



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sunnyvale

July 2026

Fellowship News & Events



Join us on Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in person at 1112 S Bernardo Ave, Sunnyvale, CA,
or on Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/958336800>.

No Kings! Power to the People!

July 5 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Colleen Hamilton, DRE

The signing of the Declaration of Independence 250 years ago was our nation's original No Kings protest. Attendees this Sunday will march against the monarchy themselves, and, inspired by Americans throughout our history who have fought for the rights of all who live here, they will join together in a demonstration of People Power. This Action Sunday will bring folks of different ages and other constituencies within our church community into the kind of solidarity needed to continue rejecting rule by one and upholding the sovereignty of the many.

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

Action Sunday Service, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

The entire congregation, including children, will start in the sanctuary for brief opening worship and then proceed together to Shephard Hall to prepare a demonstration of people power on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. When we march back into the sanctuary, congregants will participate in a show of civil rights advocacy from throughout our history. All ages are invited for a special summertime treat during social hour after the service.

The Holy Work of Tending

July 12 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Member Debbie Timmers

Anything we build needs upkeep, or it falls apart on its own. This week we'll explore what it takes to keep our democracy and institutions from falling into disorder. Using our shared UU values as a guide, we'll explore the quiet, ongoing work of repair, and why showing up for it together matters now more than ever.

Reflections on our Universalist Heritage

July 19 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Member Sam Knapp

Although when asked about our denomination, I, like most of you, usually respond, "I am a Unitarian." Nonetheless, our denomination is called Unitarian Universalism. I am going to talk about the importance of our Universalist heritage and its relevance to us today.

35th Anniversary of the ADA: Meet Rev. Dr. Harold Wilke

July 26 @ 9:30-10:30 a.m.

By Member John Dowding

July 26th marks the 35th anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act. In recognition, I want to introduce you to one of the individuals who helped bring this landmark legislation to fruition. Harold Wilke's personal story reminds us that when barriers are removed, human possibility expands.

Minister's Musings



As I sit in my home office preparing these final musings, I find myself thinking back to when our journey together first began. You were my very first congregational ministry, and if I'm

honest, I was a bit like a newborn deer trying to find its footing on a frozen pond—uncertain, stumbling often, and making more than my share of mistakes. Yet, as happens in the best of relationships, we learned from one another. We found our rhythm. We grew together.

Serving as your minister these past three years has been one of the great privileges of my life. I have laughed, grieved, celebrated, and dreamed alongside you. I have watched this Fellowship wrestle faithfully with difficult questions while never losing sight of the love that binds you together. As you prepare to take this next courageous step into your future, I do so with deep gratitude and profound hope. I would like to think that, in some small way, I helped encourage the leap of faith you are now taking. The future before you is bright, not because it is certain, but because you have already shown yourselves capable of meeting uncertainty with courage, compassion, and covenant.

As is our custom within Unitarian Universalist ministry, I now enter a period during which I will not maintain an ongoing pastoral relationship with the congregation. While that may feel like a difficult goodbye, it is, in truth, one final act of pastoral care. It creates the space your next minister will need to build relationships, earn your trust, and become fully your minister, just as you graciously allowed me to become yours.

By the time you read this, I will likely have stepped away from our connections on social media as part of that transition. Please know this is not a reflection of affection lost, but of love expressed differently. It is my way of honoring the ministry that is yet to come.

I am not leaving the area, and life has a wonderful habit of bringing people back together. Should our paths cross at a community event, a social justice gathering, or simply while out in the world, I hope you'll say hello. We can share a smile, a conversation, perhaps even a hug. What I cannot do is step back into the life of this congregation or comment on your new ministry. That, too, is part of caring for you well.

May the blessings of those who came before us accompany you as you continue this journey. May you remain curious, courageous, and compassionate. May you continue to build a community where every person is welcomed, every voice is valued, and love remains at the center of all you do.

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sunnyvale will always hold a cherished place in my heart.

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



Dear Families and Congregants,

Action Sunday comes back this month. Remember this style of worship piloted on first Sundays at UUFS from November 2025 to

March 2026? It was paused for special events over the spring and morphed through those early iterations to return on July 5. Variety defines this format, offering all ages and aptitudes different access points during the same service. As before, there may sometimes be a choice of breakout rooms—typically one contemplative, one analytical, and one hands-on. Other times the inclusiveness and connection of Action Sundays will arise from a single activity that offers different roles or a variation on the familiar sanctuary mode. This month, rather than dividing up into separate rooms after convening in the sanctuary, we will consider the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence together in Shephard Hall. Attendees will choose different ways to interact with the topic and then

participate in the stirring outcome of our combined efforts back in the sanctuary.

As Director of Religious Education for children and youth, I am especially committed to the multigenerational dimension of Action Sundays. Going forward, children will attend Action Sundays every other month. But of course, there are other ways different ages mix at church. Social hour (aka coffee hour) brings us all together as well. So children will henceforth enjoy social hour with the whole congregation every month. In those months when they're not participating in Action Sunday, we'll put some of the alternative ways to approach a theme or topic that we practice in RE spaces on offer along with the coffee and chat. Adults are invited to try out these hands-on activities. Go ahead, get a little messy and discover something unexpected. The children will lead the way.

