

The Beacon



South Valley Unitarian Universalist Society

Volume 36, Issue 12

December, 2016

December Theme: Communion



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December 4: "When Our Presence Is Needed: Why I returned to Standing Rock"

When are we truly needed? How do we know? Our world is at a crossroads that is embodied by that small and mighty community called Oceti Sakowin on the banks of the Cannonball River. The initial demand to re-route the pipeline has transformed into the larger question faced by our Earth: how do we save the Earth for the generations to come? Let us listen together to that call and for the answer of your heart. Your presence is needed here.

Rev. Patty Willis

December 11: "Giving to the Stranger: Why do we give to people faraway that we will never meet?"

For November and December, we are splitting the plate with Maher, the life-changing work of Sr. Lucy Kurien in India. Why do we reach out to a community on the other side of the world? Who are our brothers and sisters and what is our responsibility to them? Perhaps you will begin saving money for a plane ticket to go meet the people of Maher. This could be a dangerous service!

Rev. Patty Willis

December 18: "Do You See the Baby Crying?"

An uncommon story of survival I heard from Rev. Sandor Kovacs, a Unitarian minister in Transylvania, carries a message for us of hope and responsibility. What do you see that no one else sees? Come and find out how Sandor's great-aunt became his grandmother, too. Mary Lou Prince is writing a new song for this woman of courage. Come and be inspired!

Rev. Patty Willis

December 24: December 24th, 2016 at 6 p.m. The Christmas Carol will frame lots of wonderful singing!

Did you know that Charles Dickens was a Unitarian? Come and be proud! Our Christmas Eve service is a South Valley tradition.

Rev. Patty Willis

December 25: "Our Waiting is Over, The Day Has Come:"

Let us spread Christmas cheer through singing, listening to poetry and enjoying the warmth of community. Bring your favorite Christmas treat so that we can share hospitality together after the service.

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

SVUUS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mac Lund, Co-President 801-273-0462
Jan Vanderhooft, Co-Pres. 801-943-3879
Christine Hurrill, Vice Pres. 801-493-9316
Ann Hess, Secretary 801-577-1678
Cody Pace, Treasurer 801-518-8399
Cynthia Dobbs, Trustee 801-979-5951
Nolan Newbold, Trustee 801-336-8919

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Luci Malin (Chair) 801-440-3776
Sandra Roach 801-562-9465
Phil Quigley 801-942-0049
Lory Schantz 801-856-7834

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Cindy Martin 801-944-9723
Email: admin@svuus.org
Office Hours: Tue & F 1:30-4:30 pm
Mon. Wed. Thu. 1:30-5:30 pm

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Liz Martin (Director) 801-604-2973
Email: dre@svuus.org
Office Hours:
Sunday: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Tuesday: 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Other hours by appointment

REGAL COUNCIL

Kris Berg 801-414-3051

CARING CIRCLE

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

SVUUS Web Site
www.svuus.org

SVUUS News & Community Email Lists

South Valley has two email lists, one for official announcements and the other for communications within the congregation.

If you wish to sign up for either or both of these lists, please visit: www.svuus.org/our-community/online/

To send a message to the list, simply address it to
news.svuus.org

Message from the Board

Communion has a few different meanings. The main meaning is the holy sacrament instituted by Jesus at the last supper. Communion has also come to mean the meeting or worship service where communion is given. However, communion has taken on another meaning as well. It is the unity of the members of the church (or body of Christ). That means the congregants in the Christian church exhibit communion as they unite together. But, do we need to agree about Christian beliefs, or any beliefs, to truly unite together?

The words "communion" and community have the same roots. They both contain "co" and "uni" which means together as one. Isn't that exactly what our church means to do? I personally feel privileged to be part of a church named "Unitarian Universalism." It encompasses unity and universality, meaning togetherness and fully accepting.

So, for me, communion is not some mystical event when Jesus ate supper with his 12 disciples. For me, it is anytime a group of people can eat supper together, have an auction, have a bread ceremony, visit with members various places, or do anything important and be together.

As we now enter the holiday season, may we, as a church, join together in our fully accepting tradition. We do not need a president of the United States to tell us to accept others. We do not need a common Christian credo. We do not need a traditional family. Like the song says "All you need is love. Love is all you need." My heart is full when I think of my larger South Valley family. May this Christmas season and May the New Year help us all remember the ideals necessary to be together and to be fully accepting. May we bless each other. Amen.

