

the Mountain Chalice



Unitarian Universalist Community of the Mountains

September 2025

UPCOMING SERVICES

Our Sunday Services are at 10:30 AM in person and via Zoom.

If you've been exposed to Covid, RSV, the flu, or are just not feeling well, please attend online.

TO JOIN THE ZOOM SERVICE AT 10:30 AM ON SUNDAYS:

Online via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/746107217>

Meeting ID: 746 107 217 # • Passcode: 688010

Audio by phone: Dial in: 1 669 900 6833 or 1 408 638 0968

Meeting ID: 746 107 217 # • Passcode: 688010

... See Page 17 for Kid-Centered Activities ...

SEPTEMBER THEME: Building Belonging

Sept. 7 Don't You Need a Welcome?
(With UUCM's Annual Water Ceremony)
Rev. Kevin Tarsa and Lindsay Duncel,
Worship Associate

We enter this month's theme of "Building Belonging" by recognizing the powerful significance of belonging, especially amid so much public "othering." Come, whoever you are. Come, build a place of welcome, of hope, of compassion as well as power. Come, build a community that aspires to greater justice and to loving with a wider embrace.

You are invited to bring a small amount of water from your home or from some place special to you to add to our common bowl in our annual water ceremony.

Sept. 14 Building Belonging: Architects of Fate
Rev. Kevin Tarsa, with Worship Associate TBD

Picking up on the themes of the previous Sunday's service, we ask more deeply why it matters that UUCM is here, why being part of such a community matters now in particular, and what the upward movement of energy, interest, and number of searchers at our doors is asking of us, teaching us, and gifting us.

Sept. 21 Belonging to Place
Randy McKean and Carol Nimick,
Worship Associates

Our "sense of place" is foundational to our wellbeing, for a place can protect, inspire, comfort, and ground us. Perhaps it is where we were born or a site in nature? Perhaps our UUCM Sanctuary?

Our sense of place also lives in our hearts and bodies. Let us plumb the dimensions of place and how a place can become sacred as it holds the power of memories, experiences, and opportunities for us to feel connected.

Sept. 28 Serving with Grace
Rev. Kevin Tarsa and Cheryl Morris,
Worship Associate

Erik Walker Wikstrum writes, "Common wisdom holds that people come to church for a sense of belonging, and that getting involved with a committee or task force is a great way to meet people and feel more connected." But what if we come for an even deeper reason, he asks: "to have our lives transformed?" What if we understood our participation in the life of this community as a key source of spiritual sustenance and a source of deep joy?

► INSIDE THIS ISSUE ◀

Item	Page
Upcoming Services.....	1
From the Minister.....	2
Board of Trustees.....	3
Treasurer's Update.....	4
Words from the Worship Team.....	5
Evening Contemplative Service.....	5
Membership Team.....	6
Endowment Thanks.....	6
Strategic Planning.....	7
Parish & Lay Pastoral Care Teams.....	7
Arts and Aesthetics.....	8-9
Summer Fun - UUCM Campout Pics.....	9
UUCM History Corner: UUCM By Laws and more.....	10
Feature: Food for the Soul.....	11
Justice News and Activities.....	12-14
Community Connections.....	15-16
Second Sunday Book Group.....	16
UUCM Family Ministry.....	17
UUCM Contact Info and Office Hours.....	18



The Minister

Rev. Kevin Tarsa
UUCM Minister

Building Belonging

When “building” is taken as a verb, the theme focuses us on the ways we can and are called to nurture a sense of belonging within and among all who participate or who want to participate in this community. This is an especially important need as so many people arrive seeking both sanctuary and a base camp. The important inner, interpersonal, and community work of building a sense of belonging will guide our focus in several of the September services.

When “building” is taken as a noun, the theme focuses us on the ways UUCM’s current building serves and/or hampers a sense of belonging, on the ways that people attach meaning and hold personal connection to this structure at 246 South Church Street. It also considers the possibilities for belonging to a new physical home for UUCM and this community that seeks to cultivate spiritual, emotional and intellectual strength in all of us for the sake of greater compassion, sustainability and justice in our world.

Soon, informed by rich conversations and your written feedback, I’ll be naming what I see as the best experimental path for meeting the gift and challenge of an overflowing sanctuary, even as the possibility of purchasing property with a larger sanctuary and that might better meet UUCM’s needs unfolds. This take on “building” belonging will inform the focus of the September 14 service.

I suggest that our personal preparation for this month will be to notice and reflect on our own experiences and feelings of belonging and of not belonging and to notice what helps build our sense of belonging as well as what gets in the way. Ask yourselves what part of us is yet longing to belong and to be welcomed in and to reflect on our own willingness to help others find and feel a sense of genuine and deep belonging.



When so much othering is being wielded to frighten and separate people in our nation, a focus on building belonging is about much more than UUCM. We’re being called to invest in connection and belonging in much wider circles, too.

May this month focusing explicitly on building belonging be a meaningful and wise investment in the journey within us, among us, and beyond UUCM.

With care,

– Rev. Kevin

MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS



*Rev. Kevin's office hours
are usually held
Tuesday through Thursday afternoons.*

Email Admin@uugrassvalley.org
or call the office at (530) 274-1675
to schedule an appointment



Carol Richey, President,
UUCM Board of Trustees
President@uugrassvalley.org

Board of Trustees

The Board's Work

As attendees at UUCM, you are probably familiar with the Ministry part of the organization. It's the daily work of building community and transforming lives, the practical tasks behind creating worship services, and many other activities in the life of a congregation. These activities are in Rev. Kevin's area of responsibilities.

What may be less familiar is the Governance part of UUCM. Governance means "owning" the congregation or holding the whole organization and its work in trust and taking responsibility for its performance in fulfilling our mission. This is an oversimplification, but Governance is responsible for documentation: mission, strategic plans, goal, policies, budgets, financial condition, contracts, etc. One of the main jobs is envisioning the future and holding a vision consistent with our mission. These numerous functions are in the Board of Trustees' area of responsibilities.

I share this with you because this year's Board has two primary goals. One is to address our building needs, and the other is to simplify our organization so that it's easy to know where to go when you need to get answers or something done. UUCM relies on the participation of our members and friends as well as the outside community "to create a world more compassionate, sustainable, and just." Let's make it clear how to engage in our good work!

The Board sent an email to UUCM members & Friends on August 21 to share the news about a potential church building to explore. The Facilities Exploration committee has been working to keep our current building in good condition as well as planning for a potential new home. There is much exploration to be done with this current opportunity, and we will keep you up to date every step of the way. Know that any decision to move forward with the sale or purchase of a building must be approved by the voting membership. It is our job to provide you with enough information to make an informed decision.

