



Mt Diablo UU Beacon

Transforming Ourselves and Our World

Volume 73, No. 7

July/August 2026

SUNDAY SERVICE TIME — 10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY MEDITATION — 9:00 A.M. ON ZOOM

ALL SERVICES ARE LIVESTREAMED!

- <https://mduuc.org/service-stream/>
- [https://youtube.com/](https://youtube.com/@MDUUC) — @MDUUC

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR PODCAST!

Search for “MDUUC Beacon Light” on Spotify

JOIN US ON BLUE SKY — @mduuc.bsky.social

SUNDAY, JULY 5

Tending the Flame: Join us this July 5th as your MDUUC worship team invites you into a service not of celebration or condemnation, but of tending the fragile, living flame of hope and freedom that has always burned at the margins of our country's story. Through music, movement, and the words of those who dreamed of a more just world, we will grieve together, hope together, and leave carrying the light forward.

SUNDAY, JULY 12

A Theology of Small Things: “We cannot all do great things, but we can all do small things with great love.” Join Aiden McMahon this Sunday as we reflect on the power of small and simple acts of care.

SUNDAY, JULY 19

The Wholehearted Life. We are born entirely dependent upon the love and care of others. As we grow, we learn to take care of ourselves, but our need for meaningful human connection never leaves us. At times we may struggle to make and maintain those connections, and wonder how others manage it. Join Rev. Bonnie Dlott for an exploration of what it might take to live healthy “Wholehearted” lives, rich with authenticity, emotional intimacy, and meaning. With guest minister Bonnie Dlott whose roots are with MDUUC!

SUNDAY, JULY 26

Youth Service. Young adulthood is often filled with change, uncertainty, and meaningful first experiences that shape who we become. Join our DRE, Marena McGregor, for this special Young Adult-led worship service as we explore the sacredness of our “firsts.” These are the moments that challenge us, transform us, and invite us to grow. Together, we'll reflect on how change is a universal part of the human journey and how our community can honor one another through life's transitions.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2 - CHURCH HIATUS

This year's Staff Hiatus is from Monday, July 27 through Sunday, August 2. This means that there will be **NO SERVICE** on Sunday, August 2 and during which the campus is closed.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9

Reclaiming Passion. Feeling discouraged or burned out? In challenging times, what we need most is renewed passion and hope. Join us for this special service led by Guest Minister Rev. Millie Phillips as we explore how reclaiming our passion can inspire positive change in our lives and communities.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

Pray. Move. Grow. Our faith traditions are rooted in the principles of discerning new truths and a life long commitment to grow. That combined with the ever-possible hope of redemption means that each day can bring new spiritual practices. Join Rev. Leslie Takahashi for this reflection on them miracle of everyday hope.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

The Spiritual Necessity of Banishing Shame. Some might believe that is impossible to lead an entirely shameless life. This service emphasizes the urgency of removing shame from our narratives and proposes the possibility of a world where we can see both others and ourselves through the lens of consummate acceptance. Join Casey Gardner for this service, followed by a signing for her new book of poems.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30

Hospitality as Healing. In a time of strife and division, how do we direct our lives towards connection, exploration and that special form of creativity which grows out of dissolution. Rev. Leslie Takahashi will lead this service.

Vespers & Community Summer Schedule

VESPERS, 5PM, Sanctuary and Zoom. Join us for this brief mid-week gathering focused on recentering and calming with a theme in mind. This is also a good place to hold your grief at what is happening in the world.

- **July 8,** “What Does Love Mean to Me?”
- **August 26,** “How Do We Reconnect?”

COMMUNITY DINNER, 6PM, Bortin Hall.

Next dates: July 8, August 26

All are welcome to join this simple meal with conversation. Please register online to help us honor a headcount for preparation. <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/category/82674>

\$10 suggested donation to help cover costs, but please give what you are able to, and it's completely optional—it should never be a barrier to attending.

MINISTERS' CONVERSATIONS *Returns on August 26

Join us for a free-ranging conversation about what it means to honor our values in ways that are steady and changeable, time-honored and wholly new. We will use discussion, ritual, story, and shared experiences to remind ourselves of key skills for these times.

Leslie's Logos "Trusting Our Own Hearts"



At our annual meeting, as we were discussing witnessing for our transgender kin, Rev. Ron Ahnen noted that this work is part of our hospitality and that comment has stayed with me. I think it is very true in this time when remembering one another's humanity is becoming more counter-cultural.

As I write this, I am concluding the second day of the pilgrimage from Crystal City to Dilley, Texas which kicks off a summer of action for the National Coalition to End Family Detention and the #FreeFamilies campaign. This particular witness travels from the site of the Crystal City incarceration center where Japanese-Americans were held in World War II to Dilley, Texas which is the best known of the many sites where immigrant families and children are being held today. Travelling with us is a group of survivor elders who tell the stories of how dehumanized they felt and, as I listen to them, I understand in a visceral way, how this kind of trauma endures.

We heard the stories of who we humanize and who we don't last night as we were entertained by the first Universal Church of San Antonio. Their hospitality was a welcome boost to our hearts—meeting so many Texans of good heart and strong resolve who wish for a different world. It makes me realize how vital our everyday work is to just create places where people can just experience being a person treated like a person.

What comes to me in this last column of this program year is to say thank you to all of you for all the ways you have showed up for the years that I have been able to be your minister and to be grateful to you for all the gifts of hospitality I have witnessed you extend. This is a community with a very particular gift for hospitality which I expect will unfold in new and different ways in the years to come.

And that hospitality will be a true gift.

We are in a different kind of time where we understand that what it will take to change what we want to change, is not a single action, a single letter, writing campaign, or even massive voting registration, though all of these are important. What will change what is us now, is a process that allows us to see other human beings again. Our Universalist faith calls us into that ever-present possibility of redemption just as our Unitarian faith asks us ever to be engaged in the process of self-examination and growth.

