UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF SANTA BARBARA

NOVEMBER 2026

KALEIDOSCOPE

Our Monthly Newsletter

Living With Integrity
Nurturing Wonder
Inspiring Action



November Worship Services

Join us in-person or online at 10:00am on Sundays.

November 1: "Beauty from Ashes: All Souls Sunday" with Rev. Julia Hamilton

Those who have gone before us remind us that there is always an after - always more to the story of life and each generation adds its chapter. This Sunday we celebrate our beloved ancestors, build our community altar for All Souls, and tie our Ribbons of Remembrance to the gate. *This is an all-ages service - kids will stay in the sanctuary with their families. Childcare will be available for the littlest.

November 8: "The Ambition of Democracy" with Rev. Julia Hamilton

In this post-midterm-election service, we gather to reflect: What is the state of our democracy today, and why is democracy both a civic practice and a spiritual value?

November 15: "To Do Good and To Be Good: Our 150th Anniversary Service" with Rev. Julia Hamilton

The story of the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara is one of resilience and transformation in response to a rapidly changing world. Yet through it all USSB has managed to hold on to the cornerstone of its founding ideal: "To do good and to be good". Join us for a celebration of our history - and our future! Before a very special coffee hour, we will take a congregational photo on the steps after the service - don't forget your hat!

November 22: "...Even For Our Needs: A Service of Gratitude" with Rev. Julia Hamilton

Our annual Gratitude service helps us focus our attention on all that we are grateful for, and all the ways life sustains us. This year, we will reflect on why even our needs are a cause for gratitude, as we honor the practice of giving and receiving our whole life long.

November 29: "After the Feast, What Are We Still Hungry For?" with Keir Zecher & Deb Karoff

When we live in a culture continually telling us that our hunger can be satisfied by more, what does it mean to have enough? Join Deb Karoff, Keir Zecher, and Charla Bregante as we pause between Thanksgiving and the fullness of the holiday season to explore what truly nourishes us, and what enough asks of us.

November Outreach Offering:

The Brigid Alliance



The Brigid Alliance's mission is to "get people to abortion care, whatever it takes." Legal barriers are just one factor that can prevent someone from accessing an abortion – particularly people struggling to make ends meet, young people, queer people, disabled people, and Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. For many Americans, the costs and logistical challenges of physically getting to an abortion provider are primary barriers to access – and only getting harder.

The Brigid Alliance supports people who must travel long distances for abortion care, working across the United States, through direct support and in collaboration with a network of partners, to arrange and fund confidential travel, lodging, childcare, and logistical assistance, closing the gap between the need for an abortion and the ability to access one and serving as a single, trusted point of contact for every step of the journey. Wherever someone needs to get to abortion care in the U.S., Brigid Alliance finds a way to get them there.

Together, the Alliance and its partners are filling critical gaps making abortion possible for Americans from every state. Its resources are stretched thin and face surging demand in the Twake of the overturn of Roe. They are part of an ecosystem of support organizations that is propping up abortion care access in this country in an increasingly hostile environment. To have 100% of your donation go directly to this month's project, make out your check to USSB and write "Brigid Alliance" in the memo line.



Hats for the Hundred Fiftieth!
Sunday, November 15th

On Sunday, November 15th, we will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara with a special Sunday service followed by an interactive historical presentation in Parish Hall. Your USSB archivists and historians have been hard at work excavating the stories from our earlier years and uncovering all kinds of delightful photos and memorabilia!



One of the photos we have uncovered is this one, taken at the laying of the cornerstone for "The Old Stone Church" on Nov 2, 1890. Notice that everyone in the photo is wearing a hat?

When this congregation was founded, showing up in your Sunday best *always* included a hat! So, in celebration of our 150th, we invite you all to wear a hat to services on Sunday, Nov 15th.

What kind of hat? That's up to you! It could be a fancy chapeau with ribbons and bows galore. It could be for your hometown sports team (Go Saints!). It could be the bucket hat from your alma matter, your jaunty derby or your flat-cap favorite. Fascinators and flower crowns won't be turned down! Just adorn your beautiful noggin with something special for the occasion. Following the service, we will gather on the front steps of the Sanctuary to take a congregational photo of us in our 2026 Sunday Best, complete with our hats - Let's give the folks in the year 2176 something to remember us by!

