

**Unitarian Universalist Church
of Fresno**

GET INVOLVED



Ministry Teams and Activities

2024-25

Our Mission

La misión de la iglesia Unitaria Universalista de Fresno es:

Amar inclusivamente
Crecer espiritualmente
Servir con gratitud y
Trabajar por la justicia

The Mission of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno is to:

Love Inclusively
Grow Spiritually
Serve Gratefully
And Work for Justice

GET INVOLVED!

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno is a busy community, with teams, events, activities, worship services, religious exploration for children, adult learning programs, and a variety of other ways to live out our mission. We are one church in many places: both on our Alluvial campus and online, through Zoom, Facebook, and YouTube. Experienced users are available to provide coaching to help with any technical barriers to connecting with our offerings.

Through service and shared leadership, we empower one another, nourish our souls, and deepen our connections. Members, friends, and visitors are all welcome to participate in all aspects of the life of the church. If you would like to know more about getting involved with any of the teams or activities in this booklet, please feel free to reach out to the listed contact people.

If you have questions or if you would like help making connections, please contact Cecily Callahan, Coordinator of Community Life, at 559-322-6146 ext.15 or msc@uufresno.org.

TEAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Family Ministry and Lifelong Learning

The mission of the Lifespan Religious Education is to grow spiritually and deepen our Unitarian Universalist faith by engaging in a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, fostering a beloved community, and exploring programs that promote faith development, spiritual growth, and engage the intellect.

Children, Youth, and Family Ministry

Contact: Karen Polnitz

559-322-6146 dll@uufresno.org

Adult Programs

Contacts: Karen Polnitz

dll@uufresno.org

John Moses

jwmoses@comcast.net

We, the UU Church of Fresno Adult Religious Exploration team, take value in continuing the development of each other in an ever-changing world through exploring our spiritual awareness and a wide variety of life experiences. We seek to plan, develop, and present an array of adult programming which promotes and encourages faith exploration and spiritual growth to nourish both the intellectual and the spiritual life..

Religious Exploration Team (children and youth)

Contact: Karen Polnitz

559-322-6146 dll@uufresno.org

The Religious Exploration Team oversees programming, events, and outreach related to Religious Exploration (the church's classes for children from preschool through 12th grade). The team works closely with staff in choosing curriculum, reaching out to parents, and planning the Religious Exploration calendar. The Religious Exploration Team also works to provide events with families in mind, such as the Movie Nights, Drum Circles, Cocoa & Carols, the Annual All Church Picnic and more, with the overall goal of creating a community in which children explore what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist and where they feel safe, loved, and cherished.

Norelma Walker Youth Library

Contact: Nancy Hatcher

nhatcher46@gmail.com

The Norelma Walker Youth Library is an attractive, joyful space, home to a carefully curated collection of over 1,800 books of quality literature consistent with Unitarian Universalist values for youth of all ages. The library provides a comfortable place for youth to select and read books; the library also serves as a resource to church members who work with our youth. The library is directed and staffed by the Norelma Walker Youth Library team, an enthusiastic group of book-lovers who assist our youth

in selecting and checking out books every Sunday following church services. The team also plans reading activities and literary celebrations for our youth throughout the year.

Spiritual Exploration

Chalice Circles

Contact: Karen Polnitz

Coordinator of Congregational Life

559-322-6146 dll@uufresno.org

Chalice Circles offer the gift of spiritual connection. Around us swirls a shallow, frantic and materialistic culture that leaves us cut off from our deepest selves, life's gifts, and needs greater than our own. Chalice Circle groups offer spiritual connection with 8-10 people. Your group will meet with a facilitator two times monthly (October-June). Chalice Circles are small intentionally to allow everyone an opportunity to be involved to their level of comfort.

Fresno Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship

Contact: Linda Mack

lindamack4554@gmail.com

The Fresno UU Buddhist Fellowship is currently meeting to discuss Buddhist teaching on Zoom at 3 pm every Wednesday afternoon. To learn what we are currently studying and to receive the link to Zoom, contact Tope Adewusi at tadewusi614@yahoo.com.

