

The Beacon

South Valley Unitarian Universalist Society

Volume 35, Issue 12

December, 2015

December Theme: God



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December 6: "When the Way Is Hard"

Come and walk with our incarcerated brothers and sisters and discover grace and what many would call "the face of God." After the service, we will be having a potluck and then a gathering with Leslie Hugo and Helen Tobler to talk about work we might engage in towards walking with the incarcerated. This Sunday will be a "First Sunday" when we especially welcome our friends from Utah Valley. There will also be classes in UU history and for newcomers.

Rev Patty Willis, Leslie Hugo, Helen Tobler

December 13: "The God you do not believe in may not be the same one others hold dear"

In this community, some define themselves as atheists, others as Christians, others as theists, among many other beliefs. (When I was on a train, this title is how a UU minister responded to the assumptions of a man who defined himself as an atheist). What do we assume when someone says they are an atheist or theist or Christian? Otter Creek, Peter and Mary Danzig, will perform their wonderful music during the service.

Rev. Patty Willis

December 20: Morning and Afternoon services

Morning: "Time Travel to Christmas: Is there room at this inn?" We will experience Christmas and welcome a baby into our midst with a child blessing and dedication. Let us challenge ourselves to see this tradition anew.

Rev Patty Willis and Liz Martin

Afternoon: "An ALL-AGES Solstice tradition: Dance around the Sun" Let us join together and celebrate Solstice with singing and ritual and dance. **CUUPS, Rev. Patty Willis and Liz Martin**

December 24: December 24th: "Christmas Eve: Every Child Born is a Holy Child"

Stories of births around the world, with Christmas carols and songs by our amazing choir. Invite your friends to this beautiful service!

December 27: "The Cathedral of the World"

John Cooper

From the Board of Trustees

LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

****For urgent issues please call the main office or the Caring Circle (listed further below)**

MINISTER

Rev. Patty Willis Cell #: 801-633-0709
Email: minister@svuus.org

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Liz Martin (Director) 801-604-2973
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REGAL COUNCIL

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CARING CIRCLE

Dot Clayton (Chair) 801-561-4776
Email: ibedotclay@comcast.net

SVUUS Web Site

www.svuus.org

SVUUS-NEWS Email List

South Valley maintains a news listserv to facilitate announcements and other communications for the congregation.

If you wish to sign up to receive messages, send a request to Lyn Worthen, listserv administrator, at lynw@xmission.com.

To send a message to the list, simply address it to svuus-news@mailman.xmission.com

During this holiday season, I interact with over 50 family members who are almost all Mormon and republican. Except for the negative quick quip about perceived outsiders, religion (not culture practice) and politics are taboo subjects. Before my brother died for example, he refused to explain to me why he was atheist. Even when I claimed the same sentiment, he claimed he didn't want to exert undue influence over me since I am seven years his junior. I was 40 years old at the time. About a month ago, I went to a wedding for a grand niece. I broke the taboo, and in friendly conversation and explained to another niece what I liked about the Obama administration. Instead of explaining what she didn't like, she quipped "I'm glad somebody likes him". After I pressed her to explain what she didn't like, she simply raised the taboo curtain and refused conversation on the topic. I wonder if my family thinks I am too stupid or too intolerant to hear different points of view. Luckily, here at South Valley, we covenant to listen to diversity without undue judgments.

I asked many members of our community if they believe in God. While I am surprised how many do, I am even more surprised they are willing to share it with me, an outspoken atheist. They seem to trust my intelligence and tolerance to follow our covenant and support our individual search with dignity. What a joy to be in such a trusting community.

Our covenant doesn't eliminate passion or disagreement. Recently, Rev. Patty modeled this by reporting the response our Muslim brothers and sisters had on the France terrorist attack, and her public, even angry, reactions to the LDS position on gay marriage. Wouldn't we have a better world if we all held this kind of respect, while making our own position clear. Who knows, we might even progress through compromise.

Jan Vanderhooft
Board of Trustees member



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From Our Minister

Monthly Theme: God
Imago Dei: The Image of God

When you hear the word “God,” what do you see?

