



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: Choosing Hope

December 7

“Memory & Meaning: Weaving Hope”

Rev. KC Marie Pandell

When we live in a world inundated with toxic positivity, it can occasionally be difficult to suss out real hope from the commercial, especially when an overload of untethered, unhelpful hope can feel thin at best, and dangerous at worst. How do we hold the stories of our past, and relish the possibilities of our futures, and use genuine hopefulness as the thread that connects them?

December 14

“Hopeful Hearts: Loving Hope”

Rev. KC Marie Pandell

Sometimes it's difficult to see the hope and goodness in our world, especially when fear and misinformation run rampant. How do we model hope and love out loud, even in a world where we are encouraged to not make waves? How can we love and hope with the whimsy of a child, even on a dark day? Join Dir. of Religious Exploration Mary Carter-Vail & Rev. KC on an exploration of loving hope, planned in collaboration with Summit's children. This service will include our New Member Ceremony, a time of embodied worship, and an extended worship time.

December 21

“Building a New Way: Practicing Hope”

Rev. KC Marie Pandell

In their book *Active Hope*, Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone posit that "...we take a clear view of reality, ...we identify what we hope for in terms of the direction we'd like things to move in or the

values we'd like to see expressed, and ...we take steps to move ourselves or our situation in that direction." What does it mean to practice hope in such a way? Even when it feels hopeless, how do we move from passive hope to hopeful action?

December 24—Christmas Eve

"This Little Light of Mine: Nurturing Hope"

Rev. KC Marie Pandell

Sometimes, hope can feel perilously close to disappearing, as if the wind might huff, and puff, and blow all our hope away. But what does hope look like when we consider the partnership between the light and the darkness? How do we keep the flame of hope alive, while also honoring the work in the dark? Join Rev. KC for our annual candlelight Christmas Eve service, where we will sing some carols, and build our power for hope together.



December 28

"Hope is an Active Verb"

Jan Phillips, Guest Speaker

Hope is the energy that sustains a new vision while it transforms from the realm of the imagination into the realm of manifest reality. Hope is prayer married to thanksgiving. It's not something we have; it's something we do. It is contagious. And we can grow it through our prayer and intentions. It is an evolutionary act that involves the total engagement of body, mind and spirit.

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 ~ Reverend KC Marie Pandell

Dear Summitarians and Friends:

Speaking with a friend today, she lamented how “gross” (accurate) she felt at the recent news story of our current president calling a female member of the press “Piggy,” in response to a valid question about the Epstein files, and as we discussed the bleak feelings that keep cropping up, I told her about something I read last night: a brief thought from a European man that essentially said “America is fighting fascism in months in ways that took Europe years to do. Keep going!” That sparked a little flame in my heart’s chalice, and I shared that with my friend, telling her “If you need hope, I have some to spare.”

I’m really grateful that we’ll be moving into the theme of **Choosing Hope** in December, and I do love that it’s *choosing* hope. It’s not some amorphous feeling that if we pray hard enough for, *poof*, we magically have hope. We must find the ways we can create it, and use it to bless a better world into being (a la Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone’s *Active Hope*: put a pin in that one). We also have to find ways to keep hope kindled in the darkness, and one of the ways we do that is by our mutual support of each other, and the community around us. Seeing people enthusiastically engage in our Adopt-a-Family, as well as helping with the WSWA Toy Drive spark a little extra hope in me – we are the ones we’ve been waiting for, and it gives me hope to see the wheels turning.

The staff and I recently discussed some possibilities around how we can support more activist movements, and a really salient way I hope we will consider doing so is through hosting space – there are plenty of organizations seeking safe places to host training on subjects, such as community safety as it pertains to ICE. This is work we’re seeing play out in Los Angeles, Chicago, and most recently: Raleigh, NC (to the tune of almost 1000+ newly trained neighbors).

Sometimes showing up and witnessing isn’t about using our voices, but offering our resources, which is something I know Summit does well, and with gusto, when able, from the food at our dinner tables, to a ride to the doctor’s, and a myriad of other ways.

So here’s to us, and the hope we manifest, the hope we create, and the hope we nurture, together, every single day. May it be the foundations for the better world we all dream of.

All my love and blessings,

Rev. KC

(714) 869-7645

summitminister@gmail.com

MINISTER’S OFFICE HOURS

Reverend KC is delighted to receive your calls and emails. Her regular day off is Monday. She checks email on a limited basis on Friday, her study day. She is available for one-on-one meetings by appointment.

