



Mt Diablo UU Beacon

Transforming Ourselves and Our World

Volume 72, No. 8

September 2025

SERVICE TIME — 10:30 A.M.

9:00 A.M. SUNDAY MEDITATION — ON ZOOM

ALL SERVICES ARE LIVESTREAMED!

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

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR PODCAST!

Search for “MDUUC Beacon Light” on Spotify

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

When Nothing Works. Throughout the summer, we have become even more aware of threats to what is precious to us. Join Revs. Leslie Takahashi and Rodney Lemery as we remind ourselves of all the ways we can continue to be a place of memory and hope.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Being A Good Person in A Hateful World. Waking every day in a world not of your choosing? Wondering how to keep yourself centered on how you choose to be in the world? Join Rev. Leslie Takahashi for a reflection (and some practical tips.)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Reconciling Our Religious Past. Please join our new Ministerial Intern Aiden McMahon who will be preaching this Sunday! Join us as he reflects on the journey that brought him from an Evangelical upbringing to pursuing Unitarian Universalist ordination.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Making Our House A Home. Join us for an exciting housewarming party where all ages can explore our “spiritual home” together! Discover what makes MDUUC and Unitarian Universalism special compared to our Christian origins as we explore the heart and soul of our community. Plus, fuel up at our delicious bagel bar while you mingle, learn, and celebrate! Come hungry for bagels and curiosity about faith!

CONGREGATIONAL FORUMS

3rd Sundays of the Month at 12:30 p.m.

October 19, November 16, January 18, February 15,
March 15, *April 19 (to be determined)

The youth will be holding a lunch fundraiser following the before the Congregational Forum begins and could use food donations! A variety of homemade soups, breads, desserts and coffee-hour treats are welcomed. [Sign-up here!](#)

WEDNESDAY EVENING PROGRAMS

Join Rev. Leslie Takahashi, Jo Gelinas and others for this brief mid-week gathering focused on recentering and calming. Vespers services are held on the first and third Wednesdays and begin at 5 p.m. and are available through Zoom as well (see the calendar or the Church Center app for more information. This is also a good place to hold your grief at what is happening in the world.

VESPERS, at 5 p.m. in the Sanctuary and online

- September 3: How do we imagine a caring world?
- September 17: How do we imagine a world of possibility?

COMMUNITY DINNER, at 6 p.m. in Bortin Hall

Please register to help us honor a headcount. Click on the link below or visit the calendar online. A suggested donation of \$10 should not be a barrier from joining. All are welcome to join.

- September 3 - <https://registrations.planningcenteronline.com/signups/3112632>
- September 17 - <https://registrations.planningcenteronline.com/signups/3112782registrations/events/3112782>

*MINISTERS’ CONVERSATIONS at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary and online.

The Ministers’ Conversations will now only meet on the 1st Wednesday of the month.

Breath and Spirit - Remembering Our Inner Power! October 11, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

Join Rev. Leslie Takahashi, Jo Gelinas and others for this half day retreat which will allow us to remember the power of our own inner strength and resources. This is a wonderful gift to give to yourself.

If you have not attended before, try out this non-threatening, peaceful space for contemplation and connection with others seeking the gifts of the spirit.

Suggested donation \$20 (however this amount should not be a barrier for coming.) The donation can be made in person or online by choosing “One Time Gift” from the Give Form <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/giving>

Register online at: mduuc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3011864

Leslie's Logos

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.
—Martin Niemöller

Not a poem, this confessional reflection, written by a Christian minister after the horrors of the Holocaust had been revealed has been echoing in many of our heads in 2025. I've heard it all my life, or at least I can't remember a time when I have not known these words. And even as a young child, I wondered what I would do as an adult if faced with the world or the rights of others were being brutally violated.

And now, I live in that world.

This is what I believe with all my heart: that there are many ways to be part of resisting what is happening in our country. That each of these ways matter, and that everyone must find their own path through these traumatic times. I also believe that we can continue to imagine the world that will emerge after these times which, just as with the post-Covid world will be forever changed. I feel scared and sad about the lives affected by what is happening—and glad that some of the skills I am sure we will need is firm commitment to our values, resilient joy, solidarity and a true ethic of mutuality and interdependence. I so look forward to these focuses for our community.

Over the years, I have seen a version of these words on so many refrigerators and so many homes of people of faith. Now we need to make them more than a phrase. Now we need to make them commitment exercised day-to-day.

