



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sunnyvale

April 2025

Fellowship News & Events



Join us on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in person or on Zoom at [bit.ly/uufs-sunday-service](https://bit.ly/uufs-sunday-service). All our children join us in the sanctuary on the last Sunday of each month and then go from there with their teachers to their classrooms.

### **Spirituality and Joy When the Times Are Evil**

April 6 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Rev. Dr. John A. Buehrens

How can we resist the evil of our times and promote change that supports our values? Dr. Reverend John Buehrens speaks to these urgent questions we face today.

### **Children's Sunday Morning Community, 9:15-11:30 a.m.**

Rise from the ashes! How can the practice of finding joy help us in difficult times? We will kick off this month's theme of *joy* by considering strategies for facing difficulty or disappointment in challenges of skill and perseverance.

**Pledge Supplement.** Want to learn more about the UUFS budget and how your pledge dollars are allocated? Interested in learning methods to potentially reduce your tax obligations through your donation to UUFS? Come to a supplement in the meeting room behind Shepard Hall on April 6 at 11:00 a.m. This meeting is geared to newer members, but all are welcome to attend.

### **TBD**

April 13 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Member Tara Martin-Milius

### **The Book of Joy**

April 20 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Rev. John Bloom-Ramirez

Inspired by the "Book of Joy," an interview book between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and His Grace the Archbishop Desmond Tutu, we will investigate what makes "joy", and how the definition of "joy" can be permeable.

### **Earth Day: Flower Ceremony**

April 27 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Rev. John Bloom-Ramirez

A celebration of one of the greatest gifts from the Earth: the flower, and joy that it brings. This is a ceremony developed during WWI by Norbert Fabien Capek, and we'll honor that legacy with a children's pageant, and a sharing of flowers with one another. In the spirit of the joy of resistance, please dedicate your flower to your favorite revolutionary, and attach a small card on your flower with said name and why this person is important to you.



### ***Minister's Musings***

*Written at 35,000 ft...*

I need to tell you all something. It's been on my heart a lot lately, and I need to get it off my chest.

I love you. I love each and every one of you. You each are the reason I continue to serve this community, and why I want to stay here in Sunnyvale.

The joy I experience when a good service comes to fruition. The thrill of watching the children wrestle with deep theological ideas. The free exchange of thoughts, beliefs, and individual insights. The support shown to marginalized and vulnerable communities is something to be applauded.

In the interest of honesty, there are things we need to work on. Our community is privileged, and largely white. Few have come from places of scarcity. A good portion of our population owns their own homes, and have rarely if ever had to struggle to put food on the table, or have to choose to pay a bill or eat. This is lived reality, and no need to feel shame. However, what can you do to leverage that privilege? How can we as a fellowship engage the “sin of empathy” a bit deeper?

I dream of more pulpit involvement from our members. I would love to see an active choir and robust music program. I wish to see us do more in the community at large, as a fellowship. I envision a financially healthy beloved community where all are welcome and cherished.

What do you dream? What do you want from your fellowship? How would you make it happen?

### *Children’s Religious Education: Update from Colleen Hamilton, Director of RE*



Dear Families and Congregants,  
What a joy it is when our community spends time together. The Ostara festivities celebrating the equinox last month brought all ages out to hunt for eggs and occult surprises. Sweets and personal insight brought smiles all around!

Let the good times roll in April, too, when our explicit theme is *joy*. There will be a number of opportunities to rejoice in each other’s company as we honor the earth, celebrate Easter, and observe the cherished Unitarian Universalist tradition of the flower ceremony. First up, Earth Day will come a little early

to UUFS when all ages are invited to help a local neighborhood cool their streets and capture carbon by planting trees. This event extends the Climate Justice Revival into action. Like last fall’s worship service and retreat, this hands-on project is a collaboration between UUFS and the UU Church of Palo Alto. The more the merrier, right? In addition to the planting, this event will also afford an opportunity to spend time with area UUs over songs, games, co-created art, reflection, and a treat.