In Office Hours:

Tues: 10 am to Noon 2 pm to 5 pm
Thurs: 10 am to Noon 1pm to 5 pm

Zoom/Call/Etc (Zoom preferred):

Wed: 10 am to Noon 1 pm to-3 pm

Schedule an appointment: [Calendly Schedule](#)



LIFESPAN FAITH FORMATION NEWS

MARY CARTER-VAIL, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

December is here with the mystery of the long nights and short days as we lead up to the Winter Solstice. We will be “Choosing Hope” and gathering to

celebrate the light AND the needed darkness that is part of the many Holidays that are celebrated by some at this time. Whether you celebrate or not, all are welcome to be in community together as this time can feel complicated for many of us. Let us choose hope and love together.

Choosing Hope: The darkness of the long nights is a time for rest and healing as we dream of what is to come. This month we will be “Choosing Hope” as our theme. Though many of the holidays are celebrations of light, I invite us to seek out the gift of the long dark nights. By leaning into the mystery of the long night we engage in wonder and hope as part of the darkness. Some questions to ponder: What are the gifts of the longest night? How do I choose hope in a time of challenge? What do I want to release and to call in at this time of year? This is a beautiful time to embrace the gifts of healing and hope together.

Free Little Library is OPEN! – Thank you to all who have brought books to contribute. Our little library is getting some local attention. We do need some more books, so bring in any gently used titles to contribute. Bring book donations to RE so our children can add in the bookplates and enjoy filling the library. Thanks again to all who have supported this fun project!

Join us for All Ages Faith Formation at Summit: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! We are growing our Religious Exploration program and expanding to an all-ages Faith Formation program. Join us and consider being part of this important part of our congregational life. (Volunteers who work with children will need to be background checked and take Mandated Reporter training.) Contact Mary at summitdre@gmail.com to explore ways you can be part of Faith Formation at Summit.

Our December theme is Choosing Hope: We will be gathering in RE at 10 am on Sundays for our Religious Exploration activities. Our children and youth will participate in the service until after the “Invitation 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.

December 7 – Hope and Choosing to Create the Light for Each Other – This week we are beginning to explore our new theme “Choosing Hope”. During the service we will be decorating the Sanctuary to Deck the Halls together. This is the beginning of our celebrations of the mystery of the dark nights and the returning light. During RE time we will be making our own lanterns of light to take home and enjoy with our family.

December 14 – Hopeful Hearts: Loving Hope - Our Annual Children & Family Holiday Service with New Member Celebration – Sometimes it's difficult to see the hope and goodness in our world, especially when fear and misinformation run rampant. How do we model hope and love out loud, even in a world where we are encouraged not to make waves? How can we love and hope with the whimsy of a child, even on a dark day? Join Dir. of Religious Exploration Mary Carter-Vail & Rev. KC on an exploration of loving hope, planned in collaboration with Summit's children. This service will include our New Member Ceremony, a time of embodied worship with stations to enjoy, and extended worship time as we play together.

December 21 - Hope and Choosing to Look in the Unexpected Places – This is Winter Solstice Sunday so we will be talking about the longest night and making gifts for our friends in nature. We will be seeking hope during this time of mystery through playing games together including Solstice Bingo. Join us for Hot Cocoa, Cookies and cozy fun!

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service at 5 pm – Bring the whole family for our Christmas Eve service at 5 pm. We will be singing classic Christmas Carols, UU style, and sharing stories as we gather for community at this time of mystery and hope. We will have a passing of the flame at the end of the service as we use candlelight to create a magical moment together while singing Silent Night.

(continued on next page)

December 28 – Game Day! – We end the year by playing games together. This is a wonderful day to bring friends for fun day of games as we pull from our large collection of board games. Before we begin to play we will be going over how to be together and inclusive even when we are not winning. Our games include easy and challenging options and groups will choose and play together, centering whatever is age appropriate for the group that is present.

These are the plans at the beginning of the month, and they may be adapted as our community needs

change, 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.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Sunday December 7 at 10am

“Deck the Halls” - decorate the Sanctuary during Service

Sunday, January 25 at 11am

SUUF Congregational Meeting

Sunday December 14 at 10am

New Member Cermony during Service

Thursday, January 29

Red Cross Blood Drive in the Salon

Santee United Methodist Church is continuing the community meals they started last month, but with a Christmas twist!

Meet on their campus on Mondays in December for a potluck-style community dinner (they've been asking folks to bring a dish to share as they are able, with some folks attending who do not bring food - there is always plenty!) at 5:30 p.m., and then head into their Sanctuary to watch a family-friendly Christmas movie at 6:30 p.m.

Summit Fellowship, friends, neighbors, are all invited and welcome to join!

