



Mt Diablo UU Beacon

Transforming Ourselves and Our World

Volume 73, No. 8

September 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/ — @MDUUC](https://youtube.com/@MDUUC)

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR PODCAST!
Search for “MDUUC Beacon Light” on Spotify
JOIN US ON BLUE SKY — @mduuc.bsky.social

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Gather the Spirit! On this Labor Day weekend, let's take some time to celebrate our connections within community. We will also participate in the water service ritual in which people bring water which reflects the meanderings their spirit has taken over the summer. If you have water from a particular location, bring it! If not, we will have some to symbolize your experiences. This is a chance to offer some spiritual sustenance to one another.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

What We Know, What We Don't Know and the Spirit of Sankofa. In this time of accelerated change, people have insight—and regret. This can also lead to a commitment to go forward in a new way. Join Rev. Leslie Takahashi for a reflection on the conversations she has been having with people about how we find acceptance and equanimity in these demanding times.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Keeping Your Balance in a Topsy Turvy World. Brené Brown's new book *Strong Ground* invites us to move beyond simply “not losing” and instead lean into strategies that help us truly thrive. How might these ideas shape the life and future of a religious community like Unitarian Universalism? Join Rev. Becky Leyser, community minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Livermore, as she guides us in exploring these insights and what they might mean for our shared spiritual journey.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Sanctuary: An Old Word for a Continuing Fight. Long before it was a hashtag or a legal strategy, sanctuary was a theological claim: some ground is set apart, and what happens on it matters. Given what our own community members and congregants are living out at the Concord courthouse most weeks, it seems worth asking where that word came from and what it's actually asking of us now. Join Rev. Rodney Lemery for a time of reflection and growth on just what is a sanctuary and how might we be called into it.

Wednesday Evening Programs Return *2nd and 4th Wednesday Evenings

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.

- On September 9, join Rev. Leslie Takahashi and others with the theme of “How do we cradle hope?”
- On September 23, join sabbatical minister, Rev. Becky Leyser and others for this gift of recentering.

COMMUNITY DINNER, 6PM, Bortin Hall.

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/109828>

\$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

At our first Ministers' Class for 2026-27, we had an engaged discussion of “When No Thing Works” by Norma Wong. This is a very provocative book talking about this time of accelerated change and how we might be able to imagine a future very different from what we have known before. We will finish our discussion of this text on September 10. *Limited copies are available to sign out on Sundays and it is available on most e-book platforms. Please join us for this discussion at 7 p.m. either in the Bortin Hall or on-line.

Quarterly Meditation Retreat
BREATH & SPIRIT
Saturday, September 12 | 9:30am-1pm
\$20 suggested donation
Visit the calendar for more info or scan to register



Our Breath and Spirit half-day spiritual retreat on Saturday, September 12 from 9:30–1pm, will focus on cultivating the resources of inner peace and joy. Understanding how we can bring resources to our own hearts is a vital way we can stay tenacious, persistent and engaged. Through meditation, reflection, song, chant and art, we will remind ourselves of the rich troves of inner strength we have within our own hearts and which can be a lifeline in these times.

If you have attended a retreat in the past, please regift yourself with the gifts of silence and contemplation and spiritual focus. 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.

<https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/registrations/signups/3712297>

Leslie's Logos "Trusting Our Own Hearts"



What a privilege it is to have several weeks of paid vacation. I am very aware of how many people, especially those who need it the most, do not enjoy this privilege. So when I came back in August, I appreciate those who say, "Oh you look so rested!" And this year, the truth was a little more complicated...

My time off in July did allow me to connect with the deepest sense of gratitude to share community with you as one of your ministers. The commitment, talents and dedication that members—and friends!—of this congregation share is not something to take for granted. During my summer wanderings, I kept coming back to this with awareness and intention. Even in this time, which Norma Wong describes as a time of "collective acceleration," something steady and good happens when this community connects.

So, for that reason—I am going on sabbatical, starting at the end of September. This is long overdue—I had a plan to take some sabbatical in 2020 (oops) and then a longer piece in 2021 and the delay has not been helpful. The nature of ministry, especially the demands which can result in long hours and uncertain schedules, requires a complete release and reset upon occasion. When I started in ministry, the best practice was to take sabbatical time every seven years—and now it is every four. The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations has a resource on sabbaticals here [<https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/sabbaticals-all>] which I invite you to read when you have a moment.

