



Mt Diablo UU Beacon

Transforming Ourselves and Our World

Volume 72, No. 7

July / August 2025

SERVICE TIME — 10:30 A.M.

9:00 A.M. SUNDAY MEDITATION — ON ZOOM

ALL SERVICES ARE LIVESTREAMED!

- <https://mduuc.org/service-stream/>
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SUNDAY, JULY 6

Reimagining Our Nation: Beyond the Founders’ Dream.

What if the America we’re living in right now is just the beginning of our story, not the end—and what if you hold the power to help write the next chapter grounded in love, justice, and equity? Join us as we explore Raza Benjamin’s bold vision for moving beyond our founders’ limited imagination toward the beloved community we’re all longing to create together.

SUNDAY, JULY 13

Keep on the Sunnyside. Deeper meanings to this classic Americana tune made famous by the Carter Family in 1928. The song went on to become the unofficial anthem for the group and it continues to be recorded by renowned country artists including Rosanne Cash. What does the song tell us about the human condition?

SUNDAY, JULY 20

Meeting the Moment. Members of MDUUC’s delegation to this year’s general assembly will share reflections on what they learned, witnessed, and took away from this annual nationwide gathering of Unitarian Universalists.

SUNDAY, JULY 27

Gardening As Spiritual Practice. So many find the divine in nature. Come hear from those who find natural spirituality in the art of gardening. How does digging one’s hands into the earth ground and connect a person with their spirit? Let’s find out together.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3 - No Service

There will be no service during the scheduled hiatus. Our office and campus will be closed on Monday, July 28 through Sunday, August 3.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10

Rites for Hard Times. If these hard times have you questioning what makes an adult, a leader, or elder, join us for this powerful exploration. Our Worship Associate, Brandon Peele, will lead us in a reflection upon the rites of passage that shaped us, and how our congregation might rise to meet the moment with rites of passage throughout life.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17

Windfalls, Whimsy and Other Survival Strategies. Join Rev. Leslie Takahashi to reflect on how we can wrap our values around our own hearts in these times when sustenance is essential.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24

A Good Goodbye. Sometimes good-bye is hard, sometimes it’s just what you need. Sometimes it’s joyous and exciting, sometimes it’s sad. Many times it is all of these things and more. As Rose shares our pulpit for the last time she will explore what it is that makes a good-bye good.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31



SAVE YOUR WATER FROM YOUR SUMMER TRAVELS!

Waters Of Life. Please join us for this unique ritual sacred to our faith. All who participate are asked to bring waters from their summer travels to blend in a service where we celebrate the ties of community.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PROGRAMS

Our Wednesday evening programs provide a midweek opportunity to connect, reflect, and recharge the spirit in the embrace of comfort and community.

- **For the month of July (Vespers, July 9 at 5 p.m.)**
In July we will have one Vespers service, on July 9 at 5 pm, in the Sanctuary. The theme is “Welcome Summer: How can the warmth of the summer sun add to your fire of commitment?”
Community Dinner: Postponed.
Ministers’ Class: Will resume in the fall.
- **Earth Based Worship (July 23, 5 p.m.)**
Join Rose for a Earth Based Worship Service on July 23 at 5 pm, on the Brick Patio. We will welcome and honor the Summer Sun and the continual turn of the Earth.

More Wednesday evening programs will be available in September.

Save The Date: Congregational Forum, Oct. 19

The Congregational Forum is scheduled on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 12:30 p.m. The youth will be holding a lunch fundraiser following the Sunday Service. More information to help with the fundraiser with food and donations will be shared on the Friday Weekly Email as the date approaches.

Leslie's Logos

Despair and hope.

Joy and grief.

Shock and inspiration.

I am sure I am not the only one who notes this emotional whiplash, a frequent occurrence in this 2025. As we move into the second half of the year, we now are realizing that we need to develop new skills for fluctuating and moving through these new rhythms.

Sustaining the embrace of these paradoxes is not easy and it requires us to build new muscles. Yet, as with many strengthening activities, these build on the skills we already have. For example, we already know that savoring the moment is an essential part of living with mindfulness. Mindfulness gives us an opportunity to savor the joys which are always here even in times when the larger frame of society is difficult. They build on the skills many of us have been cultivating of holding multiple truths at the same time.

