

the Mountain Chalice



Unitarian Universalist Community of the Mountains

December 2024

UPCOMING SERVICES

Our Sunday Services are at 10:30 AM in person and via Zoom.

If you've been exposed to Covid, RSV, the flu, or are just not feeling well, please attend online.

TO JOIN THE ZOOM SERVICE AT 10:30 AM ON SUNDAYS:

Online via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/746107217>

Meeting ID: 746 107 217 # • Passcode: 688010

Audio by phone: Dial in: 1 669 900 6833 or 1 408 638 0968

Meeting ID: 746 107 217 # • Passcode: 688010

... See Page 12 for Kid-Centered Activities ...

Monthly Theme: The Practice of Presence

December 1 Holy Ground, Holy Grounding

Rev Kevin Tarsa and
Lindsay Dunckel, Worship Associate

Staying grounded and present to ourselves, each other, and to what IS, will be vital in the months ahead. And so, we turn to our December theme, the practice of presence, and to considering what can ground us on the journey.

You are invited to bring a small rock – one that feels good in your hand - to share with others.

December 8 Humming Under the Bodhi Tree

Rev. Kevin Tarsa and Cheryl Morris, Worship
Associate, with the UUCM Choir

Bodhi Day, as it is sometimes known in English-speaking cultures, commemorates the "awakening" of the Buddha. Having been introduced to suffering in the world after a thoroughly protected early life and having tried already many of the existing paths for pursuing peace of mind, Gautama Buddha vowed to remain in meditation until he found it. In this service of singing and meditation, we will seek peace of mind and heart for an hour, continuing our search for our own grounding.

December 15 Rapt Presence: Priceless.

Rev Kevin Tarsa and
Carol Nimick, Worship Associate

"Building our capacity to open with curiosity and empathic care

to another's experience, feelings, and needs also allows us - and actually requires us - to open more deeply and compassionately to ourselves as well, strengthening our capacity for meeting all life's challenges." So says the Rev. Cat Cox, who offered us an online introduction to deep dialogue in October. As the winter holidays and holy days approach, with potentially challenging interactions with family, friends, and loved ones as well, we'll prepare our hearts and our own empathic care and curiosity as best we can.

PLEASE NOTE: You are invited to bring a homemade ornament to hang on the UUCM Christmas Tree. Be sure to label it with your name if you would like it back. (See craft ideas on pg. 13!)

Saturday

December 21 Solstice Celebration at 7:00 PM

Beth Karow, with Rev. Kevin Tarsa

Our annual Solstice Eve Celebration aligns the rhythms of our hearts and our spirits with the rhythms of the earth and sky.

Continued on page 4...

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Rev. Kevin Tarsa
UUCM Minister

From the Minister

Living Love Through the Practice of Presence.

My dear post-election people, if ever there were an invitation to practice being truly present, here it is. It is an invitation that arrives now in general as well as in numerous specific moments throughout each day.

We know from experience that the incoming administration in Washington will throw up daily distractions, actions to shock and rile and keep people chasing, endlessly chasing, the latest urgency, the most recent not-to-be-believed threat or outright harm, the day's outrage. We can count on it, and, in fact, it's already begun. And thus, so has the need, already, to pay attention to staying grounded and whole and present as best we are able, so that we can face each day with as much wholeness, skill, and resilience as we can.

Despite my own introverted, contemplative propensities, I encourage you and us to approach this not as a set of parallel solitary journeys or a goal to be reached in isolation, at least not solely in isolation. For the inevitable demands of the coming months and years, whether we rush out to meet them or wait for them to arrive at our door, we are going to need others to help us stay connected to ourselves, to each other, and to the larger reality that holds all of us. This is part of what religion and religious community is here for.

This month, as we begin to move into recognizing and acting upon what is possible, we will be inviting and practicing together being present. We'll be looking for and lifting up tools and opportunities to practice grounding ourselves. Moving into the new year, we'll be exploring spiritual practices together so that you and all those new folks seeking community here will have chances to discover what helps you to remain anchored in who you are and in the values that define your integrity.

I know, this is not exactly a "Happy Holidays!" message.

The risk every December is that the holiday and holy day season will be experienced primarily as shallow and commercial, even crass. For me, this year, the approaching holidays, rooted in this season of longest nights before the days begin to lengthen in the new year, take on more meaning than usual. I'm looking for depth within them, anchor points, more substantial sustenance.



For those of us on the progressive end of the religious spectrum, those of us who can usually take or leave these holy days, this is a potential gift stirring within our angst and disappointment – that we will need what and how we celebrate this season to matter. We will need these days to guide us toward our own ability to be truly present – present to what is, present to who we fully are, present to each other and others, and present to the deep sense that we are part of a much larger rhythm and reality.

In the midst of this twisting journey, with all its distractions, may we together find the kinds of presence that matter.

