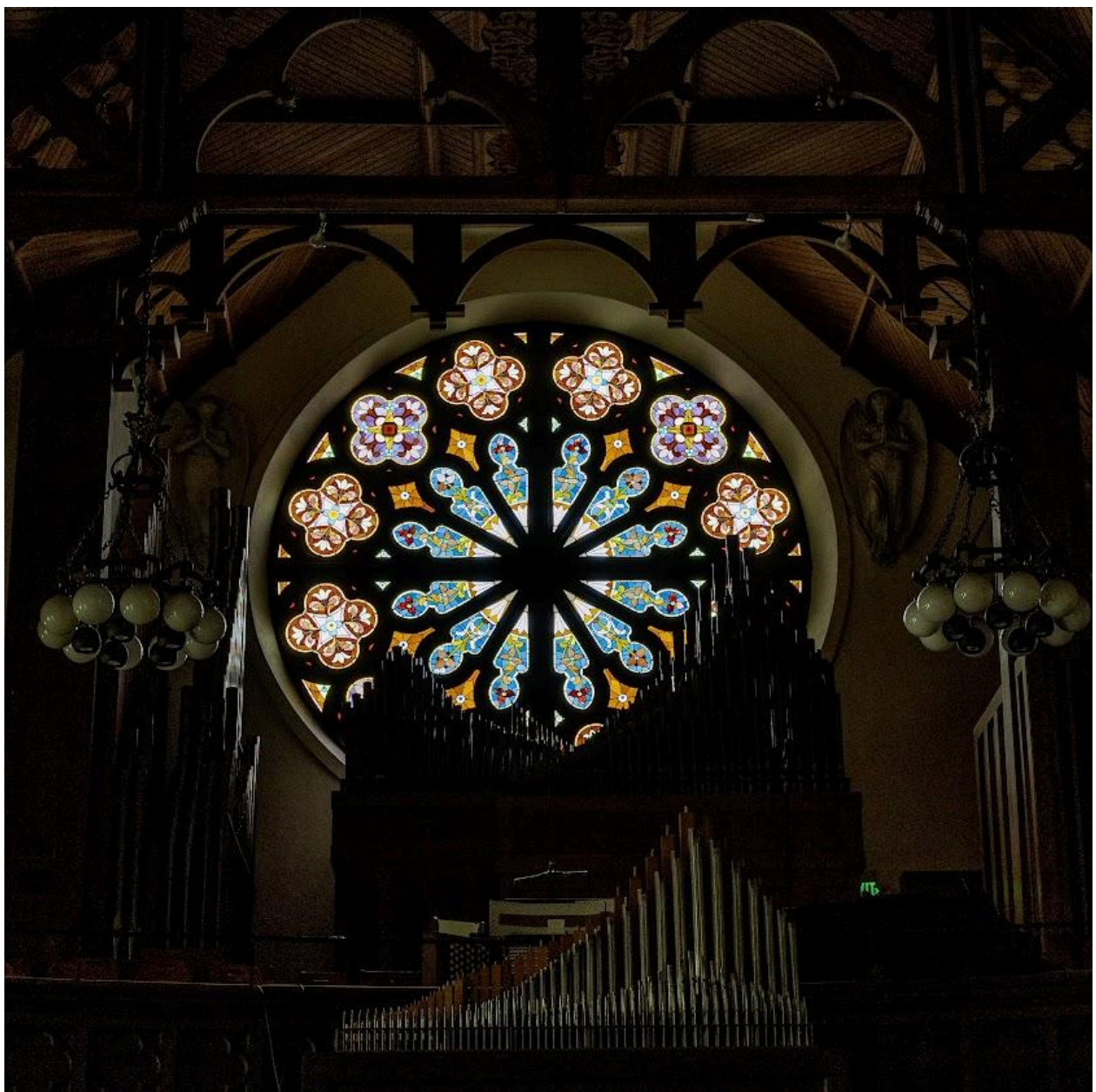


# First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco

2025 - 2026 Annual Report



## Table of Contents

<b>Annual Meeting Agenda - June 7, 2026</b> .....	2
<b>Senior Minister’s Annual Report to the Congregation</b> .....	3
<b>Minister for Congregational Life’s Annual Report to the Congregation</b> .....	11
<b>Ministerial Intern’s Annual Report to the Congregation</b> .....	15
<b>Minutes from 2025-26 Congregational Meetings</b>	
• June 8, 2025 - Annual Meeting.....	18
• February 8, 2026 - Special Voting Meeting.....	20
Text of Proposed Statement of Public Concern.....	21
• March 15, 2026 - Special Voting Meeting.....	22
• May 31, 2026 - Budget Meeting.....	23
<i>These minutes will be inserted into the Annual Report after the meeting occurs.</i>	
<b>UUSF Committees and Groups Reports</b>	
• 20s and 30s Community (TnT).....	24
• Affiliated Community Ministry (Rev. Millie Phillips).....	26
• Affiliated Community Ministry (Rev. Seanan Fong).....	29
• Animal Ministry (UUAM).....	31
• Art Committee.....	32
• Communications.....	33
• Environmental Justice Working Group (EJWG).....	36
• Facilities Advisory Committee.....	38
• Forum.....	39
• Human Rights Working Group (HRWG).....	40
• Journey Toward Wholeness (JTW).....	45
• Membership Committee.....	48
• Men’s Breakfast Group.....	50
• Pagan Interest Circle (PICT).....	51
• Pastoral Care.....	54
• Personnel Committee.....	57
• Rheiner Award Committee.....	58
• Society for Community Work (SCW).....	59
• UU Service Committee (UUSC).....	60

**First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco**  
**Annual Meeting of the Membership**  
**June 7, 2026**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Opening Words
3. Appointment of Parliamentarian and tellers
4. Agenda review
5. Approval of minutes of prior Congregational Meetings
6. Introduction of nominees for Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee
7. Nominations from floor for Nominating Committee
8. Voting
9. May Treat Morrison tribute and reading (presenter Bob Bacon)
10. About this year
  - a. Senior Minister's Report
  - b. Moderator's Message
11. Staff appreciation
12. Announcement of Election Results
13. Appreciation for our committees and volunteers
14. Recognition of Board members whose terms are ending
15. Presentation of Anne Dillon Award
16. In Memoriam
17. Closing Words
18. Adjournment

## Annual Report to the Congregation

Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern, Senior Minister

June 7, 2026

*This year we celebrated our 175th anniversary, launched a sanctuary renewal project, welcomed a ministry intern, deepened our connections across the UU world and the city of San Francisco, and continued the faithful work of gathering in meaningful worship, lifting up the arts and music as part of our lives, taking care of one another, hosting forums to engage the hardest questions of the day,*



*and opened our Center to thousands of people, using it as a vessel to support community and civic strength. This was also a year that called on our congregation again, and ever-more deeply to live our values publicly and persistently. Sometimes tired, often heartbroken, we answered that call. What follows is a summary of some of the highlights across the major areas of church life from the 2025–2026 program year.*

### 175th Celebration

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This year First UU Society reached our 175th year of existence. The 175th Anniversary was headed up by a committee of dedicated folks: The Rev. John Buehrens, Linda Enger, Jack Delo, Gino Fortunato, Milo Hanke, Judy Payne, and Gayle Reynolds. Thanks to them! The larger group of people who made all the events happen is much longer. The UUSF website has a page that links to all the 175th services

and other information! Thanks to everyone who made this anniversary extravaganza possible! So *what happened.....you ask...*

**Events:** The celebratory month (October 2025) featured **three commemorative services**, including guest preaching by the Rev. Diane Miller, who served the congregation from 1978-1981, and the Rev. John Buehrens, who served from 2013-2015. John Buehrens also delivered a **special lecture on Horatio Stebbins**, accompanied by the unveiling of a historic set of silver gifted back to the congregation by Stebbins' grandson. On the final Sunday of the month there was also a **celebratory catered luncheon and the annual auction**. The auction items contributed by church members raised

\$20,350 for the operating budget, and the **Fund-a-Need** portion of the auction raised \$168,657 to beautify/freshen up the sanctuary. Many thanks to Stephen Gerard made a transformative \$75,000 designated gift in honor of his late wife Trudy Lionel, followed by an additional \$30,000 matching gift to help the congregation reach its goal. Here is what has followed:

- An Ad Hoc Sanctuary Rejuvenation Committee was formed, including Linda Enger, Judy Payne, Gayle Reynolds, Keith Hollon and Liz Strand, to manage the vendor selection and design process.
- Carpet: The new carpet was selected and was installed in April 2026.
- Cushion recovering and restuffing: Fabric samples were sourced from Los Angeles interior designer David Desmond and final decisions about production are being made.
- Separately, a new high-resolution large screen was donated to the church by a friend of the congregation, which debuted on Easter.
- Other donations made by Lee Most in honor of his wife, Uvonne Most, who we lost this year, are engaging a metal worker in the East Bay to forge additional candle holders to replace those that have broken over the decades that are part of our central sculpture in the sanctuary.



## Worship & the Arts

This year the congregation continued using the Soul Matters thematic curriculum as a framework for worship and spiritual practices. Each month themes were woven into our service topics (as appropriate) and came with downloadable poetry and imagery for reflection and a bulletin board prepared by Alicia Cover for shared responses to an invitational community question for reflection.

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## Worship Highlights

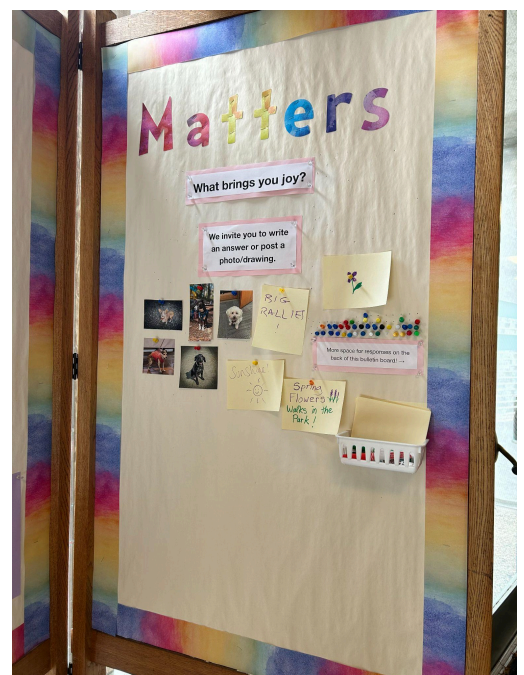
- Drawing from the many traditions and communities in the congregation services, again, reached broadly. They included a powerful Lunar New Year service led by Affiliated Community Minister, the Rev. Seanan Fong; an All-Souls/Day of the Dead service with our annual *Ofrendas* or memorial altars in the gallery and in worship; an International Women's Day service led by Women's Reproductive Rights Group; an Earth Day service featuring a wonderful musical

collaboration with the Kensington UU Choir (and an orchestra) all led by Mark Sumner; and the Youth Sunday celebrated graduating seniors and included a Boy Scout badge conferral.

- Our Ministerial Intern, Mark Caswell has been a wonderful addition to the worship team. He has led and participated in many worship services, including working with our Animal Rights Group at UUSF to do our annual Blessing of the Animals, a Blue Holidays midweek service; and coordinated the liturgy for the Earth Day service.
- Beyond Our Walls: We participated in the larger world of liturgy beyond our walls. Congregation members and I attended and participated in the annual Vigil for those homeless and housing insecure who died in San Francisco, held at Civic Center Plaza. Jeff Pekrul, Mark Caswell and I attended the Iftar dinner and celebration at City Hall. And in the fall, on October 30th, I was asked to preach at the evensong on October 30th for an interfaith farewell service for the Rev. Canon Anna Rossi, at Grace Cathedral.

### Rites of Passage

- We had a few member weddings this year which was a great joy. Bruce Clements and Carol Fleming were wed on Valentine's Day in the chapel and a week later Jim Valent and Pattie Melvin were married!
- We also lost many great and much loved members this year and celebrated their lives together. I was part of services in honor of Julia Thoron, Suzie Thorn, Larry Danos, Uvonne Most, and Kamaria Ventura (wife of congregant Mwangi Mukami). This year we also lost Fred Rabidoux, Jim Stevens, and Kett Zegart.



