

January 2021



UUCOD Monthly Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM REV. BARBARA



Tim Nguyen-Photographer

January 2021

Teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom" Psalm 90

It seems to me that *wisdom* has something to do with the mind and the heart. It is certainly more than knowledge and information.

I heard this years ago: *You cannot put your foot into the same stream twice* and I wanted to puzzle it out. Then I learned that our cells are renewing constantly, literally. And I thought, well, maybe you cannot even put your same 'self' into the same river twice. But what is a "self" I wondered.

I gathered information. I learned that our cells don't all renew and change at the same rate. Our skin cells change every 2-3 weeks, a heart renews its cells about every three years and some of the cells, if damaged

begin to be replaced with new cells in a few weeks. Our bones take about ten years for complete renewal. You likely know that tooth enamel is with us our whole lives.

What about our brains? What about our minds? Well, they are not the same things. It is clear that we human beings have the power to be willing and able to keep learning and integrating experience and information and grow our minds. It is almost a miracle that we can be honestly curious about what we once thought we knew for certain. That we can practice becoming less reactive to what is said, or what goes on around us, and become more thoughtful about how we respond, even if that is not the example that was set for us?

But then how does knowledge become wisdom? I know the Psalm has it centered in the *heart*, but heart is a metaphor for love. I think wisdom has something to do with love. The desire to be loving and be loved. To behave in loving ways. To know you are beloved on this earth.

But where does that *love* come from? I think it may part of our creation, in our DNA, in the very dust out of which we were created. Or did it infuse all our cells when we took our first breath? And do those cells pass it on to their next generations every three weeks or

years? This I know, while its origins may be mysterious, cultivating a *heart of wisdom* takes practice.

So as another year begins, here I am still wondering about the big mysteries and trying to persist in practices that will encourage my heart to become more wise. I think that is why you are here too. I think that is why a place such as UUCOD was created. Why it still matters. Why it is like the cells of a body, constantly renewing and evolving.

A congregation is a living entity. Human institutions evolve as well and work only as well as the humans who serve their core purpose. Unitarian Universalism is and is not the same as when I came into its embrace...30 years ago. We can be a disputative bunch. I prefer to think of such times as lover's quarrels. Sincere justice centered love wrestling with and adapting to the world's challenges.

Every evolution of UUism has its own urgencies in light of the larger issues of our times. One of our ministries going forward is to deeply hear the call and wisely live into the challenges of Widening the Circle of Concern.

May we keep our minds and hearts open to see how the promises of our Universalist and Unitarian theologies will guide our shared lives in the years to come. May we practice and encourage each other to renew, evolve, grow, healthy minds and whole heart centered lives.

May this be a good new year.
Hugs,
Rev B

SERVICES

January 3, 2021

HOPERS UNITE!

Worship Leader: Rev. Tom Owen-Towle

Worship Associate: Hiroshi Glenn Yamaguchi

We live in a harrowing time of gloom and doom, yet we Unitarian Universalists are inherently a hopeful (not optimistic) lot of religious pilgrims. May we unite hopefully as 2021 is launched!

The Rev. Dr. Tom Owen-Towle was ordained in 1967 and is still preaching, hither and yon, throughout our PSWD. When the pandemic is over, Tom will return to his community commitments: volunteering at the homeless center; singing in nursing homes; and mentoring young people. He is always delighted to be the guest minister at our UU Church of the Desert.

January 10, 2021

The Promise of Imperfection

Worship Leader: Rev. Ian W. Riddell

Worship Associate: Bryna Blum

How might letting go of the need to be perfect in all ways open our hearts and minds and hands to possibility and to the depths of our strength? Join us as we explore embracing our imperfectness and imagine some new possibilities.

January 17, 2021

Where Do We Go From Here?

Worship Leader: Rev. Barbara Fast

Worship Associate: MDIB (Ministry of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging)

The Rev Dr. King asked that question in 1967. As we reflect on his vision and sacrifice, we are invited to reflect on what that means in our individual and communal lives here at UUCOD. We are invited to cultivate a state of mind that moves us away from

preconceptions and resistance, often called 'beginner's mind' . It can help us be more willing to be curious and open to possibilities. Members of the MDIB will share some of our process and discernments so far in relation to the UUA's Widening the Circle of Belonging.

January 24, 2021

Searching for Walden's Instagram

Worship Leader: Matthew Pargeter-Villarreal

Worship Associate: Betty Bender

"Henry David Thoreau is a much celebrated figure in UU history. His rugged determination that led him to renounce the world and move to a small cabin where he would write *Walden* has served as an inspiration to generations of future UUs. Although he may not seem to have much in common with the endless stream of social media influencers that we see today, join Matthew Pargeter-Villarreal for a discussion of how the two are more alike than they appear to be different."

January 31, 2021

Gathered Here

Worship Leaders: Rev. Barbara Fast

Worship Associate: Sarah Gonzales & Chris Eager

It is still a bit of a mystery to me, the sustaining strength that comes from a gathered community of common purpose and shared values. That, even as we struggle to stay connected virtually, we find renewed power as we are and a clarified vision of who we want to become. Now is the time that we are asking you to reflect on and consider renewing your financial commitment to this community so that we can continue to say: "Whoever you are, however you are, whoever you love, wherever you are on your faith life journey, you are welcome here."