Summer offers a time to adjust our routines, to experiment with different activities and to deepen relationships with ourselves and others. Many of us spend more time in contact with nature and are reminded of our body's forces in these ways.

We have a marathon before us, and not a sprint. I will be taking July and part of August to readjust and reconnect with the larger rhythms of my life and I hope you will be as well. Perhaps in this way, we will have the strength to engage that which we need to foster:

Peace and engagement.

Vigilance and rest.

Commitment to the world and to ourselves.

In faith and perseverance,



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/revlesliemeet>

Bring a Friend to MDUUC! Do you know someone who could use the community and spiritual renewal and justice commitment of our community? Summer is a great time to bring a friend to Sunday services or one of our midweek refreshers. And if you know someone who isn't mobile or who lives farther away, share our YouTube Channel and Beacon Light podcast can be subscribed to an shared. We need to spread the word and spread the care!



Rev. Dr. Rodney Lemery, Associate Minister



Reflections from General Assembly: Making Heaven on Earth

This past week at General Assembly, I had the joy of reconnecting with one of our early interns who served at Mount Diablo during Rev. Dr. David Sammons' tenure, Tess Baumnerger. It was a beautiful reminder of our congregation's long-standing commitment to being a teaching congregation, nurturing future religious leaders for our larger faith movement.

She shared with me one of her powerful poems that feels especially meaningful as our Justice committees take their well-deserved summer break before reconvening in September, "Let Us Make this Earth a Heaven".

*Let us make this earth a heaven, right here, right now.
Who knows what existence's death will bring?*

*Let us create a heaven here on earth
where love and truth, and justice reign.*

*Let us welcome all at our Pearly Gates, our Freedom Table,
amid singing and great rejoicing,*

*black, white, yellow, red, and all our lovely colors,
straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning,*

Cisgendered, transgendered, non-binary, gender non-conforming

Healthy, sick, hurting, variously-abled,

Young, old, gentle, cranky, joyous, sorrowing.

Let no one feel excluded, let no one feel alone.

May all have enough to meet their needs.

May all share power generously.

*May all venerate the Earth, our mother,
and tend her with wisdom and compassion.*

May we make our earth an Eden, a paradise.

May no one wish to leave her.

*May hate, violence, and warfare cease to clash in causes
too old and tired to name; religion, nationalism, racism,
the false false god of gold, deep-rooted ethnic hatreds.*

May these all disperse and wane, may we see each other's true selves.

May we all dwell together in peace and joy and understanding.

Let us make a heaven here on earth, before it is too late.

Let us make this earth a heaven now, for each other's sake.

To me, Rev. Tess' vision resonates deeply with our Unitarian Universalist values: welcoming all at our "Freedom Table" regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, or age.

Even during our summer break, opportunities for justice engagement continue. Please continue to check our church calendar and Church Center app for programs, and our Living Our Values webpage for ongoing advocacy, activism, and educational opportunities. Our earth needs tending, and that work never truly pauses.

May we carry Baumnerger's vision forward: creating heaven on earth, for each other's sake, in every season of our shared ministry.

In faith and solidarity,

Rev. Dr. Rodney Lemery

Marena McGregor, DRE

Greetings and Happy Summer!
Coming Next Year in Religious Education: Whole-Body, Whole-Heart Faith Formation



We're excited to announce a transformative year of Religious Education programming rooted in Unitarian Universalist values and built around the sacred, powerful work of becoming our full, authentic selves—together.

This year, we're centering love as our spiritual foundation. Through a rich and emergent curriculum, children and youth will explore what it means to live with compassion, courage, and curiosity in a complex world. We'll engage in spiritual play—learning not just with our minds, but with our whole selves.