### Music & Arts

- Arts in Ministry and Shared Life offered a full season of programming. This year there was Bruce Clements' creative staging of "Hansel and Gretel Reimagined," and a Halloween writers' reading event led by Mari Magaloni Ramos and Michael Bossier. Mark Sumner and Nancy Munn organized a year of SKWPS concerts events that brought a wide variety of performers to our space and with donations-only-ticketing, no one was turned away for lack of funds. The "Caroling for a Cause" concert in December, organized with Mark Sumner, drew strong community attendance to our sanctuary.



- Finally the Art Committee did another amazing array of shows, including the astounding quilt show by Sue Fox that raised money for the Ken Keep Kindness fund that supports meeting a variety of pastoral and supportive needs of members.
- We were part of a launch event for member Kathleen McClung’s new poetry chapbook. I was the MC for the event which involved a reading and discussion of the book: Climbing the Fire Escape, Flipping the Raft: Poems on Women in Movies

### Justice Ministry & Public Witness

This was another year in which UUSF’s commitment to justice was expressed not only in words from the pulpit but in the streets, at City Hall, and in solidarity with partners across the country and the world, in letter writing, phone calls, marching and financial support.

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- Clergy Call to Minneapolis/St. Paul (January 2026): Rev. Southern, Rev. Shennum, and intern Mark Caswell traveled to Minneapolis to join a march protesting ICE abuses and human rights violations. The congregation raised funds to offset the costs of attending and to support local organizers; approximately \$2,700–\$3,000 was raised in a special offering. In the spring I spoke at Sha’ar Zahav about our trip to Minneapolis/St. Paul in a forum about their immigrant support work.
- Interfaith Presence and Participation: UUSF sponsored a table at the SF Interfaith Thanksgiving Breakfast, with a delegation of ten including ministers, seminarians, and congregational leaders, focused on the theme of Sanctuary. I also delivered the opening reflection at the 9/11 gathering of the monthly gatherings of the SF Interfaith Council. UUSF participated as a “sponsoring ally” of the Community Iftar at City Hall (March 12), and some of us attended the Or Shalom Seder at UUSF.



- No Kings March (March 28, 2026): Members and ministers marched together in San Francisco; in October members Marched in the first No Kings March in San Francisco while Rev. Southern, following a UUA Board Meeting in Boston, joined clergy in the No Kings March in Providence, Rhode Island.
- Wall of Clergy Vigil (November 6): Rev. McAninley, Mark Caswell, and Rev. Southern participated in a clergy vigil at SF Immigration Courts, with UUSF named and recognized for showing up consistently as faith witnesses.
- UUSC Reparations Summit: In March I attended, with UUSC Board and Staff and partners from Haiti and the Bahamas, a gathering to support the conversation and organizing efforts that would aim at mounting an international argument for reparations for Haiti. The UUSC underwrote the event, requested by its grassroots partners in Haiti.
- Advocacy on California Death Penalty: Rev. Southern and Bob Bacon were present on the steps of City Hall in support of a resolution to commute all California death sentences; Rev. Southern and Michael Pappas, Executive Director of the Interfaith Council toured the offices of the Superintendents of San Francisco speaking to their staff or representatives on behalf of the resolution.
- A UUSC panel and luncheon was organized by Linda Harris and Marty Vanderlan and held in late November with UUSC Board member Rohit Menezes and others; Executive Director Mary Catherine Morn was featured in a December program.
- Please note that these are only the events and actions I was part of. Members of UUSF, often together, but also alone, showed up again and again and again in actions and events and gatherings in the Bay Area and around the country.

## Fundraising

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### Stewardship and Annual Giving

The **Stewardship Committee** (a small and mighty group), oversaw the very successful auction, annual Holiday Fair, and 2025–2026 annual giving campaign. The **annual giving drive** was co-chaired by Judy Payne and Chantel Boshears, with broad participation from staff, volunteers, and board members. Its theme is “Igniting the Fire of Commitment” and as this report is being written we are almost 90% of the way toward our ambitious goal of \$825,000, and are reaching out to try and make the additional \$85,000.



### Offerings

Most Sundays we take our offerings. Only four or five times this year was it for our own operating expenses. It can also be for additional efforts UUSF is part of — from donations to the discretionary

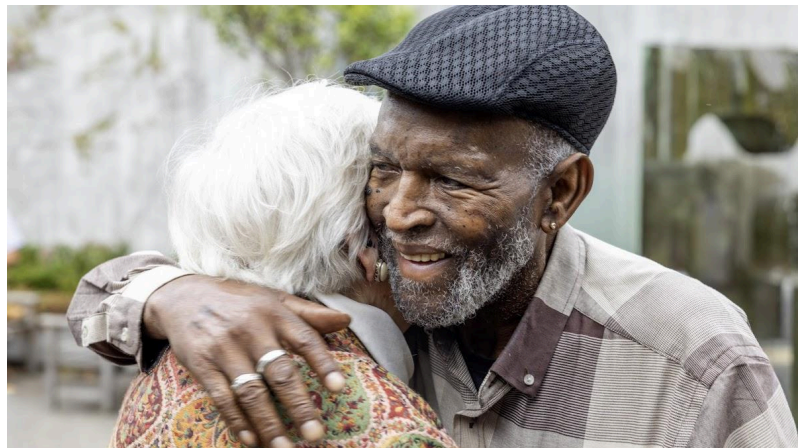
fund, toward new initiatives that are outside the budget and to support things like our SCW scholarships and grants. The rest are for outside organizations. **As of May 10th, the offerings have taken in over \$45,000 only \$2431 went toward our own operating expenses.** The remainder went to support our SCW scholarship and community grants programs, Up On Top, Faithful Fools, five UU efforts and organizations, and over 35 local and national non-profits. The money we raise for larger work at UUSF and beyond raises multiples of what offerings for our own operations raise — so we have embraced this leaning! Besides the multiplier effect, there are other benefits: People who give get the tax write off without the junk mail, and with each check goes a letter of larger institutional support of our congregation, which gives UUSF a larger power and presence in our shared giving. Thank you all for your generosity, in all the ways it shows up at UUSF!

## Staff

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### Staff

We have been able to keep a solid staff team together for the full year, with the only transitions being due to the loss of Thomas Brown this year. Thomas, who had been at UUSF for three decades, I believe, was a hard loss personally and professionally to our community. UUSF underwrote the reception at his Memorial service in New Orleans and Remigio Flood attended (along with Thomas' granddaughter, Brenaja, who teaches Sunday School). Justin Roth joined the staff recently on our (part-time) sexton team.



### Seminarians/Interns

#### **UUSF welcomed Mark Caswell as our intern this year:**

I will let Mark's own report speak to his work, which has involved everything from support for worship (including meaningful vespers and collaborative services in the sanctuary) to classes, creative workshops, witnessing in support of Trans students and athletes, pastoral support for members, and so much else. We will have a reception in Mark's honor after his last Sunday sermon on June 21st!

## **UUSF became the sponsoring congregation for two seminarians this year:**

- Mari Magaloni Ramos, enrolled at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, remains deeply involved in congregational life, serving on the Board this year as well as the Worship Associates!
- Wayne Hsiung, enrolled at Union Theological Seminary in NYC. Wayne may be studying in England next year and was recently arrested as part of his animal rights activism and ongoing effort to lobby for the legal “Right to Rescue.”
- Both have received Hinckley scholarships.



## **Adult Programming**

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- The Minister’s Book Group met less frequently this year but gathered to discuss titles that included “Awe” by Dacher Keltner, “Imagination: A Manifesto” by Ruha Benjamin, “Better Living Through Birding” by Christian Cooper, and the poetry of Wislawa Szymborska.
- Pod and Country, UUSF’s podcast, completed a six-episode first season, the final episode going live in October. A bonus Halloween episode was released before the podcast went on hiatus to assess next steps.

## **UUA Board Service and UUMA Connections**

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I began my term on the UUA Board of Trustees this year, and began serving as liaison to the Commission on Social Witness — the body that oversees social justice resolutions at General



Assembly and the follow-through actions. The monthly UUMA gatherings that Rev. Laura and I rebooted (after 20 years) with Rev. Brian Ferguson last year continued strong and are bearing larger fruits in cooperation and health of the Bay Area UU clergy and congregations. I participated in the UUMA Institute for the Learning Ministry in Albuquerque (January 2026) and will be participating in UUA General Assembly as a Board Delegate.

## **Looking Ahead: Sabbatical Planning**

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The board received an initial briefing this year on sabbatical accruals and planning for both ministers. Rev. Southern and Rev. Shennum both have four months accrued. The working proposal is for both

ministers to take sabbatical in the coming program year from December 1 to March 1 (for me) and until April 1 (for Rev. Shennum). Formal planning is underway with lay leaders Galen Workman and Linda Enger. If you are interested in helping with that effort, please reach out to any of us.

\* \* \*

*Thank you all for another year of fulfilling ministry, in another year of interesting times. Resilience fatigue was real at times, but being in it together was powerful and healing and allowed many of us, myself included, to rise to hope and work for change again and again.*

*In faith and with love and gratitude,*



Vanessa Southern



**Annual Report to the Congregation**  
**Rev. Laura Shennum, Minister of Congregational Life**  
**June 7, 2026**

Children/Youth Programming

We had 38 children/youth register for our programming this year, which included 27 families.

Our Nursery/Pre-K class explored the same congregational themes that were explored in worship through the Soul Matters curriculum led by teachers Brenaja Cates, Shantanyze Lockett, Oriana Jooss Moren, and Arson Bacon-Bratton. Arson is a new teen staff person this year. The children had storytime and simple crafts.

Our Elementary class explored the Soul Matters Themes through story, games, crafts, and Legos. The elementary class was led by Charu Sharma with a volunteer assistant through March. Then, Charu decided to leave due to personal issues and Jayden White was hired to lead the class.



We had one student, Robert Jumonville, Jr, pursue and earn a UU Love & Help Cub Scout Badge. Sam King and Robert's father led activities I developed throughout the year. We presented the badge at the Annual Youth Service on May 3.

Our Middle and High School youth were encouraged to volunteer or participate in the life of the church on Sundays. Then, they had monthly gatherings to build community. They had a pizza party, learned about finance, went ice skating, and so much more. They were led by Diana Bacon and Sam King.



In addition, the K-12 graders had a monthly service project they did. They made blessing bags, snacks for Coffee Hour, welcome bags for new families, bird feeders, and cards to send to congregants.

We had a full event calendar and here is a list of the many events from this year:

September - Annual Waffle Breakfast & Opening Sunday

October - Halloween Party

November - Thanksgiving Potluck & Games

December - Parent/Guardian Day Out; Hanging of the Greens; Holiday Pageant

February - Cooked Winter Shelter Dinner

March - FMC potluck & games

April - Easter Egg Hunt

May - Youth Worship Service; All Church Retreat

June - End of Year Party!



My collaboration partners were the Family Ministry Committee, chaired by Dennielle Kronenberg. Other members were: Jay Gupta, Christine Patch-Lindsay, Diana Bacon, Chantel Boshears, Ruth Wong, and Alicia Cover. A retreat was held on July 27 to identify goals for the year and orient new members. FMC provided greeters on Sunday mornings this year to welcome any new families.

Dennielle is stepping down as chair and Diana Bacon will be stepping into the role. We will have a retreat on July 11 to plan for the upcoming year.

Alicia Cover did another year of amazing work coordinating our classroom supplies, recruiting volunteers, and assisting in classrooms. In this upcoming year, Alicia will be taking on more responsibility, especially during the sabbatical time.

### Adult Spiritual Growth

The Minister's Book Group was led by Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern.

The Small Group Ministry program had one traditional group this year and then several other types of groups: Young Adult Spiritual Group; Craft the Theme group; Spiritual Practices Group. I will be leading a small group facilitator training this summer to hopefully reenergize the program. We will launch groups again in August.



Elena Perez continues to lead two meditation groups, one on Thursday mornings and the other on Friday mornings over Zoom. There has been consistent attendance and many participants are grateful for the space.

I taught a 5 week class discussing the book “Love at the Center: Unitarian Universalist Theologies” with 12-15 participants. Five participants provided reflections on what they learned for the August 10 worship service. I will offer this class again in the summer.

I led a 6 week class on Living Our UU Values Out Loud. We discussed the books “Calling In” by Loretta Ross; “The Separation of Church and Hate” by John Fugelsang; and “The Power of Bridging” by John Powell. This class was online and included participants from UUSF, UU Redwood City, UU Fresno, and UU Sacramento.