Zen Buddhism Classes (on hold)

Contact: Soshin Bruce Jewell

soshin504@gmail.com

Wednesdays at 10:00 AM. Soshin Bruce Jewell, a transmitted teacher in the Soto Zen lineage, will be giving a multi week class covering the basic practices and teachings of Zen Buddhism. [Registration is requested.](#)

Unitarian Universalist Humanists of Fresno

Contact: Devin Carroll

devinc@sbcglobal.net

We meet via Zoom each third Sunday at 1 pm for a lively discussion of topics of interest to Humanists from our congregation. We meet together with the Humanists of the San Joaquin Valley. The UU Humanist Association represents Humanism in the UU Association of Congregations.

Social Justice and Social Service

Unitarian Universalists believe we are all called to help shape a more
just and compassionate world for all people.

Our **social justice teams and projects focus** on equitable access to
resources for all members of our society.

Our **social service teams** and projects focus on helping to meet the
material needs of members of our community.

Social Justice Coordinating Committee

Contact: Stephen Sacks

johnsonsacks1@gmail.com

The Social Justice Coordinating Committee lives out our Unitarian Universalist covenant of love by working for social justice and social service in our community and the wider world. Most members of our church participate in social justice and service projects through donations of their time and money. All those with a passion for social justice and service causes and activities are welcome. The Social Justice Coordinating Committee meets on the fourth Sunday of every month after service.

Social Justice Teams and Projects

IAF (Industry Area Foundation)

IAF is the nation's largest and longest-standing network of local faith and community-based organizations. They have been organizing in various cities/counties since the 1940s. Right now, the Central Valley Team is in the process of forming an official IAF group which includes our UU Church of Fresno IAF team, the teachers' union, El Dorado Park, and others. Any group, nonprofit, church, or organization can join as well.

The reason that most members of our Social Justice (SJ) Team have joined the IAF is that we understand that:

1. We need a large community-based group to influence Fresno politics—larger than simply our church's SJ Team;
2. The IAF has paid staff and stayed in the communities for decades working for positive change;
3. In conjunction with our 8th Principle, we join together with historically marginalized groups working for justice.

If there are questions, concerns, or inquiries, please contact Steve Sacks,
johnsonsacks1@gmail.com

Monthly Social Justice Collections

On the second Sunday of every month our church takes up a collection to support a local nonprofit organization that is working to make the world a better place. Since 2013 we have donated more than \$60,000 to approximately 40 organizations. *To nominate a group, contact Stephen Sacks, johnsonsacks1@gmail.com.*

LGBTQ Rainbow Pride Parade Team

*Contact: Kyle Osborne
kosborne794@gmail.com*

We help get the congregation prepared to march in Fresno's annual Pride Parade. We plan publicity, creative attire, and items to give away. We also staff a table at the Pride Festival after the parade.

Prison Ministry

The Holiday Gift Bag Project - For more than two decades, volunteers with The Holiday Gift Bag Project have worked to ensure that women incarcerated in the Central California Women's Facility are not forgotten during the Christmas holiday season. For most of these women, far away from family and friends, and largely forgotten, the most meaningful gift is simply knowing that someone cares. The Holiday Gift Bag Project needs donations and volunteers each fall to assist with sorting donations and packing gift bags.

Contact: Cheyenne Jenvey at livevertically77@gmail.com

Our team supports the inherent worth and dignity of prisoners in the Chowchilla prison through an annual goodie bag collection of personal items, serving more than 3,000 women prisoners annually.

Contact: Joanne Michelson, joannejoan44@gmail.com

Church members and others offer transformative workshops in prisons through the Alternatives to Violence Project. *Contact: Barbara Cutright, bcutright@fresnocohousing.org*

Through the Unitarian Universalist Association, church members can support incarcerated individuals by donating to the Church of the Larger Fellowship prison ministry and by participating in its letter writing program. *Contact: Cecily Callahan, Coordinator of Congregational Life, 559-322-6146 ext. 15 msc@uufresno.org*

Enough Gun Violence

In June 2022, after frequent mass shootings, a group of grassroots, interfaith citizens formed Enough Gun Violence. Now affiliated with Brady United Against Gun Violence, this group focuses on sensible gun safety legislation, mental health issues, and social disparities and economic issues which will reduce gun violence. For more information contact Sharon Bell-Stevens at sbellstevens@bradyunited.org.