In faith and resilience,



Leslie

Rev. Leslie Takahashi serves as the Lead Minister for the congregation and is best reached by the church phone or leslie@mduuc.org.

Schedule an appointment with Rev. Leslie at <https://calendly.com/revleslie-meet>



Marena McGregor, DRE

Greetings!

Welcome to a new year of spiritual exploration! We are excited to welcome families, children, youth, and adults into a season of spiritual exploration, growth, and connection. At the heart of our community is the belief that learning, playing, and wondering together nourishes our spirits and helps us live out our Unitarian Universalist values of love, justice, and compassion.

This year, we are thrilled to offer a wide variety of programs for all ages on Sundays and beyond:

Nursery Care – Loving and safe care for our youngest community members so that parents and caregivers can fully participate in worship.

Religious Education Classes (Preschool – 1st Grade & 2nd- 5th Grade) – Each Sunday, children will explore UU values through interactive activities, stories, and spiritual play, discovering what it means to bring love to the center of their lives.

Middle School Youth Group – Meets Sundays during service, offering space for middle schoolers to build friendships, dive into big questions, and explore their spirituality in fun and meaningful ways. Join us for some epic field trips!

High School Youth Group – Meets Sundays after service, creating a vibrant and supportive space where teens can connect, grow as leaders, and put their faith into action.

Family Music Program – Families will gather to sing, play, and celebrate music as a form of spiritual practice and joyful community-building.

Young Adult Groups – A place for those in their 20s and 30s to explore spirituality, share life's journey, and find connection with peers.

Parent Groups – Supportive gatherings where parents can share experiences, deepen their spiritual lives, and connect with one another.

Our Whole Lives (OWL) Programs –

2nd–4th graders: Starting in September, offering age-appropriate lessons in human sexuality, self-worth, respect, and healthy relationships.

7th–9th graders: Beginning in January, providing a comprehensive and values-centered sexuality education program.

We look forward to a year filled with curiosity, creativity, and joy as we journey together. Join us this fall as we embark on another year of love, learning, and spiritual growth—together.

Sincerely,

Marena

marena@mduuc.org



Scan the QR Code to join the Parent Group or visit:

<https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/groups/families-and-religious-education/re-families>





A Message From Your Board of Trustees

**Greetings, MDUUC Community,
and welcome to the start of the 2025-2026 church year!**

We hope you have had some fun this summer, some rest and respite. We know some have gone on big trips outside the country and others may have been able to chill close to home. Many of you were part of the summer Community Circles - much gratitude to those who facilitated and those who participated in our ongoing programming - along with those who continue to show up for the many of the activities of witness and solidarity, addressing some of the challenging situations that are impacting our neighbors and our nation. We have also welcomed many new people through our doors over these last couple of months. People seeking support, refuge from the political angst, families wanting value-centered education for their children. Please make a point to introduce yourself to a newcomer, welcome them into community and ask, "what would you like to find here?"

We must give a huge shout out for our food pantry, as one of the many ways we can lean in and support others in our community. The pantry is just inside the doors to the kitchen (from Bortin Hall). Please accept the invitation to take what you need -no questions asked. And please accept the invitation to contribute as you are able. If you are not sure what to bring, look at the shelves and see what is there but there is also a description in the weekly mailer that Rev. Rodney sends out. This is one of the ways we can provide true support in real time to those who need it.

We are sad to say goodbye to former Intern Minister, Rose Riedel. We will miss her warm smile, her calm presence and her many teachings, from the pulpit to meditations, and how to support the unhoused community, through the sandwich builds. She has been such a vibrant member of the MDUUC community. We hope you have been able to engage with Rose in her time here. We wish her and her family a safe travel, crossing the country, to begin her ministry in a UU church in northern Michigan.

As we say goodbye to Rose, we are excited to welcome our 2025- 2026 intern minister, Aiden McMahon, who will be starting with us on September 1. Our ability to continue to have intern ministers, at a time when many are not interested in parish ministry, is made possible through the generosity of our dear late member, Sonja Christopher, and the quality of mentorship offered by Rev. Leslie and Rev. Rodney. Please extend a warm welcome to Aiden as he moves into this new role.

In Faith and Gratitude,

Linda Russell

President, MDUUC Board of Trustees

Welcome Aiden, Intern Minister!!