Each class will offer opportunities to move our bodies, use our voices, and connect to spirit in creative ways:

- **Somatic practices** to help us notice and honor what we feel in our bodies
- **Sound healing and music-making** that help us tune into inner calm and community rhythm
- **Movement and theater** to express who we are and imagine new possibilities
- **Meditation and mindfulness** to build resilience and emotional intelligence
- **Time in nature** to ground us in wonder and our interdependence with the Earth
- **Joy as resistance**, as we reclaim delight and creativity as powerful spiritual practices

Children and youth will also be invited to shape the journey themselves, with space for questions, storytelling, and emergent themes that arise from their own lives and longings.

At the heart of everything is this: Love is our guide. Community is our container. Spiritual exploration is our path. And everyone, exactly as they are, belongs.

We can't wait to grow, create, and celebrate with you next year.

With heartfelt thanks,

Marena McGregor

OWL this FALL for 2nd-4th graders Starting in September!

Join us for an exciting journey of learning in our "Our Whole Lives" (OWL) class for 2nd-4th graders and their parents! This comprehensive class is designed to help children begin the lifelong process of learning and developing values around identity, relationships, safety, and health. This program helps set up the parents as the primary educators for their child as we explore key topics like gender identity, gender roles, sexual orientation, race, ability, and setting healthy boundaries for ourselves. Don't miss out on this engaging opportunity to create a dynamic of open communication with your child!

Thank You From Jyvonne



Big thanks to the MDUUC congregation for the best welcoming experience I've ever had in my 10+ years entering a new UU worship space!

Chalice Choir!!! You've thrilled me from the day we met back in January and I've only become fonder still during our time together since my arrival on May 1st. Watching how you care for each other and how you engage the spiritual practice of music making, I'm so proud to have you all on board as we support our communities spiritual development through the gift of song. Thank you!

Thanks to Scott Schrader for his musical prowess, and sharing his kind and wise counsel giving insight into the last 27 years of the MDUUC music program.

To Laura Zucker & Brett Carson, thank you both for making Sunday service music the least of my concerns during my two week absence!

Thank you Beth Prantil and Scott Schrader for coming in so strong during our June 29th service, and for answering the call - you sounded great!

To everyone who has sent me an email, a text, come up after or before service to share a kind word, introduce themselves, ask a question, share some favorite music experiences or favorite tunes, thanked me for the music, or even if you've simply silently sighed, clapped or whoo!d after a wonderful musical piece during our worship together, THANK YOU!!! It's unintentional if any specific names have been left out but your kindness, generosity and support have not gone unnoticed.

Breath and Spirit - October 11, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

Our Breath and Spirit half-day spiritual retreat will focus on cultivating the resources of inner peace. 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.

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

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



A Message From Your Board of Trustees

For the Unitarian Universalist annual conference, known as General Assembly, the theme this year is: **Meet the Moment!** From the AIWs (Actions of Immediate Witness, voted on by your conference delegates to affirm actions that need immediate engagement), to the daily discussions and lectures and worship, we are asked, in this moment, to look through the lens of our faith toward right action. As of this writing, many of us participated in marches and protests in the middle of June to declare what we stand for, who we stand for, and why it is important to embrace one another as a coalition of intersectional communities.

At stake in this moment, is the precious value of Democracy, with the rights we want upheld and the responsibilities we share in ensuring those rights—from teens to elders. GA is our opportunity to participate in the creation of the UU story. MDUUC is a part of the story and that process. This calls for a different kind of pledge. This pledge we make to each other - to learn from each other, across the generations and culture, respecting the diversity of our very human experiences. We are in challenging times, but we are not alone. Let us pledge to support each other, sharing and reflecting our values with one another because, in this moment, we need one another. MDUUC is a faith community committed to meeting this moment.

As your Board, we will continue our commitment to diversity of thought, experience, and expertise. And as we welcome new Board members, we give gratitude to those who have been serving on the Board:

We say thank you to Mark David Watanabe, who will be stepping aside as Co-President but we appreciate his plan to continue on the Board a bit longer to help with a smooth transition.

We say thank you to our Board Vice President, Jana Contreras, who has been a consistent voice, both as a parent with children actively involved in the church, and, as an attorney, bringing Board recognition to legal issues.

