

Welcome Back!

Dear Friends, it was so good to gather together around our chalice last Sunday, singing and bringing both water and a willingness to contribute. We share the joy of growing families and new friends, and we look forward to our year together.

I want to alert you to a transformation! Many churches, UU and otherwise, have "Coffee Hour" after services on Sunday, and we have been among them. Many of you know I enjoy a cup of coffee as much as the next New England adult raised on coffee milk. I do intend to keep making coffee for you all, and I am literally eager to teach others how easy it is to make coffee for a crowd. For those who want to take it to the next level: I'll show you the dishwasher.

However! In 2026, provisioning has become complicated and expensive. Dietary needs and preferences range widely. Some of us love to forage wild edibles and grow food from seed to table, and others among us don't cook at all. We want the full range of folks to be comfortable gathering with us and also joining in on the helping. It feels great to feed each other, and it feels great to be fed.

We have been re-learning this in the years since the pandemic disrupted our systems.

Despite the complicated nature of trying to gather over food and drink in 2026, we remain committed to doing so regularly. Community dinners feed us in so many ways. Sitting there from ten to elevenish on Sunday mornings, we might get a bit thirsty or hungry, and we will want refreshment. Refreshments!

Some people don't care for coffee or they don't drink it for some health reason. Some people like coffee, but they would rather not make it, and I bring good news- those people are invited too. Refreshments might not include coffee, and they might last less than an hour. Our commitments in 2026 include flexibility and room for variety. We do what we can. Refreshments can be as simple as water and a bit of fruit, or it can be as charming and bountiful as the friendly days when dear Chef Steve Harrison used to organize us into a whole brunch with linens. If we can remember to stop calling it "coffee hour" and start

calling it "refreshments," perhaps we will find ourselves refreshed. Perhaps breaking the limitations of language will help us become more flexible in other ways.

If you are interested in helping with Refreshments, feel free to contact me or show up after service, where we plan to have a friendly face and a sign-up sheet. If you want to help and money is tight, you may submit receipts for reimbursement. If we all do a little, nobody has to feel burdened, and we share the good feeling of service to each other. In the coming months, we will talk more about food and beverages, and we look forward to Chalice Days dinner and other community meals and snacks.

My first year back on the Board was a great learning experience. I am grateful to all who have helped me get a handle on compassionate leadership in the tumultuous times of the twenty-twenties. What a balm it is to have good work to do and good people to do it with. It is a blessing to be here now together.

With love and anticipation,

Amber Collins, UUCSC Board President

*Office hours: Tuesdays by appointment*