We are delighted to welcome Aiden McMahon as our new intern minister beginning September 2nd. Aiden brings a strong theological foundation to our community, having earned his Master of Divinity from Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta in Spring 2023. His journey from a small town in Southern New Hampshire through the Northeast and South has prepared him for this exciting opportunity to explore Unitarian Universalism on the West Coast. Aiden's academic focus on pastoral care, Queer Theology, and liberative interpretations of sacred texts aligns beautifully with our congregation's values and commitment to justice. When he's not engaged in ministry, you might find him strategizing over board games, experimenting with new recipes in the kitchen, or immersed in a fantasy novel. His appreciation for the thoughtful artistry of Wes Anderson and Hayao Miyazaki films, along with his passion for Star Trek, reflects a spirit that values both creativity and exploration—qualities that will enrich our community life at MDUUC through June 30th 2026.



SAVE THE DATE! BID-4-LOVE SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8 AT 4PM

This is our biggest annual fundraiser. Over the next few weeks, you will receive more information on how you can contribute items, events, teaching, trips, or something else that you would like to offer. If you have questions, please feel free to ask a Board member, a member of the ministerial staff, Church Administrator Jen Marsh or member and former Board Treasurer, Sharon Solstice. This event is not only a lovely evening with entertainment and fellowship, it is a fun way to make money for the church.

Membership Matters

Have you been thinking about joining? Been around for a bit visiting and wondering what the next steps might be? Interested in participating and having a voice in some of the exciting developments going on? The first Sunday of each month, we offer an opportunity for people to sign the membership book—this is a simple act which captures your desire to shape the future of this congregation.

Look for Rev. Leslie Takahashi or a board member outside the Sanctuary doors at 11:30 a.m. or 15 minutes after service ends on Sunday, September 7.

Getting to Know UU - September 7

Join this quarterly, hybrid conversation held on September 7 from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m., in the Sanctuary and online that helps answer questions about who we are and what we care about. Come learn more about what we believe. [Register here](#) or via the calendar. Snacks will be provided.

MOVIES THAT MATTER

Film & Discussion Event Every 4th Sunday!

Upcoming Date: Sunday, Sept. 28 @12:30pm
Children's Chapel

In September, we will be watching two videos:

Lead Me Home. Nominated for best documentary short subject Academy Award, this 2021 documentary takes us through the state of emergency of homelessness in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Seattle.

Unseen Americans – 2025. 600,000 unhoused folks in the streets of the US every night. "What's happening is not a crisis of character, but of systems failing." This documentary brings us the narratives of those who are often not seen as we go about our daily lives.

Join in the Children's Chapel every 4th Sunday, from 12:30-3:00 pm. Bring your lunch or a snack, and join us to watch and discuss the films. *

Please note that we will be skipping October.

Buildings and Grounds Work Party Saturday, Sept. 6 from 9 a.m.–noon.

Join our work parties on the 1st Saturday of each month from 9 a.m.–noon to help beautify our campus while connecting with members and getting a few tasks done that cannot be done by one person alone!

All are welcome to join! A variety of tasks are available, scheduled with priorities and weather in mind!

Bring your work gloves, some snacks to share and refuel, email admin@mduuc.org and join us for an hour, or two, or for the whole duration!

Pastoral Visitors

Pastoral visitors assist our ministers with pastoral care in two capacities. First, they are matched one-on-one with members who could use a listening ear. And second, they provide on-site listening support on Sunday mornings (yep, that is them behind the water column during the Offertory.) If you are a member and interested in serving in this capacity, please email Rev. Leslie Takahashi at leslie@mduuc.org.

- SECOND HOUR -

Centering Practices For Unsettled Times November 2 at 12:30pm, Sanctuary

Throughout the year, we will be offering periodic opportunities to delve deeper into critical issues. Our next Second Hour will be on November 2, at 12:30 p.m. Join in the Sanctuary or online. The link is available on the calendar.

In November, join Rev. Leslie Takahashi for "Second Hour: Centering Practices for Unsettled Times", to focus on ways we can honor our bodies in these stressful times. Simple and inclusive embodied practices will be used as well as a chance to reflect on the science of why this is so important in our times.



THANK YOU!

Thanks to
Pacific Playground
for their generous donation
of 3 new pieces of
playground equipment!



Coffee & Conversations

Here's a great time to share a beverage, coffee-expansive, and some good conversation. This is a chance to meet other members of the MDUUC community who live near you.