Our intern, Mark Caswell, offered a class on the UU Common Read and a class on processing religious past. See his report for more information.

We offered many different ways to engage the Soul Matters themes throughout each month. There was a monthly visio divina; question; worship; workshops; and so much more!

### Pastoral Care

I continue to partner with our Senior Minister and Lay Chaplains to provide pastoral care support to members and friends of the congregation. In addition to visits and phone calls, I officiated a memorial service for Jim Stevens and helped coordinate the service for Uvonne Jones-Moost.

### Membership & Young Adult

I worked with Emma to welcome new members, teach New UU classes, and provide opportunities to sign the book. We have a new membership committee chair, Ruth Wong, who is doing a great job in leading the committee.



Emma and I held a Young Adult Retreat the weekend of Jan 17-19th in Pescadero, 25 minutes south of Half Moon Bay. We had 16 Young Adults participate from UUSF, UU Berkeley, and UU Redwood City. A group of young adults participated and shared their reflection about the time during worship on Sunday, March 22.

### Greater Denominational Work

I attended Starr King School for the Ministry symposium in August and the graduation in May.

I continued to attend the Pacific Central UU Minister's group that met monthly.

I participated in a Clergy Study Group that met quarterly. Our topics were White Christian Nationalism, Crisis and Spirituality, and the book "Life After Doom."

I served on the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, which is the credentialing board for ministerial fellowship and conduct.

I participated in the Youth Collaboration Process along with Emma. This was a regional effort to address youth and young adult programming in the area as well as engage some of the issues that keep coming up. This involved clergy, religious educators, lay leaders, youth, and advisors from the surrounding churches.

I travelled to Minneapolis, MN in January with Vanessa and Mark to answer the call for support by those impacted by ICE.

I attended the UU Ministers Association Institute at the end of January in Albuquerque, NM.

I attended rallies and spoke at events to promote the rights of Transgender youth and adults.

Thank you to the wonderful staff that continue to support the work of the church. Thank you to my partners on the Executive Staff Team, Reverend Vanessa Rush Southern and Director Laura Ludwig. Thank you to our intern, Mark Caswell, and all he added to this year. Thank you for a great year and I look forward to our continued journey together.



Blessings,  
Rev. Laura Shenum

## Annual Report to the Congregation

Mark Caswell, Ministerial Intern

June 7, 2026

Thank you so much for a wonderful year with all of you in San Francisco. My time here has been incredibly formative. Our work together in this time of education and discernment, has in part, centered around 8 areas of competency designed by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee as guide posts for the next steps of Ministerial Formation.



### *One: Worship & Rites of Passage*

Time with the congregation on Sundays helped shape my presence and voice as a minister. Preaching on topics like relationship repair, grief and loss, identity, and our relationship with animals and the earth offered opportunities to develop that skill. Leading the story for all ages, prayer, and ritual design allowed space for me to incorporate my visual art background.

### *Two: Pastoral Care and Presence*

I have spent time with the Lay Chaplains each month learning both how much care the congregation requires and how much is offered. I spent hours at the hospital and homes of members who may not be able to make it to church in person. I also had many shorter conversations before, after, and during the services. An effort to understand the delicacies of these relationships inspired me to take “Healthy Boundaries 101” offered by the UUMA in May.



### *Three: Spiritual Development for Self and Others*

Attendance at the San Francisco Interfaith Breakfasts showed me the importance of developing interfaith relationships. Worshipping with other faith communities at the Or Shalom Seder and the San Francisco City Hall Iftar this Ramadan helped expand my understanding of diverse spiritual traditions. At UUSF, I also participated in a full moon ritual with the Pagan Interest Circle and acquired a growing understanding of Kwanzaa, and aided in the sounding of the Shofar.

### *Four: Social Justice in the Public Square*

Working alongside the Trans Working Group, I attended the Trans Health Care March in the East Bay in December. I also spoke

before the California Interscholastic Federation in Sacramento and then again in Oakland to support Trans Athletes by discontinuing a pilot program intended to force winning Trans Athletes to share the podium with the next-place cisgender athlete.

With help from the congregation, we sent “Hearts of Resistance” (notes of love and affirmation) to our congregations deeply affected by Operation Metro Surge. I also participated in the Wall of Clergy, Faith Walk Vigil ICE Out in San Francisco and No Kings: Santa Cruz.

As part of the clergy call to Minnesota, I summoned my design and sewing skills to quickly create three utilitarian stoles for myself and other ministers in formation. You see, in Unitarian Universalism, stoles are often reserved for ordained ministers, but with the harsh cold the organizers requested folks wear yellow “Side with Love” stoles for visibility over coats. After 10 hours of sewing, I delivered the stoles to fellow candidates for the ICE OUT of Minneapolis march.



#### *Five: Administration*

Through observation and supervision, I gained an understanding of the minister’s role in a mission-based organization through engaging board, committee, and staff meetings, in addition to learning the spiritual care and rest required to show up as a community leader.



In support of the stewardship committee Pledge Drive: I created an image based on the theme “Igniting the Flame of Commitment”, which then translated to an interactive art piece on the Bulletin Board; folks could add a flame with their name showing their commitment to UUSF. For the auction: I offered an Italian American Dinner and Kenosis Drawings which raised \$512.00. I also won a Hike to Mount Tamalpais with Diana Saylor and Tom Brookshire, which was a beautiful way to experience the mountain in April. At the holiday faire, in addition to a delicious meal, I acquired a number of fabulous pins from the jumble sale.

#### *Six: Serves the Larger Unitarian Universalist Faith*

As well as monthly Collegial Ministerial chapter meetings, I organized a group of Ministerial Interns serving Mt. Diablo, UU Church of Berkeley, and UU Church of Sacramento, which resulted in offering a digital vesper style service March 25, 2026, that was attended by members of multiple congregations.

I completed my Master of Divinity in December of 2025 at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities after completing my final class “Understanding Ritual Experience” remotely. Continuing education involved the Pacific Coast Chapter Minister’s Study Group, which met twice this year to share resources about Christian Nationalism and Our Theological Grounding for a Crisis. I also attended the UUMA Institute in Albuquerque, NM, where I focused on “Improv for Liberation.” At the General Assembly, I will serve as a member of the covenant team.

*Seven: Leads the Faith into the Future*

I led a Book Discussion about the UU Common Read for 2025-26, *Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and Connection* by Deepa Iyer, led four deep and meaningful sessions of “Owning Your Religious Past,” co-facilitated by Julia Wald, and organized the community conversation “UU and AI.” I also spent time with the youth on Sunday reading stories out loud and making “Welcome Bags” for newcomers, Chex Mix for the Family Ministry Pot Luck, as well as Robots out of cardboard tubes to practice resilience.



*Eight: Theology*

During sermons, rituals, retreats, and study groups, I was able to discuss my theological grounding and exploration. I attended the Pacific Coast Chapter Minister’s Retreats in the Spring and Fall, as well as the Starr King Symposium, and a 12-Step Retreat called Finding Fellowship. In the past year, my experience at the Tsubaki Shrine opened my heart to the spirit that resides around us, while my 12-Step Spirituality has helped provide me with a design for living grounded in prayer, meditation, and relationship repair. Moving from self to service, from individual to community, we can recognize that the healing we do within ourselves ultimately heals the entire system. Even theologies of interdependence make space for the unexpected in situations of conflict. Our future as Unitarian Universalists is ultimately interwoven with the liberation of all those we share in this beautiful reality.

**Intern Committee**

I want to thank the Intern Committee, which has supported me during my time serving at UUSF. This has meant helping me grow, and offering both positive and critical feedback. Thank you: Sue Anthony, Sara Feree, Stephanie Gowin, Jeff Jones, Paul Kensinger, Gregory Stevens, and Shulee Ong.

My last preaching date will be Father’s Day, June 21, 2026.

**FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO**  
**Draft Minutes of the Annual Meeting**  
**JUNE 8, 2025**

Vice Moderator Sam King called the meeting to order at 12:55 pm. Senior Minister Vanessa Rush Southern read opening words (from Bless the Imperfect: Meditations for Congregational Leaders). Sam appointed Bob Bacon as parliamentarian and Laura Davis and Linda Enger as tellers. The agenda was reviewed; no changes were proposed.

Sam called for approval of the minutes of congregational meetings during the last year: the [2024 Annual Meeting](#), [Resolution of Immediate Witness meeting](#), [May budget meeting](#) Richard Davis so moved, Amy Kelly seconded. All minutes were approved.

Carrie Steere-Salazar, chair of the Nominating Committee, introduced the slates of candidates for Nominating Committee (Hanna Clements-Hart [incumbent], Aimee Alden, Sherry Delo) and Board of Trustee (Diane Allen [incumbent], Linda Enger, [incumbent], Galen Workman [incumbent], Carl Cade, Mari Magaloni) members.

Sam called for a motion to accept the slate for Nominating Committee members. David Heilburn so moved, Steve Schwichow seconded. There was no discussion, so Sam called for a vote. The vote for the slate carried unanimously.

Sam then called for a motion to accept the slate for Board of Trustee members. Santana Gonzalez-Gomez so moved, Amy Kelly seconded. There was no discussion, so Sam called for a vote. The vote for the slate carried unanimously.

Bob Bacon gave a brief tribute to May Treat Morrison before reading the terms of her bequest, as required by the bequest, and announced the funds to be disbursed from the May Treat Morrison Fund this year: \$4,886.25

Vanessa gave her annual report. Highlights included recognition and appreciation of the whole staff, also of Kathleen Quenneville for her tireless work around the tenant situation. Vanessa thanked Harry and Mirjam Moren for their work leading this year's pledge drive. She also urges us all to use moral and religious language in our activist work, both because it's the right thing to do and to help protect our institution.

Lori Lai made a brief presentation about a nascent UU church in Cebu, Philippines, and the possibility of becoming a partner church with them.

Sam returned to the podium to recognize all the volunteers who have helped ensure that events, programs, Sunday services, and after-church activities, as well as to meet needs that came up during the week, came off efficiently, effectively, and joyfully.

Board Secretary Lucy Smith gave a brief appreciation of the two members who are leaving the board along with a hearty “thank you!” for their service.

At the request of the current board, former moderator Jonah Berquist made a brief presentation about why we should approve making Reverend Alyson Jacks an emerita minister of this congregation. Jonah moved to recognize her as such; Liz Strand seconded. Sam called for a vote and received an overwhelming “YES!” from the congregation in response.

The board this year chose to recognize two people for their above-and-beyond volunteer work. Sam reminded the congregation about who Ann Dillon was and why an award was established in her name. He then introduced Carlowe Connelly to speak about Linda Harris and the work she does around the church that deserves recognition and to present the Ann Dillon Award to Linda. Sam then introduced Stephanie Gowin to speak about Larry Danos and his quiet but impactful volunteer activities for the church. Larry’s award was presented posthumously and accepted by his long-term partner Veronica Masterson.

Vanessa asked us to remember the members we lost in the last year, including: Eloise Mayo, Beth Pewther, Irene Westler, George Miller, Leslie Bader, Larry Danos, and Uvonne Jones-Most.

Minister of Congregational Life Laura Shennum read closing words.

Sam adjourned the meeting at 2:11.

**Voting Meeting of the UUSF Congregation**  
**Draft Minutes**  
**February 8, 2026**

Galen gavelled in the meeting at 12:33. Vanessa spoke first, of holding hard conversations with love and respect. Galen noted the agenda: to determine how the congregation wants to handle banners and the statement of public concern, then closing words and adjournment.

Rev. Shennum read the congregational covenant as opening words. Also Forum guidelines. She also reminded us of the “ouch, oops, and whoa” tools and pointed out Liz Strand and Mari Magaloni Ramos, who were there as both congregants and part of the Healthy Congregations Team.

Galen opened the banner discussion, which quickly became quite lively. Vanessa called for calm.

One proposal was to take down the “Ceasefire” banner, as it’s been up for some time. Many members, and some not-yet members, spoke passionately about the issue. A not-yet member and a new Young Adult member both noted that it was the ceasefire banner that had first brought them into the church. Vanessa reminded us that taking the banner down doesn’t mean we don’t care.