We say thank you to Sharon Solstice, whose dedication as our Treasurer was greatly appreciated, particularly as this was a role in which she had served previously. When her health took precedent, her discernment in stepping aside showed great humility and respect for the needs of the congregation.

We say thank you to Chris Carter, for his tremendous contribution, stepping in for Sharon, participating with the Finance Committee as well as the Board and providing consistent information, in a timely fashion, in order for us to make informed decisions as we move toward next year's budget.

We say thank you to Peggy Kroll, who was our wonderful pinch hitter when an elected Board member had to step away due to family obligations. As a dedicated member of the church, knowledgeable regarding many church operations, Peggy's input has been invaluable.

We say thank you to Steve Dietsch, for his service and his consistent engagement, his thoughtful regard and participation in meetings and forums, even as he went through the experience of his own great loss early in the year.

We say thank you to our incredible staff—from admin to tech, to facilities—all have weathered the challenges of illness, interruption, unexpected changes, yet continue to serve consistently and professionally every single day, in ways often not recognized. They are the ones behind the scenes who simply make things happen.

And we say thank you to the very dedicated and generous folks who lead us—Lead Minister, Rev. Leslie; Associate Minister, Rev. Rodney; Intern Minister (now former intern) Rose Riedel; Director of Religious Education, Marena McGregor; and our newest addition to staff, Music Director, Jyvonnie Haskin.

As we move into our 2025-26 year, thank YOU for being a part of a thriving faith community. Please consider what you need, what you can offer, and invite others in.

In gratitude,

Linda Russell

Co-President

MDUUC Board of Trustees

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, July 6 and *Sunday, September 7.

Our congregation will be on a hiatus week and there will not be a service on August 3rd.

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.

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)

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS Work Party

Buildings and Grounds Work Party - Sept 6!

Our work parties are currently suspended and will resume in September! 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!

Why Do We Drop Stones During The Offertory?

A number of newcomers have asked about the ritual during our offertory where people line up and drop stones. So here is a quick response to some of the frequently asked questions!

Why do people drop stones? This simple ritual is an extension of our spoken joys and sorrows when people share something of significance. Because we cannot all share each week, this gives us an opportunity to connect with what is on our hearts.

What sort of joys or sorrows? The reasons are as varied as our people (which means infinitely so!) Some people drop a stone every time they are at service, often in name of their loved ones., others might have a sorrow too private to share or a secret joy. Some people do this as just a part of their own weekly centering.

Is this a kind of communion? No, although in our sense of such a ritual, it is one open to all! It is not something people do to be “made pure” because we believe that that all are good--with inherent worth and dignity!

Why the pebbles? Because so many candles would be a fire hazard! Sometimes people will also light a silent candle for something very significant.

Who are the people with the badges who stand with the ministers? These are our amazing Pastoral Visitors who are there in case someone needs a listening ear after service. Having them visible during this time makes it easy for people to find them later! Need a listening ear? Try it!

Thanks to those who asked?

New! Earth-Based Spiritualities Group

Whether you're just a little bit on the woo-woo side, a modern witch, or a full pagan priest, come check out the Pagan and Earth-Based Spiritualities group and meet some like minded folks to talk non-traditional spirituality with. Our first meeting will be all about what we'd like to get out of such a group moving forward--whether it's just a place to share about how we change the words of some of the hymns or further organized activities. Some snacks will be provided, but feel free to add something tasty to the mix!

Meets on 2nd Sundays in the Children's Chapel.

Please check the calendar on-line for more current information.

Summer Community Circle Groups

Summer Community Circles Are Forming!

Visit <https://mduuc.org/connect/community-circle/> to view all available sessions and to learn more!

Looking to deepen your connections this season? Our Summer 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 register today or look for the table in Bortin Hall after Sunday Service to join.

We Need School Supplies for Backpacks

Throughout the month of July, we are collecting new/unused school supplies for our youth. Join us in filling backpacks in preparation for the upcoming school year. Look for the bin by the church office to put the donations in. Our goal is to have the backpacks ready in time for the Blessing of the Backpacks happening during service on Sunday, July 27. Have questions? Contact marena@mduuc.org.

