepper over the flesh of the squash. Set a small sprig of thyme or sprinkle the dried thyme in each half.

Bake until the squash is very tender when pierced with the tip of a knife. The time will vary depending on the size of the squash, but will range from 35 to 45 minutes.

Remove from the oven and serve.

I have cooked this many times. This is what I do differently.

I don't measure anything. Pierce squash all over with a long tine fork. Microwave for about 2 - 4 minutes depending on how large it is. When cool enough to handle, cut in half lengthwise. Then put foil under squash. Do not cut off ends - the syrup falls out. Make sure squash cannot turn over and spill contents. Cover loosely with foil. Halfway through cooking, take foil off top and brush the cut ends of squash with olive oil or melted butter. Bake the rest of the way with no cover.

They call this a side dish but it is great as a main course with a salad or other green vegetable.

-- Lynda Sayre

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