The current plan is to take some time in October and November, returning in time for the last Sunday of November and then to also take some additional time in the spring. What will I be doing Well, resting—and being me, also doing some deep dives into some learning, including on ministerial support for capital campaigns. More details will emerge as we get closer, however I am excited about the additional talented people whose gifts you will get to experience.

As I enter my 18th year of ministry with MDUUC, I am having that experience I had as a parent when I realized a child was coming of legal age. What?!? How can that be? And just as a parent needs to reexamine roles, I am excited about this ability to discern and learn and assess. An adventure before us all, and I look forward to its beginning.

In the meantime, I remain so grateful to be here and will be giving it my all.

With gratitude,

Leslie

Rev. Leslie Takahashi serves as MDUUC's Lead Minister and can be reached at leslie@mduuc.org

Marena McGregor, DRE



Greetings and Happy Autumn! I hope the new school year is off to a wonderful start for all of our children, youth, families, and educators.

We have lots of wonderful programs and opportunities planned for children, youth, and families this year. Be sure to check out our website for upcoming programs and events, and sign up for our email lists so you don't miss announcements and opportunities to participate.

One program we are especially excited to offer this fall is Our Whole Lives (OWL) for students in grades 4–6.

Growing up comes with lots of questions, and OWL provides a safe, caring, and developmentally appropriate place for children to explore them. This comprehensive program helps children develop the knowledge, values, and skills they need to understand and express their sexuality in holistic, life-enhancing ways. Through age-appropriate activities and conversations, participants will explore topics including values, body image, gender and sexual identity, peer pressure, communication, and healthy relationships. OWL is taught with sensitivity, inclusiveness, and respect for each child's individual experience.

Our fall OWL program begins with a parent information meeting on Sunday, September 13, from 12:00–1:30 PM, followed by sessions running through November 8. Families interested in participating should register online.

We are grateful to offer a program that gives young people a place to ask questions, learn about themselves and others, and build skills for healthy relationships as they grow.

Help Fuel Our Youth Group!

Our youth group is also getting ready for another great year of connection, community, fun, and meaningful conversation, and they need snacks! If you'd like to support our youth ministry, we are always grateful for donations of individually wrapped, non-perishable snacks for our coffee hour fundraising table. Granola bars, crackers, popcorn, fruit snacks, and other easy-to-share treats are always welcome.

We also welcome congregants who would like to sponsor or purchase a meal for a youth group gathering. Sharing a meal is one of the simplest ways we build community, and providing a meal is a wonderful way to support our youth.

Thank you for all the ways you support our children and young people. Whether you volunteer your time, bring a snack, share a meal, participate in a program, or simply show up and welcome our young people into the life of our congregation, you help make this a community where children and youth know that they belong.

Here's to a joyful new school year filled with curiosity, connection, growth, and plenty of new adventures!

Sincerely—Marena

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



A Message From Your Board of Trustees

Hello, MDUUC Community!

In these challenging times, many of us are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, and distressed. Gathering for Sunday services and other programming gives us ways to connect and reaffirm that there are good people in the world doing good work. I hope you've all been able to enjoy these past few summer months and carve out some time for yourselves and your families. As we return to work and school, we're also returning to a busy and active church year ahead.

Your MDUUC Board of Trustees held a retreat two weeks ago to outline our goals and priorities for the year, and we have some ambitious ones — all centered around ensuring that Mt Diablo UU Church will be here for generations to come.

First, we've invested funds in upgrading our HVAC systems on campus. This will make both air conditioning and heat more reliable, and more energy efficient, in line with our climate goals. Second, we recommitted to our values of welcome and inclusion, and to living those values openly. Third, we're prioritizing awareness of the many ways to get involved and volunteer — our community has so many engaged and talented people, and when we each find a way to contribute, it makes the fabric of our community that much richer. Finally, we agreed to embark on a capital campaign to improve our campus, an undertaking that's long overdue. You'll be hearing more about this in the coming months.

Thank you very much for being part of this amazing church community. I'm honored to be serving as your Board President this year. You have an impressive and dedicated Board of Trustees, and please reach out to any of us if you have questions or concerns.

Much appreciated,

Mark Chase (he/him/his)

2026-2027 MDUUC Board of Trustees

Check Out Our Library!

