

WVUU Times

June 2018

West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church



**WEST VALLEY
UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH**

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Gavel Talk

Barry Linden, Outgoing President
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This will be my last rant as president of the congregation. That is not to say that there might not be other rants, but they won't be "official."

Some things have been on my mind lately. I recently read a novel by John D. MacDonald called *A Deadly Shade of Gold*. Some of you may be familiar with this author and his character, Travis McGee. While most of the novel is lightweight adventure/mystery, Mr. MacDonald occasionally waxes philosophically. In the following quote from this book, a Cuban expatriot is explaining some things to McGee:

"Why should you be confused? Reasonable conservatism is a healthy thing. But that kind of poisonous, divisionist hate-

mongering Face (a character in the book) has been preaching is one of the standard Communist techniques. If you create a radical right, their vicious nonsense pushes more people toward the radical left. Then when fear pushes people into violence, or silence, the comrades enter and flourish. My friend, any way that they can make Americans hate Americans helps the cause. They would like to make Rockwell (a noted American Nazi at the time) stronger too. That is the heart of contemporary propaganda, amigo, to strengthen ignorant, terrible men who believe themselves to be perfect patriots."

I have to say I was shocked that this was written in 1965 because the ideas in it are quite relevant right now.

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Sunday Services

Sunday Services begin at 10:30 a.m.
followed by a light lunch and fellowship.
Child care is available for children ages 3 and up.

June 3: **Diversity in Creativity**

Rev. Christiane Heyde

Rev. Christiane is continuing our May theme of Creativity into June as she presents a sermon on the many creative expressions that come from diverse groups of people and how to see and hear them and be aware of cultural backgrounds.

June 10: **Communing in Unity**

Claire Goldsberry, from the Theosophical Society.

Two words are in *community* -- *commune* and *unity*. To commune is to converse with profound intensity. But what is unity, and what do we mean when we say we are *one*? How do we develop community in such a diverse world? We'll explore these questions from a theosophical and Eastern philosophical viewpoint.

June 17: **Endings and Beginnings**

Rev. Christiane Heyde

Three years ago, Rev. Christiane and the 2015 WVUUC Board President, Onna Johnson, started to correspond. They came up with a way for WVUUC to have a minister without having the money to hire a full-time one. For Rev. Christiane, presenting two sermons a month was great because she was working her way from parish ministry to community ministry and chaplaincy. Over the last three years, Rev. Christiane has presented 62 sermons at West Valley, and her 63rd will be her last, for now. She will reflect on this congregation, on ministry, and on her path into the future.

June 24: **Water Sentinels**

Jennifer Martin, from the Sierra Club

Jennifer Martin is coordinator for the Sierra Club's Grand Canyon Chapter Water Sentinels program that mobilizes volunteers to protect, improve, and restore our waters. Current projects focus on the San Pedro and Verde Rivers and the Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area in Phoenix.

Who We Are



West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church is affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association. We are a welcoming congregation whose mission is provide a safe place for celebrating diversity, drawing inspiration for living better lives, fostering social and environmental justice, and compassionately supporting each other in our spiritual searches.

We are a theologically diverse community who encourages you to seek your own spiritual path. We provide a caring environment for each adult and child to learn more about yourself and your place in the interdependent web of existence. Sunday services celebrate our community, challenge us intellectually, and engage us spiritually.

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It looks like what the Russian trolls and bots have been doing the past few years is not new. I believe that we, as Americans, are being played against each other to the detriment of each of us and all of us collectively. We are being encouraged to see each other as enemies if we disagree on political issues or even religious beliefs.

We may think that we, as principled UUs, are above this. However, please describe to me right wing politicians, the President and his cabinet, and evangelical and other conservative Christians. Do we use divisive language?

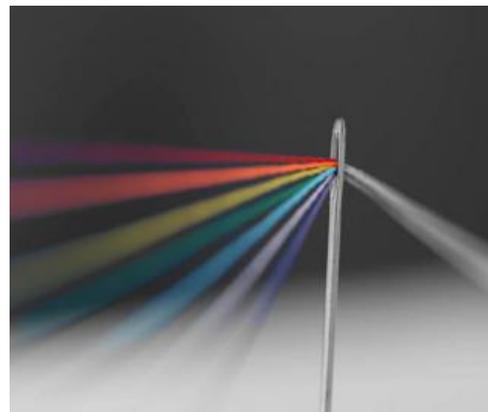
This issue is relevant to at least two of our Principles: "The inherent worth and dignity of every person"; and "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning".