Community Concert Series

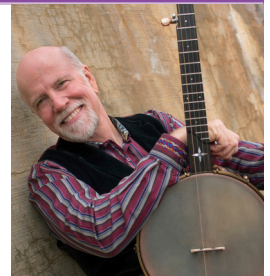
**SAVE THE DATE:
JOHN MCCUTCHEON
Saturday, Jan 17!**

Stay Tuned!

More concerts coming soon! Devil Mountain Coffee House (DMCH)

is now the Community Concert Series. Different name, same emphasis on singer songwriters, and incredible music. Interested in volunteering or learning more?

Contact coffeehousechair@mduuc.org.



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 on-line 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.

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.

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 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 or intern minister, Rose Riedel.

Wheels of Welcome

Have you been looking for something to engage in at MDUUC? Do you enjoy helping families? Maybe you know how to teach a child to ride a bike or make a grilled cheese sandwich! Contact justintime@mduuc.org to join!

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.

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/>

Share The Plate - July 2025

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant is an organization founded in 1982 during Central America's civil wars. East Bay Sanctuary Covenant serve over 12,000 refugees and asylum seekers annually. They provide comprehensive, trauma-informed support to help participants achieve legal status, citizenship, and well-being.

Their services include legal assistance, case management, a multilingual hotline, and cash assistance for immediate needs. They offer English classes, citizenship preparation, community forums, and arts-based healing workshops that help people process trauma while building essential skills.

Justice Sunday: Build Trans Justice & Safety A Webinar for Unitarian Universalists - July 13

Our UU faith calls us to affirm every person's worth and dignity—now our trans and nonbinary siblings need us to turn principle into life-saving action.

Join us July 13, 12:30-2:15 PM for the webinar "Build Trans Justice & Safety" (1hr 20min) plus discussion. Learn practical tools to create genuinely safe spaces and advocate for trans rights.

The time for passive allyship has passed. Let's answer the call to justice together.

Share The Plate - August 2025

White Pony Express - White Pony Express is a volunteer-powered 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to eliminate hunger and poverty by delivering the abundance all around us to those in need—with love. They serve 120,000 people each year through more than 90 partner agencies. Since their inception, WPE has rescued and delivered more than 25 million pounds of nutritious food—equal to 21 million meals—which prevented more than 31,000 tons of CO2 emissions from entering the air we breathe.

Justice Sunday: What's Fair Trade? An Equal Exchange Presentation - August 10

"Fair trade" food items are widely available, but what does it really mean? Do your food purchases (and those of MDUUC) provide fair income for small farmers and support environmentally sustainable farming practices? At noon on 8/10, Kristen King of the 40 year old fair trade cooperative Equal Exchange will give a short virtual talk about her organization's approach and show videos. Enjoy lunch and sample drinks and snacks featuring Equal Exchange fairly traded chocolate, coffee and other ingredients. A "What's fair" game will provide an interactive experience for younger folks.

For more information visit <https://shop.equalexchange.coop/>

Sustainable Living Tips

Have you ever heard of Plastic-Free July? The concept of Plastic-Free July was created in 2011 and is a key initiative of the Plastic-Free Foundation: <https://plasticfreefoundation.net>. The initiative's catch phrase is "Choose to Refuse", and it couldn't be clearer about why refusing to use plastic is so important. MDUUC is taking steps to limit plastics on our campus not just for July, but as an ongoing commitment to being a Green Sanctuary. We are also working toward educating our community to become more aware of and less reliant on plastics by offering movie screenings and tabling events, and of course through this monthly newsletter article.

Going plastic-free is an exciting and liberating journey that can be done on your own or in a group-coordinated effort such as with your immediate family, with a group of friends or acquaintances, at work, at church, or wherever there are people who are motivated to take this very important step. If you would like to get connected with others who are working toward a more sustainable, less plastic, lifestyle, there are many local and online organizations where you can find resources to help you on this worthwhile journey. From the degradation of our oceans and lands to the damage it causes to wildlife to the microplastic particulates that are building up in our own bodies, now is a great time to embark on a future free from plastics. Here's a link to a movie about Plastic-Free July with tips for simple changes we can make daily: <https://youtu.be/UnXVU-06ciI?feature=shared>

Faith Without Walls Sandwich Share & Care Program

Join us for another round of this meaningful program in which we build and share sandwiches and burritos with our wider community of unhoused neighbors in Concord, Walnut Creek, and Pleasant Hill, leading to some new connections and meaningful interactions.