Sharing food is a sure way to spread the cheer. Mid-month participants in the Sunday Morning Community for Children and Youth will get to taste chocolate-covered matzo, the specialty I contribute to my extended family’s Passover seders. A week later, the traditional UUFS Easter brunch will allow all ages to enjoy each other’s company around a table as well. On the last Sunday of the month, a short multigenerational play, “The Best Flower in the Garden,” will anchor the full-length family-friendly service where we all participate in the flower ceremony.

New growth, good deeds, beautiful flowers, and shared sustenance: I’m confident this month of joy will bring hope as well.

### *Supporting Our Community and Values*

#### **Pledge Drive**

**AND WE’RE OFF!** The UUFS Pledge Drive has kicked off! Members and friends of UUFS are asked to make a financial commitment, a “Pledge,” to support our community financially for the coming fiscal year. We have a shared responsibility – **and an opportunity** – to create our community together and to raise the necessary funds to support the programs and activities that connect us. This includes money for staff pay and benefits, as well as rental of the space that makes the connections we value possible.

We invite you to make a financial commitment to UUFS, guided by what is meaningful to you.

Whether large or small, your support helps us uphold our shared values and support our community. If you made a pledge last year, consider increasing your pledge amount to cover costs which increase annually, as well as to improve and potentially add programs and activities.

**Our goal is to receive all financial pledges by April 18** to allow the Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees time to review and finalize the proposed spending plan with the congregation for the new fiscal year, which begins on July 1, 2025. [Pledge forms](#) are available [online](#), or a [paper form](#) can be printed and returned in the donation basket at the Sunday service or mailed back. Payments can be made up to the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2026. Payment methods can be found [here](#). Please direct any questions to [pledge@uufs.org](mailto:pledge@uufs.org).

### **Lisa Lethin Memorial Silent Auction, Marketplace & Potluck**



The Lisa Lethin Marketplace, Silent Auction and Potluck will be held June 8 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. by the Religious Education classrooms. This event is both a fundraiser and a

community building party.

The Marketplace and auction are made possible by the donations from, or solicited by, our members. People donate things, but more importantly, they share their time and talents. Please start thinking about what you'd like to offer – a party, a lunch, a dinner, an outing, or a personal service like providing a ride to the airport, walking a pet or house sitting...make something delicious to eat, share your handmade crafts.....consider pooling your time, energy, talents or space by working with others. If you have a skill or hobby that you're willing to teach or share, create an event; share your skills in crocheting, knitting, quilting, home repairs or wood working. If where you live is too small, consider reserving space at the Fellowship.

You can also solicit or donate gift cards to your favorite store or restaurant, and we'll send the donor a thank you letter and recognize them in our auction catalog.

The [donation form](#) is online now; please use it for items to be sold in the Marketplace and silent auction.

If you're not an organizer-type, simply show up and enjoy the potluck and sign up for whatever auction offerings pique your interest.

### **Tree Planting**

Saturday, April 12 @ 9:00 am to 1:00 pm  
Ramos Park, 800 E Meadow Dr, Palo Alto

Help [Canopy](#) plant 15 trees in south Palo Alto's Ramos Park neighborhood. All ages welcome! Organized by the UU Fellowship of Sunnyvale and the UU Church of Palo Alto, our collaborative Climate Justice Revival lives on in this intergenerational action promoting tree equity and carbon removal. Bring a picnic and enjoy a provided treat while we play, connect, and reflect together after the planting. Children under 16 should be accompanied by an appropriate adult. Closed-toe shoes and sun protection recommended.

[Register here](#) by April 1 (please indicate the UU group in the box). (Event poster attached below). Questions? Contact [redirector@uufs.org](mailto:redirector@uufs.org) or [revcat@uucpa.org](mailto:revcat@uucpa.org).

