Co-Ordinated Effort: Widening the Circle of Faith Community

By the Reverend Sangye Hawke

What a time this is for the Fellowship. Your beloved minister of eight years takes his first long sabbatical amidst yet another pandemic spike, and an Ordination, a Co-Ordination, involving another congregation of similar historical age in the heart of California's pioneer history, occurs. In between these events are weddings and TGIFs and yes, more fires and human suffering as members experience COVID breakthrough infections.

But UUFSCC survives just as it did in the 1860s when fire and quakes devastated the city and in the early 20th century, when Influenza took its toll. And as Canada struggles with the horror of the residential schools and mass graves of Indigenous children, Santa Cruz also recognized and mourned and continues to honor the trauma of the past as it recognizes the mass graves of Indigenous buried in its Mission grounds.

This has been an exhausting year for all of us UUs. But we continue to thrive as a faith and move outward into virtual communities unified by technology. We strive for justice, equity, and inclusion, and recognize the interconnectivity of all our beliefs.

On August 21st, UUFSCC longtime members Lorraine Sandoval-Vigil and Lee Cavanaugh traveled up to Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento to participate, along with Reverend Russ Menk, in my Ordination. When I arrived at the Campus of UUSS that day, I didn't recognize Russ as he signed in (for contract tracing), and got a name tag. It was eerie for me to see members of one church I used to attend be in the chancel of my current church. And yet they looked as if they had always been coming to this place. The past and the future of this moment of my ministerial journey had finally come together. This was and is really happening in my life. It can't be hidden, buried, or erased. The time for acceptance has come.

My two mentors, Reverend Russ and Reverend Doctor Roger Jones stood side by side, welcoming people into the sanctuary from both Zoom and in person. It was a moment I will treasure. Yes, there were technology glitches and time pressures, but in the end, UUFSCC's Lorraine Sandoval-Vigil's live piece, "Gracias á la Vida" took everyone's breath away. Was it the acoustics of UUSS' chancel? No, I don't think so. The comments I heard were: "I didn't know there were such talented UUs in Santa Cruz!" "I didn't know there were UUs in Santa Cruz."

As your former Intern Minister, I know how hard it continues to be using a technology that alienates many who do not have the resources to use the latest and greatest version. But as we have seen more times that we can now remember, Zoom created outreach in unexpected places. You as a Fellowship have grown beyond your sanctuary walls.

Using technology in my time as a ministerial candidate allowed me to connect with a wide variety of ministries and people across the World. As I step into the too-big shoes of Secretary to DRUUMM [Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries], I am participating in a growth of UU values across the WORLD and I invite you to be part of that circle of connection, because, as you can see from the photos, you as a congregation are now linked to a congregation in our State Capitol. Yes, you share 150 years of pioneer history in this state, but now you share the ordination of a BIPOC minister. Thank you for Ordaining me to this holy of holies. I WILL see more of you.



Figure 1: Audience view of UUSS Chancel. The congregation has 350 members. Zoom participants appeared on screen.



Figure 2: Stole crafted by UUSS Members. Fabric donated by UUFSCC.