

This Week on the Peak



Mission Peak UU - Fremont, CA The Home of Liberal Religion in the Tri-Cities and Beyond! December 6, 2023

Dear Sandra,

The countdown to the longest night of the year is on! When this newsletter goes out there will be about two weeks until the Winter Solstice. December is a hard time for sun lovers like me. It doesn't help that there is so little light to read in the news. It's a good time to take care with what we consume, to supplement the diet of our innermost selves. One way to do that is to join the Tri-City Interfaith Council sponsored Winter Solstice Refugia service which I'll be a part of. We're meeting at St. Anne's Episcopal on Friday Dec 22nd, more details in a post below.

At the Diwali celebration we had last month the kids were offered a bindi to wear, the dot placed between the eyebrows, which I told them was "not a 1st eye, and not a 2nd eye but a 3rd eye- the one that helps you remember to look inside yourself, to listen for your own truth" This particular aspect of Hinduism seems totally

in line with the Unitarian Universalist 4th principle which teaches that we have a right to a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. If I were going to put a bindi on the calendar for the time of the year I most depend on the strength that lies where only my 3rd eye can see, it would be December.

One of the ways I make my way through this sometimes tumultuous, always overbooked month of December is to remember that life doesn't stop at the end of the month, January is right around the corner! This coming January I am looking forward to becoming trained as an OWL (Our Whole Lives) human sexuality teacher for elementary grades. This training will be in-person down in LA and it's possible I can find a room at no-cost to an MPUUC congregant who also wants to receive this training- maybe that's you! I'm also looking forward to a collaboration with Tanya Webster, the DRE at Starr King UU Church (in Hayward) and folks from that congregation, for a day of justice and service work on Martin Luther King Jr Day, **Monday January 15th**. If you are in town that day I hope you'll consider joining us for this multi-congregation collaboration which may involve a march if Hayward decides to offer one, followed by a native plant service project here at Mission Peak.

If Paul Clifford's article last month in Week on the Peak is still on your mind - who can forget that photo of him on a unicycle! - and you're looking for more fun this month, I hope



you'll come to the 2nd annual Cookie Decorating party that the Newstrom family is helping put on. This year we're adding the delight of MPUUC Choir Director Von into the mix, as a chance to feed our innermost selves the magic of singing together. After the party, any youth (middle and high school aged folks) are invited to stay for an evening of pizza making, dodge ball playing, and reflecting on the year coming to a close and the one opening up in 2024. And if sweets aren't your thing then maybe you want to join the Gentle Yoga class happening Friday Dec 8th, see below for more details.

When I think back on the events of my life in 2023, one of the things I'm most grateful for is the chance to engage with you all here at MPUUC.

Grateful for each and every one of you,

Ariel

This Sunday's Service:

Service can be attended in-person at Cole Hall or online. See mpuuc.org/zoom each week for how to attend services.



The Gift(s) We Are

While searching for gifts to give, take a moment to look no further than yourself. Take a holiday from the constant outside messaging of what you don't have and the internal critique of who you are not. Pause and unwrap the gifts you are as this person, this people, this congregation. Let's free up some appreciation, self compassion and determination so we might better enjoy who we are while living the process of the who(s) we think we need to be.

Rev. Jim McKinley will lead the service and assisting will be Sharon Davis. Erik Alm will be Worship Host and Jay Steele will provide our music.

Whether you are attending services in Cole Hall or remotely, you can donate and/or fulfill your pledge in the 3 ways shown below:

Mail check to

Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation
P.O. Box 545
Fremont, CA 94537-0545

(If you use Bill Pay with your bank, you could use them to mail the check)

Drop envelope with a check in Mission Peak UU mail slot addressed to:
Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation
We will be collecting this once per week.

Pay on line at <https://mpuuc.org/contact-us/donate/> with credit or debit card.
Note we use PayPal for this and they charge us around 3%.

Share the Plate: Guest at Your Table

For the next four weeks (until December 17) we are asking you to set an extra plate at your table. The cost of one meal, each night for 28 nights buys us the chance to see the connection between the difference that's needed and the difference we can make. Guest at Your Table Boxes are available in Cole Hall or [online](#). You can access the stories of [this year's hosts](#) as well as seeing the [difference you can make](#). Together, let's learn about people directly connected to human rights work, reflect on our own lives, and raise funds to advance justice in communities near and far. Thank you for the love that turns into justice.