FIRST BUSINESS MEETING OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR: CHAIR APPOINTEES

The Board met for the first business meeting of the new fiscal year and gracefully worked through a full agenda. This is the

time of year for appointing committee chairs. Taylor Carey, our most recent past president, volunteered to assume the responsibilities for the Governance Committee. I'm sure Taylor will soon get his competent arms around our documents and work toward the Board's goal of making UUCM's organization and its work easier to understand. Janet Dunstan had been doing incredible work in this area and decided to enter retirement. That didn't last long: I continue to lead the Finance Committee with Janet's help and her commitment to organization and integrity. Thank you, Janet!

Gail Schulz stepped up to lead the Stewardship Committee and is already making plans for pledge and capital campaigns as well as recruiting team members. This committee calls on aspects of both Ministry and Governance. If you have fundraising experience or enjoy communicating and interacting with people, this team may be a good fit for you. It runs for a few months before and through the end of the annual pledge campaign, so you're not expected to make a long-term commitment.

To open the August Board meeting, we contemplated the question, "How did UUCM touch your spirit in the past month?" My personal response to this reflection is 'working together on a common goal in small groups.' The best experiences I have had are getting to know people while working together. It's nice to accomplish something, but the truly meaningful benefit of the work is getting to know other members deeply and know myself in interactions with them as well. I hope you discover what touches your spirit here at UUCM.

*In service,
- Carol*

UUCM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

JULY 2025 - JUNE 2026

Carol Richey	President
Jeff Gold	Vice President
Gail Schulz	Treasurer
Lin Jovanovic	Secretary

Members at Large:

Charlene Dugan, Gwen Eymann, and Mark Grove

Board meetings are open to all members and friends starting at 1:30 PM on the third Wednesday of each month.

If you wish to address the board, please give at least two days notice so the agenda timing can be adjusted.



Treasurer's Update

Gail Schulz, Treasurer
UUCM Board of Trustees
Treasurer@uugrassvalley.org

Treasurer's Report for the Fiscal Year 2024-25

SUMMARY –

Overall, this was a very positive year financially for UUCM. Our net membership increased slightly, our family ministry program grew, and our building overflows every Sunday. Financially, we built a budget around projected pledges of \$250,000, but our final pledges for the year increased to \$266,725, and we collected \$261,656 of that money. Our total operating income was budgeted at \$277,556, and we received \$314,614, or \$37,058 more than budgeted. Our expenses were budgeted at \$276,263, and we only went over budget by (\$1,480). Our approved budget projected an operating deficit of (\$1,293), and we have a surplus of \$29,210. What happened?

Areas of greatest success on the income side in addition to pledges and their payment –

1. We budgeted \$16,000 in non-pledge donations, largely our share of Sunday Plate. In part because of the “full house” we have experienced since the autumn of 2024, our donations reached a total of \$23,148.
2. We budgeted \$10,000 income from fundraising. We received \$16,084. With 2 concerts put together by Rev. Kevin and Toby, our holiday bazaar, a very successful auction, and a few other activities along the way, it seems as if our community is showing more interest in engaging in fun activities and also helping to support the church.
3. Our investments did well, increasing by \$6,883, and your Treasurer did her bit by moving excess operating cash into higher paying CD's. Interest income increased to \$2,164.

Money that we raised for efforts in support of our values –

In addition to funding our basic operations, including salary, worship, music, family ministry, membership activities, building and grounds work, and justice, we raised a lot of money for causes dear to our hearts.

1. We raised and paid out to our partners for the Share the Plate program a total of \$13,590 under our new system of sharing 50% of our Sunday Plate.
2. We raised \$13,600 for the Postcard Campaign, and once again received the UUA designation of a “Good Trouble Congregation”.
3. We raised \$2,500 toward meals at Hospitality House, \$8,040 for continuing relief for the Haitian family, and the Ministers Discretionary Fund received \$4,783.

Expenses had their own successes –

1. Perhaps the most significant improvement that we made by spending more money is that we were able to move our health insurance options to a higher level. Health insurance is expensive, and we had been able to offer only a high-deductible major medical plan, with a deductible of \$6,000. We have been able to move up one level to a plan with a deductible of \$3,000, at an extra cost of about \$8,000 per year. There is still room for improvement, but this is a beginning step toward increased support for our staff. (We pay 80% of the cost of premiums.)
2. We have been able to increase salaries to keep up with inflation this year. We also pride ourselves on paying salaries that are at or above the UUA guidelines for a church in our area and of our size.
3. Our operations lived within budget. All our volunteers did a great job of running strong programs and putting together enriching services while living within their budgets. Yes, we had a few overages, but mostly in the area of governance, where we have only minimal control of things like utility, insurance costs and the UUA Annual Program Fund.

Overall, as I noted at the beginning, it was a very good year.

Respectfully submitted,

- Gail Schulz



Words from the Worship Team

Cheryl Morris and Carol Nimick
Worship Team Co-Leaders
Worship@uugrassvalley.org



Building Belonging

September! Kids are back in school, the days are getting shorter, and a new Soul Matters year is beginning. The folks who produce Soul Matters put a lot of thought and effort into choosing themes for the year, including surveying those of us who use them.

We are using action words this year, and for September the theme is "Building Belonging." It's an appropriate theme as people come back together after the summer, and especially this year as our numbers of new people visiting and attending remain high, it has special significance.

For newcomers and not-so-newcomers alike, it takes courage to enter the sanctuary, find a place to sit, and ready oneself to experience—maybe even participate in—a Sunday service. As the Worship Team assists Rev. Kevin in crafting a service, we try to be mindful of this. Beyond the warm greeting and support provided by the Greeters, what else can we do to help people feel welcomed and included?

It doesn't stop with Sunday services, of course, since most of us find that experiencing a sense of belonging not only takes time but active involvement in some aspects of church life. For many this may be completing the Starting Point series and then moving into a Soul Matters circle. It may mean joining the choir, or helping in the kitchen, or joining a team or task force.

It may mean contributing your writing or your art or your music. We hope you know that the Worship Team welcomes all of these forms of expression. If you let us know you're interested, we can find the month that would be the best fit for what you want to offer.

TOGETHER, WE BUILD BELONGING.

— Cheryl and Carol



MEET OUR NEWEST
WORSHIP ASSOCIATE
TEAM MEMBER:
Marlene Bottenfield

Marlene has joined the Worship Associates Team, bringing a life of striving, reflection, and personal experiences as well as years in a similar role at the Unity in the Gold Country Spiritual Center.. She has offered a thoughtful Land Acknowledgement and Reflection at recent Sunday services.]