When I left the church of my ancestors, it was partly to banish the face of God I imagined was frowning at me from the heavens. Something had shifted within me and I no longer felt deserving of the wrath of God that church leaders were embodying. Religious refugees, my beloved and I escaped to Japan where I was relieved to discover Buddhism, a faith that has no God. My Buddhist mentor, Fukushima-sensei, taught me that Buddhism did not have a source outside the self that one could go to with one’s requests in the way that I had prayed each night as a child. She denied the existence of the Santa Claus God to whom we pray for the things we want. The grandmother who had lived in our house told me that central to Buddhism was having a thankful heart. Our Japanese mother, deeply Buddhist, said, “If you want something, give thanks.”

In contrast, Shintoism, the other major religion in Japan, held a host of gods to whom one could go for all the wishes of one’s hearts. The fences and branches of trees within and around the precincts of Shinto shrines were decorated with the deeply held desires of students to pass examinations, women to bear children, lonely people to find their beloveds, and general and particular good fortune and safety. Before we traveled, especially when we traveled separately, we visited our favorite shrine to buy one of these amulets, blessed by a Shinto priest and encased in silk, to keep with our passports. At the same shrine, we stood for a few minutes, our palms together, and gave thanks, an act that is at the heart of Buddhism.

The Japanese did not find this mix of behaviors strange because for the most part Shintoism and Buddhism had existed comfortably side by side. Until the suppression of Buddhism at the end of the nineteenth century, shrines and temples were often built together on the same land and sometimes into the same building. Buddhist saints were taken into the pantheon of Shintoism. Many temples devoted to Kuan Yin, the Bodhisatva of compassion known as Kannon-sama in Japan, became places where people went to pray for help. She became a goddess that functioned much like the Shinto gods. Parents often went to her to pray for their wayward children. The need for that “Santa Claus” god seems to develop naturally people face those impossible obstacles associated with being human.

Early in my time at South Valley a member of our community who considers himself to be an atheist told me that he prays with his family because through prayer he is able to say what is sometimes hard to say in other ways. While addressing God, he blesses his family with the safety and wellbeing he desires for them. I have experienced that at the beginning of a session of the Senate when I pray for minds and hearts to open to all voices even when their opinions are very different from our own and to search for those who are suffering and have no voice. These are words of the heart that we can say in prayer. In these cases, the image of God seems closer to that of the Quaker concept of God as the light, sometimes called the Christ, within us. When we speak out of that light, we open the possibility of kindling that light within all.

When I studied spiritual direction at a Catholic retreat center, one sister studying with me worked with the poorest of the poor. She told of a time when she was washing the feet of a homeless man at a shelter and experienced a shift of consciousness. Suddenly, in the man’s face, she saw God. The image stayed with her and provided sustenance for her ministry. This is the image I want to leave you with for I hope that as religious explorers we find what we are looking for through a spiritual practice of serving the world with love. Some of us will see God in this. I wonder what you will see.

In love and community,

Rev. Patty



News from the Social Action Council

RESPONDING TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN EUROPE

Worship Service Offering Split Recipient for Nov and Dec 2015: UUSC-UUA Refugee Crisis Fund

As the world faces the greatest refugee crisis since World War II, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) have jointly launched a special emergency response. UUSC crisis response teams are reaching out to the most vulnerable people caught up in this humanitarian crisis, particularly women and children. Donations to the UUSC-UUA Refugee Crisis Fund will go directly to UUSC partners operating on the ground in countries receiving refugees. UUSC is focusing on ensuring the safe passage of refugees seeking safety and helping refugees' access their rights in host countries.

For more information on this fabulous program visit: <http://www.uusc.org/donate#sthash.IOHJGT4M.dpuf>

From the Worship Closet

Here is a Skype conversation I had recently with a very dear friend, who happens to have earned the degree of "Doctor of Ministry with a focus on Interfaith Relations". This is a slightly edited version. She is LM in the conversation.

Val: Do you assume that most Americans assume the word "God" means a being that is male and watches the world?

LM: No. Most people understand that is not God

Val: I am just thinking about Americans' concept. Why do so many churches push that, then? All the ones I know, except your church and ours, say a male god and a father, with a son Jesus.

LM: But most art, music, prayer has to use words and images. God is No-thing is very hard to sing about. Those who grew up with the apostles creed recited every Sunday have that image, but even some of them understand it is not a complete image of God. Quakers have not had Father for a long time. They might pray the prayer but they have a feeling beyond.