So, if politicians, news media, and social media are playing to our fears and our biases, what can we do as responsible citizens and UUs? We cannot just sit back and let injustice prevail. How do we stand up for what we believe in a way that is in line with our principles? It is important to stand up and push back when we see injustice and "alternative facts." We must speak up and speak our truths, but in a way that is not divisive, not unjust, and does not inflame our divisions further. But how do we do that?

I think we must be sure that what we say, is, in fact, true. That means we shouldn't just repost something that is said on social media without checking if it is true. There are sites that do fact checking and we should use them. Our principles say, "a responsible search for truth and meaning."

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Common Threads



from Moses, J. (2002). *Oneness: Great principles shared by all religions*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Conscience

*Knowing the truth,
one should live up to it.*

- Jainism

*Whoever knows what is
right to do and fails to do it,
for him it is sin.*

- Christianity

*If knowing your duty and
task, you bid duty and task
go by — that is sin.*

- Hinduism

*Let a man avoid doing what
his sense of righteousness
tells him to avoid. This is
the most direct and simplest
way to act correctly in all
circumstances.*

- Confucianism

Membership Matters

Jim Reay, Chair
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*June is bustin' out all over
 All over the meadow and the hill
 Buds're bustin' outa bushes
 And the rompin' river pushes
 Ev'ry little wheel that wheels beside the mill.*

Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel* delighted people's love of summer. In Arizona we appreciate June, but it's probably not a favorite month for most of us desert rats. We're very happy here in the 48th state not to observe Daylight Savings Time because an earlier sunset spells relief from sweltering sunshine.

Despite our summer heat, June remains a wonderful month here in the desert. The snowbirds have migrated, traffic is lighter, and my husband commences his seasonal mantra, "Give me summers in Sun City," because biking our wide empty streets is a pleasure.

June is a milestone for me as I complete my two-year tenure as our church Membership Chair. I anticipate handing the reins to fellow longtime member and friend, Terry Mead. I wish him all the best as he endeavors to strengthen and increase our membership in the next two years.

My dream is for our church to echo the (altered) lyrics of *Carousel's* song, *June*:

*June is bustin' out all over
 All over the desert and the dale
 UU Members bustin' outa bushes
 As a rompin' member pushes
 For every passing vehicle to stop outside*

Gavel Talk

(continued from page 3)

We must not use ad hominem attacks. We must consider the worth of our political adversaries and be respectful, even if they are not. Our getting inflamed will not add to the discussion nor convince anyone else. We, of course, can be angry about injustice and untruths, but we must be disciplined enough to make our arguments without attacking others, their motives, their moral beliefs, or their patriotism. I wish I could say I was good at this or even usually did this. I find it very hard, and I get flustered and angry and defensive. This does no one any good. I will endeavor to practice this discipline, however.

Lastly, we must try to understand others' motives. We cannot just assume they are bad, immoral, corrupt, or ignorant. We must try to understand their fears and their aspirations. When we do this, we find we have more in common with them than we might believe at first.

There was a saying in the early 60s which stated, "Russians love their children too". Don't we all want a more just, prosperous, peaceful world? Can we try to look for our commonalities rather than just seeing our differences?

I will try.



UU Principled Minutes

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

Every month I explore our seven Principles through practical, everyday living experiences. As Rev. Barbara Wells ten Hove explains, “The Principles are not dogma or doctrine, but rather a guide for those of us who choose to join and participate in Unitarian Universalist religious communities.”

Principle 1: The inherent worth and dignity of every person

Arguably the most difficult of our seven principles, accepting the truth of the principle is easier than its application. If you struggle with this one, read blogs/news articles written by an opposing viewpoint and identify one thing you learned. Reflect on and respect the effort that person made to express a point of view publicly.

Principle 2: Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations

Travel without a way to keep clean makes it even more difficult and dehumanizing. We can help with that. When you travel, gather up the lotions and other products at your lodging to bring back to the church for the supply boxes for our immigrant support service.

Principle 3: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

Seek conversations about topics of spiritual understandings and engage in questioning and discussion about other people’s spirituality. Is the person a

religious naturalist, a Buddhist, a pagan, a reincarnationist, or something else? Why does the person believe this, and how can you connect to that belief?

Principle 4: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

At the hospitality time after church services, ask each person at your table what their spiritual paths have been. How and why did they end up as UUs?