As I walked in the heat today, I am thinking that the door to that redemption is through the gates of hospitality. So for all of you who have extended a greeting, welcome someone, allow yourself to be welcomed, shared your gifts with the community—thank you!

In faith and perseverance,

Leslie

Rev. Leslie Takahashi serves as MDUUC's Lead Minister. She will be on leave through August 8.

Marena McGregor, DRE



As summer unfolds around us, I am reminded that faith formation does not take a vacation. While our schedules may slow down, the opportunities for wonder, connection, and spiritual growth are all around us.

In Unitarian Universalism, we believe that learning happens everywhere, not only in classrooms and church buildings, but also in gardens, parks, family conversations, road trips, and quiet moments of reflection. Summer invites us to notice the sacred in everyday life: the warmth of the sun, the laughter of children, the beauty of a shared meal, and the kindness of neighbors helping one another.

This season, I encourage families to make space for simple spiritual practices. Consider sharing joys and concerns around the dinner table, taking a gratitude walk, lighting a chalice before a family gathering, or spending a few moments each day noticing something beautiful. These small rituals help us stay grounded in our values and connected to one another.

One of the joys of congregational life is the opportunity to celebrate the many stages of our spiritual journeys. I am especially excited to invite you to our Young Adult-themed worship service on Sunday, July 26. This service will highlight the voices, experiences, questions, and wisdom of young adults in our community as they navigate a time of exploration, growth, and possibility. Whether you are a young adult yourself, know and love a young adult, or simply want to support this important ministry, I hope you will join us.

Following the service, young adults are invited to stay for a Young Adult Lunch to build connections, share stories, and strengthen community in a relaxed and welcoming setting.

As we look ahead to the coming church year, I am filled with gratitude for the many volunteers, teachers, youth advisors, and caregivers who make our religious education program possible. Your generosity of time, energy, and spirit helps create a community where children and youth can ask big questions, explore their beliefs, and discover their place in the world.

I hope you find opportunities this summer to rest, renew, and reconnect with what nourishes your spirit. May this season bring joy, curiosity, and moments of wonder for you and those you love.

Sincerely—Marena

Marena serves as the Director of Religious Education and is best reached at marena@mduuc.org

SUMMER PASTORAL CARE COVERAGE

While Rev. Leslie Takahashi is on her summer break, we still care about what is going on with you. If you are in need of personal support, please reach out to Travis MacPhee at travis@mduuc.org or call the office. Please also check the schedule as the meeting times of some of our support groups are a little different in the summer.

Join Us!

Come share a beverage, coffee-expansive, and some good conversation with members of the MDUUC community who live near you!



COFFEE & CONVERSATIONS

In August and September, we will return to our beloved tradition of neighborhood gatherings. Do you have an idea you'd love to check out with other MDUUCers? Do you want to meet more of your neighbors? Just want to connect with others in a pleasant and casual situation, consider joining us. If you have not already, check to see if you are part of the network in your geographic location.

- **Rossmoor - Peacock Plaza.** 10 a.m., Tuesday, August 11
1001 Golden Rain Rd, Rossmoor
- **Lafayette - Peet's Coffee,** 10 a.m., Wednesday, August 12
3518 Mount Diablo Blvd, #E, Lafayette
- **Walnut Creek - La Scala,** 6 p.m. Thursday, August 13
1655 N Main St Unit 110, Walnut Creek
- **Pleasant Hill - Rooted Coffee,** 1 p.m., Wednesday, August 19
1941 Oak Park Blvd Ste 10, Pleasant Hill
- **Pittsburg - Steeltown Coffee and Tea,** 1 pm, Thursday,
August 20 695 Railroad Ave, Pittsburg
- **Walnut Creek - The Heritage Downtown,** TBD.
1785 Shuey Ave, Walnut Creek

SUMMER COVERAGE

If these times teach us anything, it is that taking breaks sustains our ability to continue doing our good work. To that end, Rev. Leslie Takahashi will be on vacation and study leave through August 8, and Rev. Rodney Lemery will be away from Monday, July 20 through Saturday, August 22.

Our church campus will be closed during the Staff Hiatus week, from Monday, July 27 through Sunday, August 2. This means there will be no Sunday service on August 2.

Our main number will always be monitored, so please feel free to call 925-934-3135, extension 0.

GRIEF & TRANSITIONS GATHERING NOW ON SATURDAYS

Please join us for this space at its new time and date. Starting in August, we will now be meeting at 11 am on the third Saturday in person and in the Fireside Room. The next date is August 15.

Celebrating Eric Chapot

In the next few weeks, we will bid farewell to Eric Chapot who has served as our facilities coordinator since 2022. Please take a moment to sign the card for Eric which will be in the Bortin Hall during July.

JUSTICE SUNDAY - SAVE THE DATES

We welcome you to save these dates that we have planned for the year! Visit our website for immediate actions that you can take. Visit <https://mduuc.org/living-our-values/>

- **July 12, Viewing of "Assembly" with Q&A after with the creators**
- **September 13, Power, People, and the Beloved Community.** Join us for lunch and a multigenerational conversation about where power lives in our communities and how grassroots organizing, media literacy, and collective action help us reclaim it. All ages welcome at the table.
- **October 11, Your Vote, Your Voice.** Come share a meal with us and our partners from the League of Women Voters as we explore what voting means, why it matters, and how all of us, whatever our age, are part of the democratic story.
- **November 8, When the People We Love Say Harmful Things.** Pull up a chair for lunch and an honest, warm conversation about staying in relationship with family and community when bias shows up in the people closest to us. This one is for every generation in the room.
- **December 13, Appreciation or Appropriation?** Join us for lunch and dig into the difference between honoring a culture and taking from it, a timely conversation as holiday traditions swirl around us. Bring your questions and your whole self.
- **January 10, Breakfast Bags for Trinity.** Come roll up your sleeves and share a meal with us as we build breakfast bags together for our neighbors at Trinity. Good work, good food, and good company for all ages.
- **February 14, Colonialism Then and Now.** Join us for lunch and a multigenerational exploration of how colonialism still shapes the world we live in, and what it might actually look like to begin decolonizing our lives and communities together.
- **March 14, Turning Hard Feelings into Fuel.** Come eat with us and spend some time together naming the grief, anger, and fear that justice work stirs up, and practicing how to let those feelings move us forward rather than stop us. Embodied, real, and open to all ages.
- **April 11, Allies and Accomplices.** Join us for lunch and ask together across generations what it really means to show up for someone else's liberation without making it about ourselves. A conversation worth having at every age.
- **May 9, Black Liberation and UU Faith.** Come share a meal and explore together the history and theology of Black liberation, and why centering Black lives is not a detour from Unitarian Universalist faith but the very heart of it.
- **June 13, Kindness, Accountability, and Beloved Community.** Join us for lunch and a closing conversation about how care and accountability work together to build communities where everyone truly belongs. A good way to end the year together.