Action Sunday – July 5

Join us on Sunday, July 5, for **Action Sunday**—a monthly gathering held on the first Sunday of each month. We'll begin the worship service in the Sanctuary followed by a sign-making activity in Shephard Hall (Zoom Attendees will work on a virtual sign). We'll close by returning to the Sanctuary for a march and singing against the monarchy.

Board of Trustees News

At our June transition meeting, the new Board of Trustees took shape and elected officers for the 2026-2027 year:

- President — Demya Plantenberg (continuing)
- Vice-President — Gary Beckstrom
- Secretary — Diana Luykx
- Treasurer — Ginger Wolnik (continuing)

We also want to thank Corinne Blankenship and Richard New for four years of service on the Board. Their steady work has carried us through a lot, and we're grateful.

As most of you know, Rev. Johnnie's time with us came to a close at the end of June. We hold deep appreciation and thanks for all he invested in our community over the past three years, and we wish him every good thing in his new ministry.

With Rev. Johnnie's departure, day-to-day responsibility for UUFS operations — including supervising our staff — now sits with the Board. Diana Luykx has agreed to serve as the Board's main point of contact for staff during this period, and we're thankful she's taken on this crucial role. The rest of the Board will support her where needed.

The Board has a full year ahead. Among the efforts we'll be leading or tracking:

- Hiring a part-time Congregational Support staff person. Of all our initiatives, this is our highest near-term priority — someone to help with office work, coordinate volunteers, and support communications while we're lay-led.
- The minister search. We're targeting mid-August to have our search profile posted on the UUA site, with a hard deadline of the end of August.
- Continuing our Next Steps work — listening circles, a refreshed vision and mission, and longer-term planning for the Fellowship.

We're also eager to see our membership and visibility efforts grow stronger in the coming year.

If any of these efforts speak to you and you'd like to stay connected or lend a hand, please reach out to me or any Board member. This is work we do best together.

Supporting Our Community and Values

Lisa Lethin Memorial Silent Auction, Marketplace & Potluck

Thanks to all who participated in the June 7 event. We shared good food, a festive atmosphere and together raised over \$7300 for UUFS!

If you made purchases and still need to pay, you can send a check made out to Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sunnyvale and write "Service Auction" in the memo line, and either:

- Mail to Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sunnyvale, [1112 S. Bernardo Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94087](#), or,
- Put in the offering basket using the white envelope marked for non-pledge contributions.

Please try to get your check to us by July 8. Enjoy your events!

Circle Suppers Are Back



In the spirit of trying to strengthen our mutual relationships we have restarted the Circle Suppers program that UUFS ran successfully for many years prior to Covid. On June 13th Martin Manley and Alan Herrmann each hosted a small group of us for a coordinated potluck. The Circle Suppers this month will be on July 11 at 6 p.m. (2nd Saturday each month). Look for an

email to all UUFS for details and to sign up to attend and/or host. From the responses a



group will be put together for each host venue and confirmation emails will be sent. Each host will then contact the assigned guests, and give them the choice of desired contributions, such as appetizers, salad, main dish, side dishes, and dessert, with the host(ess) providing the table settings, drinks and/or beverages, and bread and butter.

We hope that we can use this as an opportunity to make new friends and build stronger relationships within UUFS – especially for newer members.

You can email circle.suppers@uufs.org with questions or speak with Martin Manley.

Step Into the Pulpit — Share Your Voice!

We believe everyone has wisdom to offer, and we'd be honored to hear yours from the pulpit. Whether you're inspired to speak solo or partner with someone, read your words or speak from the heart, we welcome your unique perspective.

Your talk can be anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes, and the topic is up to you! You might:

Explore a subject you're passionate about,
Reflect on an upcoming holiday that holds meaning for you,
Speak to one of our monthly themes:

August – *Creativity and Fun*

September – *Beginnings*

October – *Courage*

Interested?

Reach out to us at service.coordinator@uufs.org — we're happy to support you in shaping your message

Let your voice be heard. Let your truth be shared.

Activities

Religious Education Team Meeting

Monday, July 13 @ 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Join Director of Religious Education Colleen Hamilton and interested congregants on [Zoom](#) to discuss operations and vision for the RE program at UUFS.

Inter-congregational All-Ages Game Night -

Saturday, July 4 @ 5:00–7:00 p.m.

At UU Fellowship of Sunnyvale

Board-game enthusiasts meet on the first Saturday of every other month from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. All ages, including families with children, are welcome. Pizza provided; other potluck snacks and nonalcoholic drinks invited. Please [click here](#) for more details about our Game Night.

Social Justice & Climate Action Meeting

Wednesday, July 22 @ 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Online via Zoom

All are welcome to join us at our monthly meeting as we discuss relevant topics and plan activities for the upcoming year. Zoom link: [Social Justice](#) . If you would like to join our Google Group or have questions, contact social.justice@uufs.org.

The Book Group

Friday, July 24 @ 1:30-3:00 p.m.

In person, in a member's home

In July we will enjoy comparing notes on '[Trust](#)' by Hernan Diaz. The action takes place in the 1920's and 30's, and explores the topics of wealth and power. 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 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

Meditation Group

Meets weekly on Thursday @ 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Online via Zoom - Contact: 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

Contact Us

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

Contact webmaster@uufs.org regarding updates to our website. For questions about this newsletter and for Mid-Week Update and Newsletter or Web submissions, contact communications@uufs.org.

Monthly Calendar

uufs.org/calendar/