

# **"Crossing the Threshold: A service on death and dying... and a life informed by both."**

Sunday, August 17, 2025, 10:50 am

First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco





**Order of Service**  
**Sunday August 17, 2025**  
**10:50 AM - 12:15 PM**

Livestreamed at [bit.ly/uusfmedia](https://bit.ly/uusfmedia)

New to UUSF? Complete Our Connections form at <https://bit.ly/uuconnections2024>

A Guide for Newcomers - What to Expect During Worship (read at <https://bit.ly/newcomersguide-uusf>)

**Welcome to Worship!**

UUSF no longer requires masks indoors on our premises,  
following the lead of the San Francisco Department of Health.

We do, however, strongly recommend people to wear masks  
or do anything else that protects and respects their own health and comfort.  
There is a designated mask-only area on the far right side of the Sanctuary.

**Stay Engaged: Explore Our Busy Hand Activity Station**

Did you know we have a busy hand activity station at the back of the sanctuary for all ages?

You can find fidget toys, coloring, and so much more.

Check it out if you need something to keep your hands busy during the service.

Please return items before you leave the sanctuary.

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Prelude

Joel Karabo Elliott, Aditi Sethi, Jay Brown

Opening Words and Welcome

Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern, Senior Minister

Unison Chalice Lighting

We light this chalice for the light of truth,  
the warmth of love,  
and the fire of commitment.  
We light this symbol of our faith  
as we gather together.

\*Hymn 38

*Morning Has Broken*

BUNESSAN

([CLICK HERE OR TURN TO PAGE 6 TO VIEW HYMN](#))



## Greeting One Another

### \*Unison Covenant

Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its prayer.  
This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace,  
to seek the truth in freedom, and to help one another.

### \*Doxology

TALLIS' CANON



From all that dwell be - low the skies; let songs of hope and  
De to - dos ba - jo el gran sol; sur - ja, es - pe - ran - za

5  
faith a - rise; Let peace, good - will on earth be sung through  
fé, a - mor; ver - dad, y be - lle - za can - tan - do, de

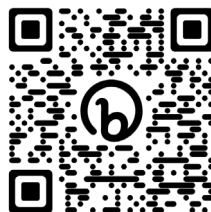
8  
ev - ery land, by ev - ery tongue.  
ca - da tie - rra, ca - da voz. A - men.

### Reflection

Gregory Stevens, Worship Associate

### Offering

Our offering today is to support the The Threshold Choir (<https://thresholdchoir.org/>). The Threshold Choir was founded by Kate Munger in 2000 to offer songs of comfort and compassion. Threshold Choirs offer their service to our clients and their families and caregivers during a tender stage of life. To learn more turn to [page 5](#). To make a donation on Vanco ([bit.ly/uusfpayments](https://bit.ly/uusfpayments)), using the Donate Button on our website, or by scanning the QR code, please select the line for Special Sunday Offering. The designation is important to ensure your gift gets applied correctly. If you are sending a check, please mark in the memo today's date, **08-17-25**.



Offertory Music    *My Body Is A Chamber*

J. Elliott  
Joel Karabo Elliott, Aditi Sethi, Jay Brown

Reflecting with Adithi Sethi and Joel Karabo Elliot

Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern

Music        *Mystery*

A. Sethi  
Joel Karabo Elliott, Aditi Sethi, Jay Brown

Meditation

**In Words**

**In Silence...**

*During this time if you have lost someone close to you in the past year,  
we invite you to stand or raise your hand in silent witness.*

**In Music**

Sermon        “Crossing the Threshold”

Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern

\*Hymn 324

*Where My Free Spirit Onward Leads*

KINGSFOLD

[\(CLICK HERE OR TURN TO PAGES 7-8 TO VIEW HYMN\)](#)

Brief Invitations

Linda Enger, Trustee

\*Benediction & Extinguishing of the Chalice

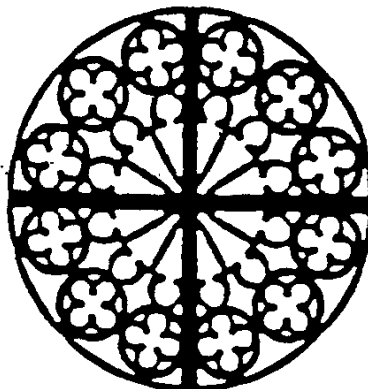
Postlude        *Thank You For Giving Us Life*

J. Elliott  
Joel Karabo Elliott, Aditi Sethi, Jay Brown

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\*Please rise in body or spirit.