Thanks to a very generous "living legacy"* gift from our member Suzanne Lofquist, we have a wonderful resource library with lots of information about Unitarian Universalism, Unitarian Universalists and many of the issues with which we engage. The library features the collection of our minister emeritus, the Rev. Dr. David Sammons and many books are now available for checkout. On the fourth Sunday between 12:15 and 12:45 you can check out books and you can also return them. Come on over and learn more!

**A Living Legacy gift is a memorial gift given while someone is alive. If you are interested in knowing more, please contact our Legacy Committee Chair Tom Adams.*

TASK FORCE TO CONSIDER RE-NAMING MDUUC

Greetings, MDUUC Community!

At our June Congregational meeting, we voted to consider changing the name of the church. Allow me to present some background on this:

In November 2025, members and friends met to discuss the identity of the church — who we are and how we want to be known to the community and to those who enter here. We discussed that, over the years, concerns have been expressed that our name can be a barrier to people coming in. Some, for religious reasons, take issue with a church named "Devil" Mountain. Others consider it a colonized name. Then there are those who want to change the designation of "church" to, for example, community or center, out of personal preference, or due to their early faith traditions, and given some of the negative experiences in "churches."

We had small group discussions around some of these issues at several congregational forums in 2026. At the June Congregational Meeting, we affirmed a vote to "consider the name change." This will involve not only identifying a possible replacement for Mt Diablo, and consideration for the word church (e.g. center or community, etc), but also understanding the legal and financial commitment of making such a change.

We decided to create a task force to look at all aspects of this, including not changing the name.

Please contact me if you are interested in being a part of this Task Force: boardvicepresident@mduuc.org and put "Re-Name Task Force" on the subject line.

In Faith,

Linda Russell, Vice President

2026-2027 MDUUC Board of Trustees

SPIRITUAL CARE AT MDUUC With Travis MacPhee



I'm excited to be back at MDUUC this church year, offering spiritual care in my role as Interfaith Chaplain. Along with hosting a few small-group gatherings, I'll be checking in with folks throughout the community and am available if you could use a supportive conversation.

I'm here to listen and offer compassionate, nonjudgmental support, especially when life feels overwhelming, confusing, painful, or transformational. You're also welcome to reach out if you'd simply like someone to talk with about spiritual practice, questions of meaning or purpose, or the existential things we all encounter along the way. Whatever brings you, I'm glad to be here with you.

Warmly,

Travis MacPhee (he/him), M.Div.
Interfaith Chaplain

Travis serves as MDUUC's community minister and can be reached at travis@mduuc.org



Community Circles

Join the Waitlist for 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. Learn more at: <https://mduuc.org/connect/community-circle>

12 STEP PROGRAM FOR UUS

SHARE EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE WITH ONE ANOTHER

Did you know that MDUUC has a 12-step group? In these demanding times more and more people find themselves struggling anew with or slipping back into many different kinds of addictions. The 12 steps approach has proved effective for many people and we have a weekly Wednesday noon group to support people with a variety of different kinds of addictions. This group meets virtually so it's very accessible to those who may be working. Check it out on our calendar where you can find the link to join online and give yourself the gift of serenity.

Upcoming Open Women's Group Meeting Announcement

We are pleased to announce that the group will resume meeting on September 3. Meetings are held online on the first Thursday of each month from 10:30 a.m. to noon, and all are warmly welcome to attend. Rev. Leslie will join us for the September meeting. To receive meeting updates and announcements, please email publications@mduuc.org to be added to our mailing list.

Save the Date: On October 1 at 10:30 the Open Women's Group will be hosting the League of Women Voters for a zoom presentation of the pros and cons of the propositions that will be on the California November ballot.

Help Us Welcome Our New Staff!

Please take a moment and say hello to our new Facilities Coordinator Adrienne Crane who joined the MDUUC staff on August 16. Adrienne brings an extensive background in facilities work and volunteer management in nonprofit and for-profit settings. And also say hello to Alex Vinn who joins Phoenix Dover on our tech deck. Alex has been working with us for a while and is now our Worship Tech Coordinator, replacing Tianyuhao Nie who leaves us for an expanded position in the University of California system.