With care,

- Rev. Kevin

MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS



*Rev. Kevin's office hours
are usually held
Tuesday through Thursday afternoons.*

Email Admin@uugrassvalley.org
or call the office at (530) 274-1675
to schedule an appointment



Board of Trustees

*Taylor Carey, President,
UUCM Board of Trustees*
President@uugrassvalley.org

These columns are getting harder to write. While one wants to maintain a calm and even magnanimous acceptance of the results of the November 5 election, that would be a lie. I'm not calm, I have no equanimity whatsoever around the horrors the electorate has visited upon us. I am disgusted, I am angry, and I am completely beyond understanding the forces and attitudes that placed a sexual predator, rapist, and convicted criminal at the head of the most powerful government on earth.

Please don't misunderstand. I absolutely do not see this in partisan terms - preserving our 501(c)(3) status. What we have just witnessed cannot be explained as mere politics. This is a cultural, organic, and perhaps, even viral shift. Liberals appeared to lose their way. In rising to the defense of everyone, they appeared to reject or ignore the implications of the bell curve, the curve of natural distribution: stuff happens whether you like it or not. Conservatives, tired of always feeling "less than" for their choices simply dropped the hammer on logic, goodness, and truth to make a point ... badly.

As a person with a significant disability, I have always registered outside the norm of distributive characteristics. There is nothing I can do about it. Some things really are as they are. I've experienced the pain of being excluded from public education because of my disability. It is one of the great ironies of my life that while I was denied access to the public schools of Los Angeles County, I was welcomed in the reactionary wilds of Idaho and Alabama.

Go figure.

Stay with me: these unrelated elements are relevant. While because of direct, personal experience regarding Southern racism I detest the State of Alabama with most of my heart, I remain aware that in many ways, it treated me with kinder regard to my special needs than my beloved home state of California.

This is the point I want us to cling to as we sway untethered in the post electoral apocalypse of 2024. Trump voters are not necessarily the scourge of the earth as we may wish to consign them.

Okay, I hear you asking, what does this have to do with the Board of Trustees right here at UUCM? Well, partly this: like Reverend Kevin, who has spent a great deal of time coming to grips with the horrors of the moment, the Board is eager to

learn from the members what is on their minds regarding the present and the future. ***We earnestly hope that on December 8, after the service, and again on December 10, via zoom, that you will share your views with us.*** Please feel free to ask us whatever you want to about what's on your mind, but more than anything, we want to hear what is going on for you.

I have shared my perception that the results of this election are both more and less than they appear. But that's just my personal appraisal. More importantly, what is yours? What does the election mean to you and yours?

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Unitarian Universalism is that its adherents demonstrate among the highest levels of intellectual achievement of all religious affiliations. I get it, some of us are not Einstein, but our denomination over the centuries has included some of history's most profound intellectuals.

I am one of those who believe that intellectual greatness did not end with the Age of Enlightenment. Even today, amidst X, Facebook, and Instagram, the intellectualism of our predecessors resides as robustly and energetically as ever. Sure, Google, TikTok, and whatever else proliferate in the era of post-scrivener communication, dominate the modes of communication, but the dissemination of ideas, those things that capture the imagination and compel exploration, remains the same. On November 5, 2024, the electorate thought, "What happens if I connect this wire to that one?"

We're finding out.

-Taylor

UUCM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

JULY 2024 - JUNE 2025

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Taylor Carey | <i>President</i> |
| Pam Kisor | <i>Vice President</i> |
| Gail Schulz | <i>Treasurer</i> |
| Lin Jovanovic | <i>Secretary</i> |

Members at Large:

Chuck Champlin, Jeff Gold & Charlene Dugan

Board meetings are open to all members and friends starting at 1:30 PM on the third Wednesday of each month.

If you wish to address the board, please give at least two days notice so the agenda timing can be adjusted.



Words from the Worship Team

Cheryl Morris and Carol Nimick
Worship Team Co-Leaders
Worship@uugrassvalley.org



November was an intense, emotional month for most of us, and December always holds its own set of challenges. How can we find a level of equanimity given all that has happened, and all that lies ahead? Our December theme is **Living Love Through the Practice of Presence**. "The practice of presence?" What does that even mean, and how do we practice it as we are buffeted by external and internal forces? Not to mention the demands of the holidays!

These are the kinds of questions the Worship Team grapples with as we work with Rev. Kevin to craft services that will challenge, move, inspire, and support all who attend Sunday services at UUCM. I found the pre- and post-election services to be particularly meaningful and since I was sitting in the congregation, I could be fully "present" to them. I noticed how many visitors came and how engaged they were, along with us "regulars." The hunger for community felt almost tangible.

Moving into December and beyond, there will be many opportunities for us to be present for one another. Let's explore together what it means and how we can make a practice of it.

- Cheryl & Carol

Upcoming Services

Solstice Eve Service, continued from page 1...

Come, center yourself in the midst of the holiday hustle and the challenges of these days. Singing, silence, candlelight, fire, and hot, spiced cider guide us through this turning edge of the year.

December 22 Still! Still? Still.

Rev. Kevin Tarsa and
Randy McKean, Worship Associate

At this still point, when the sun's annual journey along the morning and evening horizons pauses for a time, preparing to change direction, we, too, slow down for this "moment of magic" to notice the gifts ready right here, to recognize the powerful opportunity between what happens and our response to it, and to see if there is a piece of clarity just below the surface. And later on this day...