*Be sure to check our Friday Email, "This Week At MDUUC" and the calendar at mduuc.org for more opportunities and updates in the coming weeks!

- La Scala/Walnut Creek, Thursday, Sept.4 at 6:30 p.m.
- Peacock Plaza/Rossmoor, Thursday, Sept.11, at 10:30 a.m.
- One House Bakery/Benicia Friday, Sept. 12 at 10:30 a.m.
- Steeltown Coffee/Pittsburg Sunday, Sept. 21 at 2:30 p.m.

New Group: Wild & Wonderful Women Meeting: September 17 at 3pm, Owl Room

Join a new group for MDUUC women to explore their spiritual lives through creative practices like writing, painting, movement, voice, ritual, and storytelling. Each session begins with a ritual and focuses on engaging in spiritual practices rather than discussing them, with time for reflection at the end. Facilitated by Penny Hackett-Evans. The group will close after the second meeting to foster a safe and intimate space. Email wild-and-wonderful@mduuc.org with questions or to join the group!

Meets on the 3rd Wednesday, from 3–5 p.m. in the Owl Room.

Xillennial Camping Trip - September 27

Are you someone who considers themselves to be part of Gen X or a Millennial or just like hanging out with those who are? Do you like camping or hanging out with friends who are camping and then driving home to sleep in your soft, comfortable bed? If so, then join the Xillennial group on September 27 to camp at Anthony Chabot family campground. For more information or to sign up, please contact Beth and Emily at xillennial-leads@mduuc.org

—PS Kids and pets are welcome!

Also, the Xillennial Group has a lot of new campers who don't yet have stuff for car camping. Please contact Emily and Beth at xillennial-leads@mduuc.org if you have supplies you could lend them for the one night camping trip. Thanks!

Community Circle Groups

Fall Community Circle Groups will begin forming in October. Visit <https://mduuc.org/connect/community-circle/> to view all available sessions and to learn more!

Looking to deepen your connections? Our Community Circles are small, supportive groups that meet regularly to share, reflect, and grow in spirit. Whether you're new or a longtime member, there's a place for you.

*Each community circle lasts 6 weeks and space is limited! Click on the link to learn more or look for the table in Bortin Hall after Sunday Service to join.

- **Saturdays at MDUUC from 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.**
Starting October 4 and ending November 8
- **Fridays at MDUUC from 10:00 a.m. to noon.**
Starting October 10 and ending November 14
- **Wednesdays at MDUUC from 7:00–9:00 p.m.**
Starting October 15 and ending November 19
- **Thursdays at MDUUC from 1:00–3:00 p.m.**
Starting October 30 and ending December 11
(Please note there will not be a session on Nov. 27)

Virtual 12 Steps For UUs

Any time of stress can awaken addictive behavior and these coping strategies can become their own morass. 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. The link to join is available on the calendar.

Did you know?

MDUUC now has a space for scattering the remains 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.

Feeling Overwhelmed? Need To Recenter?

Did you know that we have virtual meditations on our website at <https://mduuc.org/virtual-meditation/>

Search for “Beacon Light” on Spotify or subscribe here:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/4iQZnnkS3HlXBa94JRuMin?si=808541c48b2b451f>

Friday Morning Meditations in September

Join Rev. Leslie for a simple half-hour of guided meditation, on Friday mornings from 8–8:30 a.m. on Zoom as a way to recenter yourself at the end of the week. We will not meet on Friday, September 26 and will return to this weekly gathering each Friday, starting in October. The link to join is on the calendar.

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.

- **Saturday Mindfulness Meditation, hybrid, at 9:00 a.m.**
- **Sunday Virtual Meditation, 9:00 a.m.**
Email yoga@mduuc.org to be added on to the mailing list.
- **Rituals of Restoration, 4th Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.**
These sessions allow you to connect with yourself and our community and is designed to help heal your spirit and are trauma-inclusive. Whether you're new to meditation or have been practicing for years.
- **Virtual Meditations** - Visit [HERE](#) for recordings.

