



THE SCENE AT SUMMIT

Newsletter of Summit Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
8778 Cottonwood Ave., Santee, CA 92071

Multi-Platform Sunday Services begin at 10:00 a.m.

Theme: Heritage



October 1

"Universe-All? Ultra-Universalism and Today"

KC Marie Pandell, Minister

Ultra-Universalism is one of our historical beliefs as UUs, but not without complication. Today, we look at what it means, and how we might apply it to modern Unitarian Universalism.



October 8

"Channing's Ideal: Self-Cultivation & Unitarian Universalists"

KC Marie Pandell, Minister

Unitarianism is a piece of our faith we are most readily recognized for. Today, we take a look at one facet of a traditional Unitarian belief, and examine how the idea of "self-cultivation" may still serve us as modern Unitarian Universalists.

October 15
"A Culture of Covenant"
KC Marie Pandell, Minister

Covenanting is serious business for Unitarian Universalists, but where does it come from, and why do we do it? Today, we explore the history of this aspect of our coming together, and explore what it means to make this commitment to one another.

October 22
"A Skeptic and A Believer"
Rev. Carolyn Owen-Towle, Guest Minister

From a young age Rev. Carolyn could not accept things at face value and swallow them whole. She had to ask why and how? Ultimately, this led her to a deep and lifelong commitment to Unitarian Universalism where she could become both skeptic and believer.



The Mission Statement of Summit Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

In spiritual community, we commit ourselves to building a compassionate, just and sustainable world.



If you missed a service, or would like to see it again, you can watch it on our [SUUF MEDIA](#) YouTube Channel!



KC's Korner

~ KC Marie Pandell, Minister

Hello, hello, hello, Summitarians & Friends

The Universe is an odd duck sometimes. The beginning of our time together has been tempered with joy and grief and also an incredible amount of hope. I have seen this wonderful fellowship rally around our beloved Director of Religious Education as Mary traverses the path she finds herself on. I have seen people hold holy pain, and divine delight. We have seen each other in our brokenness and loved all the same.

I have also seen our people look to the future with enthusiastic dreaming, and shared visions of a prosperous future for this community. This really is the heart of our Unitarian Universalist faith on full display. We bear witness to the hurts and injustices of the world, and we still hold our ground and see "This is not all there is." And that is my ardent hope for us as we do the hard work of beginning this new ministry.

The Summit Fellowship has done so very much to keep running in times of great transition and difficult changes, from retirements to pandemics and all the things life has thrown us these last three or so years. I can feel that people really believe in the heart of Summit, and want to see it succeed, and I give my deepest and most enthusiastic thanks to the volunteers who have been the lifeblood of this fellowship, particularly when it no longer felt fun to do. I thank you, too, for the continued financial support – an investment not just in Summit's yesterdays, but the possibilities of its tomorrows, and what we will grow to be. I am thrilled to continue to support those of us already in action, and to have their support, as well.

The Board and I met for our annual retreat this past weekend, and I am fired up about what we can do together this next year. For my own part, I can promise you dynamic worship that will seek to challenge your expectations and make space to help grow your souls, I can promise a compassionate presence as your spiritual care provider, and enthusiastic support for the things we find we want to experiment with together. The Board is ready to support this fellowship in growth and change. We have beginning small group ministry to look forward to, an auction in the near future, new ways of worshipping, and that's just between now and January! And all of this is possible because of people who believe not just in what Summit is today, but what Summit can grow to be.

Where are you ready to plug in to help build the foundations of the magnificent cathedral we know Summit can be, as a community of deepest love, glorious joy, and sacred curiosity?

We may not have the answers yet, but we can seek them together.

With gratitude and a joyful heart,
KC
Minister



Message from the President of the Board

Hello Members, Friends, Minister KC and Staff,

This has been an active month. We have had three sermons from KC, the Board retreat, and the beginning of plans for the Auction in January. Next year, when things are more settled, we will return to having the Auction in November (depending on consensus and the will of the gods, as they may exist).