COLLECTIONS BASKET

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood.
Martin Luther King Jr.

CALENDAR

Friday, January 1

New Years

8:00 am-Men's Breakfast-**ZOOM Meeting**

11:00 am-Coffee and Conversation-

ZOOM Meeting

Saturday, January 2

5:00 pm-Social BUUtterflies Happy

Hour-**ZOOM Meeting**

Sunday, January 3

10:00 am-Worship Service-**Live**

Streaming

11:00 am-Sunday Together-**Zoom**

Meeting

Tuesday, January 5

2:00 pm-Stewardship Committee-**ZOOM**

Sunday, January 17

10:00 am-Worship Service-**Live**

Streaming

11:00 am-Sunday Together and Share

the Plate-**Zoom Meeting**

2:00 pm-Chalice Circle-**ZOOM Meeting**

Monday, January 18

3:00 pm-Chalice Circle-**ZOOM Meeting**

Tuesday, January 19

5:00 pm-Board of Directors-**ZOOM**

Meeting

7:00 pm-Chalice Circle-**ZOOM Meeting**

Wednesday, January 20

12:00 pm-Chalice Circle-**ZOOM Meeting**

5:30 pm-BIOPOC-**ZOOM Meeting**

Meeting

Wednesday, January 6

6:30 pm-Facilities-**ZOOM Meeting**

Thursday, January 7

12:00 pm-Loving Kindness Meditation-**ZOOM Meeting**

Friday, January 8

11:00 am-Coffee and Conversation-**ZOOM Meeting**

Saturday, January 9

5:00 pm-Social BUterflies Happy Hour-**ZOOM Meeting**

Sunday, January 10

10:00 am-Worship Service-**Live Streaming**
11:00 am-Sunday Together-**Zoom Meeting**
11:30 am-Finance Committee-**Zoom Meeting**

Tuesday, January 12

6:30 pm-Membership Committee-**ZOOM Meeting**

Thursday, January 14

12:00 pm-Loving Kindness Meditation-**ZOOM Meeting**
6:30 pm-Social Justice Committee-**ZOOM Meeting**

Friday, January 15

11:00 am-Coffee and Conversation-**ZOOM Meeting**
1:00 pm-Chalice Circle-**ZOOM Meeting**

Saturday, January 16

5:00 pm-Social BUterflies Happy Hour-**ZOOM Meeting**

Thursday, January 21

12:00 pm-Loving Kindness Meditation-**ZOOM Meeting**
2:30 pm-Chalice Circle-**ZOOM Meeting**

Friday, January 22

11:00 am-Coffee and Conversation-**ZOOM Meeting**

Saturday, January 23

2:00 pm-Church Council-**Zoom Meeting**
5:00 pm-Social BUterflies Happy Hour-**ZOOM Meeting**

Sunday, January 24

10:00 am-Worship Service-**Live Streaming**
11:00 am-Sunday Together-**Zoom Meeting**

Monday, January 25

2:00 pm-Super Seniors-**Zoom Meeting**
5:00 pm-Art Talk-**ZOOM Meeting**

Tuesday, January 26

4:30 pm-Worship Committee-**ZOOM Meeting**

Thursday, January 28

12:00 pm-Loving Kindness Meditation-**ZOOM Meeting**

Friday, January 29

11:00 am-Coffee and Conversation-**ZOOM Meeting**
1:30 pm-Afternoon Book Club-**ZOOM Meeting**

Saturday, January 30

6:00 pm-**Variety Show**
5:00 pm-Social BUterflies Happy Hour-**ZOOM Meeting**

Sunday, January 31

10:00 am-Worship Service-**Live Streaming**
11:00 am-Sunday Together-**Zoom Meeting**

STAYING CONNECTED

Staying Connected

UUCOD Men's Breakfast: Friday @ 8:00 am

Sunday Together: Sunday @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Loving Kindness Meditation: Thursday @ 12:00 - 12:30 pm

Coffee & Conversation: Friday @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Social BUterflies Happy Hour: Saturday @ 5:00 - 6:00 pm

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Plate Collections for Sunday, December 27: \$193.00



Lifespan Spiritual Growth Program Offerings

Winter-Spring 2021

The Life Span Spiritual Growth Committee is excited to offer you a wide range of topics this term.

Here's what one of our congregants said about the classes...

"Over the past months while sheltering in place, I have had the pleasure of taking three UUCOD online classes and getting to know fellow congregants, I probably never would have gotten to know if not on Zoom. I want to encourage you to sign up for the next round of classes when they're offered. I learned so much and had a such great time "in the classroom" with my fellow learners."

Visit our website for more information on the classes and to register.

**Lifespan
Classes**

News from the Care Team:

Friends,

Holidays can be difficult. This year especially so. PLEASE reach out if you're not well, need a meal or just want someone on the other end of the phone to listen with a caring heart.

Don't be shy. We are YOUR Care Team and are here for you.

Bryna Blum

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Migrant Education Holiday Food Box Collection & Toy Drive Was a Huge Success! THANK YOU!