Join Rose Riedel and other volunteers as we prepare sandwiches and burritos and then distribute them to our neighbors who are unhoused. All are invited to help by preparing the food, and those who have been trained can join Rose and others in distributing them as a way to build connections to those in our community who are unhoused.

Remember, this ministry is about building relationships and not just "serving." We are so grateful to all those who have helped so far, and have made this program such an amazing experience.

Contact rose@mduuc.org if you would like to build, distribute, or grocery shop for any of the below dates!

- July 12: 10 am build (White kitchen), 11 am distribution
- August 9: 10 am build (White kitchen), 11 am distribution



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!

Backpack Blessing - Sunday, July 27.

August Game Night - Multi-generational Fun! We had a great time last year and we're looking forward to doing it again!

Look for more information on the Friday Weekly email.

Religious Education Starts - August 17

Water Service - Sunday, August 31

"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 - To be announced!

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

Celebration of Life Announcements

~ Celebration of Life for Marianna Laurence ~

Will be held on August 16 at 1 p.m.

If you can help with this celebration, please let Rev. Leslie Takahashi know.

HATS OFF! Honors, Accolades, Thanks!

To Linda Russel for her leadership of the June 22nd service and hosting the GA Ware Lecture watch party.

To Anne Bandy, our ever-hopeful, self-appointed coffee guru who truly could use more assistance in this task.

To Kathryn Wellington for her many hours of work on the playground safety issues along with the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

To Carol Fidler, Jim Hasse, Mora Mattingly, Scott Shrader and others for doing so much to keep our choir going this past year.

To Stephanie Singer for directing the play, "My Will and My Life" and Linda Russell for managing the door when Rev. Leslie Takahashi was ill and unable to do so.

To Dawn Greenlee who is finishing her devoted service as one of our cash counters and to Marianne Kessler and Jo Gelinas who continue this service.

To Jim Lincoln, Paul Damrow, David Stanley and Peter Huang who were among the regular participants at Building and Grounds work parties this spring.

To Norm Meites for his service to the Building and Grounds committee.

To Jeff Hearn for coordinating ushering.

To Rami Bazargannia for her leadership of a recent discussion of the PBS documentary "Single Use Planet" (which if you missed you still could see)?

To Norm Meites, Jan Dancinger, David Fitzgerald and Therese McCluskey for coordinating the Saturday meditation group.

To our Ashland Youth Trip chaperones—Amy Mosely, Diamera Bach and Neysa Matt!

To our Chalice Camp volunteers—Emily Blackshore for teaching and Sheli Cryderman for helping.

To Steve Hirsch, Laura Ransom, Sally Edgerton, Phoenix Dover, and Don Sturke for serving on my intern committee.

To Mary-Helen Binger and Julia McCloud for making Rose's stole

To everyone who has helped with the memorials held in June—from food and beverages, cleanup/setup, laundering our tablecloths, providing hospitality, and greeting the guests.

To our Pride volunteers by staffing our tables and showing support with attendance at our many interfaith events!

To all who showed strength and solidarity at our local immigration courts!

To all who continue to speak up for democracy (by voice, letters, and signs!)

To our Community Garden Work Party group for continuing to clean, plant, revitalize our community garden!

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

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/4iQZnnkS3HLXB94JRuMin?si=808541c48b2b451f>

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 sign up!

Please help ANNE out! She cannot be the only one making coffee!

- Join the Coffee Team—email sundaycoffee@mduuc.org

Help us keep our sanctuary campus beautiful

- Help with community gardening!
- Share Your Community Spirit
- Grow the Community Garden with food for all

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
- Help address the mailed copies of the Beacon newsletter

Interested in making a difference in these difficult times?