It was noted that we stop seeing what’s always there, so it may be time for a new banner, whether the subject is the same or not. A straw vote affirmed that we should move banners around for fresh viewing, and that any we put up should reflect our UU values.

A suggestion to limit the time a banner is displayed was discussed, and a straw vote affirmed discussion about removal/renewal at one year.

Galen moved the meeting to the draft Statement of Public Witness. Marty Vanderlaan moved to adopt it, Keith Hollon seconded. Galen opened the floor to discussion.

Anne Rovere moved to add “Israel” (to what is the second bullet in the final document), Julia Wald seconded. Discussion ensued and when a vote was called, the motion failed. Jeff Pekrul offered an amendment to recast the first two bullets into one and add another (third bullet in final doc); Dolores seconded. The amendment was discussed and then adopted. After more passionate discussion, a revised statement of public concern was voted on and adopted.

Mari read closing words and Galen adjourned the meeting.

### **The adopted public statement of our concerns is:**

The Members of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, a faith community that values pluralism, upholds the worth and dignity of each person, and believes we are all interconnected, affirm our 2025 commitment to being an Apartheid-Free Congregation. We the members:

- Believe that all forms of religious and racial oppression and violence, including antisemitism, Islamophobia, apartheid, and genocide, are immoral and cannot be tolerated.
- Believe that the violence against Palestinians living in Gaza and Israel is immoral, ongoing, and cannot be tolerated.
- Believe that standing up against the immoral acts of the current Israeli government should not be taken as a criticism of the Jewish people, but rather as a criticism of the Israeli government.

**Voting Meeting of the UUSF Congregation**  
**re: Long-Term Rental Lease**  
**Draft Minutes**  
**March 15, 2026**

Moderator Galen Workman called the meeting to order at 12:34 pm.

First order of business was an update on our pledge progress and drawings for early pledgers. Galen called on Judy Payne and Chantel Boshears for the update and to draw names for the two prizes. We have 91 pledges so far. Amy Kelly and Maric Munn won chocolates. John Klopacz won the use of Marty Vanderlaan's Tahoe cabin.

Galen returned to the lectern to explain the purpose of the meeting: per our bylaws, the board needs congregational approval to enter into a long-term rental lease. Carl, board member and 1187 Committee member, outlined the plans and process for finding a new tenant. He said that negotiations to obtain a new tenant are in progress. The board is asking for congregational approval now in order to avoid delay when a tenant is selected. Carl proposed a resolution.

Resolved: Members of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco authorize the Board of Trustees to enter into a lease of up to 20 years with a preschool for a portion of the Center space.

Jonah Berquist seconded. Galen opened the floor for discussion.

Kathleen Quenneville and Carrie Steere-Salazar, who are both serving on the committee to identify a new tenant and negotiate the lease, provided an overview and answered questions.

The question was called and the motion passed. Galen adjourned the business portion of the meeting at 12:49 pm.

**UUSF Budget Meeting FY2027**  
**Voting Meeting of the Congregation**  
**Sunday May 31, 2026**

This meeting will occur after the Annual Report is initially published. Once this meeting occurs, the minutes will be added to the Annual Report.

## 20s and 30s Community (TnT)

Report by Staff Member: Emma Wakeling, Membership & Young Adult Manager



### Overview

Although we have noticed ebbs and flows in growth and engagement of our young adult community this year, overall it continues to grow and develop. Young adults are regularly attending service and programming, taking on committee projects, leading their own activities, and joining as members.

### Programming

#### 1. Young Adult Lunches

This year we have been experimenting with our monthly drop-in lunch outings to adapt to the large number of attendees that we had last year. We have tried new formats including potlucks, ordering in, and providing lunch for donations. Attendee numbers have decreased a little since last year and we haven't quite found the best format yet; we will continue to experiment until we find a good fit. The lunches continue to be a popular activity with an average of 8 attendees. They are a great way for new

folks to get to know people and our community, and for existing members and friends to build fellowship.

## **2. Spiritual Discussion Group**

The Spiritual Discussion group for young adults continues to meet twice a month on Zoom to discuss the monthly Soul Matters theme. Over the past year, this has developed into a small but tight knit community of young adults who ponder big questions, hold each other's joys and sorrows, and learn from each other. They are a joy to facilitate and be a part of, and attendees have expressed gratitude for the space. Based on feedback from attendees and other young adults, we will try holding some of the sessions in person.

## **3. Other events and programming**

Additional monthly activities this year have included karaoke, museum visits, craft nights and game nights, and volunteering at the winter shelter. This offers a chance to build connections, serve our community, learn, and have fun together. Special thanks to Maggie McGrann and Nicholas Wasilewski for leading a number of Blood on the Clocktower games, and to everyone who suggested and helped to organize activities.

## **4. Young Adult Retreat**

With funding from a Hinckley Grant, we organized a young adult retreat in Pescadero in January 2026. Myself and Rev. Laura Shennum organized the retreat with the help of young adults Kealoha, Max, Niko, Dean, and Chelsea.

Twelve young adults from UUSF, UU Kensington and UU Redwood City participated in the retreat. We had a wonderful weekend filled with spiritual practice, games, nature, shared meals, singing and connection. Everyone brought their whole selves to co-create the retreat - through cooking, leading workshops and activities, conversation, co-creating worship, and bringing their talents to the open mic night!

In March, young adults co-created a worship service, which was incredibly well received by the congregation. We hope to bring the service to the other UU churches that took part as well. We're grateful for the connections we made as individuals and between our UU communities! Thank you to the Hinckley Committee for funding the retreat and investing in our young adult community.

## Affiliated Community Ministry

Report by Affiliated Community Minister Rev. Millie Phillips

This February, I received my second renewal of preliminary fellowship from the UUMA's Ministerial Fellowshiping Committee.

### Community Ministry Work

I have now been working for 4 ½ years as the “faith-rooted organizer” in Contra Costa County for the Faith Alliance for a Moral Economy (FAME), a project of the Oakland-based nonprofit the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE).



Highlights of my last year at EBASE (June 2025-June 2026) include:

- Ongoing work related to housing justice in Contra Costa County. This included a successful campaign for the county to allocate some money for rental assistance, a victory achieved by aligning organizations with many different budget requests to agree on a set of common demands rather than competing for very limited funds. I organized clergy and faith activists to attend and speak at every Board of Supervisors meeting that addressed this issue and to sign faith appeals to the board. I organized faith vigils and delegations to meet with board members. Additionally, we worked to get the City of Concord to adopt some zoning changes that will make it easier to build affordable housing and participated in an unsuccessful campaign to pass an inclusionary housing ordinance in the City of Antioch.
- Helped found and now serve on the steering committee of the Concord Immigrant Protections Network (CIPN), including speaking about CIPN to several congregations and at our very successful faith-friendly Valentine's Day Love Our Neighbors rally and procession, which even got a shout-out on the Rachel Maddow show. CIPN, a coalition of several nonprofits and community groups, currently offers know-your-rights trainings; Home Depot watch to protect day laborers; family preparedness planning; small business outreach to protect immigrant employees, customers, and business owners; a food pantry; and rides to immigration court.
- Initiating increased collaboration with the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity (IM4HI) - we are planning a joint webinar on immigration justice - and our closest UU congregation - Mt. Diablo UU Church (MDUUC) in Walnut Creek - especially as regards immigration rights, though I also worked with the congregation to hold an event last fall for the indigenous Apache Stronghold around its efforts to protect its sacred land Oak Flats in Arizona. I regularly participate in faith vigils organized by IM4HI and MDUUC at the immigration court in

Concord.

- Developed and presented a Faith-Rooted Organizing (FRO) workshop held in Concord.

## SF UU Work

Since the last year's report was written, I have planned, preached at, or otherwise participated in three services for our church:

- 5-25-25 Memorial Day service, sermon "Imagine a World Without War"
- 8-31-25 Labor Day service, sermon "To Arise from the Ashes"
- 3-8-26 Women's Day service, gave one of the reflections and covered various ministerial parts of the order of service.

My other activities at, or related to, SF UU include:

- Ongoing participation in UUs for Justice in the Middle East (UUJME). As a supporter of the Palestinian cause since the 1970s, I continue to help lead our congregational work in responding to the genocidal crisis in Gaza, including recently inviting Mya Shone, an expert on Palestinian history, to speak to our congregation.
- Human Rights Worker Group (HRWG): While usually not able to attend meetings, I serve as a ministerial liaison and participate often in the group's discussions.
- Member of the church choir.
- Backup to the ministers and lay chaplains care list, specifically for East Bay members, though my only related tasks have been giving rides a few times.
- I spoke again in my ministerial capacity at a Refuse Fascism rally, on referral from the HRWG.
- By the time this report is published, I will have officiated a wedding (5-23-26) on referral from SF UU.



## Other UU Work

In service to the broader UU community, I attended in person the 2025 UU General Assembly in Baltimore and the Ministerial Leadership Institute in January 2026 held in Albuquerque. I have been participating in a ministerial study group initiated by Rev. Laura Shennum and have attended about 2/3 of the monthly Bay Area Ministers Cluster meetings and the UU Society for Community Ministry monthly salons. Educationally, I have adopted a practice of reading at least one spiritually relevant book per month.

I also planned and guest-preached at the following services:

- 7-27-25 at Piedmont Gardens Assisted Living, “Returning to Community, an Old Model for New Times,” on the value of mutual aid during repressive times.
- 8-10-25 at Hayward UU, “Returning to Community, an Old Model for New Times,” updated to apply to a multi-generational audience.
- 3-29-26 at Palo Alto UU, “Showing Up,” on the value of the spiritual discipline of attending Sunday services.
- I am scheduled to guest-preach in San José (5-24-26).



## Affiliated Community Ministry

Report by Affiliated Community Minister Rev. Seanan Fong



It continues to be a blessing to live out my community ministry with the moral and spiritual support of UUSF. I am grateful for the continued opportunity to serve the broader San Francisco community while remaining connected to UUSF as a spiritual home and source of inspiration.

My community ministry continues to be building the San Francisco Contemplarium: a new civic institution tending to the hearts and spirits of San Franciscans through contemplative public spaces, programming, and community-building. Made by and for San Franciscans, and serving the public across diverse backgrounds, practices, and beliefs, the Contemplarium seeks to create accessible spaces where people can honor the joys, sorrows, transitions, and questions of the human journey.

Over this past year, the work of the Contemplarium has deepened significantly. What began as a set of experiments in public reflection and ritual has grown into a more people-powered community of neighbors learning how to support one another and serve the wider city. In particular, we launched our first Neighborhood Flamekeeper cohort: a group of community members committed to practicing presence, ritual, accompaniment, and shared service in the neighborhood.

Highlights of the past year include:

- Launching our Founding Neighborhood Flamekeeper Cohort of 10 participants, who gathered for a two-day immersive experience to build trust and practice core skills of presence, ritual, and accompaniment.

- Continuing the cohort through a three-month season of weekly meetings, listening circles, personal spotlights, skill-building, and shared service.
- Hosting seven neighborhood offerings across Seasonal Ingatherings and Monthly Reflection Jams, reaching roughly 160 participants through accessible spaces for neighbors to pause, reflect, share, and honor their human journeys in community.
- Continuing to develop public-facing contemplative programming, including Reflection Jams, Reflection Stands, and skill-building workshops on themes such as caring for oneself while caring for others and being present through conflict.

One of the most meaningful learnings from this year is that many people are hungry not only for spaces of reflection, but for a community in which their own calling to care for others can be honored and supported. One Flamekeeper described the experience by saying, “I just loved being part of something meaningful! I was so nourished by the presence of this group.” This captures something central to the Contemplarium’s work: that those who care for others also need spaces of care, formation, friendship, and spiritual nourishment.

Over the past year at UUSF, I also had the pleasure of preaching again for the Lunar New Year on February 22 on "The Excellence of a Horse: A Lunar New Year Celebration". I am grateful for the chance to continue sharing reflections from my ministry with the UUSF community, and for the ways UUSF continues to inspire and support this work.

Thank you again for your support of my community ministry. For more information about the Contemplarium, please visit [sfcontemplarium.org](http://sfcontemplarium.org), reach out to [info@sfcontemplarium.org](mailto:info@sfcontemplarium.org), and subscribe to our newsletter at [sfcontemplarium.substack.com](http://sfcontemplarium.substack.com) (and check out our past issues to see what we’ve been up to!)