Principle 5: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large

Find and live your purpose – searching for it will help you find your true purpose here on Earth. When you find your purpose and are able to share it with the rest of the world, you will continue to raise your level of consciousness and find a way to make the world a better place for yourself and others through your actions. You will take appropriate stands and change the world in doing so.

Principle 6: The goal of world community with peace, justice, and liberty for all

Become active in spreading empowering information, whether it is through word of mouth to friends and family, via your online networking and emails, or just by having a conversation with colleagues at work. Sometimes getting the conversation started is enough to spur others to join in too. Always lead by example!

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Getting to Know Noel Johnson

Sandra Mahoney

s_1mahoney@cox.net

Noel Johnson was reared in California by a single mother who worked two jobs. As you might imagine of Noel, who has lots of energy and creativity, he found ways to get into trouble as a latchkey kid. He spent fourth grade in an Episcopalian military school. His mother then remarried, and he attended parochial school one year and public schools thereafter.

Noel graduated from Cal State Polytechnic Univ. with a major in industrial engineering. He was married and had two sons before he graduated college, so he worked a variety of jobs at night to support his family. Following his graduation, he worked as a liaison between production and design for General Dynamics until they lost their contract. He then returned to school to earn vocational education credentials and subsequently taught engineering graphics and design at Don Bosco Technical Institute in Rosemead, CA for a year.

Noel moved to Sitka, Alaska to teach industrial arts, and his family joined him after the first winter. Most of the male teachers fished commercially during summers, and since

Noel could fix most anything, he was in demand on their boats. He bought a sailboat, and he and his wife sailed it from California to Alaska with a team hired to teach them sailing. His marriage subsequently failed.



In 1975 Noel homesteaded in Port Alexander, Alaska, built a house on the beach with lumber salvaged from an old whale rendering plant, rebuilt a fishing boat, and earned a living fishing. He loved this life and the people he met through it. After some trouble with the Fish and Game Department (that's a story in itself), his boat was confiscated, and he spent two years having another boat repaired and refurbished and then fished for the next 30 years.

After six years of teaching, he took a one-year sabbatical and sailed his boat to Mexico and Hawaii, where it remained for

five years. He spent winters there and summers fishing in Alaska. He sailed back to Alaska with a new wife in 1985. He and his wife had a daughter and son and were married 11 years.

His mother and fourth stepfather lived in Sun City West and, as they aged, Noel visited to help them out when not fishing. He bought a house in Sun City shortly before his mother's death in 2001.

Noel met Onna in Sitka through a mutual friend, and they were married in August 2001. She introduced him to Unitarian Universalism in Sitka. The church needed some work done, and he began helping. The rest is as you would imagine if you are aware of all the things Noel does for WVUUC. Onna also introduced him to our church, and he joined, because "that is what you do, if you are going to attend the church."

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Principled Minutes

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Principle 7: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

To paraphrase Rabbi Hillel, respect the interdependent web of all existence. This is the one principle, the rest are commentary. We are a part, but just a part —no better than other parts, not special. Humans' capacity to empathize with others and to plan for the future with some (although never sufficient) understanding of the consequences of our actions gives us extra responsibility to take on a role of stewardship. But this extra responsibility does not set us apart from the rest of creation. Our responsibility to each other is not at all separate from our responsibility to the earth because we too are part of creation.

Noel Johnson

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Noel golfs and bowls for fun. He is mechanically minded and has restored his 1953 Dodge truck and several golf carts. He is certainly an asset as Facilities Chair at WVUUC and is always on the lookout for volunteers to assist in the many tasks required to keep our campus and buildings looking and operating as they should. Noel has a wonderfully cheerful attitude, looks at the positives in life, and enjoys himself along the way.



April 2018 WVUUC Financial Highlights

Kathy Dugan, Treasurer k.dugan@cox.net

Total Operating Income -
\$4,070

Pledge Payments \$3,344

Facility Use \$190

Sunday Plate \$215

Total Operating Expense -
\$7,037

Sunday Service Speaker
Fees \$650

Interest on Member Building
Loans \$4,375

Facilities \$481

Net Operating Loss - \$2,967

APRIL 2018 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



Second Saturday Circle Suppers

Sharon Moore

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You know me! I'm the one waving my clipboard around and accosting you after Sunday services to see if you want to attend the upcoming Circle Supper. Well, summer is coming, and so ends another season of Circle Suppers. You'll have to wait for next fall for the waving clipboard.