- Help distribute food to our wider community
- Join Economic, Food and Housing
- Help us organize around climate change
- Give rides to area actions
- Help with sign making for demonstrations

Want to nurture your spirit?

- Volunteer your musical gifts to Jyvonnie Haskin
- Volunteer to bring food and desserts for events

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

Are you a good listener? If so, Rev. Leslie is looking forward to training new pastoral visitors in August.

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

Did you know that ushers are part of help keep MDUUC safe?

Are you willing to sign up on a monthly basis for one Sunday?

If you can volunteer to be part of the usher team, please email rose@mduuc.org.

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>

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.*

Fiber Artists Crafts and Conversation

4th Sundays, 11:45 - 12:30, Bortin. Knitters, crocheters, needleworkers and more. Bring one of your projects and join us in Bortin Hall during coffee hour. We can share our projects, our tricks and tips, and have some great conversation! Contact rose@mduuc.org for more info.

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. Meetings will resume in September. Please email admin@mduuc.org to be added to our mailing list.

Women Talk

2nd Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. (hybrid). This is a supportive space dedicated to exploring the spiritual lives of those who identify as female, dealing with matters of the spirit and heart and create a place to ask deep questions of one another.

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 and Loss Support 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.

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!

2025 - 2026 Board Transition Retreat



Let's give a big welcome to both our new and returning MDUUC board members!

Board of Trustees

Linda Russell, President

Andrew Oswald, Vice President

Mark Chase, Secretary

Elizabeth Dietsch, Treasurer

Trustees

Andy Smith, Kevin Hsieh, Jim Lincoln, Mark Chase,
Mary Kelly Persyn, Patricia Craven

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.*

September Beacon Deadline

Wednesday, August 20, 2025
at 10:00 a.m.



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MDUUC Ministers and Staff

Rev. Leslie Takahashi, Lead Minister, leslie@mduuc.org
Rev. Rodney Lemery, Associate Minister, rodney@mduuc.org
Jyvonne Haskin Music Director, jyvonne@mduuc.org
Marena McGregor, Director of Religious Education, marena@mduuc.org
Jen Marsh Prink, Congregational Administrator, jenm@mduuc.org
Rose Riedel, Intern Minister, rose@mduuc.org
Brett Carson, Accompanist, brettcarrson@mduuc.org
Ging Lee, Communications Assistant, ging@mduuc.org
Liam Takahashi, Tech Coordinator, liam@mduuc.org
Eric Chapot, Facilities Staff, eric@mduuc.org
Rev. Dr. David Sammons, Minister Emeritus
Rev. Ranwa Hammamy, Affiliated Minister
Rev. Meg Richardson, Affiliated Minister
Worship Associates - worship@mduuc.org
Board of Trustees - board@mduuc.org

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Bluesky: [mduuc.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/mduuc.bsky.social)
Podcast: Spotify - Beacon Light

SUMMER MUSIC

at mduuc

COME SING WITH US!

WITH MDUUC'S JYVONNE HASKIN

SONGS OF PROTEST WORKSHOP
SUNDAY, JULY 13 *from* 2:00-3:30PM

SONGS FROM "SING OUT LOUD!"
THURSDAY, JULY 17 *from* 7:30-9:00PM
THURSDAY, AUG. 14 *from* 7:30-9:00PM

Summer Music Events!

Sunday, July 13th, 2pm to 3:30pm

Come back after service to join MDUUC's Director of Music, Jyvonne Haskin, in a Songs of Protest workshop where we'll learn songs that you can easily take home with you to hold in your hearts and carry into the streets sharing values of love, encouragement, and justice.



**Thursday, July 17th, 7:30pm to 9:00pm and
Thursday, August 14th - 7:30pm to 9:00pm**

Did you know that there's a brand new hymnal coming out this summer?! Join MDUUC's Director of Music, Jyvonne Haskin, for a Hymn Sing as we explore some of the cool new songs in UUA's "Sing Out Loud!" virtual hymnal! Bring some water and your participatory spirit to sing out loud, together.

Join Our Chalice Choir!
Rehearsals Start on Thursday, September 4
Most Thursday Evenings, from 7:30-9PM
No Singing or Musical Experience Necessary.