

WVUU Times

February 2019

West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church



WEST VALLEY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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Gavel Talk

Diane D'Agostino, President
West Valley UU Church
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It's that time of the year when stores have sales on storage containers. You know the ones: sturdy, plastic, with lids sealing everything inside and making one feel good about getting organized once and for all. They come in all sizes; some are as big as bathtubs, which made me think, "Who has that much stuff?" Then, as I pulled into my garage one day and saw the boxes sitting there, I realized, "I am someone who has that much stuff." That's embarrassing enough, but when I didn't even know all that was in those boxes, it became especially embarrassing.

I could use the excuse that I am a child of the '50s and '60s. Riding the wave of early consumption, which started after World War II, my family, as well as most of the country, saw or heard countless advertisements on television and radio. As we

traveled each summer, my family saw lots of billboards on the highways promoting everything from new fast food restaurants to shaving cream.

The PBS program *American Experience: The Rise of American Consumerism* maintains there was a patriotic tone in becoming a consumer during this time. A good citizen was expected to support the U.S. economy by purchasing newer things representing more modern ideas. Historian Elaine Tyler May suggests people justified their purchasing because they were buying things for the home: refrigerators, stoves, vacuum cleaners, and the like. Buying practical things for one's family would not make one decadent, just upwardly mobile.

But today's consumerism goes beyond the post-World II Era.

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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.

February Theme: ***Surrender/Letting Go***

February 3: **What Illuminates Your Spirit?**

Moderator: Jim Reay. Speakers: Barbara Colony, Sharon Moore, Emilie Sulkes, and Emily Whitmore

Let's celebrate luminescence. Hear different perspectives on what enlightens us spiritually.

February 10: **Mama Can Dance**

Rev. Cathy Corbin-Manino

What exactly is the difference between letting go and just giving up?

February 17: **Happy, Joyous, and Free: Surrendering to Win**

Rev. Susan Princehouse

A personal reflection of my multiyear twelve-step journey of discovering and embracing the spiritual freedom and power of letting go.

February 24: **An Impatient Love**

Rev. Cathy Corbin-Manino

Most of us were taught that love is patient, but Congressman John Lewis says "patience is a dirty and nasty word." Which is it?

An informal **Discussion Group** to talk about current events and other matters of interest meets at 9:30 on Sunday mornings in the RE building. Everyone is welcome. Contact Terry Mead, terrycmead@gmail.com, for more information and to share possible subjects.

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.

Gavel Talk

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In the November 23, 2017 issue of *Relevant*, author Jesse Carey gives shocking statistics. For example, in *11 Stats That Will Change the Way You Think About Consumerism* Carey shows that Americans annually spend approximately \$100 billion on shoes, watches, and jewelry, which is more than what is spent on all college tuition in a year. Another astonishing fact is \$57.4 billion was spent on Black Friday in 2014; only \$103 billion was given to churches over the entire year.

Excessive consumerism has caught the attention of Pope Francis. In his *Laudato Si*, Francis connects excessive buying with environmental problems, a decline in the quality of life, and global inequality. He also

maintains in *Gaudete et Exsultate* that consumerism “only bloats the heart. It can offer occasional and passing pleasures, but not joy.”

So how does this relate back to the boxes in my garage? I think it boils down to the old adage “Live simply so others may simply live.” The more stuff I have, the more I have to worry about. This spring will involve a new twist on spring cleaning. I will need to make an evaluation of what helps simplify my life as I move on down the road. I’m looking forward to it.

Take care.



WVUUC Board January 22, 2019 Meeting Notes

Sandra Mahoney s_1mahoney@cox.net

- As Leadership Development chair, Emilie Sulkes is working to fill several positions. Can you help by volunteering for one of these?

Board of Trustees

President Elect (2-year term)
Member at Large (2-year term)

Committee Chairs

Endowment
Social Action
Worship Services

- The Board is working on a new, shorter Order of Service to use less ink and paper.
- The Board is completing Annual Certification requirements for the UUA.
- Stewardship Sunday will be on March 10. The Spring Congregational Meeting will be on May 19.