Here are some questions I've been asked about Circle Suppers:

Who can attend?

Anyone who is a member, friend, or visitor. We want to bring together a wide range of people with diverse perspectives and experiences.

If you attend a Circle Supper, do you have to host one?

Nope. Volunteers sign up for the year to host a Circle Supper, and the hosts tell me how many guests they can accommodate. The range this year was 6 to 12 guests!

What does a host do?

The host plans the menu, contacts guests early in the week before the dinner, prepares an entrée, and either provides beverages or asks guests to bring their own. It can be a lap supper or sit down to table affair, as formal or informal as the host prefers.

How do you become a host?

I have approached a number of potential hosts, asking them to volunteer, and a few people have contacted me to be hosts. So think about it, and let me know if you would like to have one dinner next year in your home with smart, interesting, and informed folk eating good food!!

How do you become a guest?

Two Sundays before the second Saturday of the month, a clipboard floats around the campus magically filling with names of guests who sign up. The week before the second Saturday dinner, the host contacts the guests and assigns dishes they will bring to share with other guests.

Guest? Host? Both? Circle Suppers are made for you! Please be part of this wonderful UU tradition.



Grading on a Continuum

Emily Whitmore emilyawhitmore@gmail.com

“Live as if you like yourself, and it may happen.”

This line is from a responsive reading titled “Connections Are Made Slowly,” No. 568 in our grey hymnal. It was read during the May 20 service.

I’m considering learning needlepoint so I can embroider it on a pillow.

I’m so glad, too, because I was originally planning on needlepointing the screenplay of Amy Schumer’s comedy, “I Feel Pretty.” It’s basically the same thing. So this will save me a lot of time and thread.

When I found out I was going to have a daughter 26 months ago, to be honest I was a little freaked out. There’s so much groundwork to do as parents of girls in our society to make sure they grow up to be confident, successful human beings.

I’m just thankful “I Feel Pretty” came along to help me in that endeavor. I plan on making it the first PG-13 movie she sees as soon as she’s old enough.

Schumer’s character, Renee, is plagued by low self-esteem, constantly interpreting slights from strangers as some sort of commentary on how she isn’t, in her words, “undeniably pretty.” After making a wish in a fountain and then receiving a bump on the head during spin class, she looks in the mirror and discovers the person she always wanted to see.

With her newfound confidence, she nails a job interview, gets into a relationship with a sweet guy, and sees her life dramatically change for the better.

The beauty of this movie, pun intended, is that nothing about Schumer’s outward appearance changes at all. The people she meets are attracted to her inner light.

Schumer’s rom-com story line of falling in love with herself proves benignly empowering yet predictable. What elevates the movie is how the radiant Renee sheds light on the insecurities of people around her and inspires them to follow her confident lead.

Her boyfriend, Ethan (Rory Scovel), admits he feels emasculated by his coworkers. Her poised boss, Avery LeClaire (Michelle Williams), thinks people don’t take her seriously because of her childlike voice. Even her stunning SoulCycle acquaintance, Mallory (Emily Ratajkowski), breaks down in tears to reveal her boyfriend dumped her and that she has just as fragile a sense of self-worth as Renee once did.

That’s the biggest takeaway I want my daughter to get from this movie (when we watch it eleven years from now). Yes, a positive attitude is your most attractive feature. But also, don’t worry, because nobody has it 100 percent figured out.

Hey, maybe I should needlepoint that on a pillow!

Children's Religious Education

Onna Johnson omercerj@gmail.com

Our fundraising project for "My Stuff Bags" for children who are going into foster care passed the \$170 mark! Good job WUUC kids and teachers!



May 6: Phyllis and Thomas prepared a lesson about Arizona Native Americans' spirituality.



The Maricopas used four sticks that represented the earth, moon, sky, and sun for a game called *Kainsish*.



The students also made Hopi Kachina dolls and decorated them.



May 13: Emily, Charlotte, and Lily decorated gift bags and made a vase of plants with liquid pearls for Mothers Day. Teachers Mandy and Shannon had a lot of fun with this also!

May 20 and 27: R.E. students learned about a line in our WVUUC Covenant, "And service is our prayer." There was a brief presentation about how our church serves refugees coming into our country. Then we filled bags with hygiene items and food for the Emergency Refugee Assistance volunteers to use over the summer.

Notice!

May 27 is the last day of regular Religious Education classes until September 2018. During the summer, Shannon will facilitate crafts and games when children are present at West Valley UU. Happy Summer!

