



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sunnyvale

June 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.

### **Liberation: Freedom in Community**

June 1 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Rev. Susan Panttaja

Unitarian Universalism, along with its predecessors, has always been considered a liberal religious tradition. In recent years, many UU faith leaders, including our UUA president, have been talking about UU in terms of a *liberatory* religion, one that generally aims to help liberate the oppressed. What is the difference between liberal and liberatory? What might it mean to embrace the principles of liberation theology in Unitarian Universalism?

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

Our group does its part for the larger UUFS community! Participants will make rice krispie bars to sell at the upcoming Marketplace and Auction. Purchase these specialty treats at the event on June 8 to support our efforts on behalf of the fellowship.

### **The Frailest Thing**

June 8 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Rev. John Bloom-Ramirez

Freedom is not about being able to do what you want and how, but being kind to the person sitting next to you. Showing caring and empathy is a type of freedom in itself.

### **Living In The Now**

June 15 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Rev. John Bloom-Ramirez

We all worry about the past (specifically how it affected us in the present), and we worry rightfully about the future. What about the now? Are we placing our worry and anxiety in the right place?

### **Pride and Freedom: Intertwined**

June 22 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Rev. John Bloom-Ramirez

Vivienne de Versailles returns to tell us why Pride and freedom are intertwined, and why we should not take movements like Pride for granted.

### **What is Wrong with American History and Why Does It Matter?**

June 29 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Member Sam Knapp

American history is commonly taught in a manner that reinforces tribalism and minimizes the interconnectedness of human life. False assumptions about American "exceptionalism" help drive unnecessarily divisive policies. Fortunately, current historians are attempting to correct the record by looking at primary sources and striving to be free from ideological blinders.



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

The month of June brings with it a lot of change. Children are leaving their classrooms for the summer break, college students are graduating and inserting themselves into the real world. We as a fellowship are moving into our summer session, when I expect a lot of folks will be travelling, seeing family, and exploring the world at large. As a bi-vocational minister, still working as a flight attendant, I expect I'll be zigging and zagging across the country myself this summer, maybe having an adventure or two of my own.

For those of us in town during the summer months, it's my hope that we can have some fun and connection this summer. I know that Alan has planned a picnic for the Fellowship, as well as a camping trip in the coming weeks to Mt. Madonna. I will be making a concerted effort to attend those events myself, and I know Rene said he wants to attend at least one day of the campout. Between these two wonderful events (thank you Alan Herrmann) and the other amazing excursions, dinners, and fun things offered in the Lisa Lethin Memorial Service Auction, I can envision a very engaging summer for all! As far as church programming, in keeping up with our Thematic Ministry, July's theme will be "Rebellion," and August's theme will focus on "Affirmation" – more to come on those soon.

For now, raise a glass of iced tea, lemonade, or whatever warm weather beverage you prefer, and let's toast to a successful church year. May the next be brighter and even more fulfilling.

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



Dear Families and Congregants, June concludes this church year's monthly themes from the Soul Matters resource-sharing circle of UU congregations. Since September, this series has explored "practices of our faith":

invitation, listening, repair, presence, story, inclusion, trust, joy, and imagination. *Freedom* will be the final waypost in our 2024-2025 journey together. What is the practice of freedom? The inspiring story of Opal Lee, whose lifelong activism helped Juneteenth become a federal holiday in 2021, shows us one way to practice freedom.

Juneteenth, as many more people nationwide now know, marks the day in 1865, June 19th, when Texans got news of the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation changing the legal status of enslaved people to free people. Opal Lee was born in 1926 in East Texas. She grew up celebrating Juneteenth with her family and friends, as did many Black families in her home state. When Opal was twelve, White rioters burned her family's house to the ground to discourage Blacks from buying homes in the predominantly White Fort Worth area where her family had recently purchased a home. This act of terror happened on June 19th of that year, underscoring the fact that despite the Emancipation Proclamation normally celebrated on that day, Black people were not free in many ways. Not being free to buy property and live in certain neighborhoods was just one restriction among many. Lee worked all her life to improve the lives of people who suffer most from inequities such as this. She wanted Juneteenth to become a national holiday as a reminder that a proclamation alone is not freedom. Freedom is a practice. As Opal Lee herself said, echoing other civil rights leaders, "None of us are free until we're all free. And we aren't free yet." There is no liberation until the news of injustice touches us all and we unite our efforts against it.

