

## Services



### MOUNT DIABLO UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

**Ministerial Services-**The Ministers of the congregation conduct Child Dedication ceremonies in the Sunday services. If the ministers are unavailable for a family service, the Ministerial Intern or a nearby Unitarian Universalist minister are usually available to officiate for family or private services. A fee of \$350 for ministers' participation in a non-members' family or private service is recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association.

**Music and Sound-**The Sanctuary has a Steinway piano. An electronic organ may also be used. There is a sound system in the sanctuary which may be available. The church pianist may be available for hire, or music may be arranged by the family.

**Equipment/Program-**MDUUC has two portable easels for displays, and some small tables in the entry area. For a private ceremony, families provide the Program or Order of Service if one is desired.

**Parking-** is sufficient in the church lot for most groups, with overflow parking on Eckley Lane.

**Flowers-** should be delivered in the hour before a service when a staff person will be on hand to receive them. Otherwise, make arrangements with the church office to be sure that someone will be there.

*To inquire or make plans for a Child Dedication service, Please contact the Co-Ministers: the Revs. Leslie and David Takahashi Morris*

*925-934-3135 or [ministers@mduuc.org](mailto:ministers@mduuc.org)*

### MOUNT DIABLO UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

## Child Dedication



When a new life is welcomed into being, we mark the event in a ceremony and ritual, as parents and families have done since the dawn of human communities.

For Child Dedication Services

Please contact the Revs. Leslie and David  
Takahashi Morris, Co-Ministers

Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church  
(MDUUC)

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Walnut Creek, CA 94596

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[www.mduuc.org](http://www.mduuc.org)

# CHILD DEDICATION



The theological purpose of the Child Dedication service is three-fold. First, we welcome, honor, and celebrate the miracle of life. Second, we honor the love and nurturing embrace of those who care for the child—immediate and extended family, godparents, and friends who take part. Finally, we acknowledge the responsibility of the community to support the development of faith in the child’s future life. Unitarian Universalists affirm the worth of every life, and recognize no need to erase original sin from a child. Our tradition perceives the development of faith to be a series of individual choices within the context of a community’s shared commitments, and thus education, nurture, support, and guidance are vital to in a maturing spiritual life. Because the community’s commitment is called for, Child Dedication ceremonies make the most sense in the context of parents’ membership in the church, but this is not required.



**Types of Services** Most often a Child dedication ceremony is done in the Sunday morning worship service, so that family and the congregation can affirm together their dedication to the religious nurture of the child. Some services happen at other times, to fit the needs of families who chose to have a private service, which may be held in the church or elsewhere. Mostly these services contain common elements, so a church or home service can be drawn from the materials contained in this brochure. Usually the private family services are longer, and those during the Sunday morning worship service are brief.

**When to Have a Child Dedication** Parents often bring an infant to these services, but may wish to include older children who have not been dedicated. To schedule a service, speak with the ministers or contact the church administrator.

**Godparents, Grandparents** Many families name Godparents as spiritual sponsors, though none are required. Many parents invite grandparents to participate in the ritual.

**Terminology** The congregational ritual is called a Child Dedication. Family ceremonies might be described as Welcoming or Naming Ceremonies. These terms carry different emphasis. Dedication acknowledges the community’s commitment to support the spiritual life and development of the child. Naming and Welcoming are focused on the special relationship between immediate and extended family and the child. Christening and Baptism are terms denoting rites of passage in Christian faith and tradition. While these terms may feel comfortable for non-Unitarian Universalist family and friends, outside the context of a committed Christian community their significance is confined to the family’s interpretation of its birthright traditions.

**Content of the Service** Elements of the Child Dedication ceremony during a Sunday service are simple. They may include:

- Introduction and Welcome
- Statement of Dedication
  - Parents
  - Godparents
  - Children
  - Congregation
- Naming
- Ritual of Water
- Presentation of a Rose and a Certificate

In a family service at church or at home, the service may include readings, participation by family and friends, recognition of siblings, tree planting or other ceremonial elements, and music.