Membership Book Signing September 6 & October 4

Thinking about joining? Have you been visiting and wondering about next steps, or interested in participating and having a voice in our congregation's future? On the first Sunday of each month, you can sign the membership book—a simple way to express your commitment to this community. Look for a minister or board member outside the Sanctuary doors at noon, 15 minutes after the service ends.

GETTING TO KNOW UU

A Discussion To Help You Understand What We Believe



Getting To Know UU - Sunday, October 4

"Getting To Know UU" is a quarterly conversation that helps answer questions about who we are and what we care about. Come learn more about what we believe!

This event will be hybrid. Please join in the Owl Room or online at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89668312470>

Please RSVP to let us know you'll be joining. <https://mduuc.churchcenter.com/people/forms/1276541>

GRIEF & TRANSITIONS GATHERING Now on 3rd Saturday, 11–noon, Hybrid

Please join us for this space at its new time and date. The group meets online and in person at MDUUC's Fireside Room and online. Next date: Saturday, September 19, from 11 -12pm.

Get to Know the Bortin Kitchen with Jaynese Sunday, September 6 from 12:30–1:30 p.m.



Join Jaynese Davis in the kitchen after Sunday Service to learn the basics of our kitchen. Come and discover how you can help with the community dinners and gatherings that happen all year.

FUTURE DATES: December 6, March 7, AND June 6

Curious About Choir?



Join Music Director Jayyenne Haskin every 4th Sunday after Sunday Service for a choir sing! Join the mailing list for updates or contact choirsing@mduuc.org for more information!

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 Mediation, 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.

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.

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!).

Help With the Mary Fenelon Shower!

Mary Fenelon 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.



Second Hour: Movie & Discussion Featuring: *Children of the Camps* Sunday, September 6 at 12:30, OWL Room

Children of the Camps is a powerful one-hour documentary that follows six Japanese Americans who were incarcerated as children in U.S. concentration camps during World War II. Guided by therapist and educator Dr. Satsuki Ina, herself born at the Tule Lake camp, participants reflect on the lasting effects of racism, family separation, trauma, and resilience. Through personal stories, historical footage, and candid discussion, the film offers insight into healing and the human cost of prejudice. Join Rev. Leslie Takahashi for a viewing of this moving documentary, followed by a thoughtful discussion of its lessons and relevance today. Learn more about this documentary at <https://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/index.html>

A Series Beginning Saturday, September 26
from 11:00 am-12:30 pm | Redwood Grove outside Bortin Hall

Nature and Community Care

Connecting, grounding, and finding nurture together

Nature & Community Care

Connecting, grounding, and finding nurture together

A Series Beginning Saturday, September 26

11:00 am-12:30 pm | Redwood Grove outside Bortin Hall

What becomes possible when we make space to connect with nature, community, and our own attentive presence?

Beginning September 26, you're invited to a twice-monthly series of gatherings in MDUUC's Redwood Grove where we'll take care of ourselves by nourishing our relationships with one another and the living world around us. Each gathering will explore a different theme with gentle mindfulness, time within nature, and community sharing.

At the heart of these gatherings is relationship. We'll approach nature not only as a peaceful setting, but as a partner: receiving support from the living world while deepening our own attention, appreciation, and care for it. Along the way, we hope to deepen our relationships with one another and with the wider community of life we are part of.

Come once or come regularly. All are welcome. The redwoods will be there.

Facilitated by Travis MacPhee, Interfaith Chaplain

Feel free to reach out to me with questions or accessibility needs at travis@mduuc.org.

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.

Celebration of Life for Rosemary Lowden

Sunday, September 20 at 4 p.m.

Please join in the Sanctuary with a reception to follow in Bortin Hall. Visit the website for the guestbook and livestream link at <https://mduuc.org/rosemary-lowden/>

Celebration of Life for John Cooper

Saturday, October 10, 2026 at 11 a.m.

Please join in the Sanctuary with a reception to follow in Bortin Hall. Visit the website for the guestbook and livestream link at <https://mduuc.org/john-cooper/>

Celebration of Life for Tony Newey

Saturday, December 5 at 3 p.m.

Please join in the Sanctuary with a reception to follow in Bortin Hall. Visit the website for the guestbook and livestream link at <https://mduuc.org/tony-newey/>

MDUUC Art Gallery Featuring Mieke Van Hout



Mieke is a recent deceased member of our church. We gratefully share her lasting legacy and inspiring artwork, donated by her husband Joe Schellenberg.