Citizens' Climate Lobby

*Contact: Connie Young
cyoungRN@sbcglobal.net*

Join church and non-church members who care about global warming and environmental

sustainability issues. Help us take specific actions in advocating for governmental policy changes. Volunteer citizen lobbyists learn to speak powerfully to their elected officials, the media, and their local communities. The Fresno chapter meets monthly and newcomers are most welcome.

Earth Day Fresno

Contact: Connie Young

info@earthdayfresno.org

Earth Day Fresno is a committee of volunteers with a passion for environmental stewardship. We collaborate to host a one-day community event each year in April around Earth Day. Our mission is to inspire people to make changes in their daily lives to help restore the ecological health of our San Joaquin Valley and the world. We are looking for people with experience and passion for event coordination, community organization, bookkeeping, fundraising, environmental justice, and media relations.

UUCF Afghan Family Resettlement Effort

Contact:

Kathy Boudinot-Johnson

kboudinot@yahoo.com

In 2021, the United States withdrew its troops after two decades in Afghanistan. The Taliban quickly seized control and thousands of Afghans, many of whom worked alongside U.S. forces, were forced to flee their homes. The Department of Homeland Security responded by launching "Operation Allies Welcome" and has partnered with agencies across the U.S. to support vulnerable Afghans. Beginning in January 2022, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno has been part of this effort. We are currently sponsoring a family of six who are in the process of resettling in Fresno. This is a long-term commitment and we are relying on the generosity of our congregation to support this family as they become self-sufficient. Your donation will directly support this family by assisting them with housing costs, internet access and utilities, food and clothing, medical appointments, English language instruction and much more. Please visit the [Give Page](#) to learn how you can contribute to our Resettlement Fund.

Church of the Larger Fellowship

Contact: Cecily Callahan, Coordinator of Community Life

msc@uufresno.org

Through the Unitarian Universalist Association, church members can support incarcerated individuals by donating to the Church of the Larger Fellowship prison ministry and by participating in its letter writing program.

Compassion in Action Animal Ministry

Contact: Margaret Baznik-Sanders

ranchoamistad@gmail.com

UU Fresno Animal Ministry seeks to demonstrate compassion for all beings by volunteering at local animal shelters, providing animal care workshops for adults and children of UU Fresno, and offering plant-based alternatives for church events. We meet monthly via zoom.

Social Service Teams and Projects

Food Collection

The 3rd Sunday Food Collection is back to the 3rd Sunday only. Please bring your food items then from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM! We are partnering with Wesley United Methodist Church, residents of the El Dorado Park neighborhood, and Valley Children's Hospital in their food distribution to people in need and families who stay in the rooms with their children. Items needed are: peanut butter, canned vegetables, Ramen Noodles, macaroni and cheese (preferably not Kraft), non-refrigerated single-serve meals of any sort including soups, vegetables, fruits, beans, etc., preferably with "flip-top" type cans. If the item is a canned item, nothing perishable, and nothing that has expired. Instant meals such as oatmeal or other meals that can be put into a microwave are best. Please stick to items that are on the list. If you have questions regarding acceptable food items contact Steve Sacks at johnsonsacks1@gmail.com

Wings Advocacy Fresno -- Homeless to Home: Restoring Hope and Dignity

Contact: Debbie Ockey

debbie.ockey@gmail.com

Wings is a nonprofit started by members of our church and members of the Catholic Bishops' Homeless Advocacy Committee. Wings volunteers serve Fresno's formerly homeless, newly housed families, veterans, individuals, and women and children fleeing domestic violence. Volunteers and donations of gently used home furnishings are always needed. *Contact Wings at* www.wingsfresno.org or furnishings@wingsfresno.org.

Sunday Worship Services

Sunday Services Team

Contacts:

Jody Palmer

jodyspalmer@gmail.com

Gloria Brough

gibrough@gmail.com

The Sunday Services Team invites dynamic and inspiring guest speakers and evaluates all aspects of Sunday services to ensure continuity of quality worship.