CIRCLE OF LIFE

Each week, we post the previous Sunday's Joys and Concerns that we were given permission to share. We encourage you to make room in your heart for the hopes and fears of your fellow members. Reach out to celebrate and console those you care about. Here are the [Joys and Concerns](#) for the past 4 weeks. If you would like your joy or concern to appear in the Wheel of

Life, contact the Encouragement Committee at ecteam@mpuuc.org

Midweek Discussion Group

The Minister's Midweek Discussion Group meets on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. We welcome all voices who wish to participate in discussion on interesting topics. The link to the conversation can be found if you [Press here](#)

Please note the link has changed as we are using a different Zoom account.

FELLOWSHIP CORNER

Pop-up GENTLE YOGA class Friday December 8th from 10:30-11:45AM

Fellowship meets fitness in Cole Hall! Registered Yoga Alliance teacher Makiko Kambayashi will lead this gentle yoga class, blending elements of Hatha and Yin yoga, incorporating a variety of postures that are coordinated with breathing to enhance flexibility and balance. She will personalize your practice with the use of props to meet your individual needs and offer a guided meditation. All levels welcome. Coffee and tea to follow the class. RSVP required by end of day Wed Dec 12/6 [here](#) or with an email to dre@mpuuc.org



December fellowship opportunity, **Saturday December 9th**, cookie decorating and holiday singalong with our choir director, Von! Please click [here](#) for flyer.



JUSTICE CORNER

This annual event offers a month of spiritual nourishment, political grounding, and shared practices of faith and justice.

Each week, you can expect to receive several different kinds of offerings, each from a different voice within Unitarian Universalism.

Within each weekly theme, which will connect with one of our intersectional justice priorities, we plan to offer prayers, blessings, grounding, and meditative practices, a story or time for all ages, as well as a reflection from one of Side With Love's program and field staff.

To get an idea of what to expect or to enjoy some meditative breaks during your lunch this month, see last year's offerings at sidewithlove.org/30daysoflove2023.



Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Committee (ARO) Recommendations

SURJ (Show Up for Racial Justice)

Show Up for our Partners' Long Term Vision

Our partners are leading with vision and breaking ground, investing in the space, people, and strategy required to build a humane society that will support their communities to thrive after centuries of racism.

- **TGI Justice Project (TGIJP)** secured a permanent home in San Francisco this year — one that will hold their long-term vision of a Black Trans Cultural Center and political home for TGIJP members within the city they helped build.
- **Sogorea Te' Land Trust** is growing their repatriation work in Lisjan territory, returning to the cultural knowledge and practices that were lost in colonization. In partnership with Movement Generation, 43 acres of land in the unceded Bay Miwok territory of the San Francisco East Bay Area were returned to Indigenous care

earlier this year.

- **Initiate Justice, Ella Baker Center, and Californians United for a Responsible Budget** are working strategically on securing long-term change through legislative action. In 2024, our partners will be supporting bills that will help establish polling centers in county jails, allow incarcerated people in California prisons to vote, and engage youth facing restitution in restorative justice, community service, and employment. All this, while steadily working on closing California prisons.

8th Principle Learning

Rev. Sofia Betancourt, PhD

Our Unitarian Universalist commitment to empowering a free and responsible search for truth and meaning alongside an encouragement to spiritual growth continues to inspire me toward a fuller and deeper examination of the critical moments and complex ideas of life.

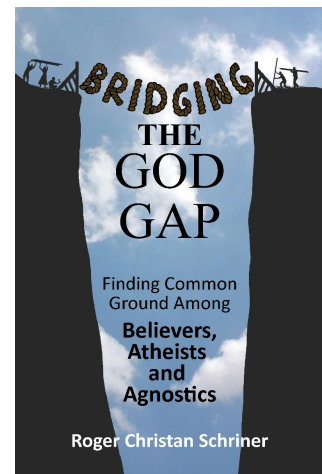
It is in this spirit that I send my love and care to you all, Beloveds, on this [#Thanksgiving](#) holiday that is also a [#NationalDayOfMourning](#). On this journey of spiritual exploration and risking new understandings, it is good to be in community.

Watch the National Day of Mourning event via livestream with the link in the comments. [nationaldayofmourning](#)

Holiday Season Book Signing: On December 17 our Minister Emeritus, Dr. Chris Schriener, will sign copies of his books after the service. Do you have family members or friends who are interested in spiritual exploration, theology, philosophy, or ways of reducing stress? They might appreciate a gift of one of these books by Chris.

Bridging the God Gap: Finding Common Ground Among Believers, Atheists and Agnostics shows how to have honest and respectful conversations with those who disagree with us about religion.