Religious Education at UUFS, in part, weaves together stories of many different groups of people in the past and present. I like to think we practice freedom in this small way throughout the year. Note: Readers of this column with children in their lives may want to share this picture book on the topic: *Opal Lee and What It Means to Be Free: The True Story of the Grandmother of Juneteenth* by Alice Faye Duncan, illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo (2022).

## Board Update

The May UUFS Congregational Business Meeting was held May 18, 2025. Thank you to all for submitting reports, attending the meeting and supporting our congregation! Congratulations to Krista Gaylen, Denise Kato and Deymn Plantenberg, who were re-elected to the board. The budget for July 2025 through June 2026 was approved by the congregation. Rev. Johnnie's contract will be extended through August 2026 and increased from 50% to 57% time. This expands his role to include Office Manager as well as Minister and recognizes his valuable contributions to our community. A Strategic Reserve Fund Task Force has been established to explore how the Fellowship can best utilize the Strategic Reserve Funds. Reference [draft minutes of the May 18, 2025 Business Meeting](#) for more details including the following reports: President's Report, Strategic Reserve Fund Task Force, Treasurer's Report, Finance Committee Report, Religious Education Report, Facilities Committee Report, Building Fund Committee Report and Minister's Report. Please contact Corinne with any corrections, questions or concerns at [board.secretary@uufs.org](mailto:board.secretary@uufs.org).

## *Supporting Our Community and Values*

### COME ENJOY THE FUN!

...at the Lisa Lethin Memorial Marketplace, Silent Auction & Potluck on June 8 immediately after service by the religious education (RE) classrooms. This is a great opportunity to socialize with other UUFS members, both at the potluck and through events offered in the auction like "Tea with the Queen" or an after-service brunch. And you never know who you'll run into!



The Marketplace and silent auction will be run in conjunction with a potluck brunch. Please label any foods brought for the potluck and marketplace with ingredients that might affect those with dietary sensitivities. You're encouraged to bring your own reusable plates and serveware. Check the [catalog](#) for all donations and auction rules. It's not too late to donate your homemade crafts or tasty treats to the Marketplace, create an event or donate larger items or experiences to the silent auction with this [form](#). We're also seeking a few more people to help with setup and marketplace sales; you can [sign up here](#).

For any questions, please contact [community.marketplace@uufs.org](mailto:community.marketplace@uufs.org)

## Covenant Groups

Are you interested in being part of a covenant group?

Covenant groups are made up of 6 to 10 individuals who meet regularly each month to share thoughts and experiences with a focus on a central theme. These small groups provide opportunities to deepen relationships, strengthen community, and explore your spirituality. Those who participate in covenant groups often gain a shared sense of community through the practice of deep listening and reflecting on the values that give meaning to our lives. A small group experience is especially valuable to newcomers. If you are interested in joining a group, including a group that meets on Zoom, contact [covenant.groups@uufs.org](mailto:covenant.groups@uufs.org).

Covenant Group One will meet on Sunday June 1 at 11:00 a.m. Covenant Group Two will meet on Sunday June 15 at 11:00 a.m.

## UUFS Summer Picnic

Join us for food and fun at beautiful Serra Park in Sunnyvale! Sign up to volunteer to come early and help prepare the site or stay after for clean-up. Picnic area #1 at Serra Park has been reserved on Sunday June 29 (thanks Alan). The site is reserved all day, so early birds can go there right after the service if they want, and the rest of us can trickle

over between 11:00 and noon or so. Bring a dish to share, a beverage of your choice and a chair for comfort. We hope to see you there! Contact [connections@uufs.org](mailto:connections@uufs.org) for more information.

## ***Activities***

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

Saturday, June 7 @ 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, June 21 @ 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 link.

### **The Book Group**

Friday, June 27 @ 10:00 a.m.-Noon  
In person in a member's home

In June we discuss [\*Loneliness and Company\*](#) by Charlee Dyroff. In July we will be reading: [\*The Wedding People\*](#) by Alison Espach. In August, [\*Fun Home\*](#) by Alison Bechdel. 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.

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

Wednesday, May 28 @ 7:30-8:30 p.m. and  
Wednesday, June 25 @ 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).

### **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. Rev. Johnnie's work phone number is +1 (669) 290-7067. Going forward, please use this number to reach them.

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).

## ***Monthly Calendar*** [uufs.org/calendar/](#)