December 22 A Blue Christmas Service:

2:00 PM Offering Refuge from Holiday Cheer
Rev. Kevin Tarsa and Allison Rivers

Come, gather in the spirit of presence—perhaps not the presence

of cheer that is often expected and maybe even forced this time of year, but the presence that allows us to sit with all that we feel, especially the sorrow that might weigh heavy on our hearts. This is a time to acknowledge that grief is as much a part of the human experience as joy and that it is okay and even necessary to carry both.

Tuesday,

December 24 The Edge of Christmas: A Christmas Eve Service
4:30 PM Rev. Kevin Tarsa with Lindsay Dunckel, Worship Associate, and the UUCM Choir, featuring Betsy Haydon, Harp

Come, gather in open-hearted, open-minded community to celebrate "the gladness of Christmas, which is Hope, the spirit of Christmas, which is Peace, and the heart of Christmas, which is Love." Carols, poetry, candlelight, messages for all and all ages to notice and celebrate what wants to be born in us.

You are invited to bring a simple refreshment to share.

Tuesday,

December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Singing Meditation
7:30 PM Rev. Kevin Tarsa

The magical energy of Christmas Eve midnight services gets channeled this year into this intimate, less formal (and not so late) service of candlelight, singing, silence, connection, mystery, and wonder, with Rev. Kevin at the piano. Come, center, settle, sing, listen within, connect, breathe, be...

December 29 On the Brink of a New Year

Tracy Pepper and Cheryl Morris,
Worship Associates

A tradition since 2005, we will gather informally for Cider Sunday. We use this time to reflect on the year that is ending and anticipate what lies ahead. The tone may be more somber than celebratory this time, but what is unchanged is the strength, courage, and joy we gain from gathering together, in good times and bad. Please join us!



Joys & Sorrows Service

SECOND THURSDAYS OF EACH MONTH

This month's service: Thursday, December 12,
from 7:00 to 8:00 PM.

New: Gentle Music beginning at 6:30 PM

Join us for an intimate, candle-lit service of singing together and sharing the joys and sorrows in our hearts.



Laura Harter
Leader, Membership Team
membership@ugrassvalley.org

Membership

to support women's right to chose, children's right to food, animals' right to live, our right to clean air and water, and the planet's right to a livable climate. I am comforted to know that UUs are discussing the possibilities for renewal and actions to rejoin the pieces of our vision for a more compassionate world.

Membership Musings

Recently, Jim Bauer posed some interesting questions about UU and UUCM. He was not sure who to ask or how to get answers. I invited him to share his questions and reflections on important topics. This is the second in a series of articles by Jim; topics will range from exploring UU values to UUCM operations and workings. I hope these articles will give us all something to think about and increase our collective understanding of our church home.

As always, the Membership Team invites your feedback and input. Let me know if you have an idea for a topic. You can reach us at membershipteam@ugrassvalley.org.

— Laura

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS & POLITICAL UPHEAVAL

By Jim Bair

"UUCM is a non-profit and must remain non-partisan, so how do we relate to the new "political" situation? While we cannot endorse, reject, or make comments about candidates, we can discuss politics and issues. So how do we discuss our feelings and beliefs when an election poses new political realities?"

We stand aghast with election results that do not reflect our values of pluralism, transformation, justice, generosity, equity, and interdependence with love as the central value. With UUCM services and numerous consolation meetings, we stand together to mourn a breakage and look at the pieces of our dream of a just, equitable, and sustainable world. It's not bipartisan politics, but rather it is seeing a reality different than what we expect and want.

Our vision includes empowering those in need and those long oppressed. Words of wisdom abound, and our activism may turn to "think globally and act locally." A favorite story of mine is about a boy walking on the beach strewn with starfish washed up from their submerged homes. He's picking up each starfish and tosses it back into the sea. A passer-by stops and says to the boy, there's thousands of starfish along miles of beach, so you're not going to make any difference. The boy tosses and says, "it made a difference to that one."

I am committed to make a difference by standing with and assisting those oppressed whether it is caused by color, race, sexuality, gender expression, personality, or physicality. I plan



UU101

UU 101 happens the first Sunday of every month at noon in the library. Current members and newcomers are all welcome. We'll discuss UU Principles as well as UU history and UUCM's mission. Grab your refreshments and come on in!



Kathryn Young
Endowment Committee
Endowment@ugrassvalley.org

Endowment

Simple Gifts Thank Yous

Thank you for the generous Simple Gifts from Theresa Houtman, Dorothy Hitchcock and Betsy Haydon honoring their birthdays!

Simple Gifts are a great way to honor special events in your life, or the passing of friends, family, and fellow UUCM-ers, or anything you feel like acknowledging with a special contribution. We would love to talk with you about other kinds of Endowment gifts, too.

Please contact us at:

Endowment@ugrassvalley.org with your questions!



Parish Care

Gwen Eymann
Leader, UUCM Parish Care Team
Caring@uugrassvalley.org

We all need extra care sometimes on our journey through life.

The UUCM Parish Care Team is here to help organize practical support for members and friends through times of need, offering support such as home or hospital visits, transportation to local appointments, a ride to UUCM on Sunday, preparing or delivering a meal, shopping, and essential errands. The Parish Care Team also sends cards of caring and celebration, makes friendly phone calls and visits, and assists with hosting and refreshments at memorial services.

