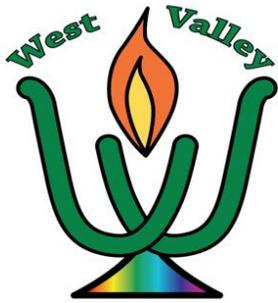


# WVUU Times

July 2019

West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church



## WEST VALLEY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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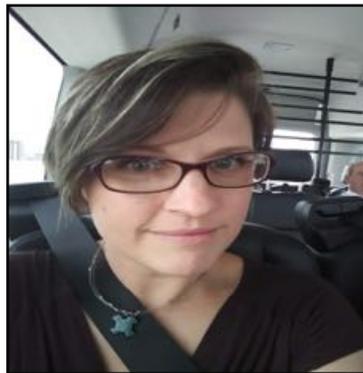
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## Gavel Talk

Emily Whitmore, President  
West Valley UU Church  
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Fresh off our Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly, and let me tell you, I learned quite a lot to help me pretend like I know what I'm doing this year as your President of the Board of Trustees.

Chief among them was some advice I got from the outgoing President of the Valley UU Board in Chandler, DeeAnne McClenahan. She said to not admit to too many people that you don't know what you're doing. Whoops!

But in all seriousness, my time spent at the General Assembly both filled me with inspiration and struck me with some harsh truths. I chose to attend workshops that focused on inclusion, in every sense of the word, as the theme of this year's GA was "The Power of 'We.'"

During the opening ceremony UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray repeated the phrase, "It is easy to hold a light up and say, 'Everyone is welcome.' It is harder to build a community where everyone feels a sense of home."

Two harsh-truth workshops I participated in dealt with inclusion of disenfranchised groups into the culture of our congregation.

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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.

July Theme: **Freedom and Responsibility**

## July 7: **Health Care for Medically Marginalized People**

Jason Odhner

Discusses how we can provide volunteer-led, patient-centered health services to medically marginalized people with respect and cultural humility.

## July 14: **The Pagan-Wiccan Path**

Rev. Darren Reale

The Pagan-Wiccan path is a beautiful nature-oriented approach to worship. Rev. Reale will briefly describe the path Paganism has taken him over the past 50 years. He will demonstrate a brief circle ceremony of the Pagan faith.

## July 21: **Reframing Justice**

Adrienne Kaye

Adrienne Kaye will discuss the importance of community in helping people during pre- and post-incarceration.

## July 28: **A UU Sabbath**

Diane D'Agostino

Diane D'Agostino will present Rev. Amanda Aikman's sermon "Relax: the discipline...Observing a Unitarian Universalist Sabbath." It begins with a strange question but ends with a satisfying answer.

# 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

(continued from page 1)

I learned that it's crucial to make space at the table and truly listen to the perspectives of those perceived to be on the margins of our UU circle, whether it be for their race, gender identity, sexuality or disability. Because this is their religion, and it's their table, too.

I also learned that we must be prepared to shift how the culture of our congregation is set up in order to truly help them feel like West Valley UU is their home. As one of the panelists explained in the workshop titled, Building Diverse Leadership, "Integration alone becomes assimilation."

I don't think any of us want our faith tradition to be anything close to resembling the Borg from Star Trek.

So this year I am pledging to do my best to implement those lessons here. There will always be an empty chair at our conference table at WVUUC board meetings (and I'm not just talking about the vacant vice-president chair that I would still very much like to fill). I invite anyone who feels they have something to say to know they will be seen -- truly seen -- and listened to.

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### Scenes from UUA General Assembly June 19-23, 2019, Spokane, WA



Attendees gather for a Public Witness demonstration June 20 to demand smart justice for Spokane.

They demanded jobs not jails, mental health services not sentences, and racial equity not racial profiling. Photo by Chris Walton



The UU Coalition to Create Climate Justice drew attention to the fact that the chinook salmon population and the orca population are inexorably linked and that dams are cutting off the food supply to the endangered orcas.



General Assembly attendees from Virginia embrace each other and sing during the closing ceremony on July 22. Photo by Emily Whitmore

# Hospitality

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

Thanks to all those who made the June Sundays a little better because of their work for Hospitality.

Roz Cook, Morgan Oviatt, Doug Pope, and Dorothy Ward were your hosts for those Sundays, making the coffee, setting up the table, and washing the dishes. Elaine King keeps napkins clean for us each week. Thanks to the best committee anyone could have!