JUSTICE MINISTRY AT MDUUC

Living Our Values: Actions You Can Take

The potential for justice exists in all spaces we cultivate together, including the virtual ones! You can visit our Living Our Values page to participate in a number of online petitions, email, phone calls, and text campaigns to further 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 here for more information,
<https://mduuc.org/living-our-values/>

Educate Yourself To Prepare For Trans Justice

Our faith has been a leader in religious advocacy for trans people and in light of attacks, we need to do more. Visit this document for comprehensive list and links to UU Actions & Resources to Support Trans Justice & Safety [tinyurl.com/UU-trans-action]. Here you'd find resources for:

- Organizations to Support/Follow
- Reputable & Worthy Sources of News on Trans Justice
- UU Resources
- Resources for Trans/Nonbinary UUs
- Resources for Understanding & Responding to Anti-Trans Legislation & Rhetoric
- General Resources on Trans Identity, Allyship, etc.

An Important Way To Get Involved

If you are looking for an important act that you can do to support immigrants in these VERY difficult times, this program is for you!!!

Do you LIKE supporting families? Will you HELP us welcome newly arrived immigrants and asylum seekers?

Learn about how you can reduce fear and offer safety, comfort, and clarity by providing a friendly face to help navigate the legal system in Contra Costa County and the Central Valley.

Join us in making a difference for our newcomer neighbors! For more information contact IM4HI Accompaniment Manager, Kelly Younger at kyounger@im4humanintegrity.org.

Are You A Federal Employee?

We are interested in setting up a supportive space for those among us who are federal employees. If you are interested in participating, please email Rev. Leslie at leslie@mduuc.org.

Report ICE Sightings

Help keep our community informed. Submit a report through the form, contributing to a more aware and prepared community. No account required and with real-time reports.

Report ICE Sightings here: <https://juntosseguros.com/>

Action Needed For Climate

The current administration is attempting to limit the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to regulate climate-warming pollution. They propose a repeal of the "[Endangerment Finding](#)"¹ which is the legal basis by which the EPA protects our health and regulates emissions from cars, and factories. ACTION IS NEEDED NOW as the public comment period for this proposal is open until Sep 15, 2025.

MDUUC's Climate Justice team recommends you:

Support trusted organizations like the [NRDC](#)² (National Resources Defense Council) and [Stand Up for Science](#)³. Joining a group can amplify our voices.

Write a letter to the EPA describing your opposition to this outrageous attack to our health and the health of our planet.

Tips for letter writing are [here](#)⁴.

The link to submit a letter is [here](#)⁵.

What group are you a part of that you can encourage to submit a letter? Healthcare, public safety, science? Input from groups may be the most powerful messages.

The Climate Justice team will be hosting informational tables in Bortin Hall.

Come by, we would love to chat and answer your questions.

Let's make a difference together!

Source:

1. Endangerment Finding: <http://bit.ly/3Vc7cem>
2. National Resources Defense Council NRDC: <https://www.nrdc.org/>
3. Stand Up For Science: <https://www.standupforscience.net/home>
4. Tips for letter writing: <http://bit.ly/47bManD>
5. Link to submit a <http://bit.ly/4mrvPjr>

Share The Plate, September 14 Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center

Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center exists to offer Contra Costa County residents a choice – a choice in how to view the world through peaceful eyes, to view Contra Costa County as part of the global family. Showing support for community programs allows the Center to work towards engendering new ways of thinking in every citizen. That choice includes how residents spend their time and money, and the picture of what peace looks like gets clearer as they take actions that reflect their resolve to be the change they want to see.

Your Vehicle Can Make A Difference

Do you have a reliable car that you no longer need? Instead of selling or trading it in, consider making a direct impact—Your generous donation can make a world of difference for individuals and families in need.

For more information, contact Rev. Leslie Takahashi.

Just In Time Volunteering

Mutual aid is how we will thrive. If you care about this community, consider dedicating some of your volunteer time. Contact justintime@mduuc.org with any questions or to signup!

Did you know you can sign-up on Church Center to volunteer as a driver?

- Visit the and choose the Signups icon, then choose Volunteering as your category. Or, click on:
- <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/3132297>

Sign Up to Make Coffee [HERE](#). Our coffee hour is a vital time for community. Our staff can really use help in this area. You can also send an email to sundaycoffee@mduuc.org

Sign Up To Help with Beautifying Our Campus.

On September 5, we will have an all church work party and will be trying to get our campus ready for the congregational year! With so many people coming to visit us, we want to keep that feeling of Sanctuary and you can help. To be added as an attendee, contact jenm@mduuc.org.

Help us keep all involved—Be part of our welcoming team-- can you help greet people? Answer questions?

- Offer rides to those who otherwise can't participate

Do you play an instrument? Like to lead songs?