Marlene focuses on learning from life lessons -- both those she's had to face as well as those coming. For Marlene, challenges are opportunities to live life more deeply and richly. She and her husband, Cliff, steward 38 acres off Red Dog Road in Nevada City. One acre is vegetable/fruit garden, where she revels in communing with the plant spirits and creatures of this acre. Marlene welcomes anyone to share it with her. "Nature is full of wisdom and in silence, I can hear it", she says. Marlene is happy to be in our UU community. The WA Team welcomes her deep thoughtfulness, experience, and passion to find joy in challenges and community. **Greetings Marlene!**

Monthly Evening Service



Join us for an Evening
Contemplative Service

SECOND THURSDAYS OF EACH MONTH,
7:00 TO 8:00 PM
GENTLE MUSIC BEGINS AT 6:30 PM

This month's service:
Thursday, September 11, 2025 at 7:00 PM

It's a simple but moving service. We will sing hymns, join in meditation, and take part in a Joys and Sorrows ritual where all are welcome to share aloud with the group the joys and/or sorrows in their hearts that night.



Membership Team

Laura Harter
Chair, Membership Team
membership@uugrassvalley.org

Starting Afresh in September

I always enjoy starting something new in September. At UUCM, September brings a new round of Starting Point sessions (make sure you're on the list if you are interested!) - email: startingpoint@uugrassvalley.org and new Soul Matters Circles: ([Soul Matters Website](http://SoulMattersWebsite.org) or email Gene Gilligan at: SoulMatters@uugrassvalley.org) I got a sneak peek at September's Soul Matters theme. Our first month's theme is 'Belonging,' a great topic for a Membership Team article! How could I resist?

A desire for connection and community brings most of us to UUCM. Did you find what you were looking for or are you still looking? Does a feeling of belonging keep you coming back? Does your sense of belonging feel like it needs a tune up? Are you so comfy that you forget to look around and meet someone new? Or does your comfort prompt your hospitality?

Belonging is essential to our wellbeing; loneliness is considered an epidemic in America and a threat to our individual and collective health. What does this mean for our friendly, welcoming community? I've begun to wonder if we carry our sense of belonging with us as we go through our day. It seems that belonging requires effort both to reach out and invite others in - whether we are 'regulars' or newcomers. Belonging takes confidence, curiosity, vulnerability, risk, and openness - this is hard to do if we feel threatened, judged, or unsure. Conversely, if we are too comfy, we can gravitate to familiar faces and miss opportunities for new connections. If we feel ignored or alienated, we can give up.

I invite you to reach out to others! Notice the room, who's new to you? Your belonging will only expand as you reach out. Take a risk and start a conversation even if your sense of belonging feels wobbly.

Feeling a bit lost, why not take a risk and reach out? I may be asking a lot but I encourage you to ask anyone at UUCM, "How does one get to know people here? Or ask, "What do you like about it here?" I believe you'll find a helpful and warm response. If you are unsure then feel free to reach out to welcome@uugrassvalley.org, any greeter, or Siobhan in the office. We are happy to steer you in a direction or make an introduction.

And if you want to really help make connections...

...HERE ARE SOME EASY WAYS TO HELP US BE A WELCOMING COMMUNITY!

The Membership Team invites you to continue to nurture and fortify our UUCM hospitality. There are easy and casual opportunities to pitch in. Consider greeting/ushering, or being a host for a Circle Supper, or pitching in at Holiday Potlucks. Making coffee, loading or emptying the dishwasher after service are simple ways to connect. These simple acts of hospitality offer big rewards and are not big commitments. As always, you set the boundaries. Try it once, commit to once a quarter, once a month, stay light on your feet - there are no victims here, only volunteers! Whether you're on the board and 2 committees, 'been there done that,' or 'no, I am too introverted' or 'too new' ... take a risk or invite a friend to join you. I believe you will be pleasantly rewarded.

I hope September brings you comfortable and rewarding connection at UUCM. Let us know your thoughts. please email me at: membership@uugrassvalley.org.

MEMBERSHIP TEAM: Laura Harter, Chair,
Jim Bair, Laurie Bell, Ruth Edwards, and Susan Merrill



Endowment

Kathryn Young
Endowment Committee
Endowment@uugrassvalley.org



Simple Gifts Thank You's

*Rev. Kevin, Gail Johnson Vaughan and Theresa Houtman
celebrated their birthdays with generous gifts to the
Endowment Fund!*

**AND - thanks to MANY contributions over MANY years -
our Endowment Fund has crossed the \$100,000 threshold!
You are paving the way for a thriving UUCM
long into the future.**

Simple Gifts are always a great way to honor special events in your life, or the passing of friends, family, and fellow UUCM-ers, or anything you feel like acknowledging with a special contribution.

We would love to talk with you about other kinds of Endowment Gifts, too. We have brochures and packets to give you more details on *Legacy Gifts*...please let us know if you would like one.

Strategic Planning

Progress Update on our Five-Year-Plan

The Strategic Planning Group has been meeting monthly through the spring and summer months, and we're now making some final edits to our draft of our Five-Year-Plan – 2026 – 2030. We hope to deliver this draft soon to the Board for their review, and then to the congregation for your review and comments.

The Planning Group has applied our Mission to formatting the plan:

*With courageous love and a sense of wonder,
we cultivate our spiritual, emotional and intellectual strength
to create a world
more compassionate, sustainable, and just.*

In so doing, sections of the Plan have been organized around four “cultural cornerstones”:

- Creating a Culture of Courageous Love
- Creating a Culture of Communicating Well
- Creating a Culture of Clear Decision-making
- Creating a Culture of Financial Well-being

We hope this Plan inspires collaboration and furthers the valuable spirit of our beloved community. We look forward to our upcoming dialog with you.

Respectfully,

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Lesley Champlin, Charlene Dugan,
Lindsay Dunkel, Jeff Gold, Laura Harter, Carol Richey,
Allison Rivers, Rev. Kevin Tarsa,
Alan Weisberg



Parish Care



Gwen Eymann
Coordinator, UUCM Parish Care
Caring@uugrassvalley.org

WE ALL NEED EXTRA CARE SOMETIMES ON OUR JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE.

UUCM Parish Care is here to help organize practical support for members and friends through times of need, offering support such as home or hospital visits, transportation to local appointments, a ride to UUCM on Sunday, preparing or delivering a meal, shopping, and essential errands. The Parish Care volunteers also send cards of caring and celebration, make friendly phone calls and visits, and assist with hosting and refreshments at memorial services.

As Unitarian Universalists we believe that we all share in the responsibility for one another's care, and we invite all members and friends of UUCM to become actively involved in this wonderfully important opportunity for service. If supporting this work interests you, please fill out this brief [Parish Care Volunteer Survey](#) to identify tasks you would be willing to do on occasion. The Parish Care coordinator will contact you as needs arise.