As Unitarian Universalists we believe that we all share in the responsibility for one another's care, and we invite all members and friends of UUCM to become actively involved in this wonderfully important opportunity for service. If supporting this work interests you, please fill out this brief [Parish Care Team Volunteer Survey](#) to identify tasks you would be willing to do on occasion. The Parish Caring Team will contact you as needs arise.

For more information, to request care, or to share word of someone in need of care, please contact us at: Caring@uugrassvalley.org



PARISH CARE TEAM MEMBERS:

Gwen Eymann, *chair*,
Jenny Dewey, Robin Hart,
Anne Lyon, Cheryl Morris



Lay Pastoral Care Team

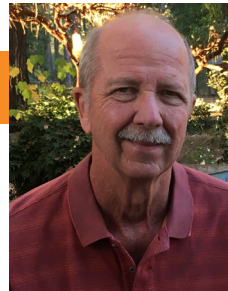
Are You Facing a Life Challenge?

UUCM's Lay Pastoral Care Team (LPCT) offers a confidential, caring presence to congregants undergoing stressful life challenges. With the support and guidance of the minister, team members commit to be available for weekly caring conversations of up to one hour, and for the duration of a congregant's current challenge or until a time of closure arises naturally.

Please contact a member of the Lay Pastoral Care Team when you are facing difficult and stressful portions of your journey and if you feel that a companioning presence from one of our team members might be helpful to you.

LAY PASTORAL CARE TEAM MEMBERS:

George Dunstan, Carol Grant, Sue Gregory, Carol Richey, Corrie Silva, and Tom Wernigg, or you can email the whole team: LayPastoralCare@uugrassvalley.org



B & G Team

Wally Holtan, Leader,
Building & Grounds Team
B-G@uugrassvalley.org

Getting Stuff Done While Having Fun!

The Building & Grounds Team manages our day-to-day facility needs and goals for improvements for our church's physical environment. We seek volunteers that are willing to help us meet those needs through work parties and project development. These are individuals who like doing projects, repairs, cleaning, or working outside in gardens and yards. There are no requirements for joining, other than enjoying hands-on tasks and working with others.

Whether you are new to UUCM or have been a part of it for a while, if you would like to meet people while doing some fun and interesting things, the UUCM Building & Grounds Team is a good place to start.

-Wally

Holiday Happenings!



Come shop at the UUCM

Holiday Bazaar

- ★ **Holiday Decor & Gifts** ★
- ★ **Handmade Treasures** ★
- ★ **Delicious Baked Goodies** ★

... Shop after Services ...
December 1, 8, & 15

CHRISTMAS DAY POTLUCK! AT 1:00 P.M.

Wednesday, December 25

Join Rev. Kevin & your UUCM Family!
All are welcome!

Carols and Christmas Stories
around the fire with Rev. Kevin Tarsa
after the feast!

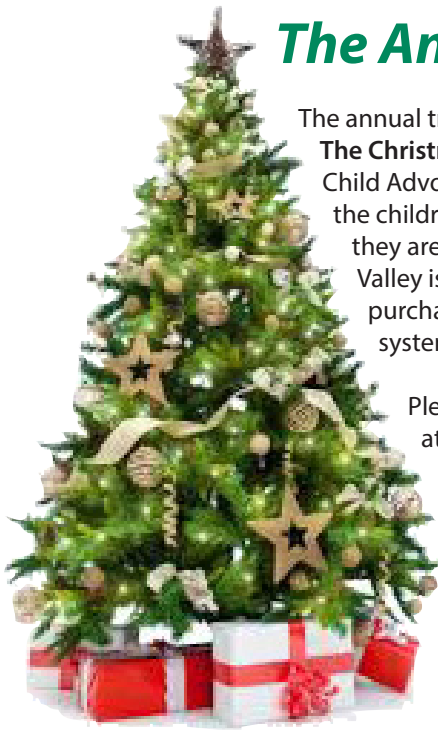
SIGN UP HERE:

uugrassvalley.org/christmas-potluck/
Be sure to list your food offering(s)



<https://www.uugrassvalley.org/christmas-potluck/>

The Annual Christmas Giving Tree Project



The annual tradition of providing Christmas gifts for the children of our community is ready to begin. **The Christmas Giving Tree** is up in the foyer and the gift tags are in place. We have chosen CASA/ Child Advocates as our recipients for this year, and they are asking for 2 to 3 new books for each of the children. The gift tags have the initials for the child, their ages and genders, and the subjects they are interested in. They range in age from 3 months to 18 years old. The Book Seller in Grass Valley is supporting our mission by providing 20% off when you show your gift tag for the purchase of these books. Now, that's the spirit!!! We can give a gift of love to a child in the foster system and we can support our local book store.

Please take a tag from the tree and give a gift of reading to a child. There will be someone at the Christmas Giving Tree to help you sign up. Please, when you take a tag, sign in on the sheet. If you choose to buy your books at the Book Seller, take your tag with you and present it at the counter for a 20% discount, but be sure to save the tag to use to label your gift when you bring it into UUCM. All gifts must be back no later than **Sunday, December 8**, and they need to be gift wrapped and have the label visible on the front of the present. We are asking for new books only for these Christmas gifts, but if you have favorite children's books, you can always donate them to the CASA lending library.