Help Keep The Community Pantry Stocked During Summer Months

*Please bring donations in to Bortin Kitchen



A Message From Your Board of Trustees

Hello, MDUUC Community!

First of all, thank you so much for your participation in the June Congregational meeting. We easily made quorum, moved through a very full agenda, including some spirited discussion, and successfully passed three important votes:

- We welcomed a new slate of members to the Board of Trustees, Legacy Committee and Nominating Committee.
- We approved our 2026-2027 Budget
- We approved to consider changing the church name.

In the year ahead, the Board will identify a process, likely a Task Force, to research the process - from the legal logistics, to the cost, to the actual identification of possible new names, all of which will be presented to the congregation throughout the process. Stay tuned for further discussion re: this process – in the monthly Forums and other church-wide communications. Ultimately “yes” or “no” will require a vote at a future Congregational meeting.

We began hearing support from members of the congregation to create a Public Witness supporting our transgender community. We will present more on this as members of the Justice Council begin to discuss this process.

It was a very full meeting and your Board fully appreciates the participation of everyone – in person and online.

In June, we also celebrated our youth in our wonderful bridging ceremony, our annual flower ceremony and extended a big welcome to those who have joined this community in the last year. Six new members joined that same day!

Where do we go from here? We are in a time of great upheaval and disregard for many of our civil rights. Being a part of a community that shows up for the rights of others, the humanity of those in our community who are being harmed, is who we are. There is regular messaging from our ministers, our religious education, through our music, that calls us to do what we can to serve and support those within our community and beyond. We have a robust Justice posting weekly, with opportunities as to how can we show up. There is something for everyone.

Lastly, please join us in expressing appreciation as we say goodbye to those Board members who are finishing their service at this time: Andrew Oswald, Kevin Hsieh, Jim Lincoln and Elizabeth Dietsch.

In Faith and Appreciation,

Linda Russell, President
2025-2026 MDUUC Board of Trustees



Community Circles

Summer Community Circles

Our Community Circles have been and continue to be a beloved piece of our small group ministry, designed to explore topics in community and build relationships. If you are a new member, or perhaps a longstanding member, looking for ways to develop a meaningful connection to our faith tradition and other members of the church, Community Circles are for you. For more information, or to join a circle, use the link below or visit <https://mduuc.org/connect/community-circle>

- Rossmoor Thursday Community Circle
Starting July 23 through August 27, from 10–noon
Register here: <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1251041>
- Wednesdays at MDUUC - Children's Chapel
Starting August 5 through September 9, from 1–3PM
Register Here: <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1250949>
- Thursday Men's/Male Identified Group - Children's Chapel
Starting August 6 through September 10, from 10–noon
Register Here: <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1250960>
- Fridays at MDUUC - Children's Chapel
Starting August 7 through September 11, from 10–noon
Register Here: <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1251034>
- Sundays at MDUUC - Oak Room
Starting August 9 through September 27, from 12:30–2PM (Skipping 8/16 and 9/6)
Register Here: <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1251046>
- Tuesdays at MDUUC - Oak Room
Starting August 11 through September 15, from 7–9PM
Register Here: <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1250824>
- Virtual Tuesdays - Zoom ([Link](#))
Starting August 25 through September 22, from 6–7PM
Register here: <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1250794>

Help With the Mary Felon Shower!

Mary Felon was instrumental in making our shower program happen. As Rev. Rodney shared, the shower not only makes ours a better site for the Winter Nights program, it also lets us offer showers to people throughout the week.

If you are interested in helping out, contact Rev. Rodney.

We could especially use a few more folks to wash towels and contribute shampoo, conditioner and liquid soap.

We're Opening a MDUUC Merch Shop!

The MDUUC Church Merch Store is opening soon! Show your pride, support our community, and be part of something meaningful. Every purchase helps fuel our mission—join us in this joyful fundraiser and wear your spirit with love!

**SAVE THE DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 10 AT 7PM
CHOIR CONCERT FEATURING JIM SCOTT**

A Mindful Nature Gathering: Connecting in Uncertain Times

July 11, 2026 from 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Meet at the Redwood Area near Bortin Hall

Register online: <https://registrations.planningcenteronline.com/signups/3686685>

Many of us are carrying a persistent heaviness right now. It can be hard to know what to do with all that is unfolding in the world. Beneath much of what feels frightening or destabilizing is a deeper thread of disconnection from one another, from our inner steadiness, and from the living Earth that holds us.

While this moment certainly calls to action, it also invites us to root in connection.

This 90-minute gathering offers space to:

- Connect inwardly through gentle mindful awareness of what is present for you
- Connect with one another through simple, facilitated sharing
- Connect with nature as both refuge and partner – receiving support from Nature and anchoring to our roles in supporting its many forms

Join us for this free community offering facilitated by Travis MacPhee and Jenny Hernandez. Together we will practice an ancient and deeply human response to uncertain times: slowing down, coming into relationship, and tending what is here so we may move forward more grounded, connected and whole.

