

UUSS CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, October 19, 2025. 11:45 am, via Zoom and in person

MINUTES



Welcome – Andy Cramer, Board of Trustees President, welcomed members and guests at 11:59 AM.

- Andy introduced the members of the Board of Trustees
- A quorum of members was established at 12:02 PM.
- Andy reviewed the meeting agenda and procedures.

Rev. Dr. Roger Jones gave the invocation for chalice lighting. Board of Trustees Member-at-Large, Patty Innes lit the chalice. Andy Cramer called for the approval of the May 2025 Congregational Meeting minutes, which were approved by voice vote at 12:06 PM.

President's Report: Andy Cramer

I'd like to highlight several milestones and accomplishments since our May Congregational meeting:

- In July, the newly elected leaders took their seats on the Board of Trustees, the Program Council, the Endowment Trust, and the Nominating Committee
- In August, the board held a retreat during which we developed goals for the coming year. More on these goals in a moment.
- In September, we welcomed our Ministerial Intern, Sophia McKean. Sophia will be with us half-time for the next two years while they are completing the program at Meadville Lombard. We are excited to have them with us and look forward to growing together.

We ended the last fiscal year in June with a surplus, and we have a good start on this fiscal year. I am happy to report that because of your generosity and good cost control, UUSS is financially healthy. We were able to give all the staff a cost-of-living adjustment and provide targeted adjustments for key staff positions that are significantly below UUSS guidelines or other benchmarks. As per the compensation plan that we prepared last year, we hope to continue the cost-of-living adjustments and targeted salary increases for the next several years to bring compensation for our ministers and staff where we think it should be. You will hear more about our finances from the Treasurer, Victoria Owens, in a few minutes.

As I noted, the Board developed goals for ourselves at the start of the church year. These are in addition to all the other tasks that we need to accomplish each year. Our goals directly relate to implementation of the Strategic Plan that you approved at our May meeting. Our goals are as follows: First, to replace the UUSS website software; second, to prepare a multi-year Staffing Plan; and third, later in the church year, to evaluate our overall progress in implementing the Strategic Plan. I'm grateful to the members of the congregation that have agreed to serve with members of the Board on the task forces that we have set up to work on these goals. While our web site is still functional, because the software is getting older, we have had periods where it is challenging to update it. We'd also like to reorganize the content on the web site to make it more intuitive. For the Staffing Plan, we will be looking at the current division of responsibilities for our ministers and staff and how that might evolve over the next several years as we grow and implement the strategic plan.

I also have updates to share with you from two other leadership groups in the congregation – the Nominating Committee and the Social Justice Coordinating Council.

The function of the Nominating Committee is to source candidates for the leadership positions that must be elected by the membership per the constitution. Elections happen at the May congregational meeting, so the Nominating Committee is ramping up their efforts to identify candidates. Elected positions are associated with the BOT, the Endowment Trust, Program Council, and the Nominating Committee itself.

One of the goals of the Nominating Committee in seeking candidates for positions is to have a process that is as transparent and inclusive of our community as possible. To that end, you are invited to consider how your interests, talents and life experience might be a good fit for one of the multiple positions that will need to be filled. Specific information about the open positions will become available in a few weeks. In the meantime, if you're curious you can reach the Nom Com at nominating@uuss.org, or talk with the chair of the committee, Marion Randall, or one of the members.

The Social Justice Coordinating Council provides the infrastructure to support our social justice efforts. I'll provide you with some of the recent highlights. I hope that last Sunday you participated in our first ever Social Justice Activity Fair. We had our internal groups represented and most of our Community Partners joined us. There are many ongoing Social Justice efforts that are doing good work serving

our larger community. I hope you take pride in those efforts and join in as you are able.

One of the things that you may be noticing is our increased efforts to collaborate with our Community Partners, whether that is volunteer days, drives, lobby days, actions, or learning about their programs. I'm grateful to Fred Pannek who has worked to deepen relationships with our Community Partners. You will be hearing more from Fred in a few minutes. Because of your generosity, the share of the Sunday offering that our Community Partners receive is increasing. It is often approaching \$4000 each month for the Community Partner.

I'd like to highlight a few recent successes and new social justice efforts that you will be seeing.

