

Caroline Haessly

Good morning, beloveds! I'm Caroline Haessly. I use she/her pronouns. I've been a Unitarian Universalist for 41 years, 23 of them at East Shore. Before I found this religious tradition, I had no spiritual practice, had never heard of deep listening, and had no community. I didn't know how to tap into hope or how to live my core values. Through participation in groups, classes, volunteering, being at worship services, teaching in the RE (Religious Education) program, and sharing time with other members, I have benefitted from the examples of wise leaders: lay people, staff and ministers, whose actions contribute to the greater good.

My two grown daughters were dedicated as infants in UU sanctuaries. They had the good fortune of a childhood that included religious education, a UU Coming of Age Ceremony, a youth pilgrimage to a Partner Church at that time in Transylvania, OWL training (Our Whole Lives – sex ed), youth group, youth cons, family retreats with East Shore at Seabeck and Eliot retreats. They have remained very close friends with many peers. I too cherish numerous long-time friends and new ones. I am profoundly grateful for these blessings.

When our family needed kindness from our church friends' network, we got it. Never will I forget the Parkinsons' support group, caregiver support group, ministerial pastoral care, lay pastoral care, the blessings of a compassionate covenant circle and dinners delivered during a hard time. I am profoundly grateful.

After I became a widow, I met my new husband Steve here at East Shore in a weekly meditation group. We cherish each other and our memories of our wedding right here in this hallowed sanctuary. We both care deeply about this community.

For those dedicated charter members who gave their foresight, money, expertise and time to build this building, I am profoundly grateful.

May we all continue to embrace growth and change and imagine our dreams of spreading love and ending oppressions. May our operating budget be generously funded and may our quest to foster love, community, spirituality and justice flourish! May we all continue to live in alignment with our covenant.