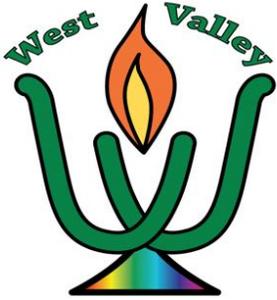


WVUU Times

September 2019

West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church



WEST VALLEY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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Gavel Talk

Emily Whitmore, President
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What are most people looking for when they decide to belong to a church? Most of the time they're looking to add something of value to their lives. So what value does West Valley UU add to yours?

I love our services. I love the sermons we get to hear from various other perspectives. I love challenging myself, exposing myself to different beliefs and experiences. I've even started playing Tibetan singing bowl videos on YouTube in my house after Karyn Diane Kirsh's gong meditation/sound bath service.

I love the music that Kellye, Paul, Rocky, Jo and all of our choir members provide. I love being asked to participate in the music sometimes and actually have a reason to bust out the ol' accordion. I even love that you were willing to elect me as your president and all the duties that it requires.

But the value that the church adds most to my life is the way it allows me to come up with my own ways to create what I seek. I love that we've started playing Dungeons and Dragons on Friday nights with Morgan, Shannon, Tom, Pax, James, Kitan, and others. I love that my family tried out the Memorial Day and Labor Day camp outs at SAWUURA, and I discovered I actually do like camping, as long as someone else does the cooking.

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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.

September Theme: **Covenant**

September 1: **Dorothy Day**

Terry Mead

Dorothy Day: suffragist, bohemian, communist, socialist, workers' advocate, journalist, pacifist, and possible Catholic saint. What can her words tell us in these political times?

September 8: **Rainbow Covenant**

Rev. Cathy Corbin-Mannino

What is a covenant? It is not a contract; it is not a sworn oath. It is a living promise made new every day. And it takes nothing less than the power of rainbow courage to keep it.

September 15: **Coming Full Circle**

Dr. Kaden Sheffield

The fall equinox marks the time when Jews review their life stories and renew their covenant with the Lord. A new movement that echoes Jewish tradition is the story circle. It is a way to unite us in community, to review and renew—in short, to covenant.

September 22: **Broken Promises**

Rev. Cathy Corbin-Mannino

What happens when a covenant is broken or violated? The focus must remain on the relationship: forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration.

September 29: **Transgender Journeys**

Karen Shiffman Lateiner

Our speaker will take you on her personal journey as she struggled to understand the gender transition of her child at a time when transgender issues were rarely discussed.

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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I also love being able to find things to post on our Facebook page. As soon as I got admin access, for inspiration I started liking every UU page I found as well as some other uplifting pages. It's made my newsfeed a much more pleasant place by breaking up all the climate crisis news and sarcastic tweets about how hard it is to be a parent.

So what value does West Valley UU add to your life? I truly hope you can rattle off as many things as I can, if not more. But if you can't, I want you to feel empowered to create the value you seek here for yourself. Churches our size are kind of like the irrational number pi (π): small number, but infinite possibilities.



August WVUUC Board Meeting Highlights

Sandra Mahoney s_1mahoney@cox.net

- The Board of Trustees met on August 11, 2019.
- Treasurer reported the review (auditing) of our books is almost completed.
- Membership chair indicated we have five news members in the past year. The Board hopes to have a recognition ceremony soon.
- Technology committee will transfer domains to GoDaddy account and then will buy and set up new host and transfer information there.
- Worship services has speakers scheduled through October.
- The Board reviewed some of the requirements for becoming a Welcoming Congregation. We are moving along on several fronts to meet those requirements.
- Rev. Darren Reale of Sacred Spiral Pagan Church of Arizona reported their Board will sponsor the necessary five people required to start a CUUPS chapter at our UU Church.
- Board members are very concerned about the lack of a President-Elect. What will happen next year when there is no President of the Board? Since the Board is the policy and decision-making part of the church and directs all activities of the church, including the financial aspects, could we continue without a leader?
- The next Board meeting will be September 15 as a quorum was not possible for September 8.