Thanks also to those who brought in the food. Thank you Cathy Corbin-Manino, Annette Darling, Nancy Drago, Cara Lancellotti, Sandra Mahoney, Terry Mead, Jeanette Morgan, and Dorothy Ward. Your service to the congregation is greatly appreciated!

# Religious Education

Mandy Oviatt ahmoondah@gmail.com

Now that the 2018-2019 School year has concluded, Religious Education classes have been suspended for the summer in favor of our summer program. We look forward to starting up our classes again this fall on September 8, 2019, after Labor Day weekend.

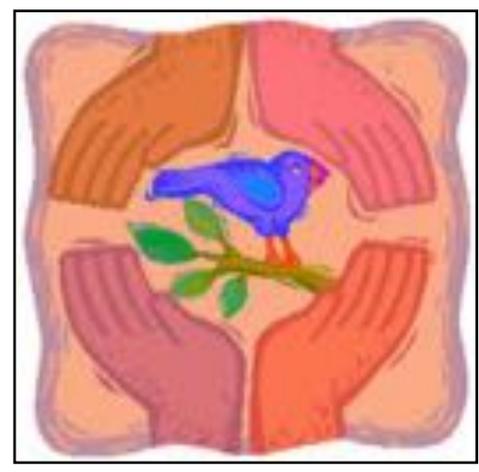
If anyone would like to volunteer for teaching our amazing children at any time in the upcoming school year, please contact Mandy Oviatt at [moonsedai@live.com](mailto:moonsedai@live.com)

You can teach one time, or multiple times, as frequently as you like!

## May 2019 Financial Highlights

Kathy Dugan k.dugan@cox.net

- Total Operating Income - \$3,869
  - Pledge Income - \$3,595
  - Fundraising - \$25
  - Sunday Plate - \$159
  
- Total Operating Expense - \$7,437
  - Worship Services - \$500
  - Mortgage Closing Costs (Refinance) - \$1,725
  - Interest on Building Loans - \$2,700
  - UUA/PSWD Fair Share - \$330
  
- Net Operating Loss - \$3,567



# Justice in Action

Stacy Fitzwater stacylfitzwater@gmail.com

- Volunteer to help with a citizen initiative! OUTLAW DIRTY MONEY IS BACK. This initiative, if successful, would place on the 2020 ballot a constitutional amendment for voters to consider that would establish a "right to know" who is giving BIG money to candidates or ballot issues. This would help get public policy more sensitive to the real needs of the community. You can join the team, volunteer, or donate. Here's the link: <https://outlawdirtymoney.com/>

- The humanitarian crisis on the border is worse than ever! Donate to Somos America and help the asylum seekers who are being dropped off in record numbers! <https://www.facebook.com/SomosAmericaCoalition/posts/2183503245063587>

- Interested in learning more about issues at our Mexican border first-hand? Limited spots may still be available for an immersion border trip August 22-25 with the Loretto Community. Contact Stacy (stacylfitzwater@gmail.com) if you are interested in learning more.

- League of Women Voters. Make Democracy Work Campaign. Second in the Series. Watch for details. <https://www.facebook.com/lwvmetrophoenix>  
Website: <https://my.lwv.org/arizona/lwv-metro-phoenix> • Email: [info@lwvmp.org](mailto:info@lwvmp.org)

- Want to stay informed about AZ issues? Sign up for "Civic Engagement Beyond Voting" emails: <https://www.cebv.us/>

- Save the Date: November 15-17 at Ft. Benning, GA. The SOA Watch annual gathering (previously held at the Nogales, AZ and MX border) will move back to Ft. Benning this year. Save the date on your calendar, and click here for more info: <http://www.soaw.org/home/>

- Are you concerned about current US policy? Make your voice heard, it takes less than two minutes! Choose your comfort level: phone, text, or write using the contact info below:

Call

U.S. Capitol Switchboard 202-224-3121

U.S. Department of Justice

202-514-2000

The White House 202-456-1111

Text: <https://resist.bot/>

Write: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>



STANDING ON THE SIDE OF

LOVE

# UU Principled Minutes

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

Each month as I write this column, I am grateful that I belong to a church that is so grounded in reality and the fundamentals of being a responsible member of humanity. This opportunity for me to reflect on what is important and essential to be a UU is one I enjoy. Living our faith tradition is what makes us more than just Sunday UUs.

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

Show a child how to be kind to vulnerable people – the homeless, those with physical or cognitive disabilities, older people, and anyone else that appears different to the child. We learn our best lessons through examples of people we admire. Be that person to emulate.