SUMMIT CHOIR is meeting Wednesdays at 6 pm in the sanctuary.

We welcome anyone who would like to sing- no experience required. We are currently operating as a DIY choir (we are running rehearsal on our own) and could use your voice!



❧ WELCOMING & MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE ❧

Welcoming and Membership Happenings

We just recently had our Getting to Know Us event on November 23rd in Summit's library. We had over 20 people attending, including visitors and Summit members. I want to thank the members of the Welcoming and Membership Committee for their help in putting together the event. The committee members include Stacey S. and her husband Glenn, Barbara S. Margo M. and Barbara and Don S. I also want to thank Reverend KC, Mary Carter-Vail and Pat S. who shared different aspects of Unitarian Universalism and Summit's history.

The next Summit new member recognition ceremony will be during the service on December 14th. During the service, we will be acknowledging our new members.

If you have considered becoming a member at Summit, now might be a good time to join so you can be part of the service. Anyone aged 16 (sixteen) or older may be considered a member of

Summit by doing the following:

- ◆ Acknowledging their sympathy with its missions and programs
- ◆ Signing the membership book
- ◆ Actively participating in the life and work of the fellowship
- ◆ Making a written pledge for each year in which they wish to maintain their membership. A pledge may be a zero-dollar amount or a pledge of time and effort.

By becoming a member, you can vote on issues such as the budget, future board members as well as other Summit issues that the Fellowship votes on.

If you would like to become a member contact Reverend KC or myself so we can arrange a time for you to sign the membership book.

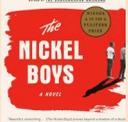
Jim

Welcoming & Membership Committee Chair

❧ ADULT LIFE ENRICHMENT ❧

THE SUMMIT UU BOOK CLUB MULTI-PLATFORM OPTIONS!

The Summit UU Book Club meets on the First Tuesday, at 7pm. The group meets both in person in the Library and via Zoom, hosted by Debbie Wingard.



This month, on December 2, we will be discussing The Cellist of Sarajevo by Steven Galloway.

On January 6, we will be discussing The Nickel Boys by Colson Whitehead.

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



GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Rev. KC, Facilitator

Rev. KC leads a Grief Group for Summitarians and friends who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

The next meeting will be December 7 in the Sanctuary at Noon.



SUMMIT UU FELLOWSHIP PRAYER CIRCLE

Organized by Seraphina Galante

We meet in the Sanctuary on the 1st Thursday of the month from 1pm to 2:30pm.

All are welcome!

∞ SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION ∞

The Social Justice committee is having Will Harris (Western Service Workers Association) speak at the Social Justice Focus Group on Wednesday December 3 at 3pm at the Lakeside Library.

The Social Justice in Action Committee meets regularly at noon in the Summit library on the second Sunday of each month. All members and friends interested in taking action on enhancing justice, freedom and the environment are invited to join us. If you would like to learn more, contact summitsjia@gmail.com. Everyone welcome!

**The SJIA committee meets on the second Sunday of the month;
Our next meeting will be December 14 at 12 Noon**
in the Library and on zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/98852027774>

As a Welcoming Congregation, all members, parents, friends, and allies of the LGBTQ+ community are welcome at Summit. We build and sustain relationships with local LGBTQ groups and organizations. For information please reach out to bkindbstrong@gmail.com



Social Justice Committee supports the WSWA Toy Drive

WSWA's low-income members already struggle to pay for basic necessities, let alone extra Holiday expenses. Please donate what you can towards Western Service Workers Association's (WSWA) annual Holiday Toy Drive.

There will be a bin labeled WSWA Xmas in the Greeting Room. Please take a sticker with a toy or item on it from the board on the bin and return the **unwrapped items** to the bin.

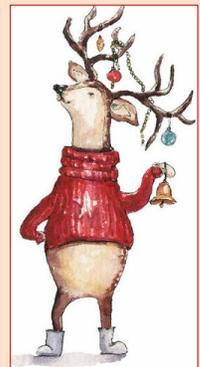
Many thanks. More info, contact Aline King at harmony81094@gmail.com

For 15 + year old boys and girls:

Soccer ball/basketball, Hacky Sack, Axe Gift Set, Headphones, Nail Polish, Make up set, Smelly lotion, Body Spray, Hair items, Press on nails, Art packs (pastels, oil paints, paint by number, nice pens, colored fancy pencils), Purse, Wallet, Puzzles, Lip Gloss, Bubble bath, adult coloring books, glitter pens, scented pens, Loteria, Jenga

For 3-4-year-old boys and girls:

Books, Duplo Legos, Etch & Sketch, Fisher Price baby dolls (not all white), Stuffed animals, Big trucks, Shopping Carts, Blocks.