Jyvonne Haskin our amazing new music director is rebuilding our database and we want to include your gifts.

Want to support our children and youth?

- Be an adult mentor for our middle schoolers
- Help buy supplies for classes
- Help with youth soup lunches —email marena@mduuc.org

Pastoral Visitors needed. Are you a good listener (or want to learn to be one?) In these times, we need more people to offer this valuable ministry. Please email Rev. Leslie Takahashi for an application at leslie@mduuc.org.

Are you nostalgic for actual money? If so, perhaps you can get your fix as part of our once a month cash counting team.

Gifts of time power our amazing community.
If you can give community, let us know by sending a message to justintime@mduuc.org.

Join Us On The Church Center App!

Join MDUUC in using Planning Center (PCO) to help our community stay connected and engaged. One of the most exciting features we're using is Groups—and you may already be part of one—and you have the capability of logging on to the app to join in more at your leisure.

PCO Groups make it easier than ever to stay in the loop with your MDUUC community. It's all about enhancing communication and creating more opportunities for connection between gatherings.

With Groups, you can:

- See all your group events in one place
- Get timely reminders for meetings
- RSVP with a single click
- Easily message your group members
- Chat on the go using the Church Center app

What If I Want to Stay Informed but Not Actively Participate?

That's totally okay! You're welcome to be as involved as you like. If you prefer to just receive updates without participating, that's perfectly fine. And if you decide a group isn't the right fit, just let us know and we'll remove you—no pressure at all.

What Kinds of Groups Are Available?

We are continuously adding more groups on to the app as the need arises for more opportunities for connection—many of which are listed on the inside back-page of this newsletter.

How Do I View or Join Groups?

It's easy! Just log in through the Church Center app or visit our MDUUC Church Center Groups page, <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/home>. Once signed in, visit the menu and select Groups. Here you'll see which ones you are part of in "My Groups" and when you scroll further you'll see "Find A Group" Look for the "request to join" button to get started.

What If I Have a Problem or Question?

Each group has a designated leader you can message directly. You can also reach out to us anytime at admin@mduuc.org—we're here to help!

Do I Need to Be a Member to Join?

Not at all! Many of our groups are open to friends and visitors. While some are specific (like RE parents), most are open to all. If you're unsure, just ask!

We hope you join us in using Planning Center to bring our community closer together. Dive in and discover new ways to connect with the vibrant MDUUC family!

Need to download the app?

<https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/setup>



MDUUC Has A Birthday This Year!

Are you interested in sharing congregational history? Do you want to be part of helping us celebrate and learn from our history over the next year? If so, please contact Rev. Leslie Takahashi at leslie@mduuc.org.

Save The Dates!

“Getting To Know UU” - September 7, 12:30-1:30 p.m. This quarterly, hybrid conversation helps answer questions about who we are, what we care about and learn more about what we believe. Stay tuned, dates will be announced soon. Have questions? Contact rodney@mduuc.org.

Learning Sundays! - September 28, February 15, and May 17.

Halloween Party - October 26, 12-2 p.m., Bortin Hall

Winter Nights - March 23 through April 6. *We need volunteers!* Besides the funds the MDUUC contributes to support the program, over a hundred of our members take part each year by making and serving breakfasts and dinners, leading activities for the children, and cleaning, installing, and taking down the equipment. Time, talent, and treasure are the ways we ask our members and friends to contribute to our community.

Celebration of Community (formerly Fellowship Event) - Saturday, March, 7 from 5-8pm.

50 Days of Commitment Kickoff - Saturday, April 18, 4 p.m.

Youth Service - Sunday, April 26.

Annual Meeting - Sunday, June 7

Flower Service - Sunday, June 7.

Bridging Ceremony - Sunday, June 14.

Bid-4-Love (Live Event) - Saturday, November 8.

In Memoriam

~

Celebration of Life for Darice Peruch

will be held in-person and online on
Saturday, September 13 at 2pm.

The link to the service can be found here:
https://www.youtube.com/live/k_boNBVx_Fo

The online guestbook can be found here:
<https://mduuc.org/darice-peruch>

We would be grateful for volunteers to help with the services.
Your presence and support mean so much.
Please contact just-in-time@mduuc.org to volunteer.

- Faith Vigils at Concord - Tuesdays from 7:30 a.m. to noon

Sign up to 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 will be present every Tuesday from 7:30 am-12:00 pm! [Sign-up Here!](#)

Poor People's Campaign September 24, 5:30 p.m.