No matter what, when the time comes, send us your donations (especially, very elaborate or simple events that include food!) We have attended two community builders this year. Barbara Scheidker's concert in her home, and last Friday, Karen Follingstad's concert at Summit. With each of them, I felt awe.

I will also personalize this letter with a blatant promotion for the Summit choir. We meet every Wednesday from 6-7:30 to rehearse, and the choir performs on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month. We have great fun, and we need more people who can sing in my range, or a bit higher or lower. Right now, I am the only man regularly in the choir. You will be taught anything you need to know – in science, politics, history, and choir singing. Well, I guess it is usually just choir singing.

Finally, I want to thank all of the volunteers who kept us going over the last year without even a part-time minister. Because of their work, we were not presented as a forlorn congregation, but as the still vibrant community that we are.

Love and regards to all,
Pierre

*At the Board Retreat on Sept. 23,
led by Rev. Julie Forest (from First
Church), we each lit a candle for
our hopes for the year ahead.*



The Summit Board of Directors meets in-person (in the Library) and virtually on the third Thursday of the month at 7 pm.



RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION/FAITH FORMATION NEWS

MARY CARTER-VAIL, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

October is usually a month of falling leaves and memories of loved ones as we enter spooky season. Summit feels like it is beginning to expand as we welcomed our new minister KC Pandell with joy and excitement. My heart is heavy this year for personal reasons. It is the feeling of “both and” at the same time. Both Sadness and Excitement. Both anticipation of Halloween fun with treats & costumes and the memories of loved ones who have passed beyond the veil. Let us experience all the complexity together.

The Gift of Heritage: This October we are going to explore the Gifts of Heritage. Each week’s exploration will be about what it means to understand our heritage as we will be using the roots of a tree as a metaphor for what holds us. This is a way for our children to understand how the past heritage (roots) supports the tree that we are growing now. We will be exploring how we stay close to our roots by learning about our past and reclaiming our roots as we learn the stories of our ancestors. We will learn reclaiming our roots by learning stories from the Kumeyaay for Indigenous Peoples Day and stories of the LGBTQ+ community for LGBTQ+ History Month. And we will continue to be rooted in science and reason as an import piece of our heritage. Finally, we will be honoring our pagan roots as we take time to remember the gifts of our ancestors through grieving our roots around Samhain. Join us as we dig deep to discover our roots and the gifts of heritage together.

Soul Work: Last month during the Water Communion service we had our first ever “Splash Zone”. I created a special pool of water with sand, smooth rocks, pebbles, shells, and shiny jewels for our young and young at heart congregants to explore in a “silent meditation” during the full fellowship service. This is an example of embodied worship or soul work. The goal being that worship at Summit be accessible to all ages and all the variety of ways that people engage with spiritual practice. This month we will have a Heritage Tree in the sanctuary that all ages can engage with. When you attend in person, you will be able to add to the tree as part of a month-long group project. For folks who are joining us online, we will be including the tree in our visuals so that you can witness the process as it unfolds.

An Update from Mary: I am deeply grieving the loss of my life partner Paul. I have written some of the story of what happened during the last two weeks of his life that is available in this newsletter (with a trigger warning) if you are interested. His journey is done and mine is just beginning. My intention is to be open and honest about what I am experiencing while being sensitive to the needs of the community. I hope that I am finding that balance as this is all new to me. I have a huge amount of work to do in unwinding his business as I close it down. Paul was one of the only independent Saab mechanics in the county. (According to his customers, one of the best in the country.) This includes figuring out in process work, plus selling, returning, and junking over 100 Saabs. (I kid you not.) I am getting lots of help from family and many Summit members and friends and am so incredibly grateful for each person’s contribution big and small. So many have asked how to help, and I don’t always know exactly what I need at the moment. *I DO need help at Summit with the Childrens RE program. I DO need help at the ranch with cleaning up all of the car mess and landscaping mess on the property. I DO need people to listen and hold my hand as I find a new way of being in the world.* And, on top of all of that... my next hip surgery is October 23rd.... So Help is definitely needed with any type of Halloween activity at Summit this year.