# PARTICIPANTS

## **Worship Leaders**

Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern, Senior Minister

Gregory Stevens, Worship Associate

Linda Enger, Trustee

## **Sunday Support**

Alicia Cover; Eric Shackelford; Shulee Ong; Eli Boshears, Camera Operators

Grace Bradley, Sound

Kelvin Jones; Matias Pineda Salazar; Francisco Castellanos, Sextons

Athena Papadakis, Flowers

Linda Messner, Head Usher

## **Musicians**

Akane Ota, songleader

Bill Ganz, pianist

Joel Karabo Elliott, Aditi Sethi, Jay Brown

## About

The Ways of Remembrance ensemble, consisting of Joel Karabo Elliott, Dr. Aditi Sethi, and Jay Brown, is a world music and devotional group formed at the Center for Conscious Living & Dying in Swannanoa, NC. Their music blends contemplative folk, ambient improvisation, and kirtan, drawing inspiration from diverse cultural roots including India, Native America, Appalachia, Southern Africa, and the Caribbean, all rooted in deep listening and trust developed through shared experiences in rites of passage. Dr. Aditi Sethi, a hospice MD and executive director of the Center, along with her husband Jay Brown, a musical poet and music therapist, and Joel Karabo Elliott, a composer and educator, contribute to this ensemble. Today, from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., the Heart and Soul Center of Light in Oakland, CA, will host a screening of a documentary about Ethan Sisser's journey through dying, followed by a discussion led by Dr. Sethi on community-centered end-of-life care, complemented by live music from the ensemble that emphasizes reverence and connection. For more information, visit <https://t.ly/20250817Event>.

## The Threshold Choir

Threshold Choir (<https://thresholdchoir.org/>), which turned 25 this year, is a group whose vision is "a world where all at life's thresholds may be honored with compassion shared through song." Each Threshold Choir chapter is firmly rooted in its local community while also being an important part of our shared community as an international organization. Singers receive specialized training around death and grief, bringing calm to the bedside and producing a lullaby-like, harmonized blend of sound. Threshold Choir is a 501(c)(3) organization. Rev. Alyson Jacks was part of the San Francisco choir, and they have sung before at UUSE.

## Offertory Update

On August 10 we took the offering for the organization Caminante Cultural Foundation and we raised a total of \$559.00.

## Morning Has Broken

*♩. = 56 Unison*

1. Morn - ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing, black-bird has  
 2. Sweet the rain's new fall sun-lit from heav - en, like the first  
 3. Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing born of the

spo - ken like the first bird. Praise for the  
 dew - fall on the first grass. Praise for the  
 one light E - den saw play! Praise with e -

sing - ing! Praise for the morn - ing! Praise for them,  
 sweet - ness of the wet gar - den, sprung in com -  
 la - tion, praise ev - ery morn - ing, God's re - cre -

spring - ing fresh from the Word!  
 plete - ness where God's feet pass.  
 a - tion of the new day!

Words: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965, used by perm. of David Higham Assoc., Ltd.  
 Music: Gaelic melody, © 1931 Oxford University Press, harmony by David  
 Evans, 1874-1948

BUNESSAN  
 5.5.5.4.D.