Are you feeling anxious, angry, helpless? Please join us online this Wednesday for a special meeting as we examine how to drive our movement forward in these unsettling times.

[Register here](#)

HATS OFF! Honors, Accolades, Thanks!

To Rose Reidel, our Intern and then Summer Minister! We will miss you and we wish you wonderful years of ministry ahead of you! Thank you for all you have brought to MDUUC!

From Rose Reidel to the garden volunteers: Cyn Coulouthros, Sharon Solstice, Matthew Brown, Marianna Tubman and Bruce Pennington. And to Cyn for her work on the garden near Bortin Hall.

To the members of the Nominating Committee for successfully completing their work and presenting an excellent slate of nominees. The Nom-Com members were Rose Barreto, Jaynese Davis, Catherine Der, Gabriel Escobar, Casey Gardner, Elsie Mills, Joe Schellenberg, and Mary Beth Spencer.

To Rami Bazargannia for hosting the “Single Use Planet” film and discussion.

To Marianna Tubman for hosting “What’s Fair Trade? An Equal Exchange Presentation.”

To Kathryn Wellington for her work on the playground project.

To Doug Tamo for dealing with the back flow (water issue).

To Kevin Hsieh and Steve Hirsch for their contributions to RE as summer volunteers.

To Anne Bandy for leading and coordinating Sunday Coffee
For Chris Carter, Sharon Solstice and Elizabeth Dietsch for all of their hard work to resolve banking and account change issues.

For David Stanley for his patient tending of our compost bins and green waste.

For Bill Clark for his help with the annual task of closing our books for the last fiscal year.

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

COMMUNITY CONCERT SERIES

FEATURING: Spencer LaJoye and R.O. Shapiro

Friday September 19th at 8pm

- Tickets \$25. Sliding scale tickets available at the door AND [Event Brite](#)
- Doors will open at 7:30pm.
- Masks will be optional.
- Refreshments will be available.

ABOUT SPENCER LAJOYE

LaJoye is a coast-to-coast singer/songwriter with Midwest roots, a classically-trained violinist with a proclivity for Broadway vocals, and a student of Americana music with a theology degree hanging in their studio. They've been writing and touring their own autobiographical folk/pop music for over a decade, but their viral 2021 anthem "Plowshare Prayer" secured them a permanent place in hearts and households across the world, as well as a peculiar career as a veracious songsmith with an unshakeable pastoral presence. Charming and banter-heavy, Spencer's live performances at theaters, listening rooms, church sanctuaries, backyards, folk festivals, spiritual conferences, and queer clubs keep diverse audiences laughing one moment and weeping the next.

<https://www.spencerlajoye.com/>

<https://youtu.be/8bMZgXRn5yo>

ABOUT R.O. SHAPIRO

R.O. (Raphael Odell) Shapiro is a purveyor of original Americana music, carefully crafted and soulfully sung. He was born in Brooklyn, NY and grew up in Sag Harbor, an old whaling town at the very eastern end of Long Island. He started performing at an early age, first with dance and then musical theater, before picking up guitar at the end of high school. He attended Yale University, still focusing on theater, but spent a lot of his evenings singing with a cappella groups, a rock band, and a choral folk ensemble called Tangled Up In Blue, or TUIB. After graduating he moved to New York City to pursue acting, but also started picking up some small venue gigs. When he realized that he was more excited about playing dive bars than Broadway, he packed up and headed out west to California to team up with fellow TUIB alum, Jenner Fox, forming the band Odell Fox. They started touring almost immediately, cultivating an energetic and intimate live show experience that R.O. has continued to build upon as a solo artist. They moved to Austin, TX, where they released two records, the "Moon Shiner EP" in 2016, and "Thank You," in 2017. When the band parted ways at the end of 2017, R.O. stayed in Austin, gigging regularly in the hallowed venues of that world famous music scene. It was then he developed the full-band, electrified sound that you can hear on 2021's "King Electric Sessions," his first release since leaving Odell Fox. In recent years he has typically played solo, touring regularly in the Northeast, California, and Pacific Northwest including Alaska and Vancouver Island. R.O. has drawn comparisons to Ray LaMontagne, Josh Ritter, and Nathaniel Rateliff. He is a winner of the 2022 Kerrville Folk Festival New Folk songwriting contest, and recently recorded with producer/instrumentalist Phil Cook (Bon Iver, Hiss Golden Messenger.) He is currently based in Northern California, and always on the lookout for new communities and stages where he can share his authentic warmth and wit.