Hospitality

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

The Clipboard Lady (aka Sharon Moore) will be requesting sign-up commitments to provide food for Hospitality after church services. We like to have a vegetarian option when possible, but honestly, we're grateful for any offerings!

We need folks to provide main dishes (with appropriate bread or crackers or tortilla accompaniment) as well as folks to bring desserts. Sharon will remind you before your Sunday so you don't have to worry about forgetting.

We plan to serve 45 people at each meal so you can cook accordingly. You don't even have to cook. Get some Costco frozen casseroles you bake to bring in.

Please help us continue our after church light lunches. What can you bring to share?

Also, the Hospitality Committee is always open to new folks joining in the fun. Would you be willing to be part of the existing team members on a regular basis to help serve and clean up?

Could you be the napkin washer who collects and washes napkins each week?

Are you able to serve on an ad hoc committee planning and prepping for special event meals?

Or maybe you have another idea to pitch to Sharon. Helpers are never turned away!



December 2018 Financial Highlights

Kathy Dugan k.dugan@cox.net

Total Operating Income - \$7,210

 Pledge Income - \$6,041

 Fundraising - \$508

 Facilities Rental - \$661

Total Operating Expense - \$6,703

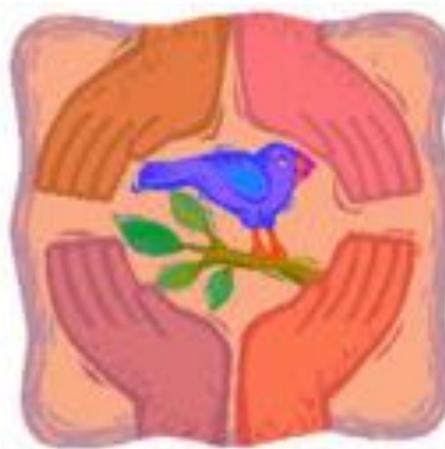
 Worship Services - \$500

 Personnel & Payroll - \$595

 Facilities Maintenance - \$370

 Landscaping - \$3,675

Net Operating Income - \$507



Annual Program Fund

Sandra Mahoney s_1mahoney@cox.net

If you attend church regularly, you will have noticed we talk about our church being part of an association of congregations. The larger body is the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) which has three core missions: equipping congregations, supporting and training leaders, and advancing our values in the public sphere. Here is a little more information about two of those areas.

Equipping Congregations: The UUA equips and supports congregations for vital and thriving ministry in all areas of congregational life. They publish pamphlets and books (<https://www.uua.org/publications/skinnerhouse>) and provide numerous online resources for all aspects of church life.

Supporting and Training Leaders: The UUA provides training and coaching for congregational leaders and offers regional trainings, support during transitions, non-profit management and development programs and innovation support, as well as coaching in health and vitality of congregations. As a past Board of Trustees President and former worship associate, I can attest to the usefulness of the online resources of Worship Web (www.uua.org/worship) which provides a searchable library of worship readings and collections.

The UUA provides credentialing for ministers, religious educators, and musicians, and the association is also key to

ministerial search and settlement. For staff and volunteer leaders, the UUA offers values-based training, professional credentialing and support services, and intensive leadership development experiences to prepare for leadership of UU congregations and communities. They also provide curricula for religious education and faith development (www.uua.org/re) for all ages.

They do much more, which will be discussed in a later article, but for now, what is important is that the UUA manages to do all the above as well as many justice and social projects through the support of its member congregations.

Each congregation contributes to the **Annual Program Fund (APF)** which is a tangible expression of our covenant as member congregations. These contributions to the UUA come through members' annual pledges to our church. We support the UUA, and, in turn, the UUA provides valuable resources that help us be a church, from training ministers and religious educators, to worship resources, to the music for our services.

You will be hearing more about the APF in months to come and especially when our annual canvassing begins.