For more information, to request care, or to share word of someone in need of care, please contact us at: Caring@uugrassvalley.org

Lay Pastoral Care Team

ARE YOU FACING A LIFE CHALLENGE?

UUCM's Lay Pastoral Care Team (LPCT) offers a confidential, caring presence to congregants undergoing stressful life challenges. With the support and guidance of the minister, team members commit to be available for weekly caring conversations of up to one hour, and for the duration of a congregant's current challenge or until a time of closure arises naturally.

Please contact a member of the Lay Pastoral Care Team when you are facing difficult and stressful portions of your journey and if you feel that a companioning presence from one of our team members might be helpful to you.

LAY PASTORAL CARE TEAM MEMBERS:

George Dunstan, Gwen Eymann, Carol Grant, Sue Gregory,
and Corrie Silva, or you can email the whole team:
LayPastoralCare@uugrassvalley.org



Art and Aesthetics Team

Linda Siska, Leader,
Art & Aesthetics Team
art@uugrassvalley.org

Meet the Arts and Aesthetics Team

I hope everyone had the opportunity to see Gail Schulz's exquisite needlework that has been gracing the UUCM library for the past three months. I am so impressed with the depth of talent in our congregation and so grateful to all of the artists who have generously shared their art with us. Thank you, Gail!

Beginning in September, we will offer something different: instead of a single artist, we'll have a group exhibit featuring the work of the Art and Aesthetics Team.

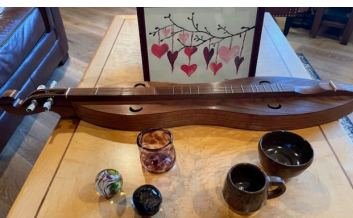
Our art is as individual as we are, so I will let each team member speak for themselves:



Shanti Emerson

When I moved to Nevada County 25 years ago, I wanted to pursue something different than I had done before—study art. I took classes in clay at Sierra College and the Mud

Hut. I took painting lessons and experimented with collage. This journey awakened my creative potential, which had been dormant for far too long. I fell in love with my artwork and showcased it at the Center for the Arts, the Altar Show, and the Nevada County Fair. Each week, I engage in artistic projects at the library. Creating art has not only enriched my life but has also become a vital and fulfilling aspect of who I am.



Mark Grove

I can remember loving many forms of art from a very early age – drawing, painting, pottery, woodcarving and music – mostly from classes

in school. I really enjoyed Art and Music from elementary to high school and looked forward to those classes all throughout my school days.

As a teenager, music became my primary form of self-expression, and this eventually led me to an interest in building my own instruments (mostly, at first, because I didn't have the money to buy them!) – I built my first banjo from scratch at the age of 15. Later in life, I took up building stringed instrument more seriously – creating guitars, dulcimers,

banjos, and other works and performing restorations on old or broken instruments.

More recently, I've made a return to my youth by working in acrylics, drawing, throwing pottery on the wheel and even some glassblowing (which I find particularly satisfying).



Robin Hart

From the time I can first remember, art has always been the center of my life. At the age of three, I announced to my parents that I was going to be an artist when I grew up. Keeping to my chosen path, I have pursued both a professional career as a graphic artist/designer and expressed my personal creativity in fine art.

During my college years, I was encouraged by one of my professors to incorporate something I was passionate about into my art. I had always been

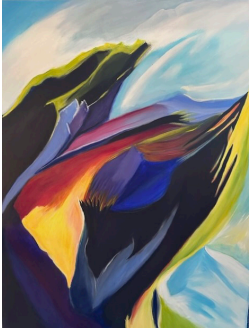
fascinated with astronomy and the space program, and grew up following the missions of the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo programs. When I integrated that subject matter into my work, I had an explosion of creativity that has continued over the years.

I have participated in art shows and galleries, as well as having had my space artwork on international tour, published in three books, and received awards and recognition. Over the years I have used a wide range of media; including watercolor, graphite, color pencil, acrylic, and airbrush with gouache and acrylic. When computers, software, and printers became sophisticated enough to be considered as a serious artistic tool around the year 2000, I began to move most of my creative endeavors over to that platform. I have found working in digital media liberating and it has allowed me to express myself in ways that would have been more limited in traditional media. I now do all my painting digitally and have traded paint for pixels and brushes for a digital tablet with a stylus pen. I use programs such as Photoshop, Painter and Adobe Illustrator to create my work on the computer.

In recent years I have also delved into the world of art quilting and working with fiber materials and thread to translate my love of space in a new and exciting medium. I am doing the majority of my art pieces today as art quilts, combining my digital artwork, output on a large format printer and heavily free motion machine quilted.

Continued on next page...

A & A Team, continued...



Laura Harter

Nature is at the heart of any image I create. I like the process of creating images whether I am composing a photo or painting. I love the clarity and simplicity of design and illustration. I love how documentary photography lets a person, place, or object reveal something of itself. But I've let go of the discipline of representational art

to explore beauty and mystery that I find in abstract images. I enjoy the freedom of discovering an image, letting it emerge on a page. I hope you enjoy and find respite in viewing my photos and paintings.



Phil Horning

I have always had a great interest in observing nature close by and in natural settings such as the National Parks and National Forests. Nature provides inspiration for me particularly when I am out hiking, biking, or skiing through the landscape. What I try to do with my paintings is to capture views, moments, or experiences that

are particularly meaningful to me and hopefully share some of that experience with people viewing my paintings. My other interest is travel, having lived in Iran and Tasmania and travelled through most of Asia. A couple of my portraits are from Iran and landscapes of Nepal and Tasmania.

My interest in art started as a young boy and it led me to become a landscape architect where I could use my design and drawing skills to implement projects in the field. I worked as a forest landscape architect for most of my career after serving in the Peace Corps in Iran. After retiring I returned to painting as a creative outlet. I hope you will enjoy these paintings.



Linda Siska

I have tried many art forms over the years — art quilts, felting, folk art painting, acrylics, watercolors, Zentangle — but one thing has always eluded me, my own artistic voice. I am currently experimenting with combinations of Zentangle, watercolor, colored pencil, and most recently,

urban sketching, all in pursuit of that elusive voice. I think I may be getting closer, but I know I'm not there yet. Still, the journey is both delightful and enlightening; I am so grateful to have art in my life.

Summer Fun!

UUCM Camp Out was FUN!

By Shannon Dooley-Miller

UUCM campers gathered again this year, continuing a tradition of more than 25 years. We made camp in August at Plumas Eureka State Park, and it was another great time to be in community, away from our busy lives with no cellphones! Singing around the campfire, sharing good food, hiking to lakes, wading in the creek and enjoying hanging out together: we'll keep that camping spirit and plan again for 2026.