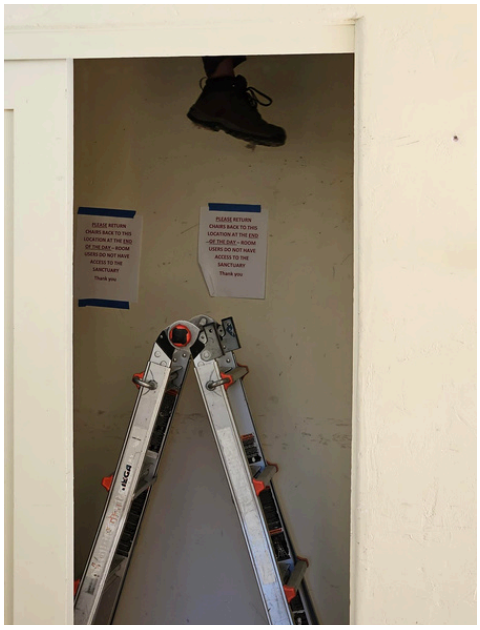
Do you have extra hats you would be willing to lend out? We'll have at table for those with bare heads to borrow something for the photo. If you have a spare hat or three, please bring them! But don't forget to put your name on the inside so we know where to return any wandering headgear.

And join us for a very special Sunday celebration.

November Bridge to the Future
Capital Campaign Update – Keep it Visible

In October we made some major strides on our Bridge to the Future project! Some visible, some invisible. We want to keep you updated!

AV Upgrade!



One of the most visible projects completed - or should we say most audible projects - is our new Parish Hall AV system! During the last week of October our AV installer, Firebird AV, spent a week drilling, wiring, mounting, and assembling the system, and fine-tuning all the components to complete the installation.

This means not only better sound in the Hall, but also greater accessibility! Our new AV system will be easy to control, meaning community groups, members, and other folks using our space to do good work in the world will be able to easily operate the AV system. The system also includes 21st century audio components (like Bluetooth!) and has the capability to be connected to a video camera for clear livestreaming of group meetings and events in Parish Hall – something our old system could not do!

All in all, this system makes it possible for those who are in the room to enjoy a better audio and user experience as well as providing those who are not in the room the opportunity to join in.

We hope you will join us on Sunday, November 8th during coffee hour for our AV System "ribbon cutting" event, where we will enjoy the benefits of our new audio system by listening to some tunes, and we will show off the new system.

Resilience Hub

Our Resilience Hub also made major strides in October. After spending months addressing conflicting guidelines from multiple constituencies, we were able to create a re-design of the project that allows for a more efficient system that does not require special allowances.

This means a (hopefully!) faster permit process. The new design was submitted to the City of Santa Barbara's building department at the end of October, including supporting documentation to express the importance of this project. After all, this isn't simply a system's upgrade – it is a community benefit!

La Paz Hall Remodel
As with the Resilience Hub, we have resubmitted to the City of Santa Barbara for approval of the remodel project on the La Paz building. Plans are still in the works to have this construction start in the summer of 2027. We will keep you posted as things develop!

The Who and the How
And speaking of visibility, we thought it was a good time to provide some visibility to the background on how the Bridge to the Future project has been organized!

When we set out on this Capital Campaign journey, the Board put thoughtful input into how this project might best be lead and shaped. The Board then adopted the "Bridge to the Future Roles & Responsibilities", a guiding document that clarifies the different groups overseeing the project in different ways. See the Roles & Responsibilities here.

Some of these groups are more visible, like the Capital Campaign team in charge of fundraising. Some of them are providing the behind-the-scenes work, like the Project Leadership Team. All of them are working together to provide the best use of our campaign funds that explicitly link to the congregation's vision.

Huge thanks to all of the folks involved in these groups doing the tireless work of building our future!



Religious Exploration for *Children & Youth:*

Chalice Lighters



On October 11, after completing two classes with Rev Julia, we commissioned 10 children as USSB Chalice Lighters! You will see one of them most Sunday mornings, wearing a beautiful red stole, lighting the chalice. Say hello and thank them for taking on this important role on Sunday mornings. Our current roster of chalice lighters includes Georgia Dalbey, Jasper Dalbey, Simon Davis, Arlo Eilliott, Leo Hultgren, Carver Mañach, Kaia Mañach, Dylan Stewart, Aldo Strauss, and Joy Warner.