Worship Arts Team

Contact: Rev. Tim Kutzmark

559-322-6146 tkutzmark@uufresno.org

The Worship Arts Team works with the minister to create the worship service for Sunday services. In addition Worship Arts Team members serve as lay leaders working with guest speakers and the Music Director to put together the worship service for any time the minister will not be in the pulpit.

Chalice Lighting Team

Contact: Rev. Tim Kutzmark

559-322-6146 tkutzmark@uufresno.org

The Chalice Lighting Team is responsible for securing individuals and families to light the Chalice for each Sunday Service. Volunteers are welcome and write their own statements; instructions are provided well in advance.

Ushers

Contact: Micheline Curnyn

mcurnyn@comcast.net

The ushering team assists with the service on Sunday by helping people to find seats, answering any questions they may ask, counting and recording the plate collection, and putting the collection into the office safe. Ushers are also called upon to serve at memorial services or special church events. This is a wonderful way to get to know the members of the church and for them to get to know you.

Greeters

Contact: Kim Fox-Kristensen

Kafk@att.net

Greeters provide a warm welcome to congregants on Sunday morning, with a particular emphasis on newcomers. They invite visitors to wear name tags, offer them connection cards to fill out, and engage them in brief, friendly conversation. This is a great job for newer congregants to get to know others in the church. Online greeters welcome congregants and post messages into the chat on Facebook and YouTube during Sunday morning services.

Music Program

Contact: Lorenzo Bassman, Music Director

lorenzo.bassman@gmail.com

The Music Program's goal is to create a vibrant and varied Sunday Service music experience, helping to create a welcoming environment that will encourage visitors to become members, and new members to become long-term members.

You can participate in several ways:

1. Sing in the Adult Choir
2. Have your kids sing in the Children's Choir
3. Perform as an instrumentalist - either as a soloist or with our rotating-membership church band, Stolen Thunder
4. Perform as a vocal soloist, a backing vocalist, or in a small vocal ensemble
5. Have your kids perform as an instrumentalist.
6. Perform as a solo dancer.

Coffee Team

Contact: Mary McDonough

memcdonough@att.net

On Sundays, after each church service, the Coffee Team serves coffee, tea, juice/water, and usually provides a small snack. We provide a gentle and relaxing space for our community to share conversation and information on philosophies, activities, and upcoming events. Being on the Coffee Team is a great way to meet and get to know fellow Team and church members.

Beloved Community

Visitor and New Member Team

Contact: Cecily Callahan, Coordinator of Congregational Life

559-322-6146 ext. 15

msc@uufresno.org

The VNM Committee comprises greeters, ushers, and other volunteers who welcome visitors to church services. The committee collaborates with the Coordinator of Community life to provide Introduction to Unitarian Universalism workshops, New Member Sunday welcome ceremonies, and all-church potlucks. The committee also helps guide new members to meaningful participation in our church community.

Mosaic Makers Team

Contact: Valerie Johnson

valeriejohnson@comcast.net

The mission of the Mosaic Makers Team is to lead the congregation in living more fully into our shared vision of being intentionally multiracial and multicultural, challenging racist biases, behaviors, and institutional practices. La misión del Equipo de Fabricantes de Mosaicos es guiar a la congregación en vivir más completamente nuestra compartida visión de ser intencionalmente multiracial y multicultural, desafiando la parcialidad, y los comportamientos y prácticas institucionales racistas.

Pastoral Care Team

Contact: Jeri Stubblefield

jeristubblefield@gmail.com

The Pastoral Care Team coordinates volunteers who provide short term help, on behalf of the pastor, to congregants with critical needs. Also under the umbrella of Pastoral Care is Long Term Care, which provides social and emotional support for our respected elders and congregants with longer term needs.

Milestones & Memories (M & M) Team

Contact: Cheyenne Jenvey

livevertically77@gmail.com

The M&M Team's ministry is one of beloved community through supporting bereaved families during memorial services and Celebrations of Life. We provide kitchen help and refreshments, and we coordinate event details with love and compassion. Both physical on-site kitchen help and at-home cooking/baking assistance are needed throughout the year. No regularly held meetings; team members are typically "on call" on a rotating basis.