Did you know that members and friends of our community display art in the gallery between Bortin Hall and the Sanctuary? Interested in displaying art?

Don't have art but have ideas for exhibits —let us know. Contact our Art Committee Chair, Randy Stansberry or Dave Fitzgerald at artleadership@mduuc.org.

Help Keep The Community Pantry Stocked

*Please bring new, unopened, unexpired donations in to the Bortin Kitchen. Portable, ready-to-eat, shelf-stable and individual sized items are especially in need.

The food barrel located near the Children's Chapel is for the wider community, Contra Costa/Solano County Food Bank.

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/>

- **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 grass-roots 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.

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!

MDUUC Home Build Trip in Tijuana Indigenous People's Day Weekend • Oct 9-12

MDUUC is sponsoring a home build trip to Tijuana, Baja California, in partnership with the nonprofit Doxa. We welcome both builders and donors—the full cost of this trip is \$15,000 for our group of 20 builders. Every donation helps offset that cost so that builders who couldn't otherwise afford the trip may journey with us.

The trip costs \$750 per person, which covers round-trip transportation between San Diego and Tijuana, overnight lodging, all meals in Mexico, and the building materials we gift to the family. Signup early at <https://mduuc.org/home-build-trip> as space is limited and/or contact Mark Chase with any questions homebuildtrip@mduuc.org.

JUST-IN-TIME Many Ways To Volunteer at MDUUC!

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

- **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.
- **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

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, Oct 15 [\[register here\]](#)
- Virtual Daytime Sessions, Nov 19 [\[register here\]](#)



Honors, Accolades, and Thanks!

- To Sue Polgar who has announced her retirement as collator/editor of this HAT's OFF column. As a member of the Membership Committee, Sue began (and named) HAT's OFF almost twenty years ago as a way of recognizing each month the volunteers who make MDUUC so special.
- To Wes Fanhani, who will be ending his term as a Worship Associate
- To Jaynese Davis for her leadership with the Celebration of Life events for Barbara Sugrue and Carol Bertaut; Mary Allan who helped with food and shared memories at the memorial; Mary-Helen Binger who helped usher, cleanup and more; Randy Stansberry for food and helping as a greeter; Diana Revutsky, Marianne Bonner, Marie McGarvey, Norm Meites, Stacy Cranston, and Therese McCluskey for helping with the setup and supporting Barbara Sugrue's reception; Diane Lovitt, Don Green, Helen Reznick, Joyce Duxbury, Kathy Vail, Kim Clark, Linda Russell, Lisa Aaron, Marcy Beaty, Mariann Kessler, Marjorie Wallace, Sandy Bonshahi, Tracy Murray, and Zendra Zehner for providing food at Barbara Sugrue's reception; Jaynese and Pete Davis, Emily Harris Nancy White, and Zendra Zehner for their help with Carol Bertaut's service.
- To Mary-Helen Binger, Jaynese Davis, Emily Harris, and Katie Wills for jumpstarting the Bid4Love donation call
- To Sharon Solstice for her many years of service as a board member, treasurer, leading Bid4Love, cash counting and volunteering wherever she could.
- To the Buildings and Grounds committee for another "cool" update to our facilities
- To our launderers for fresh towels and tablecloths
- To all who continuously keep our Community Pantry stocked
- For Crystal Loutzenhiser for the bounty of pears
- To Jo Gelinas and Sharon Solstice for cash counting
- To Norm Meites and David Fitzgerald for their support of the Saturday Mindfulness Meditation Group
- To Richard Brown and Tom Taylor for their dedicated head ushering

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

FREE FAMILIES CAMPAIGN

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.

Living Our Values: Actions You Can Take

Preparation Is The Key • Public Witness Opportunities • Policy • Partnerships

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 Come and Learn More About This Important Way To Organize Our Community

Bortin Hall | Tuesday, September 8, 2026 | 7–8 p.m.

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/#CjQKIEs2U2Tujbt12h9uOPPi-7FEai-aTxJvqDHLlaQkGONEhBSedW4e-w5A2qjR2-xSG6G>

THURSDAY JUSTICE PROGRAMS AT MDUUC

Climate

Gather to learn about how to engage in Climate Justice in our County and beyond!