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Justice in Action

Stacy Fitzwater stacyfitzwater@gmail.com

AZ Legislature Weekly Update. Arizona lawmakers introduce over 1,500 bills every year! The sheer volume of information can be overwhelming. That's why founding editor Melinda Merkel Iyer created the *AZ Legislature Weekly Update*, a condensed, easy-to-follow weekly overview that highlights the most notable bills of each session. Often called "the Iyer Report" or "the Weekly," Melinda's report describes each bill in brief, everyday language and details its status for the week. She recommends a stance for each bill, and cites multiple sources of information so readers can make up their own minds. You can sign up to get the update by email every Sunday during legislative sessions. Visit the website directly to sign up and to get more information and resources: <https://www.cebv.us/inform.html>

UU Day at the Legislature. Mark your calendars for Monday, February 18th (Presidents Day), and join fellow Unitarian Universalists at the AZ State Capitol. UUs will be gathering to meet our representatives and share information about relevant issues. Visit uujaz.org for more details, including a link to register for this free event!

National Organization for Women. The National Organization for Women (NOW) Sun City/West Valley Chapter will meet Wednesday, February 6, 1:00 p.m. at the UU Church of Surprise, 17540 N. Avenue of the Arts, Surprise, AZ. The speaker will be Marshall Shore, Project Manager of the Arizona LGBT+History Project. Everyone is welcome. For more information, call 623-972-6273 or visit our website: aznow-scwv.org.

Annual Program Fund

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What is important to know is that we as a congregation will be contributing to the APF an amount derived from a percentage of the total expenditures of WVUUC. The amount due also factors in the number of members.



When you contribute to WVUUC, you help us keep paying the mortgages on our buildings, the monthly bills, and the fees for our speakers. Indirectly, you are also supporting the UUA and the district associations which provide much need resources, training, and support for our leaders as well as advancing our core values in the world.

Please consider becoming a WVUUC member, if you are not already, and be sure to pledge an amount sufficient to help us thrive.

SHOW UP & sell or browse & buy....

Third annual Arts & Crafts

Flea Market

Saturday, Feb 23rd

9 AM - 2:00 PM

Sunday, Feb 24th

11:30 AM – 2:30 PM

**We still have spaces available to rent to sell
you wares if you like. Please call for more
information!**

**(SUNDAY's rent is 1/2 price if you rent
Saturday)**

*This event includes **FOOD VENDORS***

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**West Valley UU Church    5904 W. Cholla St, Glendale AZ  
85304**

**(Northwest Corner of Cholla & 59<sup>th</sup>)**

**CONTACT: (623) 398-4065 [wvuonline@gmail.com](mailto:wvuonline@gmail.com)**

xx



# UU Principled Minutes

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

It is important to me as a UU to live my faith every day. I'm not a "Sunday UU" (I hope). We show up as often as we can and we try to participate in helping "The Little Church that Could" be the best that it can be. That includes the people. If each of us, daily, focused on one principle to live out and demonstrate to others, our congregation and the world would be a better place. Take a minute or two each day to reflect on our principles and how you are applying them in your life.

## **Principle 1: The inherent worth and dignity of every person**

Don't forget to include yourself in valuing people. You, too, have inherent worth and dignity. Do you recognize it in yourself? Do you honor and respect yourself? Try this. Identify what you consider to be your biggest shortcoming and create the opposite of that as a mantra to repeat daily. Post it on your refrigerator. Put it by the coffee. For example, if disorder is your bane, you might say: "My life is orderly and composed and I like living an orderly, composed life." Say it over and over. Let it guide decisions you make. Fake it until you make it.

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

Empathy is simply recognizing emotions in others, and being able to "put yourself in another person's shoes" – understanding the other person's

perspective and reality. To be empathetic, you have to think beyond yourself and your own concerns. Once you see beyond your own world, you'll realize that there's so much to discover and appreciate! People who are accused of being egotistical and selfish, or lacking perspective, have often missed the big picture: they aren't the only one in pain.

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

You are also to be accepted and encouraged, by your own self, to seek spiritual growth.

Investigate some aspect of another faith tradition. Explore it. Look for connections to UUs. In Cuba, I came across a new-to-me, but the largest religion in Cuba. Santeria is fascinating, and I am learning so much as I read more about this earth-based meld of African gods with the Catholic religion. What interests you? A faith tradition you abandoned or one you've been curious about? Explore. Learn. Connect.