Blessings to this generous and caring community,

- Gwen Eymann-Parish Care Team and Keith Johnson, Social Justice Team.

Art & Aesthetics Team



Linda Siska, Leader,
Art & Aesthetics Team
art@uugrassvalley.org

An Exciting New Art Exhibit!



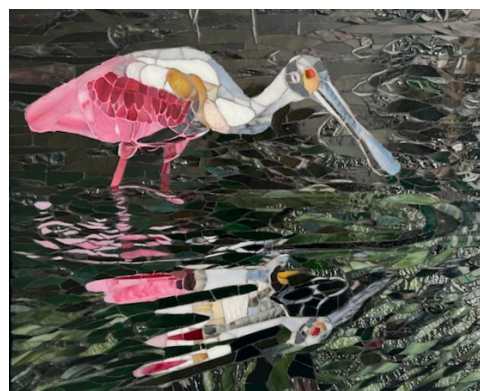
Lin Jovanovic MOSAIC EXHIBIT

IN THE UUCM
LIBRARY
DECEMBER 8
THROUGH FEBRUARY

ARTIST'S RECEPTION:
DECEMBER 15,
AFTER SERVICE

For the next three months, the Art and Aesthetics Team is privileged to host an exhibition of the work of our own Lin Jovanovic in the UUCM library. Lin is a mosaic artist. She takes broken pieces of pottery or tile and uses them to create something new, something even more beautiful. That process was the theme for the month of November, so it seems especially appropriate to be showing her work at this time.

Lin's artwork will be on display by the second Sunday of December; her official reception



will be December 15. Please have a sneak peek if you just can't wait, and then join us at the reception to celebrate her talent and creativity and to ask all your burning questions.

HERE, IN HER OWN WORDS,
IS LIN'S STORY:

I took my first mosaic class over 25 years ago and I was hooked! What a blast to break up tiles with a hammer and challenge my brain to construct a design with those broken pieces and the spaces in between.

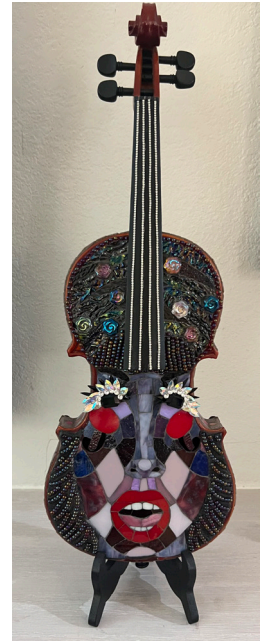
Career and family limited the time I could put into my art, but moving up to Grass Valley and finding a house that had a ready-made studio and a storage area (affectionately called "The Hoard") removed many limitations and opened me to explore and deepen my skills and passion for this art form.

I work with almost any material that takes my fancy – some commonplace in this work like tile, stained glass, smalti (small bits of mosaic glass), and dishes – some more fanciful like figurines, nuts, metal bits, fused bobbles, stones, or shells.

In looking at my work to prepare for this exhibit, I noticed my drive to master many techniques and mediums in mosaic art. Two-Dimension is one expected choice, but I love 3-D and sculptural expressions, the magic of the light of glass-on-glass mosaics, the whimsy of pique assiette* (crochery), the way a color freedom mosaic bends the mind, and the wonder of micro mosaics to fascinate. For me these are all ways to play and to bring an experience to the viewer that is visceral and sparks curiosity. I appreciate you taking a look.

* From goldbugmosaics.com:

"Pique assiette or trencadis is a style of mosaic that incorporates ceramic shards, broken dishes and other found objects into a design. While traditional mosaics used small cubes that were uniformly shaped, pique assiette or trencadis tends to use non-uniform pieces. The term pique assiette has a French origin and various sources say it means 'stolen plate' or 'broken plate.' It also refers to someone who is a scrounger, which of course fits because most pique assiette art is created with recycled or scrounged' materials."



Listening to a Labyrinth

by Gene Gilligan

Please note:

Jenny Dewey is taking a short break from her monthly feature writing to focus her time and energy on some health issues. She is delighted to have UUCM member Gene Gilligan, one of her Writing Session participants, submit the following essay:

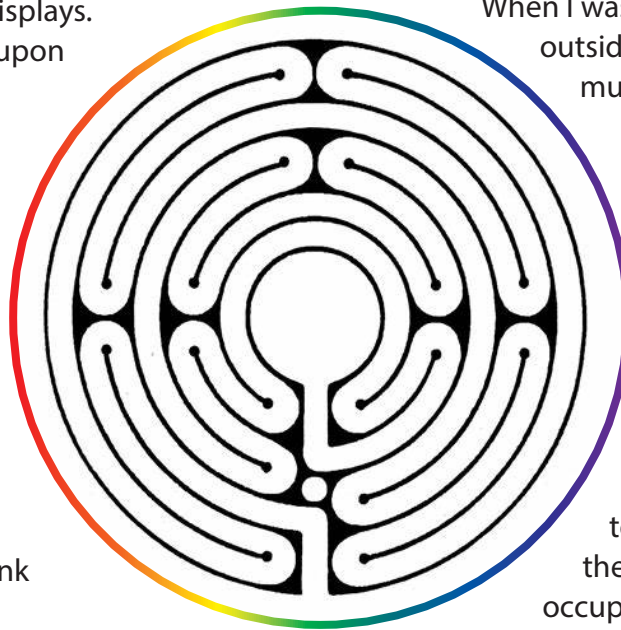
Several years ago, I was with a girlfriend visiting the Biblical Gardens in Grass Valley. We walked and observed the many spiritual displays.