Ruth Edwards
UUCM Historian

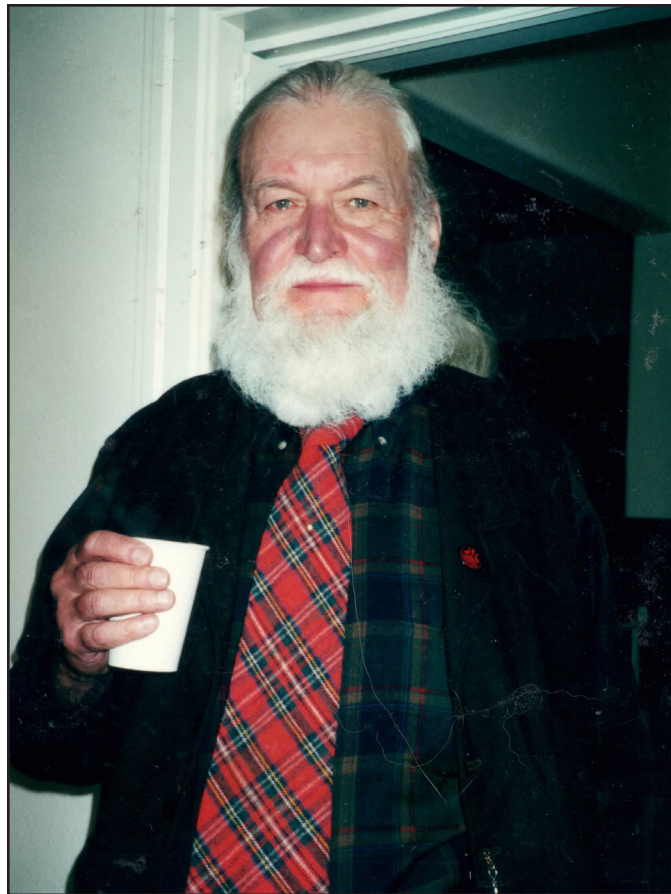
UUCM History Corner

Fall Kickoff Meeting featuring Utah Phillips, Nationally Known Storyteller and Folk Singer

September 1995 was a busy month for UUCM members and friends. On September 17, more than 200 people gathered at the Miner's Foundry to celebrate the UUCM Fall Kick-off meeting. The featured speaker was Utah Phillips, an American labor organizer, nationally known folk singer and storyteller, and a founding member of UUCM. He spoke on "Liberal Religion in the Brave Newt World." (Note: 'Newt' is not a misspelling.) The average attendance for a UUCM meeting was 60, so Utah drew a lot of people beyond the current members of UUCM.

Utah arrived in this area in the late 1980s. He had already had a lifetime of riding the rails, working all kinds of jobs, supporting the Industrial Workers of the World, and entertaining many audiences with his engaging personality, singing his original songs and telling stories. Why did he choose to spend the rest of his life (he died at 73 years of age in 2008) in Grass Valley/ Nevada City? Utah himself said: "It's my town. Nevada City is a primary seedbed for community organizing."

In the early 2000s, Utah, with a number of others, including Anita Wald-Tuttle, wanted to start a program for homeless people who could stay the night in a safe building and get decent food. The result was Hospitality House.



Utah Phillips, a founding member of UUCM, in 1995

The following are excerpts from the Hospitality House website:

"Following the guidance of successful neighboring community shelters (especially Placer County's Gathering Inn and the Chico Community Shelter Project), Hospitality House decided to operate as a nomadic shelter, moving nightly between different faith communities.

On Nov. 5, 2005, Hospitality House opened its doors to homeless residents. During those first few weeks the Unitarian Universalist Community of the Mountains graciously served as the daily welcome center.

On Dec. 11, 2005, Hospitality House moved into its new Welcome Center at 438B Colfax Avenue in Grass Valley. Volunteers and guests created a homey atmosphere, and showers and laundry facilities became available to guests. Hospitality House has grown enormously in the years since.

Located at 1262 Sutton Way, Utah's Place serves up to 69 homeless individuals and families in our community by providing a place to shower, do laundry, have meals and receive case housing management.

Utah Phillips was an ardent advocate for labor and peace issues as well as for the rights of homeless people. Utah, once homeless himself, felt a responsibility to help those in need."

UUCM will be honoring Utah and Hospitality House during a December Sunday service.

— Ruth

Special Feature

A Poem in Doggerel Form in Celebration of Food for the Soul by Jenny Dewey

A few definitions and facts about the word "doggerel":

- Bad poetry written with the intention of being silly because the writer does not intend to be serious.
- Comic verse composed in irregular rhythm; verse or words badly written or expressed.
- 0.2 occurrences of use per million words spoken or written in English
- First used in the 15th Century.

Time for Dinner

by Jenny Dewey

Frog legs and crickets and strawberry punch,
Oysters and blueberries all in a bunch.
Catfish with whiskers and don't forget snails,
Served with goat-milk in stainless steel pails.

Mushrooms abound, the kind that don't kill,
And pigs being roasted against their will.
Fried-up lobsters, antennae attached,
Sides of Beef Wellington, don't you dare snatch.

Olives with stuffings of high degree,
Served with medallions, the gilt-trim is free.
God is on your side, and so is the cook,
With bare feet, a nightshirt, and a Biblical look.

Truffles and tarts and jellies shine bright,
And vanilla-beanie ice cream in the middle
of the night.
Quail breasts are there, with all the rest,
And pickles and peanut sauce, only the best.

Your gullet and endocrine glands will rejoice
When you sit at my table, you've made a wise choice.
While stumbling home with a fullness of belly,
You'll swear never again to eat burnt toast and jelly.

Take it from someone who knows the score,
Each time you pass through my kitchen door,
Esophageal thrills set you all aquiver,
As you travel home with dreams of chopped liver.

Bon Appetit



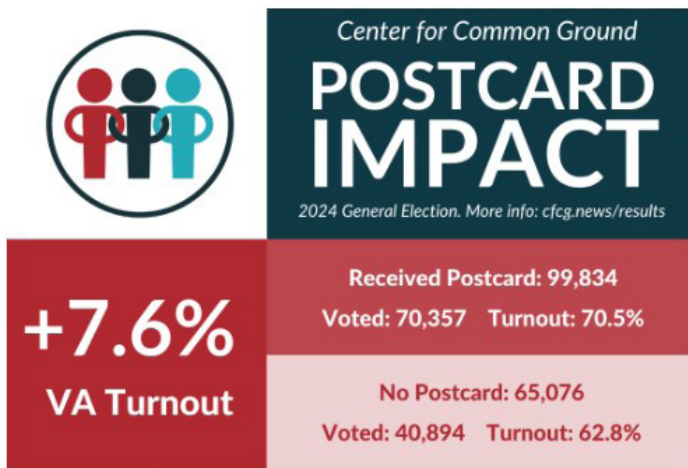
One of Jenny's whimsical drawings of a shrew

Bending the Arc Task Force

By Gail Johnson-Vaughan

WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

In the 2024 General Election, our postcard partner Center for Common Ground ran tests in Virginia to try to gauge the effectiveness of our handwritten Reclaim Our Vote postcards. They used randomized data for large numbers of voters who received our postcards and compared their turnout to voters who were eligible for a postcard but did not receive one. They found that ROV postcards increased voter turnout in Virginia by 7.6%.