M O R N I N G

# Where My Free Spirit Onward Leads

$\text{♩} = 116$

1. Where my free spir - it on - ward leads, well,  
 2. My fam - i - ly is not con - fined to  
 3. The ev - er spin - ning u - ni - verse, well,

there shall be my way; by my own light il -  
 moth - er, mate, and child; but it in - cludes all  
 there shall be my home; I sing and spin with -

lu - mined I've jour - neyed night and  
 crea - tures be they tame or be they  
 in it as through this life I

day; my age, a time - worn cloak I wear as  
 wild; my fam - i - ly up - on this earth in -  
 roam; e - ter - ni - ty is hard to ken and

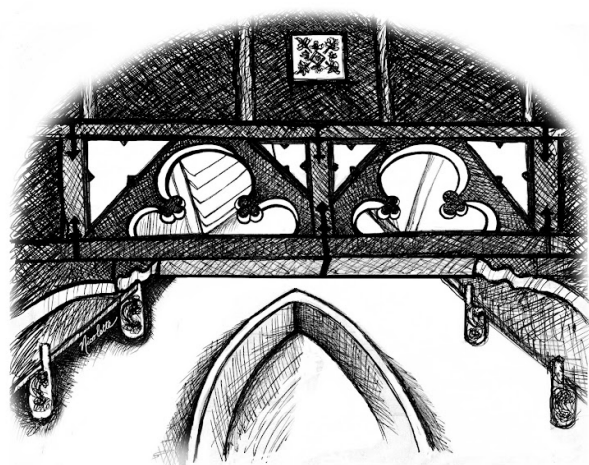
⊕ Words: Alicia S. Carpenter, 1930- , © 1989 Alicia S. Carpenter  
 Music: English traditional melody, harmony and arr. by Ralph Vaughan  
 Williams, 1872-1958, used by perm. of Oxford University Press

KINGSFOLD  
C.M.D.

HUMANITY: WOMEN AND MEN

once I wore my youth, I cel - e - brate life's  
- cludes all liv - ing things on land, or in the  
hard - er still is this: a hu - man life when

mys - ter - y; I cel - e - brate death's truth.  
o - cean deep, or borne a - loft on wings.  
tru - ly seen is brief - er than a kiss.





## TODAY!

### **We Will Not Look Away Vigil - Sunday, August 17, 8:00 am, UUSF front steps**

The We Will Not Look Away Vigil will take place on Sunday, August 17, at 8:00 am on the front steps of UUSF, organized by the UUSF Human Rights Working Group. Participants are invited to gather in grief for the lives lost in Palestine and to reignite a sense of shared humanity. Attendees are encouraged to bring items such as candles, stones, pictures, and empty bowls to honor those affected by the crisis. This vigil serves as a powerful declaration against indifference, calling for the return of UNRWA and the closure of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

### **Join the UU Vote/Reclaim Our Vote Initiative for Voter Support - Sunday, August 10, 12:15 pm, Gallery**

Visit the UU the Vote/Reclaim Our Vote table in the gallery today or any Sunday from now until early October to learn how you can assist with writing postcards of encouragement to voters in a significant election. Watch the inaugural event at <https://t.ly/reclaimthevoteevent>

### **UUSF Environmental Justice - Sunday, August 17, 12:30 pm, Fahs Room**

Join the UUSF Environmental Justice Working Group for monthly meetings on the third Sunday of each month at 12:30 pm in the Fahs Room. Everyone is welcome to share ideas and volunteer for projects, and check out our webpage at [www.uusf.org/environmental-justice](http://www.uusf.org/environmental-justice).

### **Art Unveiled: Discover the Emotional Geometry and Ancient Beauty in the Kings Gallery**

Join us after church on Sunday to explore the new artwork by **Steve Sweetser** and **Judith Williams** in the King Rooms, featuring Sweetser's mixed media pieces and Williams' encaustic paintings. Don't miss the opportunity to engage with their unique artistic expressions. Additionally, participate in the **UUSF Family and Friends Art Show**, open to UUSF members, families, and friends. Artists can submit 1-3 ready-to-hang pieces on August 24 from 10-2:00 pm, with an artist reception scheduled for September 7th from 12:15 pm to 3:00 pm.

## UPCOMING HAPPENINGS

### **Join Us in Supporting Open Door Legal: Volunteer for a Garden Renovation and Make a Difference!**

Open Door Legal, a nonprofit in San Francisco, offers free legal services to low-income residents, and UUSF is organizing a garden renovation project in collaboration with ODL in response to their desire to use their space at 60 Ocean Ave for gatherings and also consultations, particularly when children are present. Volunteers are needed for three Saturdays in September to assist with the renovation, and interested individuals can sign up at <https://t.ly/gardenproject25> or scan the QR Code. Donations are also encouraged to support Open Door Legal's mission, with contributions directly benefiting the garden project and the essential legal services they provide. To contribute, go to <https://t.ly/uusfdonate> and select the **Open Door Garden Project** for your donation.