As we were leaving, we came upon this strange maze, with a path lined with stones weaving around inside a large circle. I had never seen one before. I now know this maze was a labyrinth. She suggested I try it. I started slowly walking on the path in the labyrinth. Following the path to the center and then continuing on to the exit. I was almost breathless when I finished and had to sit and think about what I had just realized.

The labyrinth is one continuous path with many long and short lengths with sharp turns. You cannot leave the labyrinth until you've walked the length of the path. A maze is similar, but you have choices as to which path to take and how you can exit. What took my breath away, when I finished walking the labyrinth, was I had always looked at my life's path like walking in a maze: making decisions as to which way I wanted to go or which direction I wanted to travel to reach my goals. The labyrinth is one continuous journey with adjustments along the way.

I have walked several labyrinths since that first one at the Biblical Gardens, but none have made me feel the way I did that first time. I did have a unique experience walking a labyrinth this month in Nevada City. This labyrinth's path was made of small pea gravel which slightly moved as I walked. There were also very slight ups and downs. I felt unsure because my ankle was a little sore from the slow short strides I had to take to keep my balance.

When I was finished, I walked around the outside of the labyrinth, and I felt much better, more confident.



That Sunday at UUCM, I realized it was the anniversary of my daughter's arrest on October 20, 2018. Maybe the date had been weighing on me and I didn't realize it. Maybe she was walking the labyrinth with me. Her life's path allowed her to graduate from two colleges, then took her to a short career in occupational therapy, jail, and prison.

While in prison she mentored inmates trying to pass their GED; she was transferred to a rehab facility because of her good behavior. She continues to mentor inmates and is allowed to have a part time job. She is applying as a receptionist at a medical facility and is an online student and fulltime tutor at Sacramento State. No, this is not the path she chose, but like the labyrinth's path, she keeps moving forward, meeting the turns. Working to do what she loves in situations she does not love. Being open to following the path and trying to create the best for her.

Nisenan Task Force Update:

HOMELAND RETURN

By Eileen Hale, Task Force Member

Escrow closed! After mighty efforts by the tribe, Frank Lawrence (tribal attorney), and others in clearing all the paperwork and legal hurdles, and enthusiastic fundraising efforts from the community, including Friends Meetings and alumni of John Woolman School, the JWS property has been transferred into the hands and the stewardship of the NCR Nisenan and CHIRP.

Tribal families are beginning to move into residences on Yulic'a, and members of the tribe are beginning to connect with the land and contemplate what it needs for its healing and thriving.

Yay! Read more here: <https://chirpca.org/homelandreturn>



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY SERVICE

In the October 13 service, Shelly Covert and Jordan Reznick spoke with Frank Lawrence about what makes for a good relationship between academics and Indigenous people. Creating trustworthy relationships is about sharing with tribes the results of academics' research, rather than approaching research as an "extractive" process that provides little or no benefit to the people whose lives and cultures are studied. Jordan gave us a small preview of the presentation he gave later that day at UUCM, about research into the Indigenous history of the Malakoff Diggins area through photographic records, and Shelly provided her perspective on it, gained through her own family history. It was a lively and fascinating discussion, and it can be viewed in the Sunday service recording for October 13.

JORDAN REZNICK ON PHOTOGRAPH VS. GRINDING STONE

Following the service and a soup lunch (thank you Shannon Dooley-Miller and all soup-bringers!), Jordan showed slides and spoke about the place of photography (which is only ten years older than the Gold Rush!) in California, leading to Yosemite being designated a National Park, excluding the Indigenous people of the area from the photographs and from the park, while showing the effects of genocide in the changing landscape in the post-Gold-Rush years.

Bending the Arc Task Force

By Jim Perkins, BTATF Member

The Bending the Arc task force has as its goal confronting white privilege and reducing white racism. We are currently working on our strategic plan for next year. If you are interested in joining our efforts, or have ideas for initiatives that the task force can work on, please contact me at BendingTheArc@uugrassvalley.org.

"The moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.



Sponsor a Family's Holiday Meal

Join IFM in making a meaningful impact this holiday season! Each year, they serve 10,000 - 13,000 individuals, and last year they provided Thanksgiving and Christmas food to 8,000 Nevada County residents. They anticipate even greater need this year. As the holidays approach, their goal is to provide each client family with special ingredients for a holiday meal.

What does each family receive?

Turkey and side dishes like cranberry sauce, stuffing, potatoes, and more

How much does it cost?

\$30 per family

How can you help?