All are welcome. Accessibility and inclusion will be prioritized. Please disclose any accessibility needs with your registration. Feel free to reach out to Travis@mduuc.org with further questions.



Curious About Choir?

Join the Choir Retreat with
Potluck on Saturday, August 29
from 10am - 3pm

All are welcome!
No experience is necessary.

EMAIL CHOIRSING@MDUUC.ORG TO RSVP

History Committee

Our history committee has been on a hiatus since the pandemic. Are you interested in learning more about the particular history of this congregation? Or some of our longest serving members? Do you like organizing materials? Please let Rev. Leslie know! (You can email her and if you don't hear back then just reach out another way!).

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative Practices

In these challenging times, finding peace and mindfulness is more important than ever as is remembering the inner resources we have which we can develop to anchor ourselves.

- Virtual AM Meditation, Aug. 21, Sept. 4 & 18 at 8:30 a.m. Start your day with calm and clarity. Join Rev. Leslie online for a short, 30-minute session to ease into your day.
- Saturday Weekly Mindfulness Meditation, join online or in the Fireside room at 9:00 a.m. (*Not meeting on Aug. 1*)
- Sunday Virtual Meditation, 9:00 a.m. Email yoga@mduuc.org to be added on to the mailing list.
- Virtual Meditations - Visit [HERE](#) for recordings.

These sessions allow you to connect with yourself and our community, whether you're new to meditation or have been practicing for years.

Mindfulness Reboost on Saturday Mornings

Did you know that our mindfulness group is still going strong? And that you can join in person in the Fireside Room or online weekly on Saturdays at 9 a.m.? This is a great chance to connect with a dedicated group who make a priority of being mindful. The link to join online can be found on our calendar. All are welcome to join regardless of experience. Join the group to receive reminders. (*Not meeting on Aug. 1*)

Call For Pastoral Visitors

Pastoral visitors are amazing people who commit to be in one-to-one listening relationships with people who can use a little bit of support. Rev. Leslie is recruiting additional visitors and if you have an interest, please flag her down and let her know! Please email Rev. Leslie Takahashi at leslie@mduuc.org.

Summer Is A Great Time For Support

Did you know that MDUUC offers many ways to seek support when you are going through some of those life-challenge moments? Consider joining us for:

- Grief and Transitions Group. Now Third Saturdays at 11 starting this month.
- Caregivers Support. A group for those involved in the heart filled and exhausting work of care-giving. Upcoming meeting dates are July 11 and September 5 at 11 a.m., online.
- 12 Steps for UUS. A way to get started in the 12 steps that honors that UUs often have diverse ideas of what constitutes a "higher power."
- Health and Hope. First Saturdays at 1 p.m. A group for those living with difficult diagnoses.

Could you use a one-on-one pastoral listener? We also have an amazing group of Pastoral Visitors. Please call or speak to Rev. Leslie if this support would be valuable to you.

Community Concert Series

The Community Concert Series (formerly Devil Mountain Coffee House) offers an opportunity to experience great music in a warm and informal setting. Our performers present a rich variety of musical genres: mostly acoustic, mostly original, but always wonderful. Visit ccs.mduuc.org for upcoming shows.

MDUUC Art Gallery - Solar Resist Art Featuring John Hopper



John works in oils, acrylics and watercolors. Born in Seattle, John has won scholarships and awards for his painting and has been exhibited at Seattle Art Museum, Frederick & Nelson's, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, PA and numerous private galleries. Locally he has exhibited at Lafayette Studios, John Muir Hospital, Lafayette Art & Wine,

and AC5 - Art Passages, The Body Gallery in San Francisco, Art in the Yard, MDUUC Gallery, and Walnut Creek Library. John is an active member of California Watercolor Association (CWA), American Watercolor Society (AWS), Rossmoor Art Association (RAA) and Lamorinda Art Alliance (LAA). He teaches "Watercolor just for the FUN of it" in Rossmoor and on the QM2 and Queen Elizabeth for Cunard Lines.

John's website is www.jw-hopper.com

Don't have art but have ideas for exhibits —let us know. Contact our Art Committee Chairs at artleadership@mduuc.org.



Need some inspiration? Have you been participating in work to support our immigrant neighbors, especially those with children? Are you interested in learning more about what is being done to help end family separation, deportation and detention? Are you in need of a way to have your spirit uplifted by song and connection? If so, please join the weekly Free Families Fridays gatherings which you can register for [here](#). This weekly gathering is designed to boost your spirits as well as connect you with other activists concerned about these efforts.

Paper Doll Campaign of #FreeFamilies Download the Toolkit - [HERE](#)

Join in contacting our representatives to ask them to end the practices of family detention, separation and deportation. A toolkit is available with a template, background info, and a phone script for calling your representative. Have a friend or relative in another state who might also participate? Download the toolkit provided by the Kairos Center and share with others (includes printable paperdoll template) and take action —[Download Here!](#)

REDUCE ELDER FRAUD WITH DROP Protect Your Data!

SIGNUP for the Delete Request and Opt-out Platform (DROP), a free tool Californians can use to help protect their privacy. The California Privacy Protection Agency (CalPrivacy) created DROP to give Californians a simple, free way to tell data brokers to delete and stop selling their personal information.

With DROP, Californians submit one request to hundreds of data brokers at once. Using DROP can help reduce spam calls and emails, lower exposure to scams, and decrease the risk of identity theft or data misuse. Data brokers often collect, repackage, and sell large amounts of personal information – like Social Security numbers, precise location, browsing history, and past purchases. They can even make and sell assumptions about your health, finances, or political views, often behind the scenes without you ever knowing.

Starting August 1, 2026, Data brokers are required by law to start processing DROP requests. Since DROP is operated by CalPrivacy, they can enforce against data brokers who violate the law. Submitting a DROP request is secure, simple, and fast – the average request takes five minutes or less and can have a big impact on your privacy.