HOW TO ADD A DOT TO THE TALLY JAR POSTER

Have you noticed the Tally Jar Poster as you come through the foyer? It's on the right side of the entrance into the sanctuary and shows how many postcards have been written. Each time a writer finishes writing a packet of postcards they get to put their initials on a colored dot and place them on the poster. Such fun to watch the poster fill up! Two ways to add your dot:

1. Stick one up yourself
2. Send an email Gail JV at gailjv@uugrassvalley.org and she will do it for you.

WANT COMPANY WHILE YOU WRITE?

You are invited to join our weekly (including Labor Day) drop-in postcard party Mondays 9:00 – 11:00 AM. Great way to get cards written and have fun conversation with other writers.

There's still lots of time to write! We can start mailing postcards on Sept 15 and have until October 20 to get the last ones in the mail. If you are new to writing, just sign out your packets from the postcard table in the foyer. We ask writers who are able to reimburse us for the \$13.00 cost of stamps, cards, etc., for each packet. Scholarships are available for writers who need them and donations from others to cover the scholarships are appreciated.

Thanks for making us a Good Trouble Congregation.

Growing Together: Intercultural Development at UUCM

This past month, our first-ever Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Cohort from the Bending the Arc task force took the IDI, gathered for a group debrief and reflection, and then met with me individually for a confidential assessment of their IDI results. These inaugural participants have begun a journey of learning, vulnerability, and transformation. Early feedback suggests that this process is valuable in helping participants gain a deeper understanding of themselves, engage more fully with others, and contribute to building a more inclusive and connected faith community.

At UUCM, we affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person, the interconnected web of all existence, and the search for truth and meaning. These Unitarian Universalist principles call us not only to celebrate diversity but also to actively develop the skills and understanding needed to communicate across cultural differences with compassion, humility, and clarity. We covenant to dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression, working to become diverse, multicultural beloved communities where all can thrive. We support the use of inclusive, democratic processes to make decisions within our congregations, our Association, and society at large.

That's why UUCM is offering a second opportunity to take part in the Intercultural Development Inventory. The IDI is a research-based assessment and guided learning process designed to deepen intercultural awareness and improve communication across cultural boundaries. Whether the differences we encounter are based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, language, or worldview, the IDI helps us understand how we currently engage with cultural differences—and how we might grow.

The next IDI cohort is scheduled to begin in November. The total time commitment for participation is approximately 3 to 7 hours (depending on group size), which includes completing an individual online assessment, attending a Group Orientation and Debrief, and receiving a one-on-one Individual Debrief. Debriefs can be conducted either in person or via Zoom.

Participation is open to UUCM members, friends, and regular attendees. The cost is \$26.00. A limited number of scholarships are available to help ensure that cost is not a barrier for members and congregants. While community members beyond UUCM are also welcome to participate in the IDI and receive an individual debrief, scholarships are not currently available for non-congregants.

Effective communication across cultures is more than a skill—

Justice News and Activities

It is a spiritual practice that calls us into deeper covenant with one another. We invite you to join us on this journey toward greater awareness, empathy, and action.

If you're interested in participating or would like to learn more, please get in touch with Tracy Pepper, IDI Qualified Administrator, at TracyPepper@grassvalley.org.

Let's grow together—in faith, in community, and intercultural competence.

- **Tracy Pepper, MPA**
IDI Qualified Administrator
Building the Arc Task Force Member
Founder/Past Executive Director,
Color Me Human

Yuba River Cleanup

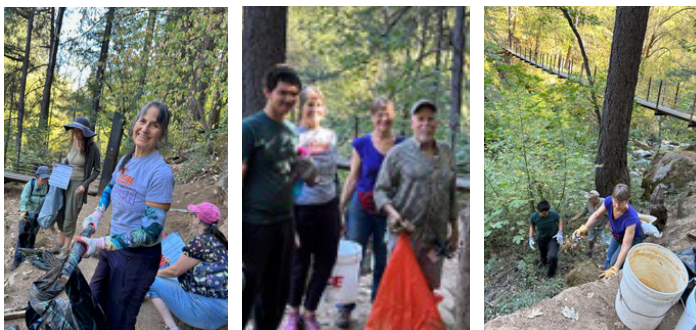
Register to Volunteer for the 26th Annual Yuba River Cleanup

For over a quarter of a century, volunteers have removed more than 160 tons of trash and recycling from our waterways. This year, You can join the traditional community cleanup on the 20th, or schedule a self-guided cleanup for the week prior. This year, the UUCM SYRCL Team is going to be at Wolf Creek/Glen Jones area. When you sign up our password is Wolf. Any questions, email Shannon at shannondooleymiller@uugrassvalley.org and let her know you have signed up



Register at: yubariver.org
or go directly to the sign up form here: [SIGN UP LINK](#)

*Meanwhile.... enjoy some photos from LAST September
of the UUCM group...*



Nisenan News

By Eileen Hale

We're still the Team-Formerly-Known-as-the-Nisenan-Task-Force—a new, solidified structure, a confirmation of our new name, and acceptance by the congregation, are still waiting in the wings—but we're still here, working away, sometimes faster (mostly not), sometimes slower.

We're currently putting together our October service, which will NOT be on October 12, in honor of Indigenous Peoples' Day, because the NCR (Nevada City Rancheria) Nisenan Tribe have a very full and exciting calendar that weekend. Their next exhibit at 'Uba Seo, their gallery, is opening on Saturday, October 11, and on Sunday, October 12, they're holding their Nisenan Heritage Day at the Miner's Foundry, from 12:00 – 4:00 PM. But we'll work something out with them, as usual.

Meanwhile, one of the things I'm particularly excited about is that, at Shelly Covert's suggestion, a Nevada City church from another denomination contacted our team to help them find ways of putting their own Land Acknowledgement values into action!

We've been gathering a list of the actions we've taken and will be meeting with them soon. Speaking for myself, I feel very honored that Shelly directed them to us.

If this sounds like the kind of thing you'd like to be involved with, we'd love to have you join us on the team. Even if you feel you only have energy and time to hang out in the background and eavesdrop, it still brings valuable energy; and you never know when you'll realize we need something you never imagined might be needed, something you can do at home, on your own time; something you can practically do in your sleep... Join us!