WVUUC 2018-2019

Board of Trustees and Committee Chairs

Board of Trustees	Member	Term
President	Diane D'Agostino	1 of one-year
President Elect	Emily Whitmore	1 as Pres. Elect & 1 as Pres.
Secretary	Sandra Mahoney	1 st of two-year
Treasurer	Kathy Dugan/Mark Oelerking	1 year shared/2 nd year Mark
Member at Large	Noel Johnson	2 nd of two-year
Member at Large	Adrian Hudson	1 st of two-year
Committee Chairs	Member	Term
Caring	Diane D'Agostino	1 st of two-year
Endowment	vacant	
Facilities	Noel Johnson	2 nd of two-year
Hospitality	Onna Johnson	1 st of one-year
Long Range Planning	Noel Johnson	2 nd of two-year
Membership	Terry Mead	1 st of two-year
Newsletter	David Moore	One-year extension
Religious Education	Mandy Oviatt	1 st of two-year
Social Action	Stacy Fitzwater	2 nd of two-year
Stewardship	Onna Johnson	2 nd of two-year
Worship Services	vacant	

WVUUC Safety Policy

WVUUC has adopted a Safety Policy in light of recent shootings at churches and after having solicited information from other places of worship, insurance companies, and police departments. Main points of the policy are as follows:

1. No person may possess a firearm or other weapon on the premises. Signs to that effect should be placed on the entrances to the property.
2. Potential threats should be conveyed to the President of the Board who will notify appropriate church members.
3. There should be training of worship associates, greeters, board members, teachers, and congregants regarding recommended safety procedures such as locking doors during services, calling 911 if needed, evacuating a building, getting behind locked doors, and pulling the fire alarm.



Media Review

Tyson, N.d. (host) (2014). *Cosmos: A spacetime odyssey*. Fox/National Geographic Channel.



Reviewed by Sharon Moore

David and I are science seekers. While in Flagstaff during the summer, we attend the monthly *Science on Tap* event at a neighborhood bar. Local scientists present topics that are in their specializations but made accessible to non-scientists. Sometimes the speakers ask if we want another round of drinks while listening to their presentations. NAU graduate students run the event.

Flagstaff also has an annual *Festival of Science*. Every September more than 100 exhibitions, excavations, and presentations are featured across ten days. We attend as many of these sessions of interest as we can.

So you get it, we're into popular science. Then how could we not watch *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey* with Neil deGrasse Tyson?

The visuals are astounding, and for the most part Dr. Tyson does an admirable job in thirteen episodes making topics from astrophysics, astronomy, astrobiology, and so on accessible to informed but inexperienced minds.

Except relativity. I didn't get it before, and sorry, Neil, I didn't get it after your explanation.

The series pays homage to and extends what Carl Sagan did in the 1980s. For instance, in Episode One, Tyson repeats Sagan's statement that "We are all made of star stuff." Tyson uses Sagan's storytelling approach but features updated ideas and information along with computer-generated imagery and animation. He brings in a Cosmic Calendar and a Ship of the Imagination.

Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey is likely to upset many religious fundamentalists and science deniers. It embraces evolution in the first episode and throughout the series. It

shows how humanity is discovering the laws of nature governing the cosmos. It upholds climate change.

And it openly and boldly states that we still can't fully explain the origin of life. We just don't know, and realizing this is an eminently valid scientific position. It's good to know what we don't know.

As I watched the wonders of the universe unfold in each episode, I couldn't help considering our origin story. The Big Bang is generally acknowledged to be the beginning of our universe. But some hypothesize that we are in the latest iteration of universes, that previous ones have collapsed then expanded, beginning all over again. We know the universe is dynamic, still forming, and most likely eventually collapsing. But what was before the original Big Bang? We just don't know, and *Cosmos* has helped me realize that that's good enough for me.

Web Presence



Go to this online calendar for WVUU events:

westvalleyuu.org/events/calendar/



Keep up with WVUU church and member news, post comments, and share articles and photos with friends at these websites:

Facebook Group
facebook.com/groups/wvuuc

Facebook Fan Page
facebook.com/WestValleyUnitarianUniversalistChurch

Pin and browse UU-related visuals at this site:

pinterest.com/pin/242772236133017855/

UU Principles and Sources



Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote seven principles:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all; and
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalist principles are drawn from six sources:

1. Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
2. Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
3. Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
4. Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
5. Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit; and
6. Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.