

the Outlook

Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Verdugo Hills,
Where all are accepted;
Where we cherish the process of developing our own spiritual path; Where we respectfully support the paths of others.



January 2012
Volume 17
Issue 1

MINISTERIAL MUSINGS

This is a season when we are reminded to think about what we truly want for our lives in the New Year. With that in mind, I went through my files to find some stimulation for that process for myself. What I found was a prose-poem by Oriah Mountain Dreamer. You may have seen it before, as I had. But I think that we can still find new possibilities in old messages. So I share them with you as a potential inspiration for your journey - and our journey together - into 2012.

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dream, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon. I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain! I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it, or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own, if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, to be realistic, to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself; if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul; if you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see beauty even when it's not pretty, every day, and if you can source your own life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine, and still stand on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have. I want to know if you can get up, after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains you, from the inside, when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

As we look toward the year ahead, I hope that we can find ways to be our best selves and to honor each other in our shared values and our differences. I believe that we are up to the challenge, and I hope that you will join me in living it to reality. Best Wishes for the New Year!

Blessings, Rev. Betty

Unitarian Universalist Church
of the Verdugo Hills
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Our Mission Statement

"UUCVH is a growing and welcoming community, offering a diverse spiritual landscape for an informed search for truth and meaning. We promote social justice, work to affirm the dignity of all people, and respect the interdependent web of all existence."

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Last year at this time I made a prediction for the year 2011: Spiritual growth and fulfillment for our congregation.

As I look back, I believe we have achieved just that under the guidance of our excellent minister, the Reverend Dr. Betty Stapleford. We are blessed with new members and a rededication of existing members. Attendance at Sunday services has increased. I see us as a lively and connected group of parishioners.

Of great importance is the fact that we now have quite a few new Chalice Lighters. We have more than the 20% required to apply for a Chalice Lighter Grant. Tom Stapleford has very kindly agreed to write a grant on behalf of our congregation. Thank you, Tom. In order to write that grant proposal he will need to know just how we plan to spend any grant money we receive. Even though actually receiving a grant may be some time off, it is important for us as a congregation to consider how best a Chalice Lighter Grant might be spent. As a congregation we will make those decisions.

The list of what I think is most obvious is short: The Sanctuary, the Fellowship Hall, and the kitchen.

Those are my personal major concerns. What are yours? And how would you prioritize your list or my list? Send me an e-mail. Or call me on the phone. Or collar me in the Fellowship Hall.

We are blessed with an accomplished pianist, Dan Brodsley. His wife, Rosemarie Pfinder, brings us new delights with her richly elegant vocal solos. Thank you both. You enrich our services with your talents.

As always, I want to thank our various committees and individuals who put in time and effort to keep our little ship afloat. Without your efforts we would surely founder.

Thanks to you who sent in your Guest at Your Table envelopes. That money supports UUA outreach.

And thanks to each of you who fill our Blue Basket throughout the year. Your donations are vital to the Burbank Temporary Aid Center (BTAC). As you may know, we have been supporting BTAC since its inception. The phrase "Think globally—act locally" resonates with me. It is important that we take care of our neighbors.

My best wishes to you for the year 2012.

In solidarity,

Ann Miller Rillo

This Month in UU History

(Frank Shulman’s “This Day in Unitarian Universalist History”, available for browsing in the UUCVH office – take a look!)

1784: Sir George Savile died. He worked in England to change the laws that forbid Unitarians to own their own churches or to perform weddings, funerals or baptisms.

1811: Charles Sumner was born. He toured Europe for several years to learn its languages and social changes, and then returned to America to improve education, abolish slavery and to advocate world peace. He survived an attack on the U.S. Senate floor by a South Carolina congressman who supported slavery.

1820: Caroline Severance was born. At first she believed a woman’s role was as wife and mother, but increasingly became involved with women’s rights. She helped found Los Angeles’s first Unitarian church, Unity Church.

1830: The First Brahmo Samaj temple, which is a Unitarian form of Hinduism, opened in India.

1845: Quillen Shinn was born. A Unitarian minister, he traveled by horseback more than 25,000 miles a year preaching in every state and started about 50 churches.

UUCVH BOARD MEETING MINUTES DRAFT 12/21/ 2011

Present: Vice President Howard Richman, Secretary Cleo Rogers, Treasurer Deane Phinney, Trustees Gary Clark, Paula Hallowell, Minister Rev. Betty Stapleford.

Absent: President Ann Rillo, Trustee Pat Berberian,

Vice President Howard Richman called the meeting to order at 6:10pm.

Minutes: Minutes for the meeting of November 16 were approved as distributed.

Treasurer: Deane distributed the financial statement dated November 21, 2011. It was noted that expenses for the two line items of Membership and Hospitality need further clarification and separation. The statement will be filed for review.