You can reach out to us, whether to join or just to learn more about what we're up to, at: nisenan@uugrassvalley.org

Justice News and Activities

Share the Plate

UUCM's July Share the Plate recipient, [Child Advocates of Nevada County](#) received over \$1000, thanks to generous UUCM members, friends, and visitors. These weekly donations add up. Thank you all!

As of this writing, we are currently finishing up collections for our August partner, [Bear Yuba Land Trust](#).



Our September *Share the Plate* recipient is [Nevada County Habitat for Humanity](#), an organization that brings people together to build affordable homes for working families in need. Habitat has built/provided homes to more than 38 families in our area. They are currently building four houses near Nevada Union High School.

Thank you, each of you, for your continual compassion and justice-centered generosity.

SHARE THE PLATE PARTNERS FOR 2025-2026

Thank you for voting to select our Share the Plate Partners for next year. A total of 48 members and friends made their voices heard. Unfortunately, there were 15 worthwhile organizations to choose from but only 10 available slots. (IFM and Hospitality House are automatically chosen as our partners each year.)

Listed below are the partners that you selected for this year:

July	Child Advocates of Nevada County
August	Bear Yuba Land Trust
September	Habitat for Humanity
October	Sierra Roots
November	Bright Futures for Youth
December	Hospitality House
January	Community Beyond Violence
February	FREED
March	Citizens for Choice
April	KARE Crisis Nursery
May	IFM (Interfaith Food Ministry)
June	Color Me Human

Thanks again for voting and supporting these local non-profit organizations.



September is Hunger Action Month

Last year IFM had various donation drop off sites and they would love to have them again this year. If anyone from UUCM would be interested in being a drop off site or hosting a drive-through donation event, please reach out to Victoria – victoriamcm.ifm@gmail.com.

IFM still needs volunteer food sorters, checkers, and distribution drivers. If you are interested, contact Victoria at IFM for more information.

The UUCM Work Group for IFM meets every second Tuesday of the month from 2:00 - 4:00 PM. at IFM. If you would like to be a part of this fun and worthwhile project, please contact Karl Snyder or Keith Johnson at: justice@uugrassvalley.org.



Hospitality House Donations

Our continued generous support of Hospitality House is greatly appreciated by the guests and staff!

Currently, Needed Items Are:

- Men's and Women's Underwear
- Twin-Size Fitted Sheets and Twin-Size Blankets
- Towels
- Men's Casual Pants, Shorts and T-Shirts
- NEW Pillows
- NEW Toiletries - Shampoo, Conditioner, Razors, Soap – *Travel size ideal.*

For the most current update on their needs, please check their website: <https://hhshelter.org/>

Please leave donations in the designated bin in UUCM's Alcott (refreshments) room.

*Thank you for your generosity,
Laurie Bell & Keith Johnson*

Community Connections

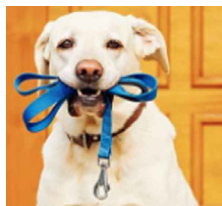
WEEKLY @ UUCM

Subscribe to the weekly e-Chalice for Zoom links and phone numbers. If you need links, please contact our administrative assistant at Admin@uugrassvalley.org.

SUNDAY SERVICES - 10:30 AM VIA ZOOM OR IN PERSON

Make Connections at UUCM

Please contact the organizers if you are interested in joining!



WALKING GROUP

TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS, OFF-SITE -

MEET AT 7:30 AM

Email Walking@uugrassvalley.org

We meet on **Tuesdays** at the Wolf Creek Trail/Northstar Mining Museum parking area, and on **Thursdays** at 418 Chapel, Grass Valley. Be sure to ask our Administrative Assistant, Siobhan (Admin@uugrassvalley.org) to include you on our walking group mailing list so you can hear about last minute changes.

MEN'S GROUP

WEDNESDAYS FROM 8:30 - 10:30 AM AT UUCM

Men gather to enjoy each other's company.

Contact for the group: Men@uugrassvalley.org

SINGING MEDITATION CIRCLE

FIRST THURSDAYS, 7:00 PM, ONSITE AND VIA ZOOM

Contact SingingMeditation@uugrassvalley.org



WOMEN'S GROUP

MONTHLY POTLUCK -

SECOND MONDAYS, 6:00 PM

AT UUCM

Our next meeting is Monday, September 8 at 6:00 PM.

Shanti Emerson has arranged for a friend to come and teach us some Qi Gong and Tai Chi exercises -- They will be adapted for all ages and abilities. We'll eat first; please respond to the email coming to you near the beginning of September with your food offerings.

For reminders and RSVPs, join the Women's Group email list by emailing a request to our Administrative Assistant, Siobhan Boylan, at: Admin@uugrassvalley.org.



HUMANISM DISCUSSION GROUP

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 10:45 AM

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, September 3, at 10:45 AM at UUCM, and our topic is the recent Internal Revenue Service decision that it will allow houses of worship to endorse candidates for political office without losing their tax-exempt status.

Our UUCM Humanism Discussion Group is a gathering for both those who identify as humanists and those who are interested in learning about this philosophy.

Our group's purpose is to connect and intellectually explore the issues that touch our daily lives through Humanism's values and principles. Humanism emphasizes ethical living, critical thinking, and social justice while aiming to inspire compassionate action and mutual understanding.

Topics for group discussion are chosen by participants, and optional readings on the topics are made available prior to the meeting. When health precautions allow, we meet in person at UUCM. If you would like to take part via Zoom, request the link by emailing Humanism@uugrassvalley.org.

(Please view the UUCM website calendar for the most up to



BUILDING & GROUNDS

WORK PARTY

FOURTH SATURDAYS, 8:30 - 11:30 AM

AT UUCM

RSVP TO: B&G@uugrassvalley.org

Meet people while doing fun and interesting things in this monthly Building & Grounds work party to take care of UUCM's building and property. There is usually a choice of indoor and outdoor projects.

Newcomers are always welcome. In fact, this is a great way to meet new people, connect, and contribute to helping our UU community. RSVP so that the day's work projects can be planned at the email above.

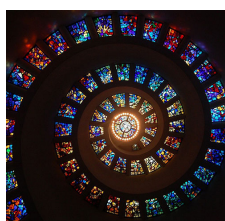
Connections...



ARTS & CRAFTS CIRCLE
SECOND & FOURTH FRIDAYS, 1-3:00 PM
AT UUCM -ALCOTT (REFRESHMENT) ROOM

Contact: arts-n-crafts@uugrassvalley.org

Come and meet with other UUs on **Friday, September 12 and/or 26 at 1:00 PM** to work on your own art or craft form! Enjoy each other's company while working on independent projects. No teacher or facilitator.