November Pizza Church: Sacred Family Objects

Friday, November 20, 5:30-7:00 pm in Parish Hall. RSVP by: Wednesday, November 18 at 5:00 charla@ussb.org

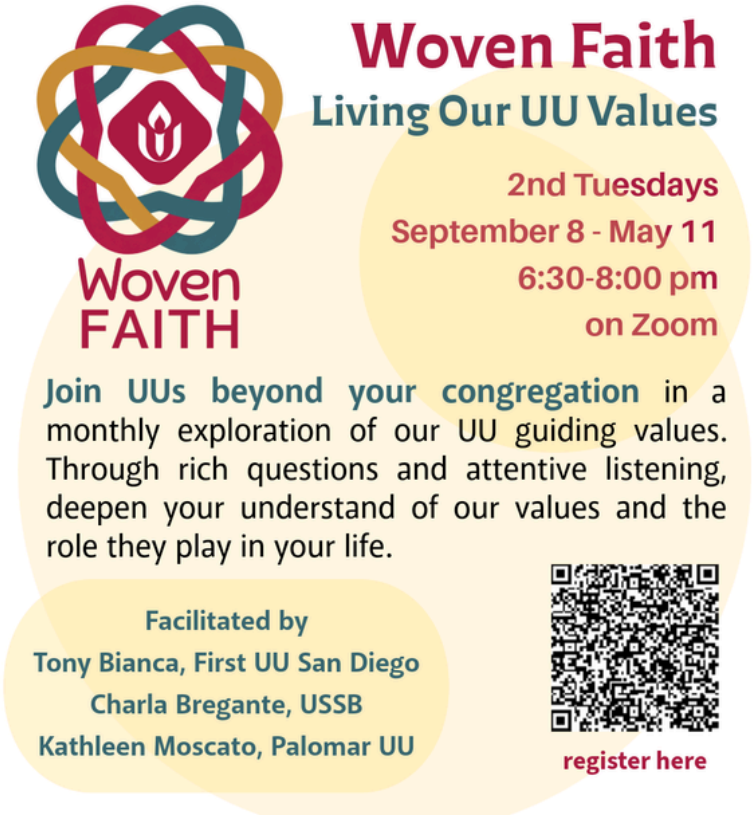
CRE families are invited to bring an object that is sacred to their family to our November Pizza Church. A sacred object can be anything from a family heirloom passed down through generations to a favorite bedtime book or a rock collected on a family beach walk. What makes an object sacred is not the object itself, but the story and meaning behind it. During this special Pizza Church, families will have the opportunity to share their treasured objects and the stories that make them meaningful.

YoUUth Group Pie Auction: Sunday, November 22



Did you know your Thanksgiving pie could support social justice work? Don't miss our annual YoUUth Group Pie Auction on Sunday, November 22! This beloved event raises funds for our service trip to La Cobina Migrant Shelter in Mexicali. There will be whole pies to purchase or bid on, as well as slices to enjoy with your Sunday coffee.

Religious Exploration for *Adults:*



Woven Faith: Living Our UU Values

2nd Tuesday of the month, 6:30-8:00 pm via Zoom. Next meeting is on November 10.
Our Woven Faith gatherings continue through June of 2027. Each month we gather online and break into small groups to explore what it means to live our UU Shared Values. All workshops are enjoyed from the comfort of your own home on Zoom.

This month we explore covenant as the living practice of creating, sustaining, and repairing relationships rooted in love. Each Woven Faith session stands alone. Register HERE anytime and join as many gatherings as you're able to. Facilitated by Charla Bregante from USSB, Tony Bianca from First UU San Diego, and Kathleen Moscato from Palomar UU.

Lunch & Learn Series: Embodied Spiritual Practices

Sundays, 12:00-2:00 pm, La Paz Hall (lunch included). We have two more workshops in our fall Lunch & Learn series. Register now to hold your space and ensure we have enough food for all.

Drum Circle, November 1

facilitated by Maurice Wada, Buzz Moran, & Nathan Whitcomb.
Open to beginners and experienced drummer alike. Maurice, Buzz, and Nathan will guide you through the rhythms and meditative practice of drumming together. Register HERE.