### **Sunday School Registration Now Open**

Each year we ask families to register their children and youth for our programming. This allows us to determine the staff and space we need on Sundays. You can register at <https://t.ly/RE2025-26> or scan the QR code.



### **Minister's Book Group - *James* by Percival Everett - Wednesday, August 20, 6:30-8:00 pm (Zoom)**

Everett is a distinguished professor of English at the University of Southern California. In *James* he takes the story of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the classic tale by Mark Twain, and flips it, putting the runaway slave, Jim (James), at the center. Lionel Trilling called *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, "one of the world's great books and one of the central documents of American culture." Everett is not just playing with a classic; he is upending a national narrative. And does so, apparently, with incredible skill and power. Info & to register: <https://uusf.org/are#mbg>

### **Join the UUSF Food Pantry: Volunteer, Help Families, and Make a Difference! - Saturday, August 23!**

Join the UUSF Food Pantry on Saturday, August 23, from 8:15 am to 11:15 am at Old First Presbyterian Church to volunteer and help families in need. Parking vouchers are available, and families with children aged 5 and older are welcome to participate; sign up by going to <https://www.uusf.org/foodpantry>

### **SCW 2026 Community Grants Application Period Opens - Website: [uusf.org/scwcommunitygrants](http://uusf.org/scwcommunitygrants)**

The Society for Community Work (SCW) has funded small nonprofits for over 100 years. The SCW Community Grants Committee, including Mary Jane Mikuriya, Bick Simpson, Melvin Starks, Anne Steele, and Athena Papadakos, review applications. Last year, grants ranged from \$500 to \$5,000 for various services. Applications are due by September 30! Questions? [scw-communitygrants@uusf.org](mailto:scw-communitygrants@uusf.org).

# UPCOMING HAPPENINGS

## UPCOMING STARR KING WAY PERFORMANCE SERIES (SKWPS) [uusf.org/skwps](https://uusf.org/skwps)

### August 31 - Strings of Innovation: Giacomo Fiore's Musical Journey and Upcoming Performance!

Giacomo Fiore presents a performance of his immersive work for guitar and electronics, *Lost Horse Wash Drone*, a suite of five pieces composed while in residence at the Lou Harrison House in Joshua Tree, California, incorporating field recordings from Joshua Tree National Park alongside structured improvisations informed by some of Harrison's compositional principles.

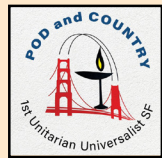


### September 21 - Jazz Magic: An Enchanting Afternoon with Shannon, Bob, and Camellia!

Join us for an enchanting afternoon of music with Shannon and Bob as they perform beloved jazz standards from their 2022 CD, *A Moment with Bob*. Shannon Warty, known for her angelic voice and love for jazz, hails from the Monterey Peninsula and now resides in San Francisco. Bob Phillips, a renowned local jazz pianist, brings joy and improvisation to his performances. Additionally, ethereal flutist Camellia Latta will add her soul-stirring sound to select songs. Don't miss this unforgettable concert!

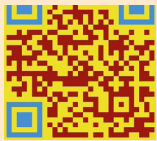


A recommended donation of \$20 is suggested, but no student discount is available. Everyone is encouraged to attend, as no one will be denied entry.



### Pod and Country Episode 4 is out now! - Check it out by going to <https://podandcountry.podbean.com/>

In this episode we continue in the best tradition of Unitarian Universalism to take it to the streets. We speak with Bill Ong Hing, a leading voice in the struggle to ensure that immigrants are treated with dignity and fairness under the law that serves all of us regardless of our immigration status. Bill is a law professor and Associate Dean at the University of San Francisco and is the founding director of the Immigration and Deportation Defense Clinic. We also have a delightful conversation with the Rev. Stacy Craig who serves as the minister to both the Chequamegon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Wisconsin and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Chico in northern California. As with every episode, we offer a bit of comedy (hard to do in these times!), poetry and music. Come on in! Questions? Email us at [podandcountry@uusf.org](mailto:podandcountry@uusf.org)



## WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

If you're new, please familiarize yourself with the guidance and support available on Sundays below. If you have any questions, an usher, greeter, or member of staff will be happy to help.