SPIRITUALITY SHARING CIRCLE
FOURTH SATURDAYS, 2:00 - 4:00 PM,
ON-SITE AND VIA ZOOM

Questions? Need a Zoom link? Contact:
Spirituality@uugrassvalley.org

For some of us, "spirituality" suggests quiet contact with Something Big we struggle to name. Why in the world would we want to seek stillness? What about it might we value?

Of course, it's different for each of us. Personally, I find respite from the ToDoList; it's a healing time when Shoulds are sidelined for a bit. (Which doesn't mean I manage quiet time with any regularity!) The Spirituality Sharing Circle offers a monthly opportunity; I count on slaking my thirst at that quiet well in the company of others who value the welcoming, shared space.

If any of this appeals to you, consider joining us on the fourth Saturday (**September 27 this month**) from 2:00 – 4:00 PM at UUCM. Do let us know ahead of time if Zoom would be a better option for you; we'll "make it so!" Send an email to the address above.



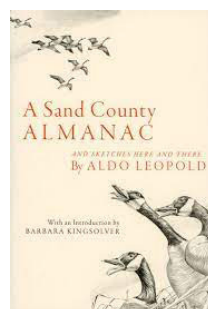
KIDS' CONNECTION
PARENT CAFÉ
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7
NOON TO 1:30 PM
HOSEA BALLOU ROOM

Join the Kids' Connection volunteers, parents, and children in the Hosea Ballou room, which is the small room next to the kitchen and the Alcott room, where Sunday refreshments are served. It will start at 12:00 PM and finish around 1:30 PM. This will be a great opportunity to connect with other parents, learn about plans for the new year, and get information on more ways to involve your children in service to our community.

2nd Sunday Book Group

USUALLY THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 12:30 PM
IN THE CHANNING ROOM AT UUCM
CONTACT: Books@uugrassvalley.org

Our book group reads variety of fiction and non-fiction books. Join us for any or all of these discussions. We meet after church on second Sundays at 12:30 PM in the Channing Room. You are welcome to bring a snack or lunch to these meetings. *We also offer the option of joining by Zoom, but please give at least one week's notice so we make sure to have equipment ready to welcome you.*



September 14, 2025:
A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold
Nonfiction, 240 pages
Facilitator: Jo Waters

Few books have had a greater impact than *A Sand County Almanac*, which many credit with launching a revolution in land management. Written as a series of sketches based principally upon the flora and fauna in a rural part of Wisconsin,

the book, originally published by Oxford in 1949, gathers informal pieces written by Leopold over a forty-year period as he traveled through the woodlands of Wisconsin, Iowa, Arizona, Sonora, Oregon, Manitoba, and elsewhere; a final section addresses the philosophical issues involved in wildlife conservation. Beloved for its description and evocation of the natural world, Leopold's book, which has sold well over 2 million copies, remains a foundational text in environmental science and a national treasure.

UPCOMING BOOKS:

Sunday, October 12, 2025:
A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini (fiction)
Facilitated by Jo Waters

Sunday, November 9, 2025:
The Mighty Red: A Novel by Louise Erdrich
Facilitated by Theresa Houtman

For more details on these books, please click this link which will take you to the UUCM Book Group on our website:
[UPCOMING BOOKS](#)

[Sunday Book Group Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 927 1111 8322 **Passcode: 472984**
Please give at least one week's notice if you plan to attend by Zoom so we can have the equipment set up.

September 7 is a Big Day for Family Ministry

By Cheryl Spaulding, Family Ministry Team Member

On Sunday, September 7, the Family Ministry Team has some big plans.

First, the Kids' Connection volunteers will be commissioned by Reverend Kevin and the congregation during the early part of the downstairs service. When I asked what "being commissioned" meant, I was told that it is something like being blessed at the beginning of a new undertaking. In this case, the new undertaking is the start of a new year of our work on behalf of the children and youth of UUCM.

The downstairs service on that day will be UUCM's Water Communion, a ritual held annually in the fall during which we welcome each other back into community after our summer adventures, large and small. Each family is invited to bring in small containers of water that represent their family's lived experiences during the past many months. The adults can bring in water for the downstairs service, and the children can bring in water for the Water Communion we will hold upstairs during our child-centered service. (Rest assured, we will have small containers of water that symbolically represent a child's experiences over the summer months

for those children who are not able to bring in their own containers of water.)

Finally, after the service on **September 7, the Family Ministry team will hold a Parent Cafe**, a time and place to bring together the adults who love and care for the

children of UUCM. We will serve a light lunch to the participating parents. Child care after the service (with lunch) will be provided by several faithful Kids' Connection volunteers. If you are a parent of one or more of our amazing UUCM children, **look for us around 12:00 PM in the Hosea Ballou room** (the former nursery) next to the large room in the back of the building where our social hour occurs each week.

September 7 is shaping up to be a big day for the Family Ministry Team and our Kids' Connection community. I hope you will join us to honor our volunteers who work so faithfully to make this program happen for our children, to celebrate our returning to community at the end of our lovely

Nevada County summer, and to build our connections with each other as we work to keep our Kids' Connection program growing and evolving just as our children do.

If you would like to experience some of this special form of community and connection, please reach out to Cheryl Spaulding and/or Lindsay Dunckel at familyministry@uugrassvalley.com or in person.





Unitarian Universalist Community of the Mountains

246 South Church St., Grass Valley, CA 95945

Telephone: (530) 274-1675

Website: uugrassvalley.org



MOST UPDATED VERSION OF THE UUCM CALENDAR:

<https://www.uugrassvalley.org/calendar/>



Sunday Services are held at 10:30 AM by Zoom or on-site

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1:00 TO 5:00 PM

(Our Administrative Assistant is available remotely on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.)

Rev. Kevin Tarsa Office Hours:

Rev. Kevin's office hours are currently held by appointment.

Contact Rev. Kevin at (231) 883-1058 or minister@uugrassvalley.org

UUCM STAFF MEMBERS

Reverend Kevin Tarsa, *Minister*

Siobhan Boylan,
Administrative Assistant

Toby Thomas-Rose, *Music Director*

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Minister@uugrassvalley.org

Admin@uugrassvalley.org

Music@uugrassvalley.org

TELEPHONE

(530) 274-1661

(530) 274-1675

(530) 274-1675

Mountain Chalice Newsletter submissions are due by the 20th of the month prior to publishing.

Submit by filling out the online announcement form on our website, or here:

[Article Submission Form](#)

VOLUNTEER TEAM MEMBERS: Kathryn Young, *Design/Layout*; Lesley Champlin, *Editing/Proofreading*