Solstice Walk, December 20

F*acilitated by Keir Zecher*
If you love a good walk, join Keir for an afternoon walk to welcome the winter solstice. Stay tuned for location details. Lunch will be provided. Register HERE.

Spiritual Direction:

A group for young adults interested in discovering or deepening their spiritual practice

Back in May of this year, I completed the two year Spiritual Direction Formation & Certification program offered through the Leadership Institute for Growth, Healing, and Transformation (LIGHT) at Meadville Lombard Theological School. Beginning in my practicum year with LIGHT, I started a spiritual direction group with six people. We have continued to meet following my certification, and have been working together for over a year.

Now it's time for me to bring that training and experience to USSB - beginning with a group for adults between the ages of 25-38 (give or take a year). But first, let me answer a question many of you are probably asking:

What is Spiritual Direction? Here is a definition from Meadville Lombard.

"Spiritual Direction is an ancient technology of deeply being with people as they attempt to grow their relationship with the God of their understanding and their personal spirituality. It is a process of deep listening, reflection, and discernment, typically guided by a trained spiritual director who creates a hospitable and confidential space for an individual or small group to explore their beliefs, values, spiritual practices and to notice and savor how God is moving in their life. Spiritual Direction exists in Christianity, Judaism, Sufism, and other traditions, and is especially sympatico with Unitarian Universalists because we live in the questions and multiple ways of knowing and being. UU Spiritual Directors support individuals and small groups in exploring their own unique spiritual path, whatever that may be, without judgment or pressure to conform to any particular dogma or doctrine."

In my group spiritual direction practice, I use a practice of meditative reading called lectio divina, silent meditation or prayer, journaling, deep listening, and rich questions. For more information about my spiritual direction practice, I invite you to explore my website https://www.charlabregante.com/.

A few logistical details about this group:
· The group size will be limited to 5-8 people
· The group will meet monthly at USSB for a two hour session. Dates and time TBD.
· There is no charge for this group.

If this sounds like something you might be interested in, please complete this short interest form. This is not a registration form. It only indicates your interest. If you have friends outside the USSB community who might be interested, please feel free to share this information with them. Of course you are also welcome to email me with any questions.

Charla Bregante
Director of Religious Exploration

Community News & Events



Let's Dance!
November 6 at 7:00 PM

USSB is hosting the second Let's Dance event this year on November 6th from 7:00-9:30pm as a fundraiser for 805Undocufund.

All funds raised will go to support families who have a member who has been detained and/or deported.

All ages welcome. Adults will be asked to make a $10 donation, with the suggested donation for children set at $5.

So come one come all and Let's Dance!

Freedom Warming Center

The Freedom Warming Center season is almost here! On cold and rainy winter nights we will be welcoming our neighbors without homes back to our campus. We need your help provide a hot, comforting meal to our guests before they rest for the night. Volunteering means selecting at least one night of the week to be on a Hospitality Team. We will be holding a **Volunteer Orientation and Info Session on Sunday, November 8th** after services in Parish Hall and the kitchen. Whether you are joining a team for the first time or have been cooking for years, this will be an opportunity to share wisdom (what's the best chili recipe?) and answer questions (how do I light the stove?). To volunteer, click here. Questions? Contact Linda Beers, our FWC Volunteer Coordinator.

USSB Thanksgiving Table

Looking for a place to spend Thanksgiving? Join Kiarra Watson and her family on Thanksgiving Day at 2:00 PM for a a catered holiday meal and good company! Dessert will be potluck-style, so feel free to bring your favorite sweet treat to share as well. USSB members are welcome to bring friends and family. To volunteer with setup or cleanup, email outreach@ussb.org. Please RSVP by November 10 here. We look forward to sharing the holiday with you!

Creating RESILIENCE at USSB by Scott Kipp

IUSSB is converting its campus into a resilience hub powered by a solar microgrid (solar panels plus battery storage). The resilience hub is a large part of the capital campaign and is at the forefront of the effort to use renewable energy to minimize environmental impacts, save money daily, and prepare for disasters.

The purpose of the resilience hub is to expand our support for the homeless population from a warming center to a cooling center and clean air center. While USSB has been a warming center for sixteen years, we will soon have air conditioning and filtration that serves the congregation and the larger community.