In Community,
Jan Vanderhooft



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From Our Minister

December Newsletter
December Theme: Communion
December, 2016

Henry David Thoreau built a house in the woods by Walden Pond to experience communion with life. To do that, he had to be vulnerable to nature, to the wind, and cold and wildlife. What he did was a new concept for white Americans especially those living in the eastern United States. He was doing an experiment, going against what was the norm of using one's wealth to distance oneself from nature, to have thicker walls. One of the aspects of Japanese culture that I loved the most was that living in communion with nature was the ideal. Traditionally, homes were built with the directions in mind not only of the sun's rising and setting but of the way that the wind traveled through. When there was a typhoon, our neighbors told us to open our home in the front and the back and allow the wind to travel through. Our house moved in the wind. Our neighbors lived in communion to such an extent that a whole family of flying squirrels lived in their attic and mice lived in the storehouse with the bags of precious rice. I wonder if their habit of communion opened them to becoming friends with us, the first white foreigners they had ever met.

In the United States, architects design houses to keep the wind, snow, flying squirrels and mice outside. More and more, our prosperity of larger homes with a bedroom for each child and technology keep us from communion with each other too. For years, one of my favorite times was riding public transportation because I would meet people. I love to talk with strangers. On a ride back to my home in Eau Claire, Wisconsin from Champaign, Illinois, where I was attending school, I met a religious Catholic sister who changed my life. She said to me that she was on the way to a retreat center because she needed to fill her well. "Life," she told twenty-two-year-old me, "can drain our resources. Our wells can dry up. We need a time and place of quiet to fill our wells." Our two-hour conversation opened my eyes to my own feelings of being drained and helped me understand what I needed to do to replenish myself. Now, when I ride public transportation, my fellow travelers are almost all hooked up to devices, neatly tucked away from any possibility of communion. We don't even dare catch each other's eyes!

Oceti Sakowin, the seven council fires that have come together in North Dakota, exemplify a long-awaited healing communion of people united in prayers for the common good of the Earth. While there, I spent most of my time communing. People had cell phones but they could only be used on Media Hill, a windy, freezing place above the camp on the northern side. Even there, when the wind was unbearable I squeezed together with people in a sheltered spot to the side of a trailer. We called our little refuge the Internet Café. Even there, we smiled and laughed with one another. My first night, I sat on that hill to text "I am safe," to Lou and watch the apricot super moon rise above the camp. Along with the beauty of that huge moon, was a deep sense of my vulnerability to the wind and cold that whipped around me and to the people who were my fellow campers. The elders of the camp spoke at community meetings of the presence of infiltrators in the camp trying to figure out the next moves of the actions that happened each day in Bismarck. Yet, I never felt any sense of distrust that would usually stem from that knowledge. We were generous with our laughter, conversation, help in the kitchen, and the way we kept the port a potties clean for the next occupant. Coming from that experience of communion, I asked all of you at our Bread Communion service to be more generous in your service to our community. We passed around signup sheets for helping with the building (Facilities), the kitchen (Hospitality), and Stewardship. I'm grateful to the many of you who signed up. I think that if we want to experience the kind of communion in our congregation that I felt at Standing Rock, we must step up and help each other. We must be unafraid to smile, laugh with one another, give our wisdom, and prepare our most delicious dishes for the potluck after our first Sunday service of the month. Consider unplugging yourself from technology when you get out of your car in our parking lot. Perhaps you have a piece of advice or even just a presence that is what someone needs. That is what I found over and over again at Standing Rock. I believe that this could happen among us and that it will make South Valley an even more beautiful place.

In love and hopes for communion,

Patty

News from the Social Action Council

Nov - Dec Offering Split Recipient - Maher

In the spirit of serving our wider community, we at South Valley split our Sunday morning worship service offering with a charitable organization whose works align with our values and principles. For November and December we have chosen Maher, an organization that provides refuge for destitute women, children and men from all over India and helps them improve their lives, irrespective of gender, caste, creed or religion. More than 4,000 women and children have been served and have been gained life-saving self reliance, confidence and dignity.

Maher's mission is to identify and understand the root causes of violence and despair experienced by women and children in India and to provide services to those in need. Maher encourages family reunification when possible and provides spiritual counseling, medical care, vocational training for women, and education and developmental services for children. They work towards creating sustainable communities by addressing economic, educational, health and environmental issues in Indian villages and slums.

"Maher" in the Marathi language means "Mother's Home": a haven of hope, belonging and understanding. Maher was founded by Sister Lucy in 1997 and is a United Nations registered non-governmental organization (NGO). Learn more about this fabulous organization at: www.mahershram.org

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The prayer shawl group will hold its next meeting on Thursday, December 15, 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.

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

South Valley's Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) will be offering a series of three very special fundraising dinners in preparation for our semi-annual retreat with renowned author and lecturer Christopher Penczak.

Dinner in the Dark – A darkened and blindfolded four course meal

January (exact date TBA) - \$30 - Remove that most important of senses and your others become heightened. We don't want to give away the menu, but be assured of the highest quality and variety. Fun for the entire family (child friendly menu upon request).

7 Course Meal

February (exact date TBA) - \$50 - We will pull out all of the stops. This luxurious meal will include a selection of wine, appetizer, soup, salad, sorbet, fish or poultry, a main course with vegetable, and a dessert.