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

Remember, being an ally or social justice advocate is a full-time gig — there are no breaks or vacations. Daily thinking about and acting on ways to develop social justice and equity means you are not only making a personal commitment to change, but your actions and discussions can influence others to join you in changing the world for the better. SJW (Social Justice Warrior) has become an epithet, a denigration from the far right. Show them the glowing and glorious side of Social Justice Warrior so that they cannot tarnish an admirable label.

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

When did you last read the sacred texts of a faith other than your own? It is well and good to read the humanist teachings you likely respond to, but what about reading the Vedas, Quran, Tanakh, or Bible? Making a concerted effort to understand what others believe begins with understanding what influenced those beliefs. When we understand what they believe, we can find our connecting bridges to world community.

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

Consider sharing your spiritual journey with our congregation and encourage them to ask you questions to clarify your thinking. Perhaps you will do an IMHO article for the newsletter. You might lead a Sunday morning, pre-service, discussion on a topic you care about. Perhaps you could deliver the 20-minute reflection/ message during a Sunday service. We all grow spiritually when we share our thinking and discuss ideas.

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

The Postcard Power Project can continue in the summer even though it's not officially organized and supported then.

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## Principled Minutes

(continued from page 6)

Do your own research on issues you care about and write to our legislators and other government officials to let them know you are paying attention and want them to respond appropriately. Stamps for postcards are in the canister at the back of the sanctuary.

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

Realize that when you are content and at peace, you make others content as well. If this keeps passing on and on, the entire world would be a happy place, bringing peace to it. World peace comes from you.

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

We all try to be more environmentally conscious. Sometimes it's not the big actions that make the largest impact. Sometimes little steps, done consistently, add up to have a major effect. One way you can do this is by cooking multiple dishes in your oven for multiple meals. Heat once, cook three times! Put the food in the refrigerator to heat up during the week in the microwave, using less energy than turning on the oven three times during the week.

## Dungeons and Dragons

Morgan Oviatt will be hosting a beginner's session of his *Dungeons & Dragons* game at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, July 11 in the Religious Education building at West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church. This fun learning adventure is open to anyone who has little to no experience with *Dungeons & Dragons 5e*. If you already have experience, we might be able to squeeze you in.

Morgan will provide everything you need, but if you'd like to purchase your own die, Imperial Outpost (4920 W. Thunderbird Rd., Ste. 121) has a great selection.



If you miss playing pretend, dream of adventure and far off places, or have wanted to wield powerful weapons and dazzling magic in a chill and non-judgmental space, then you are welcome here!

# Getting to Know Stephanie Hagen

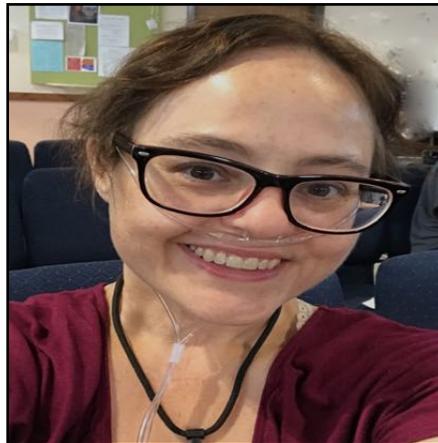
Sandra Mahoney

s\_1mahoney@cox.net

Stephanie Hagen grew up in Chandler, AZ in a family of twelve children. She and her sister were born before her parents adopted, over time, ten multiracial older children. Her father was Catholic, her mother was Mormon; when Stephanie was younger, there was an opportunity to attend many different churches. Her grandmother was Wiccan, and Stephanie went to her house on weekends where she learned more about those practices, rituals, and beliefs.

After graduating from Corona del Sol High School in the Tempe Union High School District, she took religious study classes at Rio Salado Community College. She worked as a general manager of a grocery store and helped design and construct the bakeries at Fresh & Easy Grocers. She stopped working when that chain was sold and now is on wife duty. Stephanie and her husband, Nick Hendershot, attended the same high school, reconnected a few years later, and married in November 2018. Nick is a chef who works at resorts.

Three years ago, Stephanie became ill with little warning. She was coughing, couldn't stop, and was hospitalized where she coded three times as an emergency. Eventually she was diagnosed with sarcoidosis, an autoimmune disease which attacks the whole body, causing shortness of breath, fatigue, and general malaise. She has good days and bad days and is prescribed steroids to help with the symptoms.



Stephanie needed to get out of the house and have some social contacts, so she decided to attend West Valley UUC. She feels good energy within the walls and likes the openness and community.

Being a UU allows her to still have a sense of self and be in a place where “we all have one purpose, love.” She has helped prepare food for our Hospitality Hour and the Flea Fairs. She serves on the fundraising committee and recently agreed to chair the Stewardship committee.