Val: So do we need to call it god?

LM: What do you want to call "it"? No word suffices.

Val: Only love, maybe?

LM: Works for me. I use overflowing love often.

Val: What else do you call god?

LM: Fountain, source and lure of never-ending, overflowing love. Divine One. Source of all that is Loving, Kind and Good. Beloved. My niece at 10 had the perfect explanation. She had been to church for Christmas pageants and maybe a Sunday school activity, but really was un-churched. I asked her what God was like to her. She said, "Some people think God is an old man with a long white beard sitting on a high chair in heaven. Some people think God could be a woman. But I think God is more like a feeling." I wanted to run over to the seminary and get my tuition refunded and just go and sit at this wise one's feet... because she is just Love.

LM: Perhaps human beings began to anthropomorphize god so that god was not linked or limited to a place like a mountain. But mostly I think we have minds that have difficulty with "bigger than that", which is what God is- unimaginable unlimited without beginning or end.

And so, why are we called to worship god, I asked her?

LM: Ideally worship is the intentional opportunity to draw close to each other in the Presence... of god. God.

-Val Allyse, Worship Committee

News from the South Valley Covenant of UU Pagans (CUUPS)

Come join us on December 20th for the Winter Solstice ritual at South Valley at 6:30 pm.

We will be celebrating the longest night of the year and welcoming back the sun.

On the First Sunday in February we will be hosting the Chocolate Feast Pot Luck after the service. This is a wonderful time to experience all things chocolate from sweet to savory.

Look for news in March of our equinox ritual.

CUUPS is planning to bring back Christopher Penczak for a seminar in Lava Hot Springs in March 2017, so look for more information. It was a wonderful event last year.

From Interweave

Next Interweave Potluck Dinner

When: Saturday December 5, 2015

Where: Antoinette & Altaf's home

3818 E. Viewcrest Drive SLC, UT 84104

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Bring a dish to share, we will provide wine (red and white) and beer.

Bring your own soda!

For more details call [801-580-7013](tel:801-580-7013)

Thank you!

Antoinette

Over 55 Salt Shakers Christmas Party

Saturday, December 19

6: 00 PM Pot Luck Dinner

Honey baked Ham and Egg Nog will be provided
and maybe the singing of Carols

"We'll have a Holly Jolly Christmas"

Home of Janis Ries
2367 East Catalina Drive
Cottonwood Heights
RSVP 385-259-3017

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The prayer shawl group will hold its next meeting on Thursday, December 10, at 2:00 p.m. in the Senior High Room. Anyone who is interested in knitting or crocheting shawls or afghans to contribute to the Prayer Shawl ministry is welcome to join us. If you are interested and have questions, you can contact me at lorriquigley@msn.com.



Religious Education, Growth and Learning

DECEMBER SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

December 6, 2015:

High School (9th-12th graders): UU Values in Society

Junior High (6th-8th graders): Coming of Age - The God You Don't Believe In, the God You Do

Seekers (2nd-5th graders): Love Will Guide Us - We Are Loved, Flaws and All

Pathfinders (Kindergarten-1st graders): Love Surrounds Us - Love Surrounds Us without Boundaries

Butterflies (Pre-K): Celebrating Me & My World

Nursery (Infants and Toddlers): free play

December 13, 2015:

High School (9th-12th graders): Coffee House Sunday @ Beans & Brews

Junior High (6th-8th graders): Coming of Age - Stillness, Silence, and Meditation

Seekers (2nd-5th graders): Love Will Guide Us - Love in our Congregation

Pathfinders (Kindergarten-1st graders): Love Surrounds Us - Forgiveness

Butterflies (Pre-K): Celebrating Me & My World

Nursery (Infants and Toddlers): free play

December 20, 2015:

ALL-AGES Worship - Solstice Service

December 27, 2015:

High School (9th-12th graders): UU Values in Society

Junior High (6th-8th graders): Coming of Age - Starting with Us

Seekers (2nd-5th graders) & Pathfinders (Kindergarten-1st graders): CHILDREN'S CHAPEL with Liz

Butterflies (Pre-K): Celebrating Me & My World

Nursery (Infants and Toddlers): free play

Opportunities and Announcements

Friday, December 4 at 7 p.m., South Valley's own Buzzard Whiskey will perform at the Intermountain Acoustic Music Association's Local Concert Series here at SVUUS.