Chris Schriener's *Bridging the God Gap* is well-written, insightful, and chock-full of inspiring, practical wisdom. Getting long-time theological rivals to respect each other as kindred spirits just got a whole lot easier. This book deserves a wide readership. Bravo, Chris!@ B Michael Dowd, author of *Thank God for Evolution*



Your Living Mind: The Mystery of Consciousness and Why It Matters to You. Many scholars believe that we can never understand how conscious experiences could occur within the brain. This book wrestles with the remarkable issues associated with this conundrum.

Feel Better Now: 30 Ways to Handle Frustration in 3 Minutes or Less, is a manual for coping with stress and emotional tension, with an approach inspired by Buddhist psychology.

Do Think Twice: Provocative Reflections on Age-Old Questions is for people who enjoy reflecting on the big issues that philosophers, visionaries, and college sophomores find fascinating, such as moral relativism, the mystery of consciousness, free will, accepting mortality, and the mismatch between human nature and the modern world.

Winter Solstice Worship Service 2023



Please click here for more information:
<https://www.uumfe.org/support-for-activists/light-for-all/>

Winter Solstice Refugia Worship

seeking shelter, wonder, and healing of the earth

**December 22
6:00 pm
at St. Anne's Episcopal**

At this time of the Winter Solstice, we give thanks to the Earth for this period of rest and darkness which has led us to explore the deep wisdom within ourselves. This interfaith service will be held on the labyrinth and will offer the opportunity to pray, sing, move to allow participants to release all that has not served them and draw in hope for the new year.

St. Anne's | 2791 Driscoll Road Fremont, CA 94539

Refugia (reh-FU-jee-ah) is a biological term describing places of shelter where life endures in times of crisis, such as a volcanic eruption, fire, or stressed climate. Ideally, these refugia endure, expand, and connect so that new life emerges.



At this time of the Winter Solstice, we give thanks to the Earth for this period of rest and darkness which has led us to explore the deep wisdom within ourselves. This interfaith service will be held on the labyrinth at St. Anne's Episcopal Church and will offer the opportunity to pray, sing, move to allow participants to release all that has not served them and draw in hope for the new year. The service will be followed by a time of fellowship. Dress for the weather. Please share with anyone you think might be interested.

<https://fb.me/e/326SeWE1b>

Board Briefs

Board briefs from November 2023 MPUUC Board meeting.

The board met on Thursday, November 9, 2023.

- On 11/8/2023, Cole Hall was broken into, but nothing was taken. A police report was made, and repair will be made within 3 weeks.
- At the congregational meeting on 10/29, the congregation approved the endorsement of the California Reparations Task Force after changing the word "study" to "support."
- The Board voted to authorize a transfer of 4 hours of Ariel's extra 9 hours (during the sabbatical) during the month of December to Von to prepare music for the holidays.
- The Board unanimously approved the charter for the Publicity Committee.
- The Publicity/Outreach Committee has placed an ad for MPUUC in *The Tri-City Voice* that will run for 1 year.
- The Board agreed to have the Candle Service on Christmas Eve at 5 p.m.



The next board meeting will be via Zoom on Wednesday, December 13 at 7 pm.

For complete board minutes or other board info go to the Members Only section of our web site at mpuuc.org/about-us/members-only

For more details about meetings or questions email president@mpuuc.org

Mission Peak Money Matters: Contact Info



Responsibilities for Mission Peak UU's financial process are shared between our Congregational Administrator, Sandra Lange (office@mpuuc.org) and our treasurer, Jay Steele. (treasurer@mpuuc.org).

- Sandra handles most ongoing operational tasks, such as pledge tracking, reimbursement requests/status, contribution statements, stock donations, and the like. If you are submitting a reimbursement request, please send to both office@mpuuc.org and treasurer@mpuuc.org.
 - Please send any questions to both the treasurer email (treasurer@mpuuc.org), which is being monitored by Jay Steele and also to Sandra (office@mpuuc.org). This will ensure that any financial questions are answered promptly.
 - **Important note** - if you are making a stock donation/pledge, please notify Sandra at office@mpuuc.org and treasurer@mpuuc.org immediately and note that our broker information changed this year.
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Making announcements

If you've ever had an announcement you wanted to share about an upcoming MPUUC event or meeting but didn't know how, you're in luck. This [Announcement Sheet](#) will go directly to Sandra, our Administrator (to put in the OOS); or to a Board Member (to announce at a Sunday service. Deadline for posting Sunday announcements is Thursday at 5pm.

ACT NOW!

Call your Elected Officials!

Calls can make a difference! Contact your representatives to alert them to your views!

Assembly Member Alex Lee 408-262-2501
Representative Eric Swalwell 510-247-1388 or go to house.gov
Representative Ro Khanna (202) 225-2631
Senator Alex Padilla (202) 224-3553





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