AFFINITY GROUPS

POETRY WORKSHOP

Led by Margo Mariana

Come play with words! Discover the poet within.

Please feel free to bring a short piece you have written to share with the group to get some feed-back support.

We meet in the Summit Library the first Monday of each month.



Please call Margo Mariana at (619) 312-0903 if you have questions and/or to register.

Next meeting is Monday,
December 8
10:00 a.m.—12pm

BRIDGE CLUB

Come join Summit's friendly and casual Bridge Group

We play Bridge in the Salon on Tuesdays from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Questions? please contact:

Pam Williams at

2400highview@gmail.com



WOW—WOMEN OF WISDOM EVENING WOMEN'S GROUP

Longing for a meeting that suits your needs? All are welcome - come share your wisdom and hang out with other amazing women!

Meet with us the 3rd Monday of every month, at 7:00 PM, at different houses.

Call Stacey Sasaki for more information,
619-850-7553.
See you there!

DAYTIME WOMEN'S GROUP

The Summit Daytime Women's Group meets the last Friday of the month from 1-2:30pm.

Contact Shari at 619-840-3612 or Marianne at 541-510-8263 for more info.



THE SUMMIT TUESDAY NIGHT MEN'S GROUP

Is now hosting open house meetings on the last Tuesday of each month. Any and all men in the Summit community are invited. This month the OPEN HOUSE meeting is Tuesday, December 30 from 6:30 to 8pm in the library at Summit.

We are a supportive circle of men who share and listen to each other. We invite you to visit with us.

Interested men may contact Mark Weedman for details: markatpsectrum@hotmail.com or (619) 334-5300.

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.



Denominational News

YOU → Summit UU Fellowship → SD Cluster →

Pacific SW Service Area → Pacific Western Region → Unitarian Universalist Association

Save The Date for the Pacific Southwest Assembly, April 24-26, 2026, at the Rancho Palos Verdes, Pacific Unitarian Church campus.

In the spirit of the former district assembly, we invite UUs and affiliated people to join in our **Blue Sapphire** reflection--65 years of UU history, with a look ahead as we strive for Justice. In the pursuit of justice for all let's learn from history and blend our voices with our ever-current arc toward Justice. The assembly is a unique creation of workshops, music, and keynote speakers, and we invite you to provide event planners with your ideas and suggestions for workshops and activities.

2026 Pacific Southwest Assembly

April 24 - 26, 2026

Pacific UU Church
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA



"Blue Sapphire Anniversary"

Our annual assembly brings together UU's and affiliates from the 50 churches located in the Pacific Southwest who once were tethered together under the Pacific Southwest District umbrella. Like the assemblies of yesteryear, congregational representatives participate in meaningful exchanges and exciting workshops. The keynote speakers carry the theme and stimulate deep conversations. Church leaders meet on Friday for the Leadership Luncheon and program at noon. Sunday concludes with an exuberant worship and choir service.

For more information and to provide your ideas, contact Dale Botts: dale.botts2@gmail.com, 714.686.2791 (he/him)

Keynote Speakers:

Rev. Dr. Nicole Kirk, Schulman Chair of UU History at Meadville Lombard Theological School, will speak Friday evening. The keynote topic will briefly touch on 65 years of UU history and then highlight a look ahead as we strive for Justice. UU's have moved a lot of social issues forward over the last 65 years, but there is still much work to be done to get it right. Rev. Dr. Kirk recently spoke at the UUA GA in June 2025 where enthusiasm was high.

Rev. Jennifer Gutierrez, Executive Director of CLUE, will be our Saturday morning keynote speaker. She will speak on CLUE's programming and provide an overview into nonviolent resistance to authoritarianism. CLUE has been very active in 2025 providing a clergy presence at deportation hearings. Rev. Gutierrez brings a deep understanding of labor and economic justice as well as the immigration issues facing our communities.



The
Gathering

♥ Fortifying Ourselves for the Long Road Ahead ♥

UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION

Second Monday of Every Month
8pm ET / 5pm PT

♥ SIDE WITH LOVE



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

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday & Thursday — 9 am to 5 pm
*Please call before coming in to make sure
someone will be in the office*

MINISTER

Rev. KC Marie Pandell
714-869-7645
SummitMinister@gmail.com
[Calendly Schedule](#)

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December, 2025



About SUUF Publications

Please send submissions for the monthly SCENE AT SUMMIT NEWSLETTER
via e-mail on or soon after the 20th, to
summitUUF@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.