Please see the December Beacon for details or contact David Lane at david.j.lane @comcast.net.

DECEMBER 6TH (FIRST SUNDAY):

Heretics and Saints: Unitarian Universalist History with John Cooper

Session II - UU History through the Enlightenment(s). Was there ever a Unitarian King? What is the Edict of Torda and why does it matter? Did Unitarianism and Universalist come to American soils or did they grow here? If you want to know the answers to these and other questions, join us for the second installment of Unitarian Universalist history, for exploration of Unitarianism and Universalism through the enlightenment and the origins of American Universalism and American Unitarianism.

Opportunities and Announcements con't

DURING THE HOLIDAYS MAKE ROOM FOR A UUSC GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Every November Unitarian Universalists across the U.S.A. join together to support the annual Service Committee's Guest At Your Table and membership efforts.

For an amazing 75 years this human rights organization has been helping families, children, and people in dire circumstances at home and around the world.

It is so simple to participate. You can go to their website and donate online. uuscs.org (Be sure to note you are part of SVUUS in Utah.) Also, you can use a pre-addressed envelope. Some are available in the social hall. However, probably the most fun, is to take a box and keep it on your family table. Then as often as you like, place the box on a plate, talk about the people on the box and other UUSC projects and programs like providing available safe water to drink. However you decide to participate, it needs to be completed by the first week in January. A basket will be located in the foyer for collecting boxes

Pamphlets about the program called "Stories of Hope" also are available. These tell the stories of those people who are featured on the 2015 boxes. As the pamphlet says " And, most importantly, you join a coalition of others who put their hands to the arc of the universe and help it bend toward justice."

Just an added note, UUSC is nationally recognized as a non-profit organization that spends its funds wisely and has dedicated and skilled local individuals on site and involved in their active efforts wherever they may be.

Thanks so much for taking part.

Connee Gates, local rep.



Women's Group Annual White Elephant Christmas Party

GIFT EXCHANGE AND POT LUCK DINNER

Wow, that's a mouth full! Yes, it's that time again! Sunday, December 6th is the date! 7:00 PM is the time! Join me at South Valley's Social Hall for Fun, Food and Hilarity.

Please bring an inexpensive "WHITE ELEPHANT" gift to exchange. (Please make sure it is a true WHITE ELEPHANT gift. If you aren't sure what that entails then GOOGLE IT.)

If your last name starts with an A-B-C-D-E, bring an appetizer or finger food or a fruit side dish.

If your last name starts with an F-G-H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P, bring a savory side dish or salad.

If your last name starts with an Q-R-S-T-U, bring a dessert.

If your last name starts with-V-W-X-Y-Z, bring breads or rolls with butter

Please remember that some of us are Vegan/Gluten free people, but not that everyone.

PLEASE RSVP! Email Cynthia Dobbs at cdobbs56@gmail.com or call 801-979-5951 if you have any questions. PARTY ON!!!

Opportunities and Announcements con't

CONCERT:

December 18th: "Winter Light: A Concert to shine light and beauty into the darkness:"

Please mark your calendars for a concert at SVUUS on Friday December 18th at 7:30 pm. We will feature the Salt Lake Encore Chorale and South Valley Singers in a concert of holiday music from Africa, Eastern Europe, England and the United States. The concert is free to the public, and there will be a freewill donation that will be split between SVUUS and Interfaith Power and Light. I hope that you will be able to come and enjoy the evening with us.



SIGN FOR SOLSTICE

With all the hate and intolerance spreading through this valley and the Earth, let's have a sign that gives our message of love and justice. Join us in our campaign for a "Sign for Solstice." Then, we can say to people, "We're that church on Highland with that beautiful sign" instead of "We're that church next to Kentucky Fried Chicken."

We'll also be spiffing up our restrooms off the social hall and supporting our live video streaming of services. Your gift will make a difference. Our goal of raising \$11,000 and then adding \$3,000 from facilities will help us spread our message of love and hope!