Christopher Penczak will be offering a weekend seminar on his book "The Plant Familiar" at the Aura Soma center in Lava Hot Springs, ID on March 23 - 26.

Happenings Hub

Every Sunday after service. Visit our new Happenings Hub in the Social Hall after each Sunday Worship Service to find out about all of the goings-on in our community. You will find information and signup sheets for all kinds of activities and volunteer groups, such as Wellspring Wednesday offerings (our community nights), social action opportunities, hikes, committee needs. Contact Susan Eyzaguirre eyzsooz@gmail.com for more information.

From The Welcoming Team



Alaina & Cami Hendricks

Alaina discovered Unitarian Universalism through Ogden Pride. At the time, she was almost engaged to Cami and looking for a new welcoming church. Delighted with what she heard, Alaina and Cami started to collect every UU brochure and pamphlet they could get their hands on. (There are so many of them!) They were delighted to finally and officially join a welcoming religion that encourages their relationship and their spiritual heritage and wonder.

Cami and Alaina met at BYU, where Alaina was studying illustration and Cami was studying sociology. They met through BYU's LGBTQ student-led group and bonded over Disney, musical theatre, animals, and being short.

They couldn't officially date because of BYU's honor code, but did room together as best friends and started dating as soon as they could. They got married this past June.

They both love to travel—Alaina spent 8 months in France—and are looking forward to traveling more together in the future. They currently have one little yellow lovebird (named Gypsy, after the musical) and are in the process of adopting a Yorkie!

SVUUS has been an incredible home so far and they are excited to grow with the rest of the congregation.



Opportunities and Announcements

IT'S GUEST AT YOUR TABLE TIME!

Yes, it's Guest At Your Table time at South Valley UU Society this month. If you participated in Bread Sunday on Nov. 20, you likely picked up your GAYT box and Stories Of Hope pamphlet already. This longtime tradition at UU churches across the country provides children and adults opportunities to discuss critical refugee problems and the many needs of struggling people around the globe.

You can get involved with this humanitarian Unitarian Universalist Service Committee project easily. Just pick up a copy of "Stories of Hope" and colorful box at our Happenings table. There are several options: use one of the provided envelopes for your check, go online to contribute at gayt@uusc.org. or, you can involve the family all month with a colorful box at the table where you eat at home. Talk about stories of hope and hate you have read or heard about, and donate coins and currency as often as you wish. Boxes will be collected in early January. The need is great! Help fight hate. Participate. Thank you! Connee Gates

NEW TO UU?

Come and share your story: How did you find us? Tell us about your journey. We'll introduce you to Unitarian Universalism. Facilitated by Rev. Patty Willis and Caren Smith. Sunday, December 4th after service.

First Sunday Potluck

That's right, it's back! Join us for the First Sunday Potluck for December 4th. Sunday, right after our worship service. See you Sunday!

Community Chat December 4th: "The Congregational Christmas Gift to the Church."

Wellspring Wednesdays

We need your ideas!

We had a terrific lineup of classes this session on Wellspring Wednesday evenings. And Liz Martin's soups were a wonderful treat. We had deep discussions about Unpacking Racism and Privilege, the meaning of Christ and Christianity to UUs, a primer about Samhain (the origins of Halloween), we learned how to de-stress during the holidays, make Origami decorations, and about the meaning of Yule, and we had great fun playing Strategy Games! All of these offerings were brought to us by knowledgeable, dedicated South Valley UU members who generously gave of their time and talent. Thank you, Liz, and all those who contributed. You're awesome!

Rev. Patty, Liz, and I would like your input for 2017. We'd love to see these Wednesday offerings become a larger part of South Valley activities. You, the members of the congregation, have so much to offer and we all have this tremendous opportunity to share knowledge, learn and have fun together!

So, please, take the time to tell us what topics or offerings you'd like included in our 2017 Wellspring Wednesday classes. Send us your thoughts and ideas. They could be fun, serious, creative, educational, thought provoking or playful. Use your imagination. Email your comments and ideas to me at colecasto@comcast.net. We're looking forward to your ideas! Thank you, Cole

Emergency Response Team

Your Emergency Response Team has been working hard for our South Valley community. We have: taken care of some unsafe issues in the building, met with Cottonwood Heights Police Department who assessed our building and grounds for safety and security (and responded to suggestions made), stocked and placed First Aid kits in accessible places throughout the building, placed an accessible wheelchair on the first floor closet, stocked each classroom with band aids, put up signage for a variety of things, and more!

Look for new evacuation route signage to be posted soon throughout the building and be aware that we will have an evacuation drill on a Sunday soon to come.

If you have any issues, suggestions, or questions of the ERT, just email Caren Smith (smitharies@yahoo.com) and she'll make sure the Team responds ASAP.