On Tuesday, December 8th the Migrant Education Center in Thermal held their annual Christmas Party for the migrant farmworkers and their families of the Eastern Coachella Valley. While the Coronavirus forced us to change how we participated in this well-loved UUCOD tradition, it did not change our heartfelt generosity!

Spearheaded by the compassionate co-chairs, Joni Paddock & Carol McDaniel, this year's campaign began a new tradition. Hearing of the food insecurity many East Valley families faced, they organized the first *Thanks & Giving Food Boxes* and asked for donations. Through the generosity of UUCOD members and friends, we were able to deliver 47 food boxes, with each box containing at least 25 individual non-perishable food items. With the

Coronavirus not allowing people to work, these donations went a very long way towards feeding hungry families during the holiday season.

The toy drive looked very different this year too. Instead of bringing unwrapped toys to the church, which were then delivered to the party, a money donation link was set up. Your generous donations totaled \$1,250. It was converted into Walmart E-Gift Cards using our UUCOD Scrip program and emailed to the Migrant Education Program. The staff then shopped for toys and gifts for the children and youth of these families.

On the afternoon of the party, Santa was there to greet the families as they drove through, Caravan style, to pick up the non-perishable food, toys, & plated food.

This annual UUCOD tradition continued again during this challenging time with the support of so many of you. The staff of the Migrant Education Center send their immense gratitude to each of you.

January's Share the Plate is Ophelia Project

The Ophelia Project, which is our Sunday, January 17 Share the Plate recipient, was established in 1997. The project gets its name from Dr. Mary Pipher's book "Reviving Ophelia" that describes the emotional damage done to young girls in early adolescence through lower expectations, sexual harassment and harmful social gender norms. Ophelia was a character in Shakespeare's "Hamlet" who ends her life when she cannot cope with the trials and tribulations suffered by young women of her age.

The Ophelia Project was launched as a support system to build self-esteem in young women and to improve their academic achievement. Since 1998 the Ophelia Project has quietly made the difference for 4,900 teen girls in the Coachella Valley. The Ophelia Project is a team mentoring program focused on providing educational and skill-building opportunities for adolescent girls to acquire positive values, increase self-esteem, and broaden their horizons. The program is delivered by professional women who have been certified in the Ophelia Project model of Coachella Valley and volunteer their time as mentors.

Ophelia Project programs address many of the issues young women face while providing a support system to compliment family and school. Program content is revised annually to remain current with the circumstances of our social environments. Program delivery is structured through activities planned and led by volunteer mentors throughout the school year. Ophelia Project activities are normally held on school grounds during school hours and help to guide young women in Grades 8-12 through high school graduation, and to prepare them for college and careers. The Ophelia Project also has several community partners who contribute to the Scholarship Program each year to support project participants, all of whom are the first in their family to go to college, to continue their education beyond high school.

Most of all, the Ophelia Project provides a program where young women are treated with dignity and respect, in alignment with our first principle, so that they can flourish and become the leaders for justice. Please give generously.

BOARD NOTES

These notes do not constitute official minutes of the December Board of Directors meeting but are intended to inform the congregation of matters discussed at the meeting. Official minutes of this meeting will be available after the next Board meeting on January 19, 2021.

At the meeting of the UUCOD Board of Directors on December 15, 2020 the following matters were discussed and/or decided:

Attitude of Gratitude cards were sent to: Gene Kain, Evelyn Kain, Hiroshi Yamaguchi, Diana Leslie, Steve Kerr, Jack Fitzsimmons Peter Mathews, Barbara Storms, Fran Hoag,

Rob DuWors, Walter Gendell, Mel Wilkinson.

Discussed the AV Congregational Business Meeting on Sunday, December 13, 2020 and the subsequent congregational vote authorizing the Board to spend up to \$40,000. There were additional voluntary contributions offered during the meeting.

Discussed the pledge drive preparations, communication details and timing plus our concern of this year's necessity of conducting the pledge drive electronically may impact the connection between congregants in our community.

Discussed potential agenda items for the Church Council scheduled on Saturday, January 23, 2:00-4:00pm.

Approved COVID-19 Protocols for a Lifespan Spiritual Development Class as well as a Care Team Holiday Project both of which will be held outside on the grounds of UUCOD.

Approved compensation for the instructor of a Lifespan Development Class, Race and Racism: Going to the Core.

Heard a proposal for use of Google Drive and Google Docs. Approved by consensus to gradually move storage of Church documents to Google Docs, starting with the groups most interested.

Agreed to a joint meeting between the Board and Ministry of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging to form a covenant.

Moved to approve the Finance Committee's' recommendation to provide a \$3000 budget for the remainder of this Fiscal Year to Ministry of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging to assist in meeting their goals.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, January 30th: 6:00-8:00 pm -- BINGO BASH (via Zoom)

Watch for announcements on how to pre-register!

Newsletter Deadlines: The deadline for the Newsletter is always Wednesday morning. If you are going to be late, call or email the Administrator at admin@uucod.org asking to reserve space. The newsletter needs to be on the website by 3 pm, Fridays.

[Visit our website](#)

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