Job Descriptions: A discussion was held on the need to complete and compile job descriptions and make them available to the congregation. Howard will coordinate information on this.

Facilities: Paula explained the need for more CF cards to be used for recording Rev. Betty's sermons for use on our web site. By consensus it was agreed that they be purchased and the expense be attributed to Worship Supplies.

Chalice Lighters Grant Proposal: A discussion was help on wording for our application for a Chalice Lighters Grant. Deane agreed to work on the proposed wording and bring it to the January board meeting. Gary, Cleo, Paula and Rev Betty agreed to work with Deane.

Canvass Committee: The committee has met and will meet again in January in preparation for the proposed training session to be held on Sunday, February 5 following the Salad Luncheon.

Minister Report: Rev. Betty shared her many activities in the community since last meeting. She announced that the next Cluster Vespers will be held at the Studio City Church on Feb 1, 2012. She will be starting a Welcoming Congregation Group in February.

Rental Policy: After discussion it was MSC that the rental policy be amended to state that members may rent the facilities for 50% of the existing rate with no deposit required. Insurance will not be required as long as the activity is covered under our church policy. Building use for family weddings or memorial services is a member privilege with no fee requirement.

Membership Growth: Howard will contact Ken Brown about the possibility of hiring a consultant on membership growth to meet with us.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cleo Rogers, Secretary

Movie Night

Paula Hallowell, Director

THIS MONTH'S MOVIE
Thu., January 12, 2012
7 PM

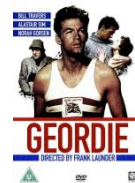
What Dreams May Come
1998, PG-13, 113 minutes



Robin Williams plays Chris Nielson, an everyman who dies in a car accident and goes straight to heaven. Overcome with grief, his wife, Annie (Annabella Sciorra), commits suicide and ends up in warmer climate. Undeterred, Chris embarks on an epic journey to hell (with angelic Cuba Gooding Jr.) to find his despairing wife. Lush special effects will make this movie resonate in your own dreams.

NEXT MONTH'S MOVIE
Thu., February 9, 2012

Geordie (Wee Geordie)
1955, NR, 93 minutes



Hoping to win Jean (Norah Gorsen) the girl of his dreams, wee Scottish lad Geordie (Bill Travers) undertakes a bodybuilding regimen that packs on the muscles, wins the lass and lands him a spot on the British Olympic. But when radio reports mistakenly declare that gold medal-winning Geordie has a new love, he must find a way to win Jean's heart all over again. Frank Launder directs.

SOCIAL ACTION CIRCLE

As we look back on the year just passed, we recognize how meaningful this church is to the community. We have given so much to various organizations that improves the lives of some whose lives need enriching. So, let's not stop now!

The Social Action Circle is already making plans for 2012's actions. At our recent meeting, we voted to repeat the successful experiment from last year: the SAC race! Briefly, those who wish to participate will donate increments of \$10 and designate their favorite charity. They will sit around a table and pass paper sacks, each containing a playing card. When the passing is done, three cards will be chosen from another deck to determine first-, second-, and third-place winners. First place will have the honor of having 60% of the total donations going to their charity. Second place will get 30% and third place, 10%.

Last year, \$465 was donated, and everyone who joined in enjoyed the game. (I wonder where the odd \$5 came from?) The Southern Poverty Law Center, Postconsumers.com, and the UU Legislative Ministry California all were beneficiaries of the event. This year, your favorite charity can be the winner.

Look for the sign-up sheet and chase down one of the SAC members to pay your entry fee. Remember, you can buy more than one chance. (One member bought 10 chances for \$100 last year and was one of the winners.) A check made out to the church can be used to enter, for tax purposes. When you sign up, be sure to designate the charity you wish your winnings to go to. We will be holding the contest on February 12. Come join the fun!

Thank you to all who gave Christmas presents for the children. I hope you got a chance to see the array of presents that went to the kids. Again, the social workers were oohing and aahing over the wonderful gifts "their" kids were getting.

Look for another poker night coming up soon.
Jerry Buchanan, *Chair, Social Action Circle*



A BOOK WORTH TALKING ABOUT

I read a review recently of Stephen Pinker's latest book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*. One hears about Pinker, since he has written and lectured for so many years now, from his post as a Harvard psychology researcher and professor, about how the mind actually works. How the evolved physical and chemical parts of us make it possible for us to read, reason, conclude. Pinker's new book, the NYT reviewer says, is really about violence. In the course of evolution and history, have human beings become less violent?

Intrigued by the book? What are your thoughts? Let's several of us read it and then meet a month later to talk about it.