Hospitality

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

Yet again a month has passed during which WVUU church members, friends, and visitors were provided with a light repast following the Sunday service.

Our wonderful hosts make sure coffee/tea, dining plates, and utensils are available and the kitchen is ready for another meal the following Sunday. Thanks so much to Roz Cook, Maryke Des Champs, Morgan Oviatt, Doug Pope, and Dorothy Ward for making sure the food is ready and the kitchen tidied!

During August our food providers were Shannon Bailes, Roz Cook, Maryke Des Champs, Ingrid Gerling, Cara Lancellotti, and Emily Whitmore, Thank you so much for your caring food offerings!

Mark **October 20** on your calendar. That date is this year's traditional in-gathering to kick off the new church year officially. Usually held in September, the Board decided to delay the date this year so more folks will have returned from their summer travels.

The date will be marked with a special church service followed by a potluck luncheon. Who brings the food on October 20? You do!

There will be more details in next month's newsletter, but for now, find that special recipe of yours to share with the crowd.

We need entrees, side dishes, salads, breads, and desserts. See you there!

July 2019 Financial Highlights

Mark Oelerking markoelerking@gmail.com

Total Income	\$28,999
Pledge Income	\$28,781
Sunday Plate	\$218
Total of all expenses paid	\$6,279.99
Bank mortgage payment	\$956
Member mortgage payment	\$2,333
Electricity	\$449
Salaries/Wages	\$520
UUA/PSWD APF	\$297

Note: Pledge income was exceptionally high in July because some members chose to pay their entire annual pledge at the start of the fiscal year. Thank you!

Call to Action!

WVUUC needs you! WVUUC has two vacancies on its Board of Trustees: President-elect and Stewardship chair. If you are moved to respond to this call, contact WVUUC President, Emily Whitmore (emilyawhitmore@gmail.com).



Justice in Action

Stacy Fitzwater stacyfitzwater@gmail.com

UUJAZ Issues + Action Day

Prepare for UUJAZ's *Issue + Action Day*.
October 26 at the Surprise UU Church.

Join UUs from across AZ for building relationships, knowledge, power, and capacity for justice. The event will include

- powerful worship services with music from Phoenix Women's Chorus,
- a keynote from the UU College of Social Justice,
- delicious coffee and pastries from the Coronado,
- vegan meals from the Rez: an Urban Eatery,
- incredible workshops from justice partners around the state, and
- in the evening, the first annual Jazzy Awards to honor justice work of the past



Sunday Discussion Group

The weekly pre-Sunday Service discussion group resumes on September 8, 9:30 a.m. in the office area of the Religious Education building. All are welcome.



Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship resumes its monthly meetings on Thursday, September 5, 6:00 p.m. at Terry Mead's house, 5124 W. Columbine Dr. Food will be followed by a discussion of Chapter 4, *The Third Agreement: Don't Make Assumptions*, from Don Miguel Ruiz's book, *The Four Agreements*. The group meets the first Thursday of most months. Contact Terry or Bill Dugan for more information.

UU Principled Minutes

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

Each month I write this column to reinforce our faith's essential elements, for you and for me. Our principles are universal. I can't think of a single faith group who would argue with any of our principles. Yet do we live our principles every day? Do we recall the principles and seek ways to demonstrate our commitment to them? Each month I offer ideas and reflections to keep our focus on our bedrock values.

Principle 1: The inherent worth and dignity of every person

The Golden Rule, a principle that predates Christianity's appropriation of it, posits that we should treat others as we would wish to be treated. Some have said that that rule is inadequate and condescending. Rather, they advocate we practice the Platinum Rule, which states that we should treat others as *they* wish to be treated. What an interesting twist and one that requires more of us in the implementation.