Social Activities

Men's Fellowship Group

Contact: Doug Halloran

douglashalloran@gmail.com

The UUCF Men's Group is essentially a monthly informal social dinner gathering (Sept-Jun) at rotating homes or at the church. The host chooses a topic and we share opinions, perspectives, and personal experiences in a supportive atmosphere. We also share ways to support UUCF activities.

Unitarian Universalist Women's Group

Contact: Micheline Curnyn

mcurnyn@comcast.net

The Women's Group is expanding and branching out!

As our current Women's Group has reached maximum capacity, there is an opportunity for new groups to form and offer different formats to accommodate various generations in our congregation. Contact us if you are interested in forming or joining a group.

The current UUCF Women's Group welcomes women 60+ and meets on the third Saturday of each month at 10 am in a private home. We have a "check-in" and move on to a selected topic for discussion. We try to pick topics that make our sharing meaningful and enhance our understanding of the world around us. Refreshments are served, and we conclude with a light lunch.

Young Adult Group (ages 25-40)

Contact: Cecily Callahan

msc@uufresno.org

The Young Adult Group meets monthly for social time and fun. When we are not facing a global pandemic we rotate between breakfast potlucks before church services, lunch after services, and off-site gatherings on other days. Those ages 25 to 40 in the congregation come together to build relationships. Currently we are meeting monthly on Zoom. See What's NUU for meeting details and links.

Facilities

Landscape Team

Contact: Jody Palmer

jodyspalmer@gmail.com

Annual maintenance of the church grounds involves the removal of dead, overgrown, and volunteer vegetation each spring, weed control, replacement of bark mulch every few years, repair of the drip irrigation system as needed, and tree trimming. Intergenerational workdays are held on Saturday mornings in early spring and quarterly to clean up and maintain the church grounds.

Volunteers maintain the orange orchard and harvest the crop in January. Maintenance includes monitoring the drip irrigation system, tree trimming, fertilizing, weed control.

Alluvial Community Garden

Contact: Betty Cornelisen

bettycorn12@gmail.com

We do not have a formal committee. Volunteers and gardeners meet on the 4th Saturday of every month to maintain the general area of the garden. Volunteers are encouraged to assist with special events, act as alternate spokespersons for the garden, and help with garden decisions. Consider joining our team as a volunteer or a gardener.

Kitchen Team

Contact: Karin Livingstone

klivingstone@gmail.com

More logistics than actual cooking, the Kitchen Team supports our UU principles of inclusive hospitality and welcome by maintaining policies, procedures, and coordination of the UU kitchen facility. This committee is responsible for overseeing the operation, use, budget, cleanliness, and maintenance of the church kitchen and its equipment. The team typically meets monthly (online or in person) and hosts Cleaning Parties twice a year.

Administration

Leadership Development Team (LDT)

Contact: Ruth Jenkins

ryj@comcast.net

The LDT is a new team responsible for identifying emerging or potential leaders for the Church, providing opportunities for leadership development/training of those congregants (in conjunction with the Mosaic Makers Team) as well as exploring local, regional, and national UUA development/training opportunities. The LDT will work with other teams to create succession of leadership planning.

Finance

Pledge Drive Team

Contacts: Cheyenne Jenvey

Livevertically77@gmail.com

Mariah Mewborn

office@uufresno.org

UUCF conducts an Annual Pledge Drive to raise funding for our fiscal year (July-June) operating budget. The Pledge Drive Team of volunteers work alongside administrative staff to select a theme and create a logo for the Pledge Drive, produce an information packet, and provide an enthusiastic presence during the Pledge Drive. Some of the skill-sets of volunteers can include a desire to ensure continuity of worship, programs, activities, etc., of UUCF, an interest in developing written material, graphic art, representing the Team during Worship Service, comfort connecting one-on-one with members and friends and more.

Annual Auction Team

Contact: Valerie Johnson

valeriejohnson@comcast.net

UUCF conducts one main fundraiser each year, our Annual Auction. The Auction Team determines a realistic fundraising goal, the theme of the auction, obtains items for bidding, and handles promotion.



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