I would like to read this book. If there are others out there who want to read it and then discuss it, please let me know.
Edith Young

SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION GROUP

Sun., January 1, 2012
12:30 PM

Come join the second meeting of the Spiritual Exploration group facilitated by Rev. Betty right after the Salad Luncheon. Whether you're interested, or just curious, we hope you will attend.



GNU UU GROUP (Younger Adults)

Tue., January 17, 2012
5 PM

At UU Verdugo Hills



GETTING TO KNOW UU I & II

Sun., January 8

&

Sun., January 22,
12:30 PM

Rev. Betty will be facilitating session I on the second Sunday and session II on the fourth Sunday, from 12:30 to 2:00 PM every other month. For potential UUCVH members and others who would like to explore Unitarian Universalism, their own spiritual journeys and the workings of our congregation. For more information or to sign up, please contact Rev. Betty at bstaple4d@aol.com or 805-630-8117.

Holiday Family Night



WHAT IS IT?

Jeff Hamilton's guest, Brenda Dillon showed everyone what she just unwrapped as Manon Washburn conducted a fun white elephant gift exchange game during the Holiday Family Night on Saturday, December 10, 2011. Everyone was in a festive mood as they enjoyed the evening of good food, good company, games, and the singing of holiday songs.



GAMBLING FOR CANDY

The big winner of the dreidel game during the Holiday Family Night was Tino Caravaggio on the left. The other players, left to right were David Tyner, Jacque Phinney, Christy Caravaggio, Rev. Betty and Jeanne Akerley, (taking photo).

Announcements



Rev. Betty and Tom will be in Moorestown, New Jersey from January 14 to 16 to celebrate Tom's mother's 100th birthday. Please contact the UUCVH office in case of an emergency that needs ministerial coverage.

Rev. Betty will be attending the PSWD chapter retreat of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association in Rancho Palos Verdes from January 23 to 26. In case of an emergency, she can be reached on her cell phone. You may also call the UUCVH office to get contact information for another UU minister who will be on call.

A Month of Sundays

January 1

“A Bunch of Old Men Sitting Around, Talking”

Members of Our Church

Come join us on New Year’s Day as we discuss the upcoming year in news and politics. You’ve all seen the corner table at Fellowship time, when (mainly) old geezers seem to be in deep conversation about something or other. Well, we’re going to eavesdrop and find out what that’s all about. This time, however, we’re all going to join in the conversation about what lies ahead for the world.

January 8

“God’s Politics; Separation of Church and State”

Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford

In recent years in this country, we have been encouraged to believe that God has a particular political agenda and that there are those who know what it is. However, most Unitarian Universalists don’t believe that is true, and our federal laws prohibit any congregation with tax-exempt status from endorsing a particular political candidate. This Sunday’s service will invite your participation in exploring what some of the issues are that we can and do support.

January 15

“The Great Fire”

A fictionalized story by M’lou Dietzer, *Guest Speaker*

The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire devastated the city. The story relates heroic efforts to rebuild and restore this famous city, unlikely heroes, plus efforts to prevent discrimination against the Chinese and other “non-whites.” The story includes a history of earthquakes.

January 22

“Loving Ourselves”

Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford

We are often told that we should love others and take care of their needs before our own, and that is certainly a worthy aspiration at times. But airplane safety instructions encourage us to take care of our own oxygen supply before helping others, something that could save both lives. On this Sunday, we will look at the ways that self-love can be a positive for both ourselves and others. Maybe it is all about us.

January 29

“Becoming a Mormon”

Ross Blocher, *Guest Speaker*

As part of a podcast investigating extraordinary claims, Ross and his friend Carrie spent six months taking classes with the Mormon Church, making a bunch of new friends, and even getting baptized. Hear the story, and find out why Ross still doesn’t believe the teachings of Joseph Smith.

Save the date!

- Every Friday Watercolor Class at Manon's, 10 AM
- Sun., Jan. 1 Potluck Salad Luncheon, 12 Noon
Spiritual Exploration, 12:30 PM
- Mon., Jan. 2 Knitting Circle, 7 PM
- Sun., Jan. 8 Getting to Know UU I, 12:30 PM
- Mon., Jan. 9 Membership Committee, 7:30 PM
- Wed., Jan. 11 Women's Potluck Luncheon, 11:30 AM
- Sun., Jan. 15 Early Coffee Hour, 9:30 AM
Social Action Circle, 12 Noon
- Mon., Jan. 16 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
- Tue., Jan. 17 Outlook Deadline
Gnu UU Group, 5 PM
- Wed., Jan. 18 Board Meeting, 6 PM
- Sun., Jan. 22 Getting to Know UU II, 12:30 PM
- Thu., Jan. 26 Committee on Ministry, 7:30 PM



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