My company Santa Barbara Studios is creating the RESILIENCE documentary series to show other congregations and other organizations how USSB became a resilience hub. The documentary series is being released on YouTube and will culminate in a festival-worthy short film that will be screened at festivals and private showings. The first two episodes are available to view now, and the links are below:

Episode One - Why Communities Need Resilience Hubs - This four-minute film shows how USSB provides emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness—and how our planned solar microgrid will strengthen that commitment. Solar panels and battery storage will help lower energy costs, reduce our environmental impact, and keep essential services running during power outages. https://youtu.be/OX9bv9FldTs

Episode Two - How We Funded a One Million Dollar Resilience Hub - This film explores USSB's approach to fundraising and financing, including our capital campaign and partnership with RE-volv. The project is expected to save hundreds of thousands of dollars in energy costs over its first 20 years. Once the loan is paid off, those savings will grow further, freeing more resources for our mission while strengthening our ability to serve the community during emergencies. https://youtu.be/Tp0PydbXaXA

Rev. Julia Hamilton's Extended Interview - This film is the complete interview with Reverend Julia where she elegantly explains the resilience hub in more detail. https://youtu.be/1GArDBd4ryE

The goal of RESILIENCE is to help other organizations understand resilience hubs and build their own. The videos show lessons learned and will connect viewers to organizations that can help viewers finance, design, and build their own resilience hub. Humans have always looked to their places of worship to inspire, and RESILIENCE is designed to show others how to live better and cleaner with renewable energy.

USSB Fun Facts with Judy Farris

November 10th - Happy 150th Anniversary USSB!

On November 10, 1876, at 11 o'clock in the morning, a gathering of Unitarians in Santa Barbara held its first service with their newly arrived minister, Rev. George Henry Young. A year later, they formally organized, wrote a Constitution, and named themselves the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara. (They more often referred to it as the Unity Church.)

They met in rented space at Crane's Hall on State Street and continued to do so for the next 3 years, including other events: speakers, musical performances, and social gatherings. Behind the horseback traveling group (one can assume from their pack animals) in the photo, Crane's Hall is the smaller building just beyond the large First National Gold Bank.

In 10 more years, our forebears would build the Old Stone Church a few blocks up the street. They were an energetic and resourceful group and I think they would be proud of how their descendants have carried on over these many years.



Alliance is Looking to the Past -
2 PM, Friday, November 6 in Parish Hall

Celebrate USSB's 150 years with a look at those who created the first Santa Barbara Unitarian Society Chapter of the Unitarian Federation of Women. In those times, the women were in "support" roles while the men carried out the governance of USSB. This didn't mean the women were passively sitting back. Learn how they helped shape the congregation and facilities we have today. Join Carol Schwyzer, Joanie Jones and Kathleen Boehm in the journey of our story, accomplishments, and models for the future. Please join us for a great conversation and treats. All are welcome.

Photo Highlights:
A Coat of Many Colors Auction

We would love to share your community photos! If you take any photos in November that you'd like to be featured in the next Kaleidoscope, please send them to Kiarra Watson, Outreach & Membership: outreach@ussb.org.





The Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara
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Business hours for the USSB Office are Monday - Thursday from 9:00am to 4:00pm.

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Erin Wilson, Executive Director erin@ussb.org
Charla Bregante, Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration charla@ussb.org
Christina Boardman, Youth Coordinator christina@ussb.org
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Kiarra Watson, Outreach & Membership Manager kiarra@ussb.org
Rob Brown, Building Manager rob@ussb.org
Jon Diaz, Facilities Coordinator jon@ussb.org
Heather Levin, Accompanist
Gwendolyn Kilfoyle, Community Choir Lead communitychoir@ussb.org
Rev. Kenneth Collier, Minister Emeritus

Deadline for the December 2026 Kaleidoscope: November 15th by 5:00pm.
Email: kaleidoscope@ussb.org OR outreach@ussb.org

Livestreaming on Sundays at 10:00am
Links for livestreaming the worship service are sent out in the Friday announcement email, in the Sunday morning reminder email, and are always available on our website at https://ussb.org/worship/livestream/.

Contact our office at ussb@ussb.org if you'd like to be added to our email list.

Can’t be with us when we're live Sunday morning? View past services at https://ussb.org/worship/pastservices/.