## Animal Ministry (UUAM)

Report by Dolores Perez Heilbron, Chair

Members: Dennis Adams, Markus Beam, Paul Carey, Stacey Coyle, David Heilbron, Wayne Hsiung, Lori Lai, Robin Larsen, Veronica Masterson, Bruce Neuburger, Shulee Ong, Dean Wyrzykowski and others.

Webpage: <https://www.uusf.org/animalministry> Email Contact: [uuanimalministry@gmail.com](mailto:uuanimalministry@gmail.com)

Mission Statement:

***To affirm our 7<sup>th</sup> UU Principle of Respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence of Which We Are a Part, by producing educational events and advocacy efforts focused on protecting all species of the earth.***

Activities:

The UUAM participates in educational events, often with the Forum, regarding the importance of maintaining the natural habitat for all wildlife, and supporting the rights of all sentient beings and the earth. The methane produced and water pollution caused by the animals we eat impacts on the climate and all of us. We recognize the importance of compassionate agricultural practices concerning animals raised for slaughter by exposing hazardous and cruel food production systems that are not only detrimental to the environment, but are often dangerous to both animals and agricultural workers. We believe our species has the responsibility to educate the public to protect domesticated animals, wildlife, and the earth itself.



On October 12, 2025, our annual Blessing of the Animals was presided over by our Ministerial Intern, Mark Caswell, who spoke on ***“Recognizing the Worth of All Sentient Beings.”*** Our Music Director, Mark Sumner provided delightful musical presentations and presided over the singing by the audience. Special guest Katie Schmidt of Muttville Senior Dog Rescue spoke on behalf of that



organization which specializes in finding good homes for older dogs. She was accompanied by a senior dog, Miss Shibotta. Many outside attendees joined our community in the blessing of each animal, with appropriate attention paid to all participants in this lively affair.

We are thankful for the support we have received from our UUSF staff, especially Jonathan Silk, Communications Director, and many other activists who join us from outside of our UUSF community.

## Art Committee

Report by Kristen Stephens



The Art Committee meets monthly and schedules different artists throughout the year to show their work in the Kings Galleries. We offer an annual Members, Friends and Family Group show to bring the church community together. Below is a list of exhibits that we had in 2025.

Artist/Show	AC contact	Dates	Comments
Children's Art Show	Paul	01/24/25	Good community builder.
	Artist Reception	02/04/25	
	Take down	03/04/25	
Diane Devine	Barbara	03/05/25	This artist did have some sales. The church received a check from this artist for the sales.
	Artist Reception	03/30/25 (Extended)	
Diane Devine Continued	Barbara	04/30/25	
	Take down	06/21/25	
Steve Sweetser Judith Williams	Elaine	06/25/25	Not sure of sales
	Gordon	06/25/25	
	Artist Reception	06/29/25	
	Take down	08/18/25	
Family & Friends Group show	Take in	08/24/25	46 Artists were presented. Several had sales.
	Artists Reception	9/7/25	
	Take down	10/26/25	
Quilt Makers "A Year of Neckties"	Elaine/Linda Harris	11/05/25	This was a fundraiser for the church. 100% of all proceeds went to the church.
	Artist Reception	11/9/25	
	Take down	01/05/26	

## Communications

Report by Jonathan Silk, Director of Communications



The First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco (UUSF) is a great example of innovative digital ministry with a strong online presence, including targeted communication with iContact newsletters and an engaging YouTube channel. UUSF has over 1,100 subscribers to its newsletter and 1,730 followers on Youtube, and combines the best of traditional congregational life with modern outreach. This report examines the elements of UUSF's digital ministry: weekly newsletters, live

streams, and high-quality video content produced by a dedicated team, as well as innovative YouTube Shorts that distill the themes of sermons into accessible micro-content. In the end, it is a testament to how UUSF creates a lively and multigenerational community that encourages inclusivity and spiritual growth that transcends geographic boundaries.

The First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco is now reaching audiences globally with new media, including digital Worship Archives and a dedicated Sermon Podcast. The society also runs the magazine style show Pod and Country which features progressive values, interviews and comedy. The church was founded in 1850 and has a rich history, well documented in various local historical newspapers of San Francisco. Historic publications like the San Francisco Chronicle and the San Francisco Examiner often chronicled its influential civic work. In particular, the press ran extensive coverage of its famous 1860s pastor, Thomas Starr King, who was credited by local media with helping save California for the Union during the Civil War. During the 1800s, the church's regional footprint was extensively documented in local historical publications such as the Daily Alta California, the San Francisco Bulletin, and the San Francisco Chronicle.

### NEWSLETTERS

The iContact email newsletter platform is the backbone of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco's communication lifeline, through its digital publications. Weekly Flame brings you essential weekend schedules, urgent justice alerts and immediate community notices, every Wednesday, to a dedicated audience. Monthly Flame Plus provides long-form pastoral messages, deep-dive committee reports and long-range spiritual programming overviews for broader reflection. These targeted e-newsletters, sent directly to over 1,100 active subscribers—members, friends and digital seekers—are the central highway that transforms information into active, everyday congregational engagement.

## YOUTUBE

The UUSF Media YouTube Channel is expanding its digital footprint, having recently hit 1,730 subscribers, with a huge archive of more than 3,700 videos published. That growing subscriber base spills directly into the society's virtual pews every Sunday morning at 10:50 AM PT, where the worship livestream draws dozens of concurrent live viewers and hundreds of community members catching up on demand throughout the week. Recent streams such as the youth-led Curiously Non-Judgmental and What Mothers Teach Us? are rapidly racking up 100-200 tracking views within days of airing. These metrics, combined with the massive organic reach of short-form content, demonstrate how UUSF effectively creates a steady, vital intergenerational sanctuary that bridges geographic gaps far beyond the physical walls of the building.

### Digital Support Team



The video support team works collaboratively and diligently to make the Sunday morning livestream ministry on the UUSF Media YouTube Channel seamless and of high quality. Each weekend, **Eric Shackelford, Shulee Ong, Alicia Cover and Eli Boshears** act as camera operators and tech directors providing a lively, accessible digital sanctuary for those who are not able to attend church in person. This technical crew is tasked with everything from adjusting critical camera angles and fine-tuning live audio feeds to controlling real-time video switching, ensuring that the music, sermons, and visual beauty of the congregation are seamlessly conveyed onto screens around the world. They're the behind-the-scenes pros

who connect the pews with the pixels and keep the online lifeline alive, vibrant and welcoming, so the larger First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco community stays connected each Sunday.

### EXPERIMENTS ON SHORTS

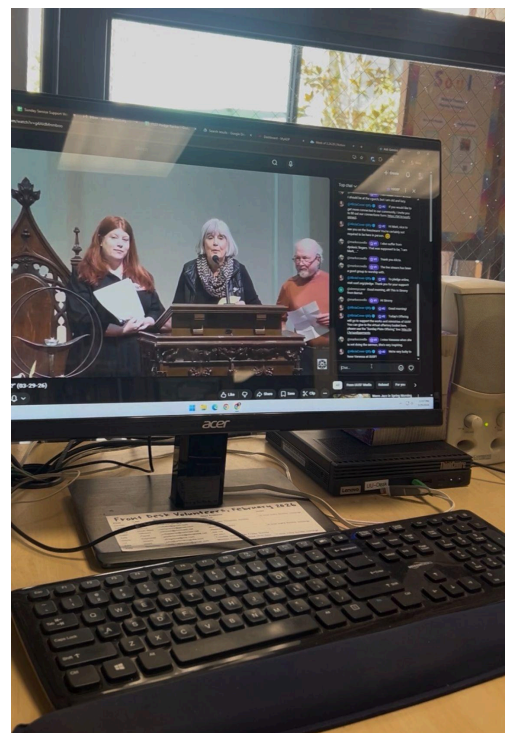
The digital ministry's YouTube Shorts experiments on the UUSF Media YouTube Channel are successfully helping us outreach by transforming big topics in the Sunday service into accessible, vertical micro-content. These short-form videos are the product of the creative direction of religious education coordinator, **Alicia Cover**, and membership & young adult manager, **Emma Wakeling**, coming together to marry traditional ministry with modern media to reach digital seekers. This video strategy is gaining momentum with powerful, resonant clips like the social justice snippet Staying Human as Resistance and the youth advocacy piece Why Is Youth Freedom Being Limited?. Through

quick, compelling moments like Can Grief Be a Path to Abundance?, the channel taps organic views by exploring profound theological questions and encouraging viewers to explore the larger UUSF faith community.

The core engagement is usually higher on their longer Sunday livestream services (averaging between 90 and 185 views per service) than on their individual UUSF Media YouTube Shorts (which tend to get fewer than 100 views each). To bridge this gap, the channel should adopt a hybrid content strategy, clipping provocative high performing sermon themes (youth freedom, societal resistance etc) into vertical Shorts that drive traffic back to their full worship archives.

## ONLINE FOOTPRINT

The First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco (UUSF) maintains its online presence through the UUSF Media YouTube Channel, which includes live Sunday services at 10:50 AM PT and a large archive of past sermons and musical performances. The congregation maintains a historical archive on its Facebook Page, but active microblogging and updates have migrated to its decentralized Bluesky Profile. Visitors can check out the most current event calendar, get on the community mailing list, and sign up to receive the weekly Flame newsletter at the official UUSF Website or by linking up with local groups through the UUSF Meetup Page.



**[Official UUSF Website:](#)** View the event calendar, join the community mailing list, and subscribe to the weekly Flame newsletter.

**UUSF Media YouTube Channel:** Stream live Sunday services at 10:50 AM PT and browse the sermon and music archive.

**UUSF Instagram Account:** View visual highlights, community stories, and real-time photographic updates.

**UUSF Meetup Page:** Discover, connect with, and RSVP for local community groups and events.

**UUSF Bluesky Profile:** Follow active microblogging updates on this decentralized network.

**UUSF Facebook Page:** Access the historical archive of past congregation updates and posts.

## Environmental Justice Working Group

Report by Deborah Baldwin, Contact Person & Founding Member

### Contact person:

Deborah C. Baldwin  
DeborahCBaldwin@Live.com  
415-606-0257 (cell for texts)

### Monthly meetings:

4th Sundays  
12:30-1:15 pm  
Fahs Room

### Annual Budget

\$200

### Group's approach for projects:

Individually initiated with solicitations for volunteers to join in

### FY 2025-2026 Activities

*2025 Earth Day* event was minimal due to insufficient time to organize between creation of the group and the designation of annual Earth Day.

*2025 Sun Day* in September consisted of multiple organizations tabling in the courtyard and a consumer behavior encouragement table by EJWG.

The first long-term project has been to live our UU values by striving for Zero Waste by eliminating disposables used for coffee service during after-service social hour. We have eliminated the use of paper cups and wooden stir sticks by using the church's cups, tumblers, plates, and spoons. This has been possible by soliciting volunteers to setup in the morning, cleanup after social hour, and take home the kitchen linens to launder.



Paul Carey organized a couple of garden cleanups around the perimeter of the buildings.

*2026 Earth Day* event consisted of a Forum presentation by Recology about the city's efforts to reach Zero Waste; environmental themed service; fund-raising pasta lunch organized by the Partnership Church Committee; live cello music during lunch; Sensible Cinema screening of the Netflix documentary, Buy Now! The Shopping Conspiracy; and tabling in the gallery.

We have begun investigating conversion of the Fireside Room fireplace from wood burning to gas log.