- Just over a week ago Rev. Roger spoke at an interfaith prayer vigil in front of the federal building in support of immigrant rights. The prayer vigil was coordinated by Sac ACT and was followed by a noisy protest led by NorCal Resist; both are community partners with us. A group of UUs joined with almost 200 hundred others at these events. Look for similar events in the near future.
- A large group of you turned out for the No Kings protest at the Capitol on Saturday. We coordinated efforts so that we could be together in solidarity and visibility in the community.
- This year, we had a series of Lobby Days in partnership with Sac ACT where we developed relationships with legislators and their staff as we advocated for specific bills, mostly in support of affordable housing and to address the crisis of homelessness. You will be seeing that continue in 2026 as we grow our local advocacy with the City of Sacramento and Sacramento County.
- Our Pink Haven group has been established to support trans people that may need to relocate from States where they are under attack. As they look to match with Kin that may be interested in relocating to Sacramento, the group is also looking at how they might support trans people locally.
- Rev. Roger is leading efforts to start up an Animal ministry and Earth Care team to promote awareness of human interdependence in area of resource conservation and environmental sustainability and the ethical consumption regarding animals and other agricultural products.

Lastly you can stay up to date on the Board of Trustees and other leadership groups in the congregation by reading the monthly Leadership Message that comes out by email the second week of each month. You are also welcome to

attend our meetings in person or on Zoom. Details are provided in the Leadership Message.

Andy responded to questions from members:

A member asked why the Board did not use the 2024/2025 budget surplus to increase staff compensation to UUA guidelines. Andy responded:

- The Board felt it was not prudent to use the surplus toward staff compensation, as it would be a one-time payment that we would need to sustain year-over-year.
- The Board decided to put the surplus into the Heritage Fund, which are funds that are in reserve for other congregation needs.

Treasurer's Report: Victoria Owens

Victoria reviewed prepared slides, the first of which showed the results of the 2024/2025 church year, ending in a \$60,000 surplus. The Board of Trustees approved the transfer of the surplus into the Heritage Fund.

Victoria discussed the 2025/2026 budgeted income and expenses. Victoria reported that early in this church year, we are doing fine! A member asked this question: "What is the comparison between the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 budget. Victoria reported the previous year budget was \$819,770, and this year it is \$880,743.

Victoria reviewed the revenue and expenses pie charts. A member asked what the mean pledge level of the congregation is. Andy responded that the average pledging household is \$2,400 / year.

A member asked how the solar panels are working out. Victoria responded that we have noticed a 40% decrease in electric bills for the time period she has reviewed.

(Treasurer's Slides are attached to these minutes)

Minister's Report: Rev. Dr. Roger Jones

Raise your hand if this is your first or second congregational meeting at UUSS. Welcome and thanks for your enthusiasm. Raise your hand if you can't

remember how many congregational meetings you've attended. Thanks for your loyalty.

Ministers

Rev. Lucy and I are happy to serve this congregation and happy to serve together. Every year together we come up with a list of our ministerial goals for the year and share them with the Board, Council, and Committee on Ministry. One goal is to work with volunteers and staff to enrich engagement for newcomers and integration of new members. We want to develop and continue good ways to help newcomers get connected and involved. The next new member welcome ritual will be five Sundays from today, November 24. Another goal is to work with the Social Justice Coordinating Council to mobilize our congregation for advocacy work at the city and county levels related to housing and homelessness. Here are a few other items.

Ministerial Intern

Another goal is to support our intern, UU seminary student Sophia McKean. This is a half-time internship over the course of two church years. Sophia lives in Grass Valley. Sophia and Rev. Lucy were at the fall retreat of the UU Ministers Association this weekend and attended the No Kings rally in Santa Cruz. In addition, we want to salute all our staff members; they are so talented and so dedicated to their work and we give thanks for their good service.

Religious Education and Family Ministry

Another goal is to develop more activities for families as well as programs that promote community across the generations. Two big ones coming up are Thanksgiving Dinner in the afternoon and the annual Tree-trimming Holiday Potluck on Friday, December 19. We also have a potluck this Friday. Crystal Fountain and I thank Alicia Taylor and her volunteer team for a successful All-ages Camp weekend last August.

Here are some statistics. Currently we have 6 to 10 people in Soul Kids and 4 to 8 in the Junior High Youth Group. We serve from 3 to 9 infants and toddlers in the nursery, which is staffed every Sunday. We are looking to hire a new part-time childcare provider. The Senior High Group started today. We have just enough wonderful teacher volunteers for each group, but we always welcome your interest. On Sundays in the summer our mixed-age classroom focused on the UU Values; attendance ranged from 4 to 14 children per Sunday. We served 65

individual children and youth over the course of the last church year. There are 50 families on our list.