To be eligible to submit a deletion request in DROP, you must be a California resident. For more information, verify your eligibility at <https://privacy.ca.gov/drop/how-DROP-works/#step1>

To get started, users can follow these 3 simple steps on <https://privacy.ca.gov/drop/>.

Step 1. Verify your eligibility

Confirm that you are a California resident. Verify using one of our trusted partners.



Step 2. Create your profile

Give basic information about yourself. You choose how much you provide.



3. Submit your DROP request

DROP lets you send a single request to over 500 [registered data brokers](#).



Side With Love

Side With Love is the Organizing Strategy Team of the Unitarian Universalist Association. They harness the power of love to confront and transform systems of oppression and build a world where all people can thrive. Through organizing, education, and mobilization, they equip Unitarian Universalists and aligned communities to take spiritually grounded, justice-oriented action. [Subscribe to get updates.](#)

Visit Side With Love for resources on their website at <https://sidewithlove.org/actioncenter>

HATS OFF!

Honors, Accolades, and Thanks!

- To Nancyj Moran and Marianne Kessler for years of flowers
- To GA volunteers and Linda Russell's leadership
- To GA delegates: Holly Ito, Kate Newkirk, Jim Lincoln, Linda Russell, Mark David Watanabe, Mary Schreiber, Meg Richardson, Errol Reyes, Mark Chase, Randy Stansberry, Rev. Ron Ahnen, and Rev. Ranwa Hammamy
- To all who have participated public witnesses this year
- To all who have helped at the Annual Pride event in Concord
- To all who have helped with washing our tablecloths
- To all who have washed our towels and stocked toiletries for the shower program
- To all who have donated to the community pantry
- To Mora Mattingly for assistance in the office
- To cash counters: Sharon Solstice and Jo Gelinias
- To: Tom Taylor for painting the outside chains and posts
- To Karl and Betsy Livengood for painting the signs in the Redwood Grove
- To Jaynese Davis, Laura Ransom, Bill Wostenburg, Susie Symons, Peggy Kroll for assisting with Harvey Segal's memorial
- To Sharon Solstice and Peggy Kroll for organizing Rev. Ron Ahnen's ordination
- Thanks to Diane Lovitt and David Eppley for their log leadership of our Pastoral Visitors program.
- To Chris Brecheen, Don Green, Laura Ransom, Lynn Scoby and Phoenix Dover for their work in the Internship Committee

We encourage gratitude and appreciation throughout MDUUC. Send "short and sweet" admissions to thanks@mduuc.org

Help Send A Special Send-off for Aiden!

As Aiden McMahan's time as our intern minister draws to an end, he will continue to be with us for a few more weeks in a limited summer ministry role. Join us as we gather in gratitude for the many ways he has enriched our community. Through his steady presence and generous spirit, he has helped sustain our weekly immigration vigils, contributed meaningfully to Sunday services, nurtured our youth, and strengthened the bonds that hold our community together.



As part of our tradition, we're collecting contributions to celebrate and thank our intern for their hard work and time with us. If you'd like to participate, please feel free to make a donation through the donation button found on our website and select "2026 Intern Gift" or use this link, <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/giving/to/2026-intern-gift>

Thank you for sending a special send-off Aiden!

Just In Time Volunteering

Here are a few simple ways you can help to welcome all

- The **#Free Families Coalition** is organizing a summer of action to end the detention of immigrant children and families. If you are interested in helping MDUUC get involved in local actions, contact leslie@mduuc.org.
- **Be a Driver!** Give a ride to those who otherwise cannot come, especially to the Annual Meeting on June 7. We'll connect you with someone in your area.
- **Help Make Coffee.** Help keep the conversation flowing after services.
- **Help Support Our Shower Program.** Could you take home a load of towels and return them back within a week? Or donate shampoo and other toiletries?
- **Drive some hazardous waste to the local facility.** We could use help with disposing waste that our regular pickup does not take, which includes certain light bulbs, paint and small appliances. Please contact admin@mduuc.org to help.
- **Baked Good Donations.** We could use baked goods and snacks for Barbara Sugrue's Celebration of Life.
- **Be an Usher!** We regularly need ushers on Sundays and could also use ushers for memorial services.
- **Provide Tech Support.** Church Center is our online and smartphone portal for MDUUC. We could use your help to connect to one another, give online, and organize our volunteer service at church.

Gifts of time power our amazing community. Opportunities to volunteer are also listed on the Friday Weekly Email. If you can give community, email justintime@mduuc.org

Not Getting Our Emails?

- Check your spam folder and mark "Not Spam"
- Save these MDUUC emails into your contacts
 - no-reply@planningcenteronline.com
 - publications@mduuc.org
 - mailer@churchcenteronline.com

Celebration of Life for Barbara Sugrue

Saturday, August 15 at 2 p.m. | Sanctuary & Livestream

Visit the guestbook here:

<https://mduuc.org/barbara-sugrue/>

Reception to follow in Bortin Hall.

If you could donate baked goods or desserts for this memorial, please let us know at justintime@mduuc.org

Celebration of Life for Carol Bertaut

Saturday, August 22 at 11 a.m. | Sanctuary & Livestream

Visit the guestbook here:

<https://mduuc.org/carol-bertaut/>

Reception to follow in Bortin Hall.

MDUUC Ashes and Memorial Plaques

If you wish to have your ashes or that of your loved ones, scattered at MDUUC, please contact Rev. Leslie Takahashi. The congregation recognizing the need for a dignified memorial for these individuals whose cremated remains are interred or scattered in the Memorial Garden has established a memorial wall located on the exterior west wall of the Scaff building. Please email leslie@mduuc.org for more information.