Click this link: [Donate to Interfaith Food Ministry](#) and you can provide a family or families with the ingredients to make holiday memories! On the donation page, select "Sponsor a Family's Holiday Meal" from the drop-down menu beneath "Apply My Donation To:"

Or mail your check to, or stop by to see us at:

440 Henderson St, Grass Valley, CA 95945.

Be sure to write "Sponsor a Family's Holiday Meal" in the memo line of your check.

Thank you!

[Interfaith Food Ministry website](#)

Justice News

Share the Plate

UUCM's October Share the Plate recipient, [Bear Yuba Land Trust](#), will receive \$895.29, thanks to generous UUCM members, friends, and visitors. These weekly donations add up. Thank you all!

As of this writing, we are currently finishing up collections for our November partner, Nevada County [Citizens for Choice](#)



Our December Share the Plate recipient is Hospitality House. The mission of Hospitality House is to bring homeless people in Nevada County into a circle of community caring that offers shelter, sustenance, medical care, advocacy, opportunity, dignity, and hope as we assist them in transitioning from homelessness to housing. In addition to Sharing the Plate, UUCM members prepare dinners on the third and fifth Fridays of every month, and the entire congregation makes monthly donations for changing list of needed items. (See below.)

Thank you, each of you, for your continual compassion and justice-centered generosity.



Hospitality House Donations

UUCM supports Hospitality House by collecting donations of needed items for their guests. With the cooler weather some needed items have changed.

HOSPITALITY HOUSE NEEDS THESE ITEMS ONLY:

- Towels
- Twin-sized blankets
- Men/Women's sweatpants & sweatshirts - all sizes
- Women's underwear - all sizes
- Men/Women's coats & jackets - all sizes

Please leave donations in the designated bin in the UUCM refreshments room. Donations do not need to be new unless specified, but should be clean and in good condition.

*Thank you, as always, for your generosity,
- Laurie Bell and Keith Johnson*

Pausing for December...

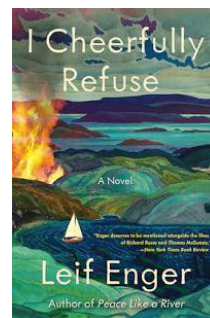
With all the hustle bustle of the holidays at UUCM and elsewhere, some of our regularly scheduled activities are not meeting this month – please make sure your group is meeting before showing up and finding the doors locked!

2nd Sunday Book Group

USUALLY THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH AT 12:15 PM IN THE CHANNING ROOM AT UUCM

CONTACT: Theresa at BookGroupInfo@uugrassvalley.org

Due to a lot of activities during December, we are postponing our December Book Club Meeting to January.



January 12, 2024:
I Cheerfully Refuse by Leif Enger,
Presenter: Cheryl Morris

This book is based on the myth of Orpheus, the musician who traveled to the underworld to rescue his wife, but it's set in an all-too-possible future. I chose to read this book because I love the author's way with words. Had I known it was "dystopian" I might have had second

thoughts, so I am glad I didn't know. But it is so much more than that! Beautiful writing, yes, and also engaging characters, a bit of an adventure story, a poignant description of living with grief and a complete refusal to give in to despair. It strikes me as a rather UU book in its determination to see the world as it is while centering on love, connection, and hope, with the belief they will ultimately prevail.

.....

[Sunday Book Group Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 927 1111 8322

Passcode: 472984

.....

Find a list of the next several months of book selections at [UUCM Book Group Selections](#)

THE BEAT AND JAM TAKING A BREAK IN DECEMBER

Contact BeatCafe@uugrassvalley.org with questions.
JamCafe@uugrassvalley.org with questions.

WRITING SESSIONS AT UUCM

OFFERED BY JENNY DEWEY –

PAUSED FOR DECEMBER

If you want more information, contact Jenny at jduucm.com.



Community Connections

WEEKLY @ UUCM

Subscribe to the weekly e-Chalice for Zoom links and phone numbers. If you need links, please contact our administrative assistant at Admin@uugrassvalley.org.

SUNDAY SERVICES - 10:30 AM VIA ZOOM OR IN PERSON

Make Connections at UUCM

Please contact the organizers if you are interested in joining!



WALKING GROUP

TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS, OFFSITE
Email Walking@uugrassvalley.org

MEET AT 8:30 AM

We meet on **Tuesdays** at the Wolf Creek Trail/Northstar Mining Museum parking area, and on **Thursdays** at 418 Chapel, Grass Valley.

Be sure to ask our Administrative Assistant, Siobhan (Admin@uugrassvalley.org) to include you on our walking group mailing list so you can hear about last minute changes.

MEN'S GROUP

WEDNESDAYS FROM 8:30 - 10:30 AM AT UUCM

Men gather to enjoy each other's company.
Contact for the group: Men@uugrassvalley.org

SINGING MEDITATION CIRCLE

FIRST THURSDAYS, 7:00 PM, ONSITE AND VIA ZOOM
Contact SingingMeditation@uugrassvalley.org



WOMEN'S GROUP

MONTHLY POTLUCK –
SECOND MONDAYS, 6:00 PM
AT UUCM

All UUCM women (and friends!) are invited to our Women's Group gathering. Come make connections!