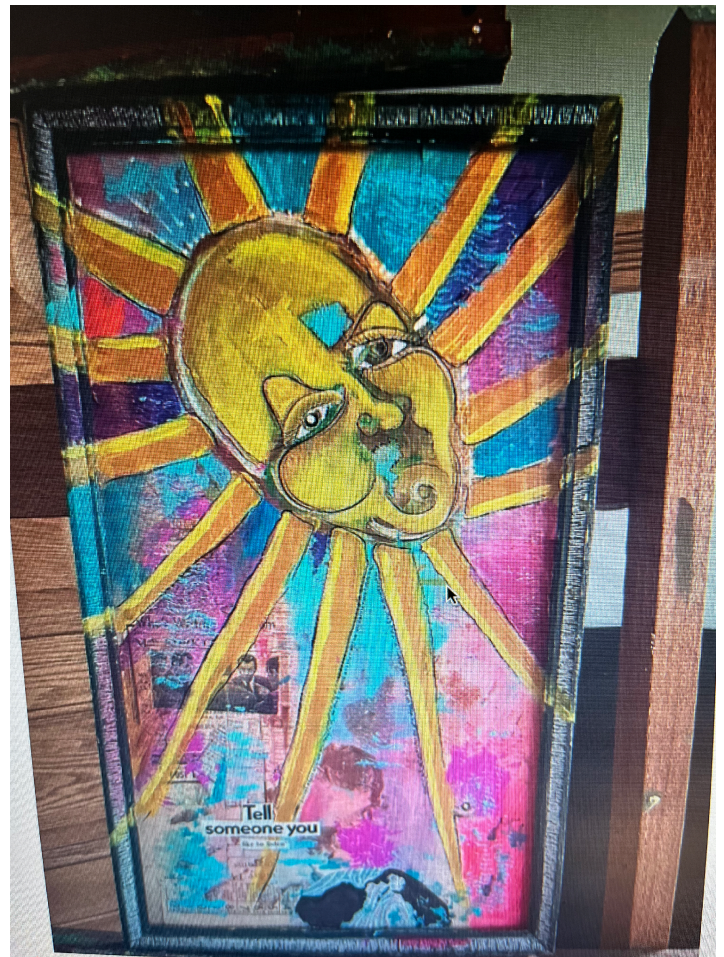
And we will be working on re-introducing Green Sanctuary to the congregation.

We continue to solicit additional volunteers. Our next goal is to create a large enough group of volunteers to be able to reach out to all of the other church groups to stop using disposables when we can provide the people to help them setup and cleanup.

EJWG Members: Alicia Cover, Amanda Chapman, August Boman, Betsy Darr, Cadell Child, Chelsea Thomas, David King, Deborah Baldwin, Denise, Emma Wakeling, Gregory Stevens, Howard & Jan Oringer, Ian Stoddard, Lee Most, Les, Melvin Starks, Nancy, Paul Carey

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah C. Baldwin  
EJWG Founding Member



## Facilities Advisory Committee

Report by Dan Barnard, Facilities Manager

Members: Dan Barnard, Linda Enger, Laura Ludwig, Scott Miller, Maric Munn and Marc Theobald.

The Facilities Advisory Committee works with Dan Barnard to plan and offer guidance on Facility projects to maintain and improve our buildings. The committee worked on the following projects:

- New Carpet for the Sanctuary.
- Working to reduce energy costs including researching the feasibility of installing batteries to store solar power harvested during the day to use during the evening hours when rates are highest. The batteries may also be used to provide power during outages. We have installed a new solar monitoring system and have negotiated with PG&E for a more appropriate rate tier plan.
- Working on upgrading the pew cushions in the sanctuary.
- Identifying options for storage of tables and chairs.



## Forum

Report by Jeff Pekrul, Chair

For the current Forum "season" which began in September and will end in mid-June (when we go on hiatus for the summer), Forum will have hosted 28 speakers. We've had some great speakers on a pretty wide range of topics. Some talks focused on international issues, others local, and most in one way connected to social justice, which is the agenda and perspective of the HRWG committee that collaborates to produce Forum. Attendance averaged about 30 people in person and another 15-20 on Zoom, depending on the subject of course, so pretty good engagement. The sessions are recorded and available on our YouTube channel, where they can be viewed by anyone on the internet.



## Human Rights Working Group

Report by Dolores Perez Heilbron, Co-Chair

Co-Chairs: Dolores Perez Heilbron, Jeff Pekrul, Melvin Starks

Members: Dennis Adams, Mary Castiglia, Ralph Fenn, Linda Harris, Vivienne Hay, David Heilbron, Wayne Hsiung, Robin Larsen, Margaret Levitt, Veronica Masterson, Tom McAninley, Bruce Neuburger, Rev. Millie Phillips, Marty Vanderlaan, Adam Varoqua, Rev. Meg Whitaker-Greene.



The Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) operates in alignment with its stated Purpose:

- ***To identify and respond to human rights violations at the local, national, and international levels, in accordance with our Unitarian Universalist principles and values;***
- ***To provide opportunities for dialogue and develop practical strategies to address injustice through education, advocacy, and action;***
- ***To collaborate with partner organizations in support of these goals.***



We research and discuss international issues of war, peace and justice; and nationally, the threats that exist to our Constitutional rights of free speech, immigrant and civil rights. Locally, we work with a variety of organizations such as the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity and Jewish Voice for Peace, co-sponsoring actions to further a better understanding of the crisis in the Middle East. This Spring, we co-sponsored a large Seder dinner at

UUSF featuring Jewish speakers who addressed human rights concerns, calling for an end to apartheid and the ongoing violence and war crimes. We work with the new Immigrant Rights group opposing national ICE raids and policies. (See attached description.)

We have responded to the national UUA's public stands on these issues, and work closely with the UJME (UUs for Justice in the Middle East). At the UUA's General Assembly in June 2024, delegates unanimously adopted the Action of Immediate Witness: "Solidarity with Palestinians." We held

educational events featuring Israeli and Palestinian peace activists, fundraising events, talks by historians and academic scholars, and we assisted in a musical performance held at the UUSF, dedicated to peace activists.

Over the past two years, as violence in Gaza escalated and civilian casualties rose sharply, we continued to advocate for an end to this conflict which is enabled by the weapons supplied by our country. We hoisted a “Love Demands Ceasefire Now” banner on our church building; and on February 2, 2025, at a Congregational Meeting, our proposal that UUSF join the **Apartheid-Free Communities** movement was overwhelmingly approved by the congregation. In February this year, during a hearing on whether the Ceasefire banner should continue to be hung on our building, new members stated that the Ceasefire banner had drawn them to join our congregation to work on this issue.



Interesting, lively events beginning August 17, 2025, included: ***“We Will Not Look Away, We Will Not Be Silent!”*** 2026: Richard Becker, ***“Endless War in the Middle East-Why?”***; David Paul, ***“Imperial Aggression against Venezuela”***; Paul Larudee, ***“Prospects for the Continuation of Life on Earth and the Human Species”***; Mya Shone, ***“The Hidden History of Zionism”***; Vivienne Hay, ***“Understanding Autism and Neurodiversity”***; and Bruce Neuburger, ***“The Farmworker Movement of the 1960s-70s”***.

We are grateful for our collaboration with the UUSF Forum and for the support of its leadership, as well as the guidance and assistance of the UUSF ministers, staff, and our many community partners.

Webpage: <https://www.uusf.org/hrwg> Email Contact [humanrights@uusf.org](mailto:humanrights@uusf.org)

Respectfully submitted,

Dolores Perez Heilbron, Co-Chair

## **Immigrant Rights Group** **A Subset of the Human Rights Working Group**

### **Beginning:**

The Immigrant Rights group began shortly after a general congregation meeting in Feb. 2025 called to encourage active, organized resistance to Trump/MAGA fascism.

### **Participants:**

The group grew over time to about 40 people on a communication list with an active core of about 10 – 12 people with Tom McAninley and Bruce Neuburger as co-chairs. Other members who've been active over the past 14 months include Michael Bossier, Dan Clanon, Theresa Cameranesi (non-UU), Meg Whitaker-Greene, Hillary Clarke, Barbara Wismer, Christine Patch-Lindsay, Daniel Halford, Mari Magaloni Ramos, Amanda Chapman, Ruth Sakeim (non-UU) and Ralph Fenn.

### **Periods of activity:**

There have been three periods of activity defined by the broader political landscape.

**Period One** February 2025 to October 2025: Time of highly publicized mass ICE raids and interventions by National Guard troops created a tense and dangerous situation in many parts of the country and belief that ICE invasion into the Bay Area was imminent. Continual news of ICE kidnappings at immigration courts in S.F.



**Period Two** Early October 2025: announcement that Trump was sending ICE to the Bay Area followed soon by word that this wasn't going to happen. Large numbers of people mobilized and active in the Bay Area as ICE activities across the country, especially in Minneapolis, kept the atmosphere tense.

**Period Three** With the killings of Renee Goode and Alex Pretti and the firing of Kristi Noam when DHS/ ICE changed tactics and with an apparent reduction of kidnappings locally as well. We are now in that third period.

### **Work among Latino/Immigrant groups**

Immigrant Rights group members began attending meetings with immigrant rights activists from **Latino Task Force** and **Nuevo Sol** day labor and domestic workers program, Bay Resistance, Indivisible and others in forging plans for community defense.



And became active in the Nuevo Sol program (local branch of NDLO–National Day Laborers Organizing Network) called **Adopt a Corner**, a national initiative to bring community members not subject to deportation to stand at corners with immigrants facing the danger of ICE raids. Michael Bossier and Bruce Neuburger became part of the leading core of the S.F. Adopt a corner effort. Dan Clanon took an active role in Oakland in a project to protect schools and school children.

The Immigrant Rights group worked with Nuevo Sol and Latino Task Force, for an event at St. Mark’s church that brought immigrant street vendors and activists together with members of faith communities for a cultural program on **October 5**. The program included the leader of the S.F. Interfaith Council, and our own Senior ministers.

Other UUSF initiatives included collective clothing and food distributed through Nuevo Sol and the Latino Task Force.

**Interfaith work:**

- Vigils at immigration courts at 100 Montgomery and 630 Sansome coordinated by Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity (IM4HI). This activity has decreased as ICE has closed courts in S.F. or reduced their use in the face of strong resistance.
- A Thursday vigil at Civic Center led by several Buddhist leaders.
- Tom M. has developed ties with faith activists from Grace Cathedral, St. Agnes, St. Ignatius, Synagogue Emanu-el, and the Quaker community which included a convergence at the Latino Task Force operation center, MLVS at Alabama and 19<sup>th</sup>. Also a recent event at Grace Cathedral and plans for a 5K run in late May.



## **The movement to close down the detention camps:**

This included printing photos of people who've died in ICE detention, used at demonstrations and at UUSF services. A banner with pictures of lives stolen by ICE created by the committee was carried at No Kings in March, the April 25 day of action Community Not Cages, and at an anti-ICE rally at Home Depot in Daly City.

## **Affiliation:**

The Immigrant Rights group is a semi-autonomous group that is an official part of the Human Rights Working Group (HRWG).

## **Work going forward:**

The Immigrant Rights group will continue to work with Latino immigrant rights groups in strategizing and organizing in response to whatever may unfold with the Trump MAGA fascists. Massive anti-immigrant ICE invasions are not out of the question and if they happen, then the ties made, and experience gained over the past year will need to be put to use.

The interfaith work led by Tom will continue and likely deepen.

The work to close ICE camps will likely become more urgent as the fascists seem hellbent on opening up ICE prisons to hold tens of thousands more people.

**Resistance is necessary and effective and will have to increasingly become more effective to meet the challenge of an ever more desperate and brutal authoritarian regime. This is the challenge to the whole UUSF community and not just the HRWG and Immigrant Rights group.**



## Journey Toward Wholeness (JTW)



### **Community Partnerships**

#### **Open Door Legal (ODL)/Community Partnership**

In 2025, we continued our support for the work of Open Door Legal (ODL). ODL provides civil legal services to people with lower income who otherwise would go unrepresented in complex matters such as wrongful evictions and wage and asset theft. Members of JTW and the congregation attended and spoke to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget Committee to advocate for ODL whose funding from the city was in danger of being cut by two-thirds. Additionally, in September, UUSF volunteers came together with ODL staff to build a garden in the back of their office in the Excelsior district. The garden provides a safe and comfortable space for clients to come with their

children to meet with attorneys as well as serving as a pleasant lunch and break area for staff (see celebration at the end of this report). Thanks to Keith Hollon with Paul Carey and a whole host of volunteers for making that effort possible!

#### **UU the VOTE / Community Partnership**

##### **August-October 2025**

We facilitated for the congregation a postcard project with the *Center for Common Ground / Reclaim Our Vote*. This non-partisan group focuses on Black voters to get out the vote. For the November Virginia General Election we wrote to 4075 addresses. To prepare, we purchased 5000 blank cards and 5000 postcard stamps.