Stephanie has studied many different religions and is a Reverend of New Age, a religious philosophy which believes in a holistic form of divinity and includes many Pagan and Wiccan traditions.

You might have noticed she has changed her name tag to read *Rev. Tree Reign*. Her parents call her “Lee-Lee” from her middle name, Alicia. When she was small, her niece called her “Tree” because she couldn't pronounce *Lee-Lee*. The nickname stuck, and that is what close friends and acquaintances have called her for 21 years. *Reign* is one of her husband's screen names.

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## **Stephanie Hagen**

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Stephanie enjoys the study of faith and religion. She is high priestess of a coven that she's been part of for 26 years.

She loves to write and has four works in progress, one fiction and the others nonfiction. She also paints and writes poetry.

Stephanie spends a lot of time with her two puppies. She is the family's designated babysitter/caretaker; her sister has nine children. She also creates YouTube videos, both random and serious.

Please welcome Tree to our WVUUC family as she is our newest member!

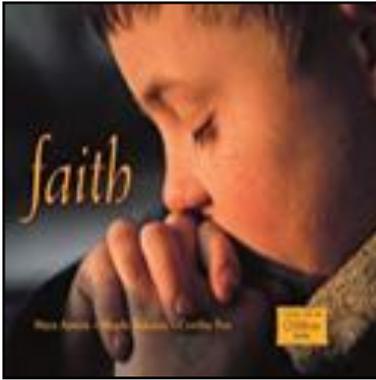
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## **June WVUUC Board Meeting Highlights**

- The Board met June 9, 2019 and approved the Treasurer's Report:
  - A negative bank balance shows for the first time.
  - Our new mortgage loan is showing on the May report. Closing costs for that were rolled into the loan. A balloon payment is due in five years. Remaining member loans were consolidated into one large, amortized loan and will show on the June reports. Accrued interest on the remaining member loans will be paid in June and July.
  - Current year pledges are due on June 30th. We need to collect all outstanding pledges by July 31 to simplify bookkeeping.
- Emily Whitmore will attend General Assembly as our delegate.
- Emily Whitmore reported Pax Whitmore would like to set up a tech committee and include himself and Tom Begush. The purpose would be to update our websites, clarify ownership, make them more secure, and make some aspects of technology more sophisticated. The Board approved the committee.
- Sandra Mahoney handed out information packets about what steps are needed to comply with the UUA's *Five Pillars of Welcoming Congregations*. We need to complete the steps then apply to UUA to be recognized as a Welcoming Congregation.
- Emily Whitmore, at Morgan Oviatt's suggestion, will help organize a *Dungeons and Dragons* night at the church. An article about this appears in this newsletter.
- The Board discussed what to do with the old piano. It was decided to see if any of our members would like to have it (in return for a donation to the church).
- Diane D'Agostino, outgoing president, individually thanked Board members and mentioned how each had assisted her. The Board members thanked her for her outstanding service to the Board.

# Media Review

Ajmera, M., Nakassis, M., & Pon, C. (2009). *Faith*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge.



Reviewed by Jo Cleland

**A**t first glance I thought this was a children's book. I saw large photos and key points in big print on every page. But as I looked more closely, I noticed brief descriptions next to the photos that were terse but deeply informative. Although I am ecumenical at heart and thought, and I knew the traditions of many religions, I was surprised to learn new facts at every turn.

The first key message states: "In our world there are many faiths." Throughout the book, though, it becomes apparent that those faiths all connect, uniting humankind into One Faith. Thus, the title is a singular, not a plural.

The first eleven double-sided pages share what people from different faiths do as they engage in their religious experiences. They show different attire, different celebrations, different sources of learning, different worship venues, and different musical expressions.

Interestingly, however, is that even though the ways people express faith vary, the focus of all worship remains consistent across all. We all pray, sing, share holy writings, and gather to celebrate our daily lives and special occasions.

Then the focus shifts from the activities to the reasons behind those activities. Every

faith centers on caring, both for each other and for the environment. Every faith instills respect for all people, seeking peace for everyone. Every faith encourages us to give, helping those in need. Every faith instills hope, looking to a better world. These principles join us as One Faith.

As I read this book I was reminded of a day many years ago when I arrived at West Valley UU Church to find a large chart on the wall. The UU principles were listed down the left and the major faiths were listed across the top. Every one of the seven principles was checked as valued by all major faiths. May this world ever be diverse in expression, but united in One Faith!



## 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.