Faith Formation Volunteers STILL Needed: We continue to need volunteers who will be Faith Formation Leaders that guide our children and youth as they explore throughout the year. Each group needs two leaders on a Sunday to support them with a story and activities that Mary will prepare in advance. Currently, we still need more volunteers so that folks will only need to help one Sunday a month. All our parents volunteer as well as many young adults who grew up at Summit. It is special when we have adults who are not parents of children in the program share their time with our kids. In the past, we have had up to 45 volunteers each month with ages ranging from 18 to 98! All that has changed since the pandemic, and we are currently rebuilding the program. Please consider being part of this important part of our congregational life. (Volunteers who work with children will need to be background checked and take a Mandated Reporter training.) Contact Mary at summitdre@gmail.com to explore ways you can be part of Faith Formation at Summit.

Our October Theme is The Gift of Heritage.

We will be gathering in RE at 10 am on Sundays for Religious Exploration on Sundays for our activities. Our children and youth will participate in the service until after the "Time for All Ages" story. We will then split into age centered groups to engage in our activities in the Religious Exploration area and/or outside (depending on weather conditions). After the service, we will be joining our families in the Salon for sustenance & community social time. Nursery childcare will be available until 12 noon.

October 1 – The Gifts of Staying Close to Our Roots –

As we start to learn about Heritage, we will be exploring our roots through art and games including the tangled root game.

October 8 – The Gift of Reclaiming Our Roots –

In honor of Indigenous Peoples Day we will be learning about the Kumeyaay people through stories and games.

October 15 – The Gifts of Our LGBTQ+ Roots –

We will be learning about famous people from the LGBTQ+ community and the contributions that they have made to popular culture and more through games and activities.

October 22 – The Gifts of Being Rooted in Science and Reason –

This will be a fun science Sunday that will include the mentos in soda experiment in the parking lot!

October 29 – The Gifts of Honoring & Grieving Our Roots –

All month long we will be working on our memory tree in the sanctuary. This Sunday we will have some time to honor our loved ones. We may have some fun Halloween activities as well depending on what our parents choose to organize. (Mary will be out healing from her second hip surgery this week and the next.)

These are the plans at the beginning of the month, and they may be adapted as our community needs adapt so, please watch the weekly Children's Religious Exploration Email. To receive the weekly email, send your email address to Mary at summitdre@gmail.com.

With deepest love and brightest blessings,

Mary

Mary Carter-Vail
she/they

Director of Religious Exploration

Children's Religious Exploration Committee

Mission Statement:

Our Mission is to create a safe and welcoming spiritual home for children & youth through creative exploration of the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources.

Sign Me Up!

It Takes a Village!

Would you like to work with our youngest members once a month? Currently, our classes will have 3 to 5 children each to start, more as we grow. We are looking for **8 volunteers per team, 2 adults per class per Sunday**. Sign-ups will be available on Sunday!

**Pre-K through 1st Grade and
2nd through 5th Grade:**

Age-appropriate stories and activities based on the monthly theme.

Middle & High School (combined):

Youth get to help decide what they want to do this year.

One possibility is Crossing Paths, a UU curriculum looking at world religions from a UU perspective.

Remember, since all worship services are available on YouTube, you can watch them later that Sunday or anytime during the week.

A Personal Story of Paul's Last Weeks from Mary (Trigger Warning: Medical Trauma, Stroke, Death)

This past month has been one of the absolute hardest of my life. On September 5th, I held the hand of my life partner, Paul, as he breathed his last breath. We were surrounded by our three children, Sean, Anya & Colin, Paul's sister, Louise and our bonus children, Lorena & Isaac. Paul, who was only 61, had had a large stroke caused by clots that had formed on a failing artificial aortic valve that he was in the hospital to repair. He had been born with a congenital birth defect that had required the original valve to be replaced at age 50.