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

We have all worked/lived/known someone who has difficulty relating to others. Perhaps they take everything literally. Perhaps they lack social skills. Maybe they speak without considering the impact of their words or take offense when none was intended. How do you

deal with them? Show patience and remain calm so as not to escalate a bad situation. Be specific and use closed questions. Draw on experiential and factual information rather than hypotheticals or abstractions. Realize they may misinterpret or misunderstand body language and facial expressions and that could be a source of an uncomfortable interaction. Awareness on your part can help moderate interactions.

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

We have had services during which members share their spiritual journeys. Have you shared yours with the congregation? With friends? Share stories of your personal growth with others. Letting others know how you've succeeded will help you to inspire others. And it will enable you to rejoice in your own accomplishments! Both can help you to further develop your spirituality.

Write for the newsletter or participate in a Sunday service. Or just talk about each others' spiritual quests during Hospitality Hour.

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

We have begun watching the Netflix series, *Patriot Act*. This show presents a different topic and relevant content each week. The host, Hasan Minhaj, is highly entertaining and informative.

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Principled Minutes

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Minaj uses comedic elements in a unique storytelling style. He takes on different topics, like the opioid crisis, the NRAs global impact, oil, immigration enforcement, and more. This is a show definitely worth watching to learn in-depth about a wide-range of issues. You'll be the smartest person in your neighborhood.

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

Register for and attend the annual "Issues and Actions Day" held by UUJAZ at the Surprise Church on October 26th. Let's all get informed about the democratic process as we prepare for the 2020 elections. Register at UUJAZ.org. Let's get more informed so we can be better involved. 2020 may be the most important election in our lifetime.

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

Around the world, citizens are struggling to force their governments to offer basic human rights to all. People are dying for the right to vote, worship as they believe, speak their minds, have control over their bodies, and other essentials we take for granted in our country. Choose one of these countries and become your

neighborhood expert on their issues and their efforts. Organize a postcard project to ask our legislators to get involved in helping these struggling democracies (or would-be democracies).

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

Help re-green our planet, one tree at a time. Young trees remove more CO2 from the air than mature trees. The Nature Conservancy began a project in 2008 to plant one billion trees across the planet. As their site says, "Trees provide so many benefits to our everyday lives. They filter clean air, provide fresh drinking water, help curb climate change, and create homes for thousands of species of plants and animals."

Other groups, like the National Forest Foundation are raising funds to plant trees, 50 million trees in the case of the NFF. If you can't plant a tree on your property, please send money to one or more of these groups so they can acquire and plant the trees. If everyone planted one tree, we would avert the effects of global warming.



Getting to Know Diana Barker

Sandra Mahoney

s_1mahoney@cox.net

Diana Barker is a native Phoenician who grew up in South Phoenix. She was reared a Catholic, and her family practiced all the rites and rituals. She attended West High School and met most of her friends there.

She stopped attending Catholic churches after her son was expelled from a Catholic school while his cohort was not because parents gave lots of money to the church. For many years she did not attend any church.

After moving to Glendale in 1991, she tried several Catholic churches, but they were not friendly, and she was put off by all their expectations regarding behavior and attending services.

Diana works as a Unit

Secretary for Labor and Delivery at Banner Thunderbird. Including her time at Good Samaritan Hospital, she has been in that position for 25 years. One of her hobbies is making cards for the babies at work.



Diana has been married four times; she has been with her current husband, Hayden, for 13 years, longer than all the rest of the marriages put together. She has three living children, two sons and a daughter, Kimberly, who is her youngest child and attends WVUUC. She served as a

Trustee-at-Large for one term and was in charge of Hospitality for six years.

Diana heard about Unitarian Universalism from an ex mother-in-law when she was looking for a pastor to conduct her son's marriage ceremony. She went "up the street" to check out the pastor at WVUUC. Pastor Ryan married her son, and she has been attending WVUUC ever since.

She was warmly welcomed by Dorothy Ward and Mary Lou Cornell and liked the service. She especially values that everyone is friendly and accepts you for who you are.