~ ONLINE ~
starts at 6:30 p.m.
1st Thursdays of the Month

SEPTEMBER 3

Racial & Immigration

Gather to learn about how to engage in Racial and Immigration Justice in our County and beyond!

~ ONLINE ~
starts at 6:30 p.m.
2nd Thursdays of the Month

SEPTEMBER 10

Economic, Food & Housing

Gather to learn about how to engage in Eco, Food and Housing Justice in our County and beyond!

~ ONLINE ~
starts at 6:30 p.m.
3rd Thursdays of the Month

SEPTEMBER 17

Join on Zoom For Justice Thursdays
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82753820159>

Sunday Hot Lunch

Every Sunday, 11:45am to 1:00pm

➤ Every Sunday, ongoing through the church year ➤

All are welcome at the table! Each week, we're cooking legumes and rice from a different culture's kitchen, and every dollar raised supports our youth. Come hungry. Come as you are.



Donations happily received!
Give what you can, if you can!



Scan To
Donate

All proceeds go to our Youth Fund, which keeps
the youth engaged and in community!



Mt Diablo Unitarian
Universalist Church

55 ECKLEY LANE, WALNUT CREEK, CA 94596
[HTTPS://MDUUC.ORG](https://mduuc.org) | 925.934.3135

UU the VOTE

Ignite Solidarity, Reimagine Democracy



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!!!

Our Whole Lives: Grades 4-6

Join the Parent Info Meeting: Sunday, Sept. 13, 12PM

Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate program that helps children build the knowledge, values, and skills they need to understand themselves, navigate relationships, and grow into healthy, confident people.

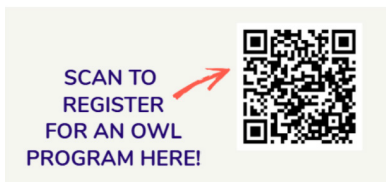
Through age-appropriate activities and conversations, participants will explore:

- Values & thoughtful choices
- Gender & sexual identity
- Body image & self-understanding
- Friendship & healthy relationships
- Communication & boundaries
- Peer pressure & decision-making
- Growing, changing & navigating puberty

OWL is taught with sensitivity, inclusiveness, and respect for each child's individual experience. Children are encouraged to ask questions, listen to one another, and develop skills for navigating the changes and relationships that come with growing up.

Starts from September 13 through November 8.

Childcare is available for the Parent Info Meeting .
Suggested Donation: \$150 (scholarships available)



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](#).

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.

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

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>

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

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

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 - *Pausing September

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. **The group does not meet on days when there is Breath & Spirit retreat.*

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. Curious about Choir? Contact choirsing@mduuc.org *See calendar for all choir events and updates. Join the choir group for reminders.

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.

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 occasional bike rides and all levels of ability are welcome. Contact Jim Hughell at bike@mduuc.org to join 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 and Rev. Leslie will be joining the meeting. 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.

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!

3rd Saturday of the month, from 11 a.m.–noon online and in the Fireside Room. 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.

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.

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!

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

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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://mduuc.bsky.social) and Rev. Leslie Takahashi [@leslietakahashi.bsky.social](https://leslietakahashi.bsky.social).

October Beacon Deadline

Wednesday, September 16 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://bsky.app/profile/mduuc.bsky.social)

Podcast on Spotify - Beacon Light

Community Concert Series Presents: **Roy Zimmerman** October 16 at 8 p.m.

Roy Zimmerman's signature blend of heart and hilarity has never been more necessary. In a career spanning more than thirty years, Roy's songs have been heard on HBO and Showtime, and his videos have garnered hundreds of millions of views.

Roy co-writes these songs with his wife Melanie Harby. Their song parody "Vote Him Away (The Liar Tweets Tonight)" has had over 140 million views online.

Video:

https://youtu.be/K8_tVmIPiT8?si=RLNyLT32FjCVpjT3

<https://youtu.be/dJIV2rOlUdo?si=kVJFuP6odMp5-OQI>

Tickets are \$25 for live show

Livestream tickets are \$10

Get Tickets On Evenbrite or via ccs.mduuc.org

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1997510829663?aff=oddtcreator>

Sliding scale tickets will also be available at the door.

- Doors will open at 7:30pm
- Light refreshments will be available.
- Masks are recommended, but not required.