Living Our Values: Actions You Can Take

The potential for justice exists in all spaces we cultivate together, including the virtual ones! Visit our web-page to participate in Justice efforts at our local, state, and national levels. This is a great way to live out our UU values, especially when we want to remain safely distanced and engaged. Visit: <https://mduuc.org/living-our-values/>

Tuesday Interfaith Vigils at Concord Immigration Court

Join Revs. Rodney, Ranwa, Leslie, and others as we provide the ministry of presence for folks lined up to enter the immigration court in Concord.

*MDUUC ministers will be present from 7:30–9:30 a.m., with the exception of holidays when courts are closed. You are invited to sign up to let us know you are joining. Our interfaith partners will remain on-site until noon. Steps to stay connected for vigils:

1. Register to join and help us coordinate - [HERE](#)
2. Sign up for specific Dates/Times [HERE](#)

Help Report ICE Sightings

No account required and with real-time reports.
Report here: <https://juntosseguros.com/>

Join Contra Costa County's Signal Network

Signal is the most secure way to communicate about upcoming meetings, trainings, and actions. Bay Resistance asks that we each sign up for Signal, a key tool for organizers in cities like Portland and Minneapolis. Use this link to join our CoCo Pod Signal chat: <https://signal.group/#CjQKIEs2U2Tujbtl2h9uLOPPi-7FEai-aTxJvqDHLlaQkGONEhBSeDW4e-w5A2qjR2-xSG6G>



Let's Try to Certify as a Good Trouble Congregation!

The late Congressman John Lewis reminded us, "When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something." In that spirit, the UUA are proud to continue the Good Trouble Congregations program. This initiative invites congregations to faithfully stretch their organizing and take bold action that not only makes a meaningful impact in the election, but also strengthens their long-term capacity for justice work.

2026 Good Trouble Congregations Criteria

This year, the Good Trouble recognition will be given to congregations that reach a certain number of goals in each of the 3 core areas.

- Voter Engagement
- Community Safety & Defense
- Community Building & Mobilizations

Learn more here and email Rev. Rodney (rodney@mduuc.org) if you want to help lead this congregation into good trouble!!!

Want To Put Your Values Into Action?



In May, MDUUC hosted a virtual meeting featuring two organizations doing vital work for our neighbors: The Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity and FAME's CIPN program and the new SAFE Center. If you're looking for meaningful ways to give your time, this is a good place to start. Review Rev. Rodney's Thursday Justice Email for the link to the recording.

Thursday Virtual Homelessness 101 Events Contra Costa Health - Register to Join

Join us for an engaging and informative session designed for anyone curious about homelessness in Contra Costa. Whether you're a concerned community member, have ideas for service programs, or are seeking services yourself, this presentation is for you!

Highlights:

- Key data and trends on homelessness
- Overview of available services
- Community response initiatives
- Opportunities for involvement
- Interactive Q&A session

Presenter: Jaime Jenett, MPH. Have questions? Please email contracostacoc@cchealth.org.

Please choose only one meeting to attend:

- Virtual Evening Sessions, July 16, or Oct 15 [\[register here\]](#)
- Virtual Daytime Sessions, Aug 20, or Nov 19 [\[register here\]](#)



**SHARE EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE
WITH ONE ANOTHER**

The threat of addiction is higher during difficult times. Many among us struggle with the traditional theistic language of 12 step programs and find it a great entry or a good supplement to engage with a UU specific approach to the 12 steps.

Join us on Wednesdays from noon-1p.m. online on Zoom.

The link to join is available on the calendar.

Blood Drive: July 7 & 21 You Have The Freedom to Give and the Power to Save Lives

Make a lifesaving difference for patients while celebrating the flavors and fun of summer. Current promotions are:

- Donate between July 1-8 and receive a free t-shirt Click on this link to win a t-shirt
- Donate between July 9–August 8 for a chance to win a car Learn more at vitalant.org/CarGiveaway

Schedule your appointment online at donors.vitalant.org



Mt Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church

MDUUC COULD BE YOUR SPIRITUAL HOME!

MDUUC Could Be Your Spiritual Home!

Imagine a faith community where doubt is welcome, questions inspire curiosity, and Love embraces every person who enters. This is what MDUUC strives to be.

As a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, MDUUC values exploration over conformity. Whether individuals come from Buddhist practice, Christian tradition, scientific inquiry, or no religious background at all, the congregation affirms that wisdom has many sources and each path enriches the whole.

Membership at MDUUC does not require specific beliefs; it asks for a commitment to community and social justice. Members gain the ability to vote in congregational decisions, serve in leadership roles, and represent the church at national gatherings. More importantly, membership strengthens shared purpose—especially at a time when religious freedom is under pressure nationwide. Joining a community like MDUUC becomes both an act of gratitude and a stand for progressive values.

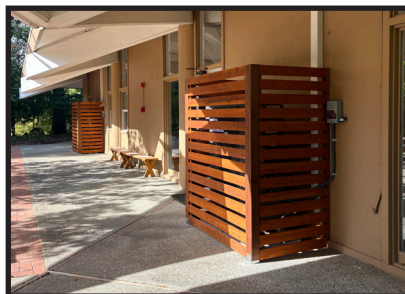
The congregation lives its principles through action as a form of spiritual practice: offering sanctuary to immigrant families, providing food and showers to unhoused neighbors, and advocating boldly for climate justice. All are invited to consider formally joining this collective effort toward a more compassionate future. Membership Sunday is held on the first Sunday of each month, when newcomers can hear members' stories and sign the congregation's historic membership book, in use since 1951.

The Gilmartin Building HVAC Is Installed!

Thank you to all who contributed to our Big Ask to help this long-awaited project is now a reality.

This installation represents an important step toward our larger goal of campus electrification, helping us create a more sustainable, energy-efficient, and environmentally responsible campus.

Thank you for making this achievement possible. Together, we are building a more welcoming, comfortable, and sustainable home for our congregation and for generations to come.



“The Werewolf Doesn’t Die in the End” Book Signing Event with Casey Gardner Sunday, August 23 (After Service)

Join Casey Gardner after Sunday Service for this book signing event. “The Werewolf Doesn’t Die in the End” is a poetic exploration of a life lived in pursuit of the unavoidable truth that sometimes there is a monster living inside of us that is hell-bent on destroying everything.