If you want to support us from afar, you can donate online through our website:

<http://www.svuus.org/stewardship/online-donations/>

In love and community,

Rev. Patty, minister and Edward Granda, President of the Board of Trustees

Monday Menus*

The next session of Monday Menus begins January 11 and it NEEDS *you* to succeed! Have a passion or talent you can share with your SVUUS community? Lead a Monday Menu class offering! It can be a single night, or a series; whatever suits you and your topic. The next session will begin in January. Please contact Sinnamon Wolfe (sinnamon.wolfe@cst.edu) or Liz Martin (DRE@svuus.org) or Rev. Patty (Minister@svuus.org) with your ideas!

*From 6:00-6:30 p.m. celebrate Meatless Mondays by enjoying a homemade soup (vegan and gluten-free) and sharing potluck accompaniments. Then from 6:30-8:00 choose from different classes/discussion groups/activities to enrich our personal and community journey!

Communications Committee looking for new members

The Communications Committee would love to have you on our team! We have been working hard to establish a process for streaming our Sunday services to both YouTube and the nursery. No technical experience is necessary, and the process is very easy. If you are interested contact Russ Martin at russell.martin@svuus.org or Ann Hess at annhess360@gmail.com.

Opportunities and Announcements con't

2016 Comprehensive Sexuality Education

at South Valley Unitarian
Universalist Society

6876 South Highland Drive



Our Whole Lives (OWL) Classes are comprehensive sexuality education workshops designed as a collaboration between the Unitarian Universalist Society and the United Church of Christ, taught by trained volunteers. It equips participants with accurate, **age-appropriate** information in six subject areas: *human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture*. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, Our Whole Lives not only provides facts about anatomy and human development, but also helps participants clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality. For more information about this curriculum, please visit www.uua.org/re/owl.

Grade Level	Day/Time	Parent Orientation	Dates	Suggested Donation*
K-1st Grade	Mondays, 6:30-8:00 p.m.	January 11 at 6:30 p.m.	January 25 - March 7 (8 sessions)	\$25 for SVUUS / \$40 wider community
5th-6th Grade	Mondays, 6:30-8:00 p.m.	January 11 at 6:30 p.m.	January 25 - March 7 (8 sessions)	\$25 for SVUUS / \$40 wider community
7th-8th Grade	Mondays, 6:30-8:00 p.m., plus two retreats	January 11 at 6:30 p.m.	January 25 - April 25 (25 sessions: 13 weeks plus 2 weekend retreats)	\$50 for SVUUS / \$80 wider community
10th-12th Grade	Sundays, 12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	January 10 at 12:30 p.m.	January 24 - April 17 (12 sessions)	\$35 for SVUUS / \$50 wider community

*The donations go solely towards materials and training of new facilitators. The lower suggested rate for PLEDGING members and friends of SVUUS is offered because this program is largely funded through the church budget as one of the missions of our Religious Exploration ministry.

REGISTRATION IS LIMITED! Please contact Liz Martin, SVUUS Director of Religious Education, at dre@svuus.org or 801-604-2973 to register. Attendance at the parent orientation is **mandatory** for your child to participate, and at that time we will collect detailed information and donations.



Grocery Card Program



The Finance Council has decided to change grocery card sales from every Sunday to once per month, the second Sunday of each month. However, if anyone needs cards on another Sunday; we'd be happy to oblige. You can ask a Council member (Kristy Jensen, David Norton or Phil Quigley) and we can arrange for an individual sale.

Save the Date		
January	10-11	OWL Classes
Upcoming Events		
December	4	IAMA Concert featuring Buzzard Whiskey
December	5	Interweave Potluck Dinner
December	6	First Sunday Potluck and Class
December	6	Womens Group Annual Christmas Party
December	10	Prayer Shawl Ministry
December	12	Second Saturday Suppers
December	18	Winter Light Concert
December	19	Over 55 Christmas Party



South Valley Caring Circle

The members of the Caring Circle provide practical support and/or pastoral care. Please contact the chair of the committee if you need or know of someone who needs our support. To ask for help you may also use the Caring Book by the name tags. The Caring Book is also for joys and concerns; we hope you will share moments from your lives.

CARING CIRCLE
Contact Information

Dot Clayton (Chair) 801-561-4776
Email: jbedotclay@comcast.net

Sandy Dreis	801-256-0825
Mel Welliver	801-963-8258
Peter Verschoor	801-944-1653