### **Activities**

#### **Inter-Congregational All-Ages Game Night**

Saturday, April 5 @ 5:00–7:00 p.m.  
At UU Fellowship of Sunnyvale

There will be a variety of teen and adult table games on hand—or bring one of your own. There will also be a staff-supervised table featuring games for younger children. Parents play knowing that their kids are happily occupied too. Enjoy good company and potluck snacks while we play. Contact [redirector@uufs.org](mailto:redirector@uufs.org)

### **Multigenerational Climate Discussion Circle**

Saturday, April 19 @ 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Online via Zoom

Join folks interested in ecology and the changing climate. We are reading: *Sacred Nature: Restoring Our Ancient Bond with the Natural World*, by Karen Armstrong (2023). A venerable historian of world religions, Armstrong examines how humans relate to nature in various faith traditions and considers how to transform today's destructive relationship. We meet on Zoom. Email [redirector@uufs.org](mailto:redirector@uufs.org) for the link.

### **Social Justice & Climate Action Meeting**

Wednesday, March 26 @ 7:30-8:30 p.m.  
Wednesday, April 23 @ 7:30-8:30 p.m.  
Online via Zoom Contact: [social.justice@uufs.org](mailto:social.justice@uufs.org)

All are welcome to join us at our monthly meeting as we discuss relevant topics and plan activities. Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/96254752500>. If you would like to join our Google Group or have questions, contact [social.justice@uufs.org](mailto:social.justice@uufs.org).

### **The Book Group**

Friday, March 28 @ 10:00 a.m.-Noon  
Friday, April 25 @ 10:00 a.m.-Noon  
In person in a member's home

In April we will enjoy comparing notes on [Horse](#) by Geraldine Brooks. In May we'll be reading: [The Promise](#) by Damon Galgut. All future (and past) book selections are posted on the uufs.org [Book Group page](#) and also via our Google Group. Contact [book.group@uufs.org](mailto:book.group@uufs.org) to join us or to be added to our Google Group.

### **Men's Group**

Meets weekly on Tuesday @ 7:15 - 8:15 p.m.  
Online via Zoom - Contact: [mens.group@uufs.org](mailto:mens.group@uufs.org)

### **Meditation Group**

Meets weekly on Thursday @ 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.  
Online via Zoom - Contact: [meditation@uufs.org](mailto:meditation@uufs.org)

### **Women's Group**

Meets every 2nd and 4th Monday of the month @ 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Online via Zoom  
Contact: [womens.group@uufs.org](mailto:womens.group@uufs.org)

### **Contact Us**

You can reach our office manager, Leah Simmons, at [office@uufs.org](mailto:office@uufs.org) or by calling (408) 739-0549.

Reverend Johnnie's meeting hours are available [here](#). Please refer there for any pastoral care or operational needs. If the date does not have hours listed, please reach out at [revjohnnie@uufs.org](mailto:revjohnnie@uufs.org). He is, of course, always available for immediate spiritual emergencies via his cell phone.

Contact [webmaster@uufs.org](mailto:webmaster@uufs.org) regarding updates to our website. Please direct questions about this newsletter to: [communications@uufs.org](mailto:communications@uufs.org).

Note: [COVID-19 Policies and Guidelines](#).

### **Monthly Calendar**

[uufs.org/calendar/](http://uufs.org/calendar/)



# Plant a Tree for Neighbors

**April 12, 2025**

**9:00 to 1:00**

**Ramos Park**

**800 E Meadow Dr, Palo Alto**

- All ages welcome
- Bring a picnic and enjoy a provided treat while area UUs play, connect, and reflect together after the planting
- Children under 16 should be accompanied by a parent/caregiver or other designated adult

**Register by April 4**  
**(please indicate UU**  
**affiliation in the box)**



Questions? Contact [redirector@uufs.org](mailto:redirector@uufs.org) or [revcat@uucpa.org](mailto:revcat@uucpa.org)

**UU Climate Justice Revival lives on through action!**