Opportunities and Announcements Continued

Compassionate Service Holiday Opportunities

Join us as we help homeless and/or struggling members of our larger community this holiday season. We are supporting Volunteers of America programs here in SLC with 2 different projects:

SOUTH VALLEY HOLIDAY GIVING TREE

Bring gift items for adults and youth to our GIVING TREE located in the church foyer through December. Items needed include:

- Fun & games: coloring books for youth/adults, Sudoku game books, word search books, pens/crayons/colored pencils/markers, composition notebooks, ear buds, \$5 gift cards to grocery stores.
- Personal Items: Lip balm, hairbrushes/combs, nail care tools, deodorant, NEW socks & underwear (especially men's boxers), NEW house slippers, water bottles, soda pop, new or gently used jeans. (Note they do not need shampoos/lotions/soaps at this time.)

CHRISTMAS DINNER at the VOA Youth Resource Center

Help by providing menu items for this special Dec 25 meal! Needed: Prepared cheesy potato casseroles, jello salads, green salads, fresh pies, & Pillsbury Crescent rolls to bake (pop-n-fresh). Social Action Council will provide the ham and a vegetarian dish. We also need a few festive volunteers to help serve and cleanup (5 - 7:30 pm on Christmas Day- and it WILL BE fun!!) Contact Susan Eyzaguirre at eyzsooz@gmail.com or visit the Happenings Hub to sign up.

Holiday Potluck Brunch

A Saturday brunch is being held on Saturday, December 31st, from 10 a.m. -12:00 p.m. to "ring out the old; ring in the new". Sponsored by our Welcoming Team, this is an opportunity to mingle with old friends and to make new ones. Please bring a dish to share-anything for breakfast or lunch will be fine. Come to the Cottonwood Cafe and enjoy this time to relax, celebrate, and enjoy the company of great people!

The Senior High Youth are hosting a fund raiser Sunday, December 4th to earn money for our trip to General Assembly in New Orleans, June 2017!!

We will offer a BAKED POTATO BAR this Sunday, after church, with all the fixings! The Community Chat begins at 12:30. You will have plenty of time to come down after the service for a tasty feast, support the youth and then join the community chat.

Suggested donation of \$7/person or \$15/family. Vegan, omnivore, and gluten free friendly.

The youth will also have a small table of amazing goods to buy for yourself or to give as gifts:

- Homemade dog treats wrapped, ready for gift giving.
- Buttons with quotes, designs and pronouns. Pronoun buttons are free!
- Car Wash passes that are a fabulous gift for our Utah winters! You can get them for teachers, mail carriers, grandparents, babysitters, the person who sells you coffee every morning!
- Sign up for a rock-mat making class. Come by to see examples. It will be a fun time!

More surprises in store for you!

So please join us for a meal and support our Senior High Youth going to General Assembly in June! Thank you!!

Any questions? Christy Montrone-Burns 801-671-8263

Religious Education, Growth and Learning

Sunday Religious Exploration for Children and Youth

December 4:

Butterflies (Pre-K) - "Fruit Chalice"
 Pathfinders (K-1st) - "Habitats"
 Trailblazers (2nd-3rd) - "We Revere Life"
 Seekers (4th-5th) - "The Power of Stillness"
 Junior High (6th-8th) - Buddhism Wrap-up
 High School (9th-12th) - Prep for Lunch Fundraiser

December 18:

Butterflies (Pre-K) - "Helping Others"
 Pathfinders (K-1st) - Faith in Action
 Trailblazers (2nd-3rd) - Faith in Action
 Seekers (4th-5th) - Faith in Action
 Junior High (6th-8th) - Discussion: Field Trip and Judaism in current events
 High School (9th-12th) - "Surprised by Beauty"

December 11:

Butterflies (Pre-K) - "Chalice Flannel Board"
 Pathfinders (K-1st) - "Lifecycles"
 Trailblazers (2nd-3rd) - "Signs of Caring"
 Seekers (4th-5th) - "The Power of Presence"
 Junior High (6th-8th) - Intro to Judaism
 High School (9th-12th) - "Listening and Speaking with Poetry"

December 25:

ALL-AGES SERVICE (everyone upstairs)

PLEASE REGISTER YOUR CHILD(REN) and YOUTH!!!

EVERY YEAR we ask you to register your children/youth for our Sunday Religious Education program (it's an important way for us to have accurate current information, track our services, and keep in touch!). Please do this by going to <http://tinyurl.com/SVUUS-RE2016>

Upcoming Events

December	4	First Sunday Potluck
December	4	Baked Potato Bar
December	4	New to UU Class
December	4	Community Chat
December	15	Prayer Shawl Ministry
December	25	CHRISTMAS DINNER at the VOA Youth Resource Center
December	31	Holiday Potluck Brunch



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: ibedotclay@comcast.net

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