##### **February-March 2026**

We returned to postcard writing with *Reclaim Our Vote*, this time joining their partnership with *Souls to the Polls WI*, a non-partisan



faith-based civic engagement project of Pastors United Community Advocacy, whose goal is to strengthen the collective voting power of their Black and Brown communities. We wrote, on a short timeline, for the Wisconsin Supreme Court election, to 480 addresses.

## UUSC / **Community Partnership**

April - May 2026 We collaborated with UUSC and our immigrant rights group to invite members and friends to help delay, by sending comments to the Federal Register, the implementation of a Trump administration proposal which would deny work permits to immigrants seeking asylum.

May 2026 forward: In further coordination with these committees, we are planning to launch a “Good Trouble” table, appearing after church one Sunday a month initially, to support congregants similarly in taking one immediate action in support of a social justice issue, identified by these groups, from their work, as necessary to the effort.

## **JTW Retreat and Focus Areas**

November 1 The committee met for a whole-day retreat in order to consider where our present and future focus should lie. The Focus Areas we took up include:

- Stress First Aid. We did a training that offers practical language and actions for response when people and groups are under stress.
- Conflict, Covenant & Capacity. Working to build the skills and culture (our own and the congregation’s) needed to stay in hard conversations together.
- Community Partnerships. Invites us to consider how inclusive our work is and how we can harness our partnerships.
- Inclusion, Accessibility & Events. Calls the congregation to review how events are designed and who they truly include.
- Abolition, a 2025 Congregational Study/Action Issue. Invites the congregation to explore the topic of abolition not only as a political project but as a spiritual and cultural one—shaping how we understand harm, punishment, repair, and belonging over time, and creating ongoing opportunities for learning and practice. Also ties into the denominational conversations happening around this idea and commitment, with a possible Statement of Conscience and congregational actions.
- Belonging. Following up with BIPOC members, including those who have left to see whether UUSF fosters a culture of belonging and welcome. And how we might respond to what feedback we receive from this outreach.



- Education. Continue to keep an eye on the education around anti-oppressive, multicultural and inclusive, liberatory community – coordinating what others offer and seeking to identify important and find a way to offer additional and necessary opportunities for deepening in this area.

**Invitation to Members:** If you would like to find out more about JTW, offer suggestions, raise questions or be part of our work, please contact us at [info@uusf.org](mailto:info@uusf.org). You can also read more and access more resources related to our work on the church webpage: [uusf.org/racialjustice](http://uusf.org/racialjustice).

Thank you so much,

Chair: Asani Seawell

Members: Cal Ball, Cheryl McKinney, Judith Stoddard,

Staff: Vanessa Southern and Mark Caswell

Outgoing Board Liaison: Liz Strand



## Membership Committee

Report by Staff Member: Emma Wakeling, Membership & Young Adult Manager



### Membership Committee Members:

The committee moved from a rotating chair structure and elected a new Chair for the committee, with Ruth Wong stepping into this role. Members: Susan Anthony, Gino Fortunato, Nancy Hardies, Gordon Sharanfinski, Judith Stoddard, Dean Wyrzykowski. Supported by Staff: Rev. Laura Shennum and Emma Wakeling.

### Mission:

The UUSF Membership Committee grows an inclusive community of diverse people by connecting people to the life of the church from initial visits through becoming fully engaged.

### Key activities & achievements:

#### **1. Welcoming Newcomers**

##### - Newcomer Orientation:

We continue to warmly welcome newcomers to UUSF at Newcomer Orientations on the first Sunday of every month. They offer a chance to connect, meet members and other newcomers, and learn about UUSF and Unitarian Universalism. So far 58 newcomers have attended orientations this year.

##### - Greeters:

We continue to grow our team of greeters, who ensure that everyone who comes through the door receives a friendly welcome and answers to their questions.



Thank you to our Greeters: Chris Valentine, Jenefer Hutchins, Hilda Leung, Joan Rost, Jess and Jane Ramos, Kathleen McClung, Gordon Sharafinski, Jonah Berquist, Cheryl McKinney, Sue Anthony, and Tom Bier for making UUSF a more welcoming, friendly place! And thank you to Judith Stoddard for organizing and coordinating this group.

## 2. Embracing New Members

UUSF welcomed 10 new members to our congregation so far this year. They have been involved in many areas of UUSF life including speaking at worship, volunteering, working on church-wide projects with the board, supporting UUSF events, and serving on committees. Thank you for being a part of our community! We are looking forward to welcoming more members at our final Call to Membership of the year in June.

The committee continues to hold regular check-ins with folks who have joined in the last couple of years, to see how their experience has been so far and if they need any further support or connections within the community.



## 3. Engagement Funnel

The Committee has undertaken a process to review an [Engagement Funnel](#) to generate ideas for supporting people’s engagement at UUSF and smoothing out the connection process. Thanks to Ruth Wong for introducing this framework and leading these insightful conversations. We’re looking forward to generating new ideas, insights and processes.

## 4. Membership and Visitor Engagement Data

Emma Wakeling has pulled together key data in one place for the committee to track, such as visitor numbers, membership programming attendees, website traffic, searches, and membership numbers. This will help us to understand where we can better support people through their journey to membership and beyond. See an overview below.

	Sunday Service In-Person Attendance	Sunday Service Estimated Online Attendance	Sunday Service Total Attendance (Total)	Connection Forms	Newcomer Attendees	New UU Attendees	New Members (includes members reinstated)	Memberships Ended	Total Membership Count	
July 2025	426	170	596		13	3			2	
August 2025	541	195	736		13	3	17		1	
September 2025	569	129	698		11	10		1	2	
October 2025	605	168	773		14	6				
November 2025	615	191	615		11	-	5		7	
December 2025	826	166	992		7	8		1		
January 2026	525	172	697		21	3		3		
February 2026	560	183	743		15	10	13	1	2	
March 2025	635	177	812		15	1			4	
April 2026	563	179	742		15	6		4	2	
May 2026						8		1	1	
June 2026										
<b>FY25-26 Total</b>			<b>7404</b>		<b>135</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Previous Year Total</b>			<b>7805</b>		<b>155</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>257</b>

**Men's Breakfast Group**  
Report by Tom Brookshire, Co-Chair



**Activities during this past church year:**

Weekly meetings held on Saturdays, from 9:00am to 11:00am, with alternating in-person meetings and Zoom meetings. Members may also contact and support each informally during the week, and we occasionally have special activities and outings. We have had 20-30 members, with 8-12 typically attending a given meeting. Membership and attendance are open, and the group welcomes new members throughout the year. Anyone interested in attending should contact one of the committee chairs or any other member.

**Committee Chairs:**

Ralph Fenn (rfenn1@gmail.com)

Tom Brookshire (tlbrookshire@gmail.com)

## Pagan Interest Circle (PICT)

Report by Christine Patch-Lindsay, Co-Organizer

For over 30 years\* the **Pagan Interest Circle (PICT)**, a worship group of the **First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco**, and a chapter organization of **CUUPS**, has been meeting for monthly Full Moon Rituals on the Saturday evening closest to the Full Moon, and for the solar pagan holidays of Winter Solstice and Beltane. We are an open circle dedicated to providing ritual space for all respectful families and individuals of any age. Our policy requires that our rituals are clean and sober, drugs, alcohol, fragrance, and animal free. Individuals who rely on an animal companion are welcome but will need to secure their animal away from the ritual room/space.

To learn more about **CUUPS**, check out the Facebook page "Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans-CUUPS".



**PICT** is about creating a safe place for those interested in exploring pagan ritual and for pagans to actually do ritual. We take turns crafting a ritual each month, leaving it up to the volunteer "priestess/priest/priestez" to do what they wish to do. And our more experienced members are happy to team up with anyone who would like help creating a ritual or to work with a co-leader.



**What you can expect** when you first attend is to **be a participant**. We have an altar supplies box on site for setting up **altars to the Four Directions and Center**. People start by setting up the altars. Then the Priestess/Priest will ask for **volunteers** to perform the functions of **casting a Magic Circle** and **creating Sacred Space**. After the ritual, we share finger food and **socialize**.

**The Pagan Interest Circle (PICT) is a membership organization**, asking a \$20 annual donation, 2/3rds of

which goes to the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco where we hold our rituals. The remainder goes to CUUPS. We welcome dues at any time, but our membership year begins at Samhain and we remind people to contribute through Yule. Occasionally, we will ask for donations for our candles and materials fund.

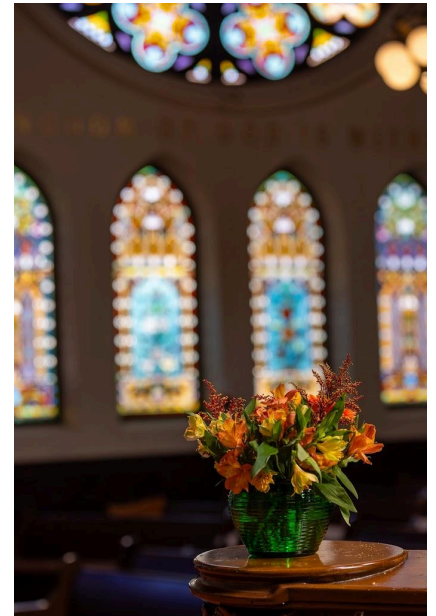
**The Pagan Interest Circle** practices shared leadership and our organizational structure is minimal.

•Communications and Liaison with UUSF Staff: **Christine Patch-Lindsay**

•Treasurer: **Betsy Darr**

Our current membership is mainly Wiccan and Eclectic practitioners, so our rituals may take that form because that is what we know. But we are open to all traditions and welcome learning something new from each other.

***\*Presently, The Pagan Interest Circle's membership is going through a generational transition. Our first ritual was created for the Summer Solstice in 1996, so after 30 years, most of PICT's core members are no longer with us due to issues related to aging. Those of us still active recognize the need to enable young or inexperienced pagans with the skills needed to continue monthly Full Moon ritual circles. To that end, we are excited to report that **The Pagan Interest Circle has received a religious education grant from The William and Alice Hinckley Fund, which will allow us to offer an "Elements of Magic and Ritual" class! It will be a 16-hour weekend intensive, scheduled for October 3rd and 4th, 2026. It was just such a class that created our original pagan UU Community, and we hope it will be a catalyst for a new generation of UU pagans.*****



**One does not need to be a member to participate in or lead a ritual.**

We do not want the cost of ritual supplies to be a barrier to leading a ritual, and will reimburse the cost of ritual supplies with presented receipts.



This year, all **PICT** monthly Full Moon Rituals are in-person and convene at the Church. We have not scheduled a virtual ritual this year. We did virtual rituals on ZOOM during Covid shelter-in-place. We still are open to having virtual rituals and have access to the UUSF ZOOM account and media equipment for streaming, but this is the choice of the person(s) volunteering to lead a ritual.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, PICT follows the protocols of the First Unitarian Universalist congregation, which requires attendees to be vaccinated. Wearing masks is no longer required, but encouraged, when inside the building.

Here's the **Calendar of Full Moon Rituals (and Solar Holidays: Yule/Winter Solstice and Beltane)** scheduled from September 2025 through December 2026.

## **2025**

September 6

October 4

November 8

December 6

December 20 Winter Solstice

## **2026**

January 3

February 7

March 7

April 4

May 3: Beltane (Maypole Dance, Sunday, 12:30 PM in the Courtyard)

May 30 Blue Moon

June 27

July 25

August 29

September 26

October 24

November 21

December 19: Winter Solstice

**Note:** No December 2026 Full Moon ritual because December's Full Moon is Wednesday, December 23rd. The church building is normally closed between the Christmas and New Year holidays.

A new Ritual Calendar is published in November for the following calendar year.



With the exception of Beltane, a ritual Maypole dance, held on Sunday after Church service in the Courtyard, **all dates are Saturday evenings, closest to the Full Moon**, 6:45 PM - 9:15 P.M., with a social time after the ritual ends to share snacks and fellowship.

**We ask that everyone who plans to attend arrive in the Chapel by 6:45 PM to set-up the space**, so we can start the ritual as close to 7 PM as possible. **We are obliged to be out of the building no later than 10 PM.**

**YOU** Are MOST Welcome to Join Us: ***Merry Meet!***

## Pastoral Care

Report by Marty Vanderlaan

Pastoral care encompasses several support activities within UUSF. Collectively these activities are “member to member” support and assistance with life challenges as part of being a caring community. One of our weekly covenants is to “help one another” and pastoral care is one example of how we live out this covenant. Our efforts are primarily supported by Revs. Laura Shennum and Mark Caswell, but all of the ministers contribute.