In Religious Education we are gearing up to offer Our Whole Lives or OWL for Kindergarten to 3rd grade; registration will start in November. OWL is an age-appropriate sexuality education program from the UUA.

UUA

UUSS is part of the Unitarian Universalist Association, which includes 1,000 congregations across the country. Because of our size and because we pay our fair share in dues to denomination, we are one of the 50 most generous congregations in the Association. Our Music Director Anthony has got us lined up with the newly introduced all-virtual hymnal from the UUA. The choir and congregation have already begun singing from it.

Our denomination's General Assembly takes place yearly but is online on alternate years. Last June I was happy to be with UUSS delegates in the city of Baltimore while other delegates participated online. Next June when it's online again, there may be regional watch parties for GA, and the UUA may ask us to be a site for it. In May I hope to co-lead another Unitarian Pilgrimage to Poland, where we have roots in the 1500s. Let me know if you're interested.

Closing

Of course, underneath all our goals is our concern about the dangerous times in which we live. As we face the crisis in our democracy, we know that UUSS represents both a refuge and a launching pad for engagement. It is a place of peace and a source of courage as we put our values into action. We give thanks for the faithfulness of so many continuing members of UUSS and we welcome all the new families and individuals who have come here seeking a community like this one, where we come together to deepen our lives and be a force for healing in the world.

Program Council Report: Sean Fountain, Chair

Hello, I'm Sean Fountain. I am a UUSS member that you elected to program council now in my second term, and I'm also the chair elected within the program council for this this year. The other members are Joyce Ownbey, Jim Glidden,

Michael Feliciano, Dave Paul, and Angela Martin. I am always eternally grateful to everybody on program council. And on that point, we are so grateful for the time that our outgoing members, Pam and Beth, spent with us. We miss them greatly. Not that we are upset with our new members, but they left a hole with their unique perspective. And Pam left us an incredible how to write a thank you letter guideline, which we will probably use in perpetuity. And Beth did not leave and go away either, like Pam serves in the Brew Crew still, and Beth serves everywhere. So be sure to express your gratitude to them as well.

The program council is created by the constitution here. So, we are an independent group established by the constitution. We have six members that are elected. We oversee the groups not created by the constitution, generally considered affiliate groups. They can be affinity groups like the people of color caucus, men's group, crone connection, young adults. They could be community groups such as Saturday Stitchers or the Ukers, which are always lots of fun. And we have a lot of these groups. There's close to 50 or maybe a little over 50 right now.

We have a very broad charge: to care for congregational life and support program groups and committees. Speaking of committees, adult enrichment, for example, is a committee under program council. The social justice coordinating council is a committee jointly under program council and the board. So those are not created by our constitution. They were created by your leadership groups. The way we work with our groups is to establish liaison from within the program council that keep in touch with the group. Sometimes we are members of the group or the committee, and we make sure that that group is connected to the general congregation and act as sort of a concierge service too to make sure that that group can access resources and with the office and other things and patch all the holes. So, it's a broad job and not incredibly tightly defined. So, give us some credit and sympathy. You can reach us at any time at programcounseluss.org. Ideas, new groups, all very welcome.

We appreciate all feedback that currently goes to me as the chair. You can also look for all leaderships that have these yellow name tags. So that's who you can bug and harass on Sundays if you have questions or concerns or ideas. One accomplishment this year was the activity fair in summer. We do this annually and we were very pleased to be lightly plagiarized with the social justice activity fair. The energy was incredible, attendance was amazing at both fairs and we had I think probably record signups for people to participate. So that was excellent.

Thank you everybody for sticking around and meandering and learning about our groups and socializing and everything. And a special thanks to Brew Crew for keeping us all going and alive during the whole process. Another accomplishment this year is the Unsung Hero award, that will come a little bit later in this meeting and Dave Paul will be presenting that for us. New groups were added this year, such as the River City Book Readers. We are in the process of finalizing an update to the pathway cards. Also, each year recommend budgets for the groups to the finance committee. We do not get to pass the budget; that is ultimately the congregation via the board, but we provide a recommendation. We also work to connect volunteers to opportunities. Our annual retreat will be held in November.