A sinister metaphor for the author’s battle with a too-late diagnosis and a devastating cycle of illness, the werewolf weaves through the pages of a story of confusion, helplessness, loss, grief, shame and at long last, a semblance of relief.

In this long-awaited poetry collection from C. Anne Gardner, *The Werewolf Doesn’t Die in the End* crawls out of the forest and strives to answer a lifetime of questions. What if we are destined to be more than just a burden? What if self-love can only come from the other side of an inescapable internal war? How have our systems failed us in the pursuit of healing?

And, if the werewolf doesn’t die... how can we survive it?

Poetry Writing Workshop with Casey Sunday, August 23 from 1–3 p.m.

Please RSVP to honor a headcount. Space is limited to 15.

Register here: <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1258894>

Casey Gardner has written and performed spoken word poetry for over 15 years. She has facilitated writing workshops for aspiring writers of all ages and levels, coached performance and public speaking, produced literary events, and taught both English and Creative Writing in educational settings. She has competed at National spoken word competitions, toured, curated anthologies, and had work featured in various publications... and she would love to share in this work with you! For a group of up to 15 participants, Casey will run a two-hour poetry writing workshop that is accessible to all comfort and experience levels. This workshop will focus on generative techniques and prompts as well as options to work on recitation, receive constructive feedback, or discussing how to build a larger writing community.

Exploring Whiteness Together September 24, 4th Wednesday, 7-8PM (Online)

Interested in having a non-judgmental space to unpack what whiteness means and how it is affecting our movement through this world? This is a sacred space for white-identifying members and friends to explore decentering whiteness (anti-racism/anti-oppression) to foster growth, empathy, and tools to dismantle systemic racism. Join on the calendar and [HERE](#).

Ongoing Programming

For the most accurate and up-to-date information on meeting times and dates, please refer to our calendar at <https://mduuc.org/mduuc-calendar/>. While the program descriptions provide a helpful overview of our ongoing offerings, the calendar is your go-to source for event locations, Zoom links, and registration details for events that require it. To stay informed about any changes or new opportunities, we also encourage you to join our mailing list.

Elder Journey

Elder Journey is a spirited conversation about life issues and the perspectives of older folks. Please join Rev. Leslie and the Elder Journey Community on Wednesdays from 10:30–11:30 a.m. The group meets weekly virtually and hybrid, in person at the Bortin Hall on the 2nd Wednesdays.

Vespers - Next Date: July 8 and August 26 at 5 p.m.

Vespers is a mid-week recharge for the spirit and a chance to connect to the community. This is a great place to check in with your spirit and some friendly community members. *Starting September, join on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 5 p.m.*

Ministers' Conversations - Next Date: August 26

Our ministers' conversations Join via Zoom or in-person on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, at 7 p.m., of the month.

Virtual Yoga

Mondays at 7:00 p.m. (virtual). The session begins with gentle integrated yoga asanas and stretches, breath work exercises, relaxation techniques, and opportunities to set neural pathways for happiness that include laughter yoga. A 20-minute guided relaxation meditation follows. Email yoga@mduuc.org to join the mailing list.

Tuesday and Thursday Virtual Lunch Groups

A friendly drop in virtual group that meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Friday AM Mini-Meditation Boost -

End your week with a guided meditation and an opportunity to state an intention for your self. Join Rev. Leslie on 1st and 3rd Fridays from 8:30–9:00 a.m. for this chance to destress and connect.

Saturday Mindfulness Meditation Group

Join us on most Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m., on campus and online. Email publications@mduuc.org to be added to the group list. **See calendar for dates. We will not meet on Aug. 1st.*

Sunday Virtual Mediation

Join Sharon Lawrence online on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Email yoga@mduuc.org to join the mailing list.

MDUUC Choir - Rehearsals resume in September

The MDUUC Choir is a chance to connect with others, deepen your faith, and be part of something truly special. Everyone is welcome to join, no auditions are required. Curious about Choir? Come to the Choir Retreat on August 29, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Let choirsing@mduuc.org know that you'll be coming.

**See calendar for all choir events and updates.*

Black, Indigenous and People of Color Caucus

3rd Saturdays at 4:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room and on Zoom. Members and friends of MDUUC who identify as people of color are invited to join this gathering where we will create a sacred space of sharing and power. We meet monthly with alternating times—please email leslie@mduuc.org to be apprised of our scheduled meeting times. *In August only, we will meet on August 15 at 5PM.*

Exploring Whiteness Together

4th Thursday starting September 24, from 7:00 p.m. on zoom. Members and friends who identify as white are invited to this gathering to create a sacred space where we can engage in what decentering whiteness means especially in a culture where whiteness is almost always the center. Through guided discussions and personal reflections, participants will explore their experiences with racism, learn about the impact of microaggressions and allyship, to develop actionable steps to become effective advocates for racial justice. Join us in this transformative journey to dismantle systemic racism and build a more inclusive community.

MDUUC Bike Group

The MDUUC Bike Group holds a ride on the third Saturday of each month—all levels of ability are welcome. We meet at the church at 10:00 a.m. and carpool or ride to our starting location. Contact Jim Hughell at bike@mduuc.org to join the email list to receive and communicate plans.

Open Women's Group - Next date: September 3, 10:30 a.m.

The group will resume meeting in September on the 1st Thursday of every month, online from 10:30 a.m. to noon. All are welcome. Email admin@mduuc.org to be added to our mailing list.

Wild and Wonderful Women's Spiritual Arts Group

2nd Wednesdays from 2–4 p.m. in the Owl room. MDUUC women to explore their spiritual lives through creative practices like writing, painting, movement, voice, ritual, and storytelling. Contact wild-and-wonderful@mduuc.org with questions or to join the group!