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

So much attention has been given to "fake news" and we are encouraged by such talk to mistrust even sources we have traditionally relied on. Counter this by broadening your search for truth to multiple sources. Don't pass along news tidbits until you have confidence that the news is accurately reported and/or interpreted.

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## ***Principled Minutes***

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I read four news sources every day. One far right, two (relatively) neutral, and one left leaning. I believe that seeking out alternative views is essential for critical thinking. If I only tune in to what I believe and want to hear, how do I assure that I am not being brainwashed as much as those who listen to their one source? A “responsible search for truth and meaning” requires work on our part.

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

It’s hard, sometimes, these days to feel as if a single flame can ignite the bonfire of action to right wrongs. However, if we don’t even try, for sure we’ll not effect change. What one issue is at the center of your pile of concerns? Prison reform? Comprehensive immigration reform? Child abuse and the governmental structures to prevent it? Health care? What? Don’t try to do it all. Pick one. Learn about it. Become pen pals with your local, state, and/or national representatives and officials. Be the voice of change by not just expressing concern but by offering suggestions for alternative practices. Show the economic and social benefits of your suggestions. Be the “go-to guy” for your friends on this topic.

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

The International Day of Peace (“Peace Day”) is observed on September 21 every

year. It was established in 1981 by a unanimous United Nations resolution. Why not start planning, with a few friends, a church service celebrating this day? You might check out John Hunter, who created The World Peace game for his fourth graders (a TED talk), or strategies for promoting peace found in Internet searches. Give congregants some tasks to do and make the service interactive to engage their minds and hearts.

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

Rev. Barbara Merritt tells us the interdependent web is a fact of our existence, indeed a fact of the entire “family of things.” It is a metaphor for all that there is, for all existence. It suggests the image of a spider’s web and applies it to the entire universe. In this image we have the intellectual disciplines of cosmology, theology, and ontology, all rolled into one. You are perhaps familiar with the meaning of cosmology as the study of the cosmos, and theology as the study of the divine. Ontology is the study of the nature of being and our nature of being, as the principle says, is connected to this metaphor of the “interdependent web of all existence.



# Getting to Know Anna Rico

Sandra Mahoney

s\_1mahoney@cox.net

**A**нна Rico grew up in Phoenix and is the youngest of eight children (seven sisters and one brother). Her family was Pentecostal Christian and attended church on Saturdays, Sunday mornings and nights, and Wednesday nights. If the church doors were open, her family was there. When she was about 13, Anna started rebelling and making excuses to avoid attending church. Her mother told her that her soul was in her own hands and if she knew her choices would mean her soul would burn in hell, that was her decision.

Several years ago, she began reading and listening to Rob Bell, who founded the 10,000+-member Mars Hill Bible Church outside of Grand Rapid. Grand Rapids, home of Calvin College, is one of the strongest enclaves of Calvinist theology remaining in the United States. In his book, *Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived*, Bell argues for a kinder God but has stated, "I'm not a Universalist because I believe God's love is so great God lets you decide."

Bell's discussion of Universalism led Anna to read online about Universalism and Unitarianism, and this led her to our church in December 2017. She found our campus to be warm and inviting and liked our small size where members aren't lost in the crowd.



Anna joined WVUUC soon after attending and has helped with our Facebook page when requested. She also provides a ride to Lucy Trissel once a month.

Anna has a degree in accounting and has worked in the health care field for over 20 years. Currently she is employed by Cigna Health Care and visits physicians' offices to provide them data about their patients.

She likes that this entails both handling data and getting out in the field to meet with physicians in person. She is also getting back into accounting as she is managing the books for her boyfriend who owns a remodeling company.

Anna has three sons ages 26, 23, and 17 and is happily looking forward to becoming a grandmother soon. She likes to work out, do yoga, read, and listen to podcasts by Rob Bell, Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev (a mystic from India who talks about how to be happy and avoid stress) as well as others. She is happiest hanging out with friends with whom she often discusses spirituality.



# IMHO

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

**E**ach week food magically appears during Hospitality Hour. Well, not quite magically. A lot of planning and work happens before and after every service to make sure our church family and friends have coffee/tea and a light repast to accompany their conversations.