Lastly, you can help us with our mission and your mission I think too of facilitating congregational life. So, a lot of you went to the Activity Fair, that is a great way to go. But those groups don't disappear just because you don't see them out on the patio. So, check out the connections table, look on our website, come and ask us. Find the people with the yellow name tags. There are so many opportunities to connect. Whether you have a specific interest or an affinity group you want to connect with, maybe it's missing and you want to start that. These are all opportunities you have. You can volunteer. And all of this helps bring us together and move us forward in our strategic plan. Thank you very much.

Community Partners Proposal: Fred Pannek

Fred, on behalf of the Board and SJCC expressed gratitude for the congregation's generosity in support of the Community Partners program this year. There has been significant increase in the average monthly donation to our partners. In addition to the collection plate, you have donated many items that our partners urgently need to serve their communities.

Ten Community Partners participated in the successful SJCC Activity Fair this month, and each partner left with new volunteer contacts.

For 2026, the SJCC proposes that we maintain the slate of Community Partners. Next year The Creation District will be assigned to a month, and Effie Yeaw Nature Center will be the recipient of the Christmas Eve donation.

Community Partners Vote: Andy Cramer

The slate of Community Partners:

FAMILY PROMISE

LOAVES AND FISHES

MERCY PEDALERS

NAMI – SACRAMENTO

NORCAL RESIST

OPENING DOORS

PLANNED PARENTHOOD MAR MONTE

RIVER CITY FOOD BANK

SACRAMENTO ACT

SAC NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH CENTER

THE CREATION DISTRICT

WELLSPRING WOMEN’S CENTER

EFFIE YEAU NATURE CENTER

A member asked how the way we are choosing the Community Partners differs from how we have done so in the past. Andy responded that in 2023 there was an elaborate process to nominate Community Partners, which the congregation would vote on. An objective of the Strategic Plan is to deepen our relationship with the partner groups, and we felt it better facilitated this objective by partnering with these groups year after year.

A member asked if there was still a process to nominate an organization for the Community Partner program. Andy responded that there is not a formal process, but that the SJCC welcomes new groups. We are looking for groups where UUSS members are engaged with. The SJCC encourages members to bring such organizations to our attention.

A member asked when the SJCC meets. Andy advised that the SJCC meets the first Tuesday of each month at 5:00 PM, on Zoom. He introduced the SJCC chair, Karen Gunderson.

A member asked what The Creation District is, and Sacramento Act. Andy offered brief descriptions of these organizations.

Andy called for a vote on the 2026 Community Partners – the proposal was approved by voice vote.

Unsung Hero Award: David Paul

David explained the criteria for this award:

The Unsung Hero Award recognizes those UUSS members who have made significant contributions in time and participation to our beloved community. Recipients should have exhibited significant efforts over the years, mostly behind the scenes contributions without obvious recognition by the congregation. The recipient must be a member of UUSS and not a prior winner of the award and not currently serving on the Board of Trustees or Program Council.

Our recipient this year brings forth delicious things along with music and dance. While many of those who have enjoyed the results have remained unaware of the joyful process behind it all, our recipient is also quite literally a bearer of treats. The local canine population has weighed in and confirmed there is frequently a homemade goodie in their pockets. Now, the recipient has also stepped up in many leadership roles in including a lot of unappreciated jobs and I will explain those are after I announce who our recipient is. Our recipient this year, drum roll, drum roll, drum roll, is none other than Tiki Harlow.

Now, Tiki is not here. I understand Tiki is in Colorado. So, if you're watching us, I want to say that Tiki is frequently the song and dance behind the food for events for the auction for the caring committee as well as for the occasional lucky pup. Tiki has served on the stewardship committee including as co-chair and on the auction committee. And recently when Gloria Wickland stepped down from overseeing the UUS kitchen, Tiki stepped up and is spearheading its management to keep things running smoothly and safely. Tiki, the program council is delighted to name you our unsung hero for 2025. A plaque with your name will join those of the prior unsung heroes where the plaque hangs inside the library. Congratulations!

Closing: Rev. Dr. Roger Jones

Roger urged attendees to support the upcoming auction! He announced that this year the Fund in Need is the Memorial Wall. The closing benediction comes from the Reverend Wayne Arnarson, a long-time UUSS minister:

Take courage friends. The way is often hard. The path is never clear, and the stakes are very high. Take courage for deep down there is another truth. You are not alone. Blessed be.

Patty Innes extinguished the chalice.

Andy Cramer adjourned the Congregational Meeting at 12:57 PM.