U.S. Religious Knowledge Quiz

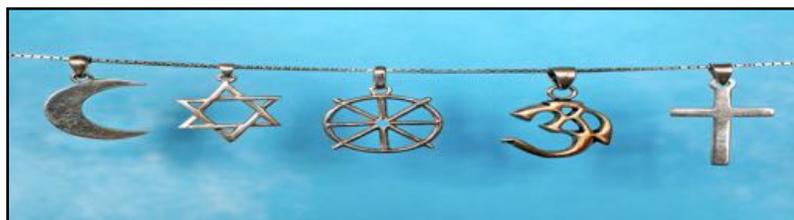
How much do you know about religion? And how do you compare with the average American? Here's your chance to find out.

Take a short, 15-question quiz, and see how you do in comparison with 10,971 randomly sampled adults.

This study was conducted mostly among members of Pew Research Center's

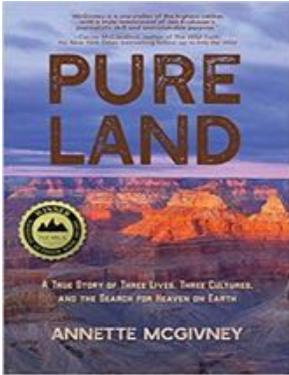
[American Trends Panel](#), supplemented by interviews with members of the Ipsos KnowledgePanel. To take the quiz, go to

<https://www.pewresearch.org/quiz/u-s-religious-knowledge-quiz/>



Media Review

McGivney, A. (2017). *Pure land: The true story of three lives, three cultures and the search for heaven on Earth*. Singapore: AUX Media.



Reviewed by David Moore

During a recent Sunday Service that Sharon and I attended at Flagstaff's Beacon UU Congregation, a Joys and Concerns speaker mentioned enjoying the book, *Pure Land*. He noted that it was written by a local author and had won a 2018 National Outdoor Book Award. I am glad I came across this book.

Pure Land tells of three people's intertwined lives. Tomomi Hanamura is a 34-year old Japanese woman raised solely by her father after her mother abandoned her. She spends her small earnings

and vacation time coming to the U.S. to explore national parks and Native American lands. She is drawn to the Four Corners area. On May 8, 2006 she hikes into Havasu Canyon, a popular destination on Havasupai tribal land, to celebrate her birthday.

Randy Wescogame is a distressed 18-year old Havasupai with a history of childhood abuse, substance abuse, and violence. Police call him an "animal" and a "black sheep" of the tribe. He is swimming in Havasu Creek, sees Tomomi hiking by herself, robs but does not rape her, then kills her with 29 stab wounds "because I didn't want her to tell."

Annette McGivney is the book's author. She is a frequent *Arizona Highways* contributor and an editor of *Backpacker* magazine. She wonders how Tomomi's murder could happen in such a beautiful place as Havasu, a location many outsiders call *Shangri-La*. While uncovering the origins of this killing, she comes to terms with the trauma she suffered as a child at the hands of her father.

McGivney blends personal history and police procedural writing to unite the stories of Tomomi, Randy, and herself. She is a tenacious journalist and gifted storyteller. Her talent for nature writing is evident throughout the book. While McGivney writes movingly most of the time, she loses some momentum in the final chapters when she gets clinical about childhood traumas.

The title of the book is apt. According to Tomomi's Japanese religious sect of Pure Land Buddhism, Pure Land is an enlightened state of consciousness in this life. Other Japanese Buddhists imagine Pure Land as a plane to strive for in an afterlife, a paradise for reborn members akin to Nirvana. McGivney acknowledges these original meanings, then presents another.

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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.

Media Review

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McGivney presents Pure Land as a metaphor for the comforting and healing power of nature. She equates Pure Land with the outdoors, with the blissful, spiritual energy she feels wandering off-trail. She says outdoor experiences helped her transcend her own traumatic childhood.

McGivney highlights Tomomi's journal entries about feeling at home and at peace in the western wilderness. And she probes historical, cultural, and psychological explanations for Randy's disastrous separation from what many see as the Pure Land of Havasu Canyon.