**COVID-19:** UUSF no longer requires masks indoors on our premises, following the lead of the San Francisco Department of Health. We do, however, encourage people to wear masks or do anything else that protects and respects their own health and comfort. There is a designated mask-only area on the far right side of the Sanctuary. If you feel unwell, please stay home and enjoy the service at home via livestream. ([bit.ly/uusfmedia](https://bit.ly/uusfmedia))

**BUSY HANDS:** Explore our Busy Hands activity station located at the back of the sanctuary. You will find things like fidget toys and coloring for all ages to help you keep your hands busy during service. Please return items before leaving the sanctuary.

**Pets:** If you came with your pet, there is a pet-friendly section on the furthest section on the left toward the front of the sanctuary.

**HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICE:** We can provide hearing assistance devices for the service. These are with the ushers in the back of the sanctuary, who will help you get oriented and comfortable with one.

**CANDLES:** In Unitarian Universalism we light candles to recognize sacred time, honor loved ones, mark important life events, and more. If you have something on your mind for which you'd like to light a candle, you are invited to come forward and light one silently during service.

**SOCIAL HOUR:** Everyone is welcome and invited to join us at social hour after service. This is normally in the courtyard (when weather permits) or in our Thomas Starr King room at the end of the hallway outside of the sanctuary. Help yourself to beverages and snacks!

### Welcome to UUSF: Connect and Discover

**NEW TO UUSF?** Complete a Connections form to receive our newsletter, which includes a link to the Order of Service and Sunday Livestream. If you're at UUSF in person, you can find a yellow connections card at the welcome table in the gallery outside the sanctuary or in a pew in front of you. You can also fill it out online at <https://bit.ly/uuconnections2024>.

**A GUIDE FOR NEWCOMERS:** What to Expect During Worship (read at <https://bit.ly/newcomersguide-uusf>)

# Welcome to the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco

1187 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

415-776-4580 / [info@uusf.org](mailto:info@uusf.org)

## OUR SOCIETY'S VISION

We, The First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, delight in our authentic, inclusive congregation that reaches across generations, ethnicities, and differences. We take care of one another, building spiritual community, knowing that we are stronger and accomplish more together. Guided by our responsibility to future generations, we take leadership in shaping a compassionate, sustainable world. Inspired by our courageous heritage and compelled by conscience, we hold one another accountable to work for racial, environmental, and economic justice and the dignity and rights of all.

## OUR SOCIETY'S MISSION

As a vibrant, joyous, caring, inclusive community of diverse people, we create a nurturing space for spiritual growth and learning. Based on our shared values, we work together courageously and publicly for human rights, economic justice, and environmental salvation.

## CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT (under construction)

In an effort to make the world a better place, we support each other's journey to seek truth with openness, curiosity and respect for different perspectives and paths.

As love is our spirit, we commit to respect, accept, listen to and support each other.

We hold ourselves and each other accountable by continually assessing our individual and community actions toward living into our covenant. This will include speaking up when someone's actions are not aligned.

We commit to be in community with openness and loving kindness, acknowledging our own biases and differing perspectives.

We welcome the newcomer, we commit to building trust with each other, we celebrate differences and make space for repair when harm occurs.

## UUSF MEDIA

View our videos <http://www.youtube.com/c/UUSFMedia>

Check out our Podcasts <https://www.uusf.org/worship-archives>

Go to our website at <https://www.uusf.org/>

<https://www.uusf.org/recent-and-upcoming-services>

**"Love at the Center Part 2"**  
Sunday, August 10, 10:50 am, 2025



Scan the QR code ↑ to  
visit our UUSF Media  
YouTube channel and  
view upcoming and  
previously recorded  
services.