<https://roshapiro.com/home>

https://youtu.be/T9BunEW4Gd8?si=q19Q7Fr2F_0JzeDn

COMMUNITY CONCERT SERIES 2025/26



Visit CCS.MDUUC.org to see more upcoming shows.

Season Tickets Available For Sale Until September 19. Get ready for a great lineup this year.

[Get Your Season Tickets 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 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Elder Journey meets virtually and is hybrid (in person or virtual) on the 2nd Wednesdays.

Vespers

Vespers is a mid-week recharge for the spirit and a chance to connect to the community. You can join via Zoom or in-person on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, at 5 p.m., of the month. This is a great place to check in with your spirit and some friendly community members. **See cover for dates.*

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. **See calendar for dates.*

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.

Saturday Mindfulness Meditation Group

Join us on most Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m., on campus and online. Email Rose Riedel at rose@mduuc.org to be added to the group list. **See calendar for dates.*

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

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. **See calendar for dates.*

Joyfully Ourselves

This is a space for LGBTQIA+ identified individuals that meets virtually on the 3rd Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. Rev. Rodney, LGBTQ+ identified congregants and friends collectively explore some of the internalized great traits and some often problematic ones. We use social media, movies, and games to spend time together in solidarity and compassion with ourselves and others.

Unpacking Whiteness: A Journey Towards Anti-Racism*

4th Wednesday of every month 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.

Black, Indigenous and People of Color Caucus

3rd Saturdays at 4:00 p.m. in the Oak Room and on Zoom (hybrid). 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. Get in touch and learn more!

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.

Hybrid Book Group (Rossmoor)

All are welcome to join the monthly book group. Meets on the 4th Saturday, in Rossmoor homes and virtual, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Contact Yvonne Strejcek at bookclub@mduuc.org to join.

Open Women's Group

1st Thursday of every month from 10:30 a.m. to noon. We will meet on September 4, online. Please email admin@mduuc.org to be added to our mailing list.

Wild and Wonderful Women's Spiritual Arts Group

3rd Wednesday of every month from 3–5 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 rose@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 and to be added to our contact list. *Weather permitting.

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

This is a monthly, drop-in group for those who have suffered a loss can continue to gather support. Join on the 1st Friday of the month from noon–1 p.m. available in-person and virtual.

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. When we face difficult and demanding declines in health, it can be hard to bear. Often we do not want to burden those around us and so we suffer alone. This is a space created for those who are living with a difficult diagnosis.

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.

Transitions Group

Join the group on the 3rd Saturday at 11 a.m. in-person and on Zoom. This is a drop-in, monthly conversation for members and friends who are experiencing a life transition such as a job change or loss, divorce or relationship change, or age-related disability and would benefit from an opportunity to discuss the challenges they face.

Did You Know?

MDUUC now 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.

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 gather to learn new life skills, make new connections, enjoy good company, nurture their spirits and have fun! This group 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!

Board of Trustees

Linda Russell, President

Andrew Oswald, Vice President

Mark Chase, Secretary

Elizabeth Dietsch, Treasurer

Trustees

Andy Smith, Kevin Hsieh, Jim Lincoln,

Mary Kelly Persyn, Patricia Craven

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.

October Beacon Deadline

Wednesday, September 17, 2025
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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Podcast: Spotify - Beacon Light



Defending The Holy
Sunday, September 7 at 4pm

**Located at: First Presbyterian Church -
2619 Broadway at 27th St., Oakland**

**Carpooling encouraged.
Scan the QR code to join the carpool.**

Mr. Nosie will be speaking about the battle of the San Carlos Band of the Apache to protect one of their most sacred sites which is now marked to become a copper mine. This is a critical issue of religious freedom.

Rev. Leslie Takahashi is on the organizing committee for the national tour of this important talk. This is the first stop.

To learn more of this direct attack on religious freedom, visit: <https://www.yahoo.com/news/articles/apache-stronghold-pushes-back-trumps-145910363.html>. Or, <https://www.apache-stronghold.com>

**Sunday, September 7
at 4PM in OAKLAND**
**First Presbyterian Church
2619 Broadway at 27th St.**



Carpooling is recommended!
**Scan the QR code to RSVP and
join the carpool!**