Paul was admitted to the hospital on August 23rd when the valve's condition was discovered, and they began preparing for the surgery early the following week. The doctors had to research the prior valve, get measurements and more before slipping in the new one laparoscopically while his heart would not miss a beat. That was the plan. The risk, the doctors said, was blood clots and stroke. August 24th was our 38th wedding anniversary and we celebrated in his hospital room with an orchid and box salad from TJ's. Paul was very nervous about the procedure, so I asked Rev. Tania, who was part of the Chaplain team at Sharp Memorial, to visit him. They had a long conversation about Paul's condition, concerns and wishes that would offer me some comfort later.

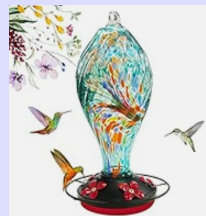
On the morning of Saturday, August 26, I arrived at Paul's room after going home to feed the critters & check on his butterfly garden & hummingbirds. A few minutes after I arrived, he suddenly started slurring his words and smiling funny – symptoms I immediately recognized as a stroke. So I called for help. Everything became a blur as a code was called and he was rushed off for immediate surgery to remove the clots from his brain. I was ushered up to the ICU where I sat shaking and stunned wondering what happened.

The next 11 days were the worst of my life as each day he slipped further and further away from us. All the kids and his sister came to be with him at some point during the week along with several dear friends who would sit with me at the hardest time of my life. There was a moment of hope when for a brief time he came off the vent and could speak to me. He said, "I love you" and "Where are my kids?" He got to hug his oldest during that brief time before his airway began to collapse and the vent had to go back in. For 5 days I did not leave his side except to use the facilities or to talk to the doctors. I held his hand and whispered to him. I told him stories of what our children were doing, of our hopes and dreams, of future trips that we had been planning, of anything that I could think of to bring him back. Mostly I told him that I loved him and that I was glad that we had been together for 40 years.

On Friday, September 2, our family met with his medical team of doctors, nurses, specialists, and Rev Tania as Chaplain, who were all trying to find some way to save him. They all, one by one, told me that the heart was too weak, the stroke was too big, and the clots were too many. I looked for some hope and there was none. We were all devastated, including the medical team. A few days later, the stroke took his brain stem, and he was gone. As I held his hand for the final hours of his life as I told him that I loved him, I forgave him and that the kids and I would be ok. I said that he was going on the ultimate road trip and that I would join him when it was my turn. I told him that I would see him in his gardens and in the monarchs and hummingbirds that he carefully created spaces for and that he could create a new garden for us to be in together on our next adventure.

I'll see you in the garden, Paul.

Mary



SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION

Social Justice in Action meetings are held the 2nd Sunday of the month. If you would like to learn more, contact summitsja@gmail.com. Everyone welcome!

General meeting — October 8, 12:30 pm <https://zoom.us/j/98852027774>

New Co-Chairs of the Social Justice in Action Committee (SJAC): November 2023

After several years of dedication, creativity, and heart, Ryn C. will be stepping down as Chair of the Social Justice in Action Committee (SJAC). Ryn, however, will still be a part of SJAC as a member. Al M. and Erin D., long-time members of the Committee will be Co-Chairs beginning in November of 2023. We would like to thank Ryn for his tireless service and unending commitment he provided to the group as well as Summit UU Fellowship.

ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

The Social Justice in Action Committee is discussing how to best support those with Food Insecurity. Please join us in one of our monthly meetings (in person in the library or on Zoom) to help us best support our community. Meanwhile, some ways to help donate food or to obtain assistance:

Santee Food Bank:

Volunteers are needed for: Sorting donations, filling bags, placing food in automobiles, and cleaning the facility. The Santee Food Bank is located at 9715 Halberns Boulevard in Santee. The phone number is (619) 448-2096. A Volunteer Agreement will also need to be completed. For specific information online at: www.thesanteefoodbank.org/volunteer/. Donations are also accepted on their website.

If you need assistance with food, please visit their specific link at: <https://www.thesanteefoodbank.org/>. Food distributions occur Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM. Please see website for any updates.

Grossmont College/Gizmo's Kitchen:

Gizmo's Kitchen is a 'grab and go' student food pantry

that supports students by providing pre-packaged items suitable for an on-campus lunch or meal. Student toiletries & feminine hygiene product items are also available.