### Lay Chaplains

The lay chaplains are: Marty Vanderlaan, Linda Harris, Jan Oringer, Laura Davis, Sara Ferree, and Deborah Baldwin. We meet the first and third Thursdays every month via Zoom and our meetings are usually attended by Revs. Shennum and Mark Caswell. We respond to requests for short term assistance from members of the congregation and we respond to messages left on the church answering machine.

In providing care we often rely on a network of UUSF volunteers who have said they are available to help other members of the congregation. We wish to express our deep appreciation for all the help of these volunteers. We recently posted a request for more volunteers on the UUSF “Volunteer” bulletin board. Many members of the congregation have made meals for other members, part of sharing the love of a specially prepared meal. We have also organized rides to medical appointments as needed.



Several members of the congregation have been hospitalized, had surgery, or been treated for cancer during the year. Many of these members have received special assistance. We also help members navigate the city and other community resources that may be available to assist them. Deborah uses her social work training to work with congregants needing longer-term assistance. For home-bound members we arrange visits and phone calls to keep them connected. We have helped provide emotional support for those who have lost pets.

## Caregiver Support Group

Jan Oringer runs the caregiver support group. The UUSF Group meets once a month by ZOOM. The meetings are attended by 4-5 individuals who provide care and support to loved ones who are experiencing chronic medical conditions and/or memory loss. They share their stories of the challenges and joys they find in their roles. The people in this group lovingly support each other, and also share resources and skills they have found while finding fulfillment in caregiving.



## Cards of Caring and Good Cheer

The Card Ministry, led by Laura Davis, sends 15-20 caring cards a month to members and staff who are having health or personal challenges, are grieving, or deserve a thank you or congratulations. Birthday cards to members over 80 (those we know about) are sent by Sara Ferree. Luanne Schulte has brought back the Card Ministry table on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of every month, where people can write their own notes to members and staff.



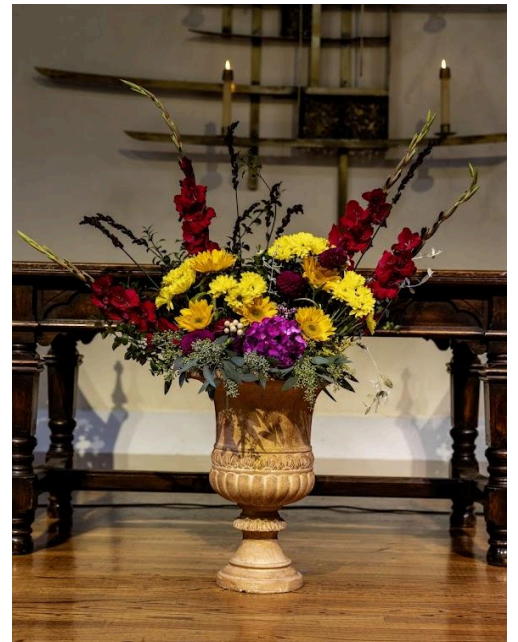
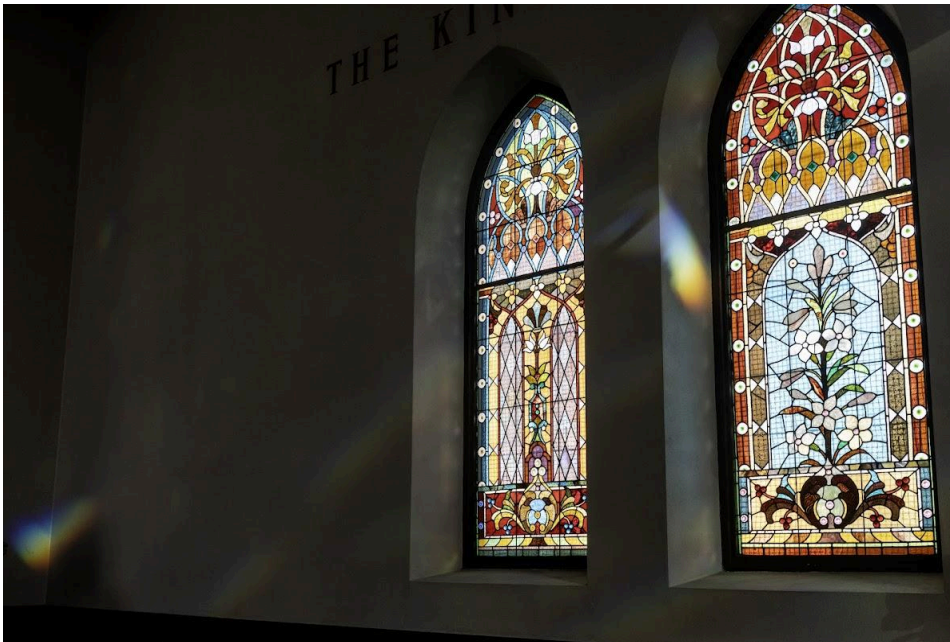
## Transportation Ministry

This is a new undertaking of the lay chaplains. The goal is to provide transportation to Sunday services; by carpooling or walking with someone who lives near the church but needs support or by arranging taxis or paratransit.

## Ken Keep Kindness Fund

Upon the death of long-time member Ken Keep, his cousin Jean Ashe made a seed grant to establish the Ken Keep Kindness Fund in memory of Ken's long history of great kindness and devotion to UUSF and its every Sunday promise to "help one another". The fund is utilized to support special needs of congregants, especially the elderly and disabled, and other needs that were close to Ken's heart (such

as continuing his long tradition of quietly providing creamer for the church's coffee every Sunday). This fund is jointly administered by the ministers and the Lay Chaplains. We were able to augment these funds this year with a very generous donation by renowned textile artist Sue Fox. Ms Fox made and donated all profit from the sales of numerous beautiful quilts and tapestries which incorporated numerous ties from Ken's huge collection. In collaboration with the Art Committee Sue Fox displayed the quilts and demonstrated her techniques. A special thank you to those who purchased the quilts. Grants this year ranged from providing funds for a congregant to move belongings to a subsidized supportive housing setting to making taxi vouchers that can accommodate a wheelchair available to meet extraordinary needs of disabled congregants wanting to attend church services in person.



## **Personnel Committee**

Report by Teresa Goebel, Chair

The Personnel Committee supports the Church's senior leadership team in matters relating to personnel and human resources. This year, we developed and executed a process to provide a 360 review to Rev. Laura Shennum, which involved feedback from Church staff, members of the congregation and outside collaborators. We also assisted the senior leadership team in addressing personnel issues that arose over the course of the year. In addition, we analyzed UUA's proposed changes to its recommended ministerial employment agreements to assess whether any changes should be made to the employment agreements of our ministers. The Personnel Committee is chaired by Teresa Goebel and includes members Carrie Steere-Salazar, Kathleen Quenneville and Kelli Murray (in addition to Rev. Vanessa and Laura Ludwig).



## Rheiner Award Committee

Report by Dolores Perez Heilbron, Chair

Chair: Dolores Perez Heilbron

Members: Bob Bacon, Rochelle Fortier, David Jones, Lori Lai, Mary Jane Mikuriya, Jan & Howard Oringer, and Julia Wald.

Webpage: <https://www.uusf.org/rheiner>

The UUSF Board of Trustees established the Rheiner Award in 1989 to honor members for their social justice activism and community service that reflects Unitarian Universalist values. The award was named for the Reverend Conard Rheiner (1902-1987), a Universalist minister who was an active member of this congregation during the later years of his long career in social work. His life and work exemplify the qualities that this award stands for.

Last fall we welcomed the submission of names to be considered to be our next Rheiner Awardee. Our committee has considered and chosen the new awardee for this year, which will be announced soon.

Detailed information about this award and the criteria for it are on our webpage.

Here is a clarified quote from the Rev. Conard Rheiner:

***"Stand for something worthwhile; champion truth, health, justice, and morality to ensure their prevalence in our community."***

The Rheiner Committee thanks our ministers, members of the staff, and all who have helped to make this award an important part of our community.



## **Society for Community Work**

Report by Kelli Murray, Chair

SCW Council Members:

Chair – Kelli Murray; Treasurer – Sherry Delo; Scribe – Judith Ottoson; Scholarship Committee Chair – Maric Munn; Community Grants Committee Chair – Athena Papadakos (succeeded by Anne Steele)

For another year, the Society for Community Work, founded by UUSF members in 1873, continued its commitment to bending the arc of the moral universe toward social justice. This year, our Scholarship Committee awarded \$40,000 to 16 new and continuing scholars (\$2,500 each), most of whom come from very low-income families and are the first generation of their family to attend college. In addition to this financial support, these students are paired with volunteer mentors from the congregation to support their ongoing educational and career development. The Community Grants Committee awarded \$40,000 to 14 local organizations, with grants ranging in size from \$1,800 to \$4,200. The Committee focused on organizations in which small grants have a big impact, as well as those affected by government cutbacks. These organizations address needs related to low-income families, especially children and youth, the environment, immigration, LGBTQ+ issues, election education, cultural institutions, and families with incarcerated members. In addition, SCW continued its ongoing support of Up On Top and the Faithful Fools. All UUSF members are automatically members of SCW, and we enthusiastically welcome and appreciate volunteers who wish to support this historical organization.



## UU Service Committee

Report by Linda Harris, Co-Chair

Linda Harris & Marty Vanderlaan are the Co-Chairs of UUSF's UUSC Committee as well as being UUSC's Local Representatives

The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Service Congregational Committee is to support the worldwide efforts of the national UUSC for human rights, social justice and environmental justice. To this end, we seek to:

- Increase the visibility of the UUSC to UUSF members, and show how UUSF members can help further UUSC's work with their own advocacy efforts.
- Increase membership levels in, and donations to, the UUSC within our congregation.
- Engage in ongoing dialogue with national UUSC leadership on ways to enhance our denomination's efforts to live out our UU values in the larger world.



As in past years, the Guest at Your Table program served as the major UUSC fundraiser, consciousness raiser, and membership drive of the year. It also provided both adults and children in our congregation with a concrete way to live out their UU values and feel empowered and hopeful in our troubled world. All contributions to this program went directly to fund UUSC's social justice and human rights projects nationally and worldwide. Individual and family donations over \$150 were generously matched by the UU congregation at Shelter Rock. We are proud to report that our congregation has earned UUSC's

"Creating Justice Banner Society Award" because of the high percentage of our membership who are also UUSC members.

In addition to periodic newsletter updates about the inspiring work of the UUSC and its partners, we had two special events that increased our congregation's knowledge about and involvement in the work of the UUSC. We had a very well attended UUSC luncheon in November during which Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern and her husband Rohit Menezes -who is on the board of the UUSC- engaged in an inspiring presentation about their trip with the UUSC board to meet with UUSC partners in Eastern Europe. Rohit also shared insights about the special challenges the current political climate offers for the UUSC and its partners and how these challenges are being met. This event was followed by a wonderful opportunity in December for UUSF members to attend a dinner at our church

with Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, UUSC President and Lead Executive Officer. She expanded on the special challenges social justice work faces in these complicated times and the inspiring ways the UUSC and its partners are meeting these challenges and offering powerful resistance in a time of escalating injustice. We extend a special thanks to Stacey Coyle, Lori Lai, Cheryl McKinney, Ralph Fenn, Melvin Starks, and Howard and Jan Oringer for their extraordinary help in planning these events,



providing publicity, planning and preparing delicious food for both occasions, collecting donations for the food, and making sure the kitchen was clean and the dishes were done at the end. We also give special thanks to all of the congregation members who spontaneously lent a hand to help with these efforts on the days of the events and made these true community building experiences.



A new initiative of UUSC is a “Resistance Network” to engage local activists within a national network. Currently we are collaborating with several of the other social justice focused groups within our church to launch our initial monthly “Good Trouble” table after the church service. We hope to have information at the table about a variety of actions people can take on the spot and over the coming month as we work together to actively live out our UU values in a troubled nation and world. We plan to offer information

at this table to congregants and visitors about how to get updated information on a regular basis about nationwide UU social justice actions and letter writing advocacy.

We look forward to continued growth of our congregation’s membership in and involvement with the UUSC and its work over the coming year and welcome any congregants who would like to join us in this effort.