Are you doing your bit to make sure this can continue?

You could start with a thank you to the hosts who give their time to dish out the food and clean up afterwards. Every week you will see one of the team behind the table working to ensure everyone has a bite. Thank you, Roz Cook, Morgan Oviatt, Doug Pope, and Kay Vogt!

Do you contribute a dollar or two to help offset the costs of coffee, tea, creamer, crackers, cheese, condiments, and so on? Chuck a buck into the dish at the end of the food counter. Please.

Another way is to step up. I am seeking help from the congregation so we have two people each week to serve and clean up,

thereby lightening the load. One Sunday a month or perhaps every other month would be appreciated. Or you might be willing to wash the cloth napkins each week so the host doesn't have that job, too.

Perhaps you could prepare a main dish/ bread or dessert to serve some weeks (for 45 guests). If the congregation doesn't sign-up for bringing food, the week's host must also prepare food in addition to serving it and cleaning up. How fair is that?

We hosts like preparing food to share, but it's a lot to expect someone to do it every time he or she hosts. Let's give the hosts a break, okay? Sign-up on Sharon's clipboard when she asks for contributions. Surely you can bring a dessert every few months. Or a main dish salad and rolls once in a while.

I just became the chair of this committee, giving Onna Johnson a well-deserved break from one of her jobs. I've been so impressed with the people I work with. The Hospitality Committee deserves more than a round of applause. But that would be a good place to start!

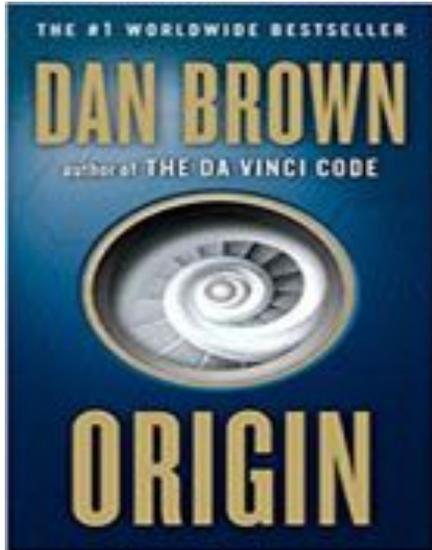


STANDING ON THE SIDE OF

LOVE

# Media Review

Brown, D. (2018). *Origin: A novel*. New York: Anchor.



Reviewed by Sharon Moore

**D**an Brown, author of *The Da Vinci Code*, propels hunky Harvard professor and symbologist Robert Langdon through another thrilling religious mystery in *Origin*. This time Langdon sets out to discover what a former student has discovered that will shatter the belief systems of all religions.

The former student, a billionaire genius futurist, claims to have answered humanity's two fundamental questions: Where did we come from (origin), and Where are we going (destiny)? The genius tells Langdon he has evidence that proves religions are man-made, that no god is behind any of them because there is no god.

The genius has revealed his technology-based answers to the world's top three religious scholars and plans to announce them to the entire world. Of course, before this happens people die mysteriously, conspiracies unfold, collusion and deceit infest highest levels of government and religion, a beautiful and brilliant woman is befriended, and action cuts from one exotic location to another.

Spoiler! Robert Langdon prevails against insurmountable odds and humanity's origin and destiny are revealed.

The novel addresses big questions. How potent can quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and genetic engineering become? Can science produce convincing accounts of humanity's metaphysical condition? Can god, nature, and science coexist? Should they?

I found *Origin* to be the most satisfying of Dan Brown's books. It certainly is the most chilling. Overall it's a masterful blend of humor, action, futurism, puzzle solving, and high minded philosophizing.



## Web Presence



Go to this online calendar for WVUU events:

[westvalleyuu.org/events/calendar/](http://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](https://facebook.com/groups/wvuuc)

Facebook Fan Page  
[facebook.com/WestValleyUnitarianUniversalistChurch](https://facebook.com/WestValleyUnitarianUniversalistChurch)

Pin and browse UU-related visuals at this site:

[pinterest.com/pin/242772236133017855/](https://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.