To support Gizmo's Kitchen, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Foundation for Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges under the Grossmont College Food Pantry program to support our students. You can also donate items directly to Gizmo's Kitchen. There is a list of needed items in the Shopping List on the Grossmont College Website at: <https://www.grossmont.edu/student-support/basic-needs/gizmos/index.php>. You can also contact staff at Grossmont College by emailing: susan.berry@gcccd.edu

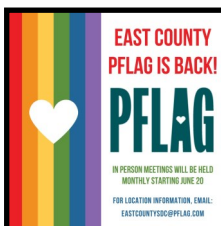
Mama's Kitchen & Mama's Pies:

This popular San Diego fundraiser helps raise critical funds needed for the nonprofit to continue to provide nutritional support to San Diego residents at risk of malnutrition due to HIV, cancer. All proceeds from pie sales directly fund Mama's Kitchen's nutrition services and programs.

Mama's Pies is coming back in Fall 2023! Pie sales begin in mid-October. Please check Mama's Kitchen/Pies for more details (see link below). You will be able to pre-order a pie for Thanksgiving/late November with various pick-ups in San Diego County. There is usually a pie pick-up in El Cajon, in the Granite Hills area. Please check-out their website for updates. Mama's Kitchen & Pies also accepts monetary donations. <https://www.mamaskitchen.org/events/mamaspies/>

Other Social Justice in Action Committee Activities

The SJAC always welcomes new members, ideas, and support. Some other areas of focus:



Sponsored by the Social Justice in Action Committee, PFLAG meetings continue on the third Tuesday of the month. All parents, friends, and allies of the LGBTQ+ community are welcome to attend.

For times and location please contact Ryn Corbeil or email eastcountysdc@pflag.com.

Supporting LGBTQIA+ Youth in East County School Districts:

Members of the SJIAC have provided in-person and in-spirit support during local school board meetings here in East County. Recently, school boards in East County have passed initiatives to limit rights, freedoms, safety, and therapeutic services to students in East County. Members of the committee have attended board meetings in support of LGBTQIA+ students and to adhere to our UU principle of the dignity and worth of every human being. Feel free to join us in our monthly meetings to further support our K-12 youth in our community. Please contact Ryn at ryncorbeil@gmail.com for more information on this matter.

Adult Religious Education Programming:

The SJIAC continues to explore Adult Religious Education programming in support of our UU values. Past Adult Religious Education topics included (but not limited to): Transgender Inclusion in Congregation via the "Transforming Hearts Collective" (see link at [Transforming Hearts Collective](#) and other online trainings addressing diversity and racism.

If you like to learn more about these online/in-person learning sessions, please reach out to Ryn C. or Erin D. at summitsjia@gmail.com to learn more about these sessions. We also welcome feedback on topics or future topics to explore in order to be a more informed, loving, and understanding community.

WELCOMING & MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE HAPPENINGS

On Sunday, Sept. 24th, the W&MC hosted "Get to Know Us", an orientation for newcomers. We were very pleased that nine new folks joined us for lunch. Along with lunch several of us spoke. Our new minister, KC, explained how the UUA supports the 1000s of congregations nationally. Pam Williams, Co-Chair of the W&MC talked about Summit's history since it was founded in September 1988 until the present with our welcoming our new minister. She talked about the early struggles holding services in the Masonic Lodge in San Carlos, to our recent challenges with COVID, and last year being totally lay lead. She felt stronger community bonds developed for those of us who helped meet the challenges both in our early time and more recently. Our new President, Pierre Vaughn, described that the Fellowship is self-governed and the Board of Trustees is the decision maker for the business of the Fellowship. The Congregation meets at least annually to vote on issues that are specified in the Bylaws that are to be left for a Congregational vote. Our former President, Elinor Weed talked about our programs. She has great hopes for a strong adult education program developing. Jim Weed, Co-Chair of the W&MC, moderated the talks and discussion and briefly discussed the process of membership. The process seems simple: attend an orientation and/or meet with the minister, and signing the Membership

book. But to really become familiar with who we are and what we value is more complicated. He told the newcomers that there is no pressure to join. We only want folks to join when they are ready.