Men's Breakfast

2nd Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. in the Owl Room or on Zoom. This is a group for those who are male-identified to gather for conversation and to share life experiences.

YA, Young Adult Group at MDUUC

YA is comprised of adults ages 24–35. This group provides an opportunity for people to gather, meet and do fun things together.

Xillennial Group (Ages 30s–40s)

This group provides opportunities to connect and gather. *Please email xillennial-leads@mduuc.org to join the list.*

Community Garden Group

Do you have interest in gardening but don't have a space of your own? Want to be involved in growing fresh food for our neighbors experiencing food insecurity? Any excess food grown will be part of the Faith Without Walls program. *Contact garden@mduuc.org to find out more.*

Buildings and Grounds Work Party*

1st Saturday of the month, from 9 a.m.–noon. Join our to help beautify our campus while connecting with members and getting a few tasks done that cannot be done by one person alone! If you can, bring and share snacks to refuel! Contact admin@mduuc.org with questions. *Weather permitting. (We will resume this program in September.)

Wednesday Virtual 12 Step for UUs

Join virtually on Wednesdays at 12 p.m. as we share our experience, strength, and hope with one another. No matter what addiction you have, you are welcome to join us as we engage in recovery as Unitarian Universalists.

Grief Group / Transitions Group - Has moved to Saturday!

This is a monthly, drop-in group for those who have suffered a loss or for people undergoing life transitions to continue to gather support. This group works for people who are going through a change of relationship, retiring or other job status change, experiencing stress or those in the later stages of grief who are rebuilding and reassessing. Next date: Saturday, July 4 at noon. Please see the calendar for future dates and join Rev. Leslie for this monthly conversation.

Memory Matters Group

4th Saturdays at 3:00–4:00 p.m. in the Oak Room and on Zoom (hybrid). This friendly, drop-in group is for those experiencing loss of memory or new difficulties with familiar tasks to come together to share in memory strengthening exercises, experiences and for support.

Health and Hope Group

*1st Saturdays at 4 p.m. Health and Hope is a group for people who have a difficult diagnosis. Please consider joining Rev. Leslie if you could use a space to talk about the challenges of living with a life-altering condition.

Virtual Monthly Caregiver Support Group

Care-giving for a loved one can be challenging. Our drop-in virtual, monthly support group meets the 1st Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (For July only, we will meet on the 2nd Sat., July 11)

Parent Group

The Parent Group meets on the 1st Sundays from 12-1:30 pm. Childcare will be available.

Parents and Toddlers Group

The Parents and Toddlers Group meets on the 3rd Sundays from 9–10:30 am. Childcare will be available.

MSYG, Middle School Youth Group

MSYG meets on Sundays 12–1:30 pm.

YRUU, High School Youth Group

YRUU meets on Sundays, from 12:00–1:30 p.m.

Emerging Adults (Ages 18-24)

MDUUC's Emerging Adults supports each other as they navigate life transitions from post high school into adulthood. Whether it's a new skill, game night, or a delicious meal, the emerging adult group is the place to be!

Dances of Universal Peace - 4th Sundays

Join us for an interfaith, multi-cultural, spiritual practice with singing, moving, prayers to promote inner peace. Led by SierraLynne & Bill Wentz with friends.

No partner or experience needed. All abilities are welcome!
No dance circles in July or August.

Do You Have A Skill Or An Area Of Knowledge To Share?

One of the joys of MDUUC is to learn about the many talents people can offer. Learning together is also a great way to connect with new people. If you have an idea for an adult class you would like to offer, email Rev. Leslie Takahashi at leslie@mduuc.org and put "ADULT" in the email subject line.

Did You Know?

MDUUC has a space for scattering the cremains of beloved companion animals in the Robert De Vight Legacy Garden. If you would like to have a minister participate in helping you with the scattering, please contact Rev. Leslie Takahashi.

2026–2027 Board of Trustees

Mark Chase, President
Linda Russell, Vice-President
Patricia Craven, Co-Secretary
Tracy Murray, Co-Secretary
Chris Carter, Treasurer

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Andy Smith, Mary Kelly Persyn,
Richard Brown, Nancy Falk

Recorded Meditations Available Online

Visit our website for virtual meditations

<https://mduuc.org/virtual-meditation/>

Listen on Soundcloud! Search for "MDUUC"

<https://soundcloud.com/search?q=mduuc>

Also available on Spotify! Search for "Mt. Diablo Unitarian
Universalist Church" or "Beacon Light"

<https://open.spotify.com/show/4iQZnnkS3HIXBa94JRuMin>



Follow Us on BlueSky!

With all the recent attention to the nefarious activities of some of our social media platforms, you might want to be reminded that MDUUC is on Bluesky. You can follow us at [@mduuc.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/mduuc.org) and Rev. Leslie Takahashi [@leslietakahashi.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/leslietakahashi.bsky.social).

September Beacon Deadline

Wednesday, August 19 at 10:00 a.m.

Please send submissions to publications@mduuc.org.

All submissions are subject to editing for space and approval.



Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church
55 Eckley Lane
Walnut Creek CA 94596

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Website: <https://www.mduuc.org>

Bluesky: [mduuc.bsky.social](https://www.mduuc.org)
Podcast on Spotify - Beacon Light

SAVE THE DATE - SEPT 6 **WATER SERVICE** *Labor Day Weekend*

**SAVE & BRING YOUR WATER
FROM HOME OR YOUR
SUMMER TRAVELS!**



Save the Date and Join Us for The Annual Water Service and In-Gathering

Sunday, September 6 at 10:30 a.m.

Join in the Sanctuary or online.

Bring some water from your summer travels or from home that symbolizes a journey you took in body, mind or spirit this summer for a service designed to nourish your spirit and your sense of community.

This uniquely Unitarian Universalist ritual which came initially out of the women's movement celebrates the ways that we are each unique and yet also interconnected.

Water too much of a hassle to bring?
No worries, we will have some on hand.