A new member ceremony is set for Nov. 19th during the service. We already have several that will formalize their joining that day. This is a good time to think about becoming a member. If you feel a part of this community, we invite you to take the final step into membership. Contact Pam Williams (2400highview@gmail.com) or Jim Weed (HDsurf@aol.com) to learn more or to tell us you are ready to join.

The Welcoming & Membership Committee is a very active committee where every member plays a role. We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month. We will be meeting this Thursday at 4:30 pm, on Zoom. We could use your help. Again, contact Pam or Jim if you are interested in learning more or would like the link to our next meeting to see us in action.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pam Williams and Jim Weed
Co-Chairs of the Welcoming & Membership Committee

ADULT LIFE ENRICHMENT—AFFINITY GROUPS

THE SUMMIT WOMEN'S GROUP

This multi-generational group is open to all interested Summit women and their friends. The group will meet via Zoom. If you would like to be added to the e-mail list to get the Zoom link, please contact Carolyn Woodbury at cbwoodbury@gmail.com if you have questions.

Contact Carolyn to find out the date of our next meeting.



MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP #2

Summit's Second Men's Fellowship and Support Group meets on the 1st & 3rd Wed, from 7-8:30 pm. We invite you to join us if you wish. We are an "open" meeting in the sense that any man who wants to can participate if he so wishes.

Our group is going to start meeting in person, in the Library. If you prefer, you may continue to join us online, too. You can use any Apple or PC/Android device (desktop computer, laptop, iPad or other tablet, smart phone) to access our meeting, but it must have a microphone and a camera.

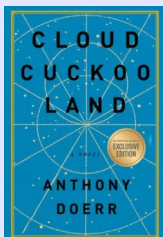
To get the link, please email Denny at denny.braun@usfamily.net.



THE SUMMIT UU BOOK CLUB MULTI-PLATFORM OPTIONS!

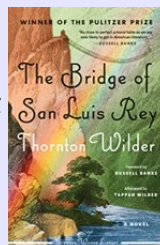
On Tuesday, October 3, at 7 pm, the Summit UU Book Club will be meeting both in person in the Library and via Zoom, hosted by Debbie Wingard.

We will be discussing **CLOUD CUCKOO LAND**, by Anthony Doerr



Dedicated to "the librarians then, now, and in the years to come," **Cloud Cuckoo Land** is a hauntingly beautiful and redemptive novel about stewardship—of the book, of the Earth, of the human heart.

In November, we will be discussing **THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY**, by Thornton Wilder



Everyone is welcome, even new members - either to participate or listen. If you have any questions, please ask Cheryl at csmreck@outlook.com

— Cheryl Smrek

WEDNESDAY MORNING CONVERSATIONS



We meet on Zoom and discuss what is in our hearts and on our minds. We are open to new folks joining. It's informal, bring a topic you'd like to discuss, or just come in to hang out. It's a good chance to hang out with other Summitarians that you might not get to see otherwise. Our minister, KC Marie Pandell, will be joining us on the 3rd Wed. of the month. Spread the word.

Wednesday mornings 9:00-10:00 a.m. PDT

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/93838510596>

Meeting ID: 938 3851 0596
One tap mobile
+16694449171,,93838510596# US
+16699006833,,93838510596# US (San Jose)

If you would like a reminder on Tuesday evening with the zoom link, let Pam know:
SuufVolunteer@yahoo.com



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OFFICE HOURS

Tues, Wed, Fri — 9:30 am to 2:30 pm

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October 2023

About SUUF Publications

Please send submissions for the monthly SCENE AT SUMMIT NEWSLETTER via e-mail on or soon after the 25th, to SUUFSceneNuus@gmail.com.

Please send submissions for the eNEWS, the weekly announcements, to SUUFVolunteer@yahoo.com by Tuesday noon.

Check the eNEWS and website for additional news throughout the month.

If you have any questions, call the office, 619-562-0833, or e-mail us at Summituuf@gmail.com.