Our next meeting is **Monday, December 9 at 6:00 PM at UUCM**. We're having our annual Holiday Party! We'll have a potluck of traditional holiday foods, and do an inexpensive gift exchange game where you can steal a gift if you like - Bring a wrapped gift if you want to participate.

For reminders and RSVPs, join the Women's Group email list by sending an email to our Administrative Assistant, Siobhan Boylan, at: Admin@uugrassvalley.org.



HUMANISM DISCUSSION GROUP

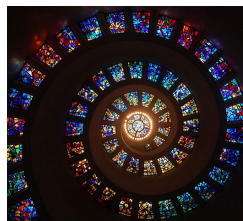
FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 10:45 AM

Our UUCM Humanism Discussion Group is a gathering for both those who identify as humanists and those who are interested in learning about this philosophy.

Our group's purpose is to connect and intellectually explore the issues that touch our daily lives through Humanism's values and principles. Humanism emphasizes ethical living, critical thinking, and social justice while aiming to inspire compassionate action and mutual understanding.

Topics for group discussion are chosen by participants, and optional readings on the topics are made available prior to the meeting. When health precautions allow, we meet in person at UUCM. If you would like to take part via Zoom, request the link by emailing Humanism@uugrassvalley.org

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, December 4, at 10:45 AM at UUCM**, and our topic will be "What is Human Nature?" (Please view the UUCM website calendar for the most up to date meeting information.)



SPIRITUALITY SHARING CIRCLE

FOURTH SATURDAYS, 2:00 - 3:30 PM,
ONSITE AND VIA ZOOM

Questions? Contact:
Spirituality@uugrassvalley.org

The Spirituality Sharing Circle offers quiet space for us to pause, to lift our spirits, and to share with each other what emerges. This month we meet on Saturday, December 28 at 2:00 PM at UUCM. (Zoom is available if requested in advance.)



ARTS & CRAFTS CIRCLE

2ND & 4TH TUESDAYS, 12:00 TO 2:00 PM
IN THE REFRESHMENTS ROOM
**WE'LL SKIP THE 4TH TUESDAY THIS MONTH
SINCE IT FALLS ON CHRISTMAS EVE**

Come and meet with other UUs on **Tuesday, December 10** at noon in the Refreshments Room to work on your own art or craft form! Enjoy each other's company while working on independent projects. No teacher or facilitator.
Questions? Contact arts-n-crafts@uugrassvalley.org

It's Never Too Early, or Late, for Gratitude!

By Cheryl Spaulding, Family Ministry Team Member

As I sit here composing this piece, I am looking forward to Thanksgiving in about two weeks' time. By the time you read this piece, Thanksgiving will be in the rear-view mirror. Taking time to express gratitude, however, is never something that is too early or too late to do. So, with that comfort in mind, I intend to use this month's article from the Family Ministry Team to share with you the reasons I am thankful for the opportunity to be a part of the Family Ministry Team here at UUCM.

First, I am thankful for the uniqueness of each individual child who participates in our Kids' Connection program on Sunday mornings. Each one of them has distinctive qualities that regularly bring smiles to my face and wonder to my mind. I spend the week between Sundays remembering things one or another of them said or did during our time together. They are an endless fascination for me. Also, I am thankful for the parents and grandparents of our UUCM children. I fully recognize the commitment it takes to mobilize themselves and their children to get to UUCM by 10:30 on a Sunday morning. Having been a parent who worked outside my home, I know the pull that a cozy Sunday morning at home can have. So, I acknowledge the effort that goes into getting each and every child to Kids' Connection on any given Sunday. Our parents and grandparents have been supportive and encouraging of our efforts as we spent a year redesigning our program, trying out new activities and spaces as we went along. Their willingness to share their beloved children with us on Sunday mornings is a gift for which I am deeply appreciative.

Next, I am thankful for the four women (Linda, Corrie, Jenny, and Shannon) who assist our efforts in Kids' Connection on Sunday mornings. Their individual and collective commitment to our program is literally the difference between having a

program and not having a program. Each week, they bring with them their positive and cheerful demeanors, as well as their obvious abilities to connect with the children in meaningful ways. Their efforts serve not only the UUCM children well, but also the members of the Family Ministry Team (Lindsay and me). They have become my beloved friends, and I look forward to the time we spend together on Sunday mornings.

Finally, I am thankful for my Family Ministry Team colleague, Lindsay. I have learned so much from her over the last 18-plus months. The routines and rituals that we use each Sunday to engage the children in UU-inspired activities were born of her creativity and knowledge. One hugely significant thing I have learned from her is the essence of true collaboration, the kind of collaboration that transcends just dividing up the work that needs to be done. Collaborating with her has been a process of bringing our disparate talents to the overarching task of designing and delivering programs for UUCM children and youth. We complement each other. Our differences are sources of strength in our collaborative process. Too bad it took me seven years to stumble upon her; I could have put the insights I have garnered from her to good use in my previous lives. I am hoping that in this season of light and love you, too, have felt the warmth and comfort that genuine gratitude can bring into our lives.



Help Us Decorate our UUCM Tree on December 15

By Linda Siska, Arts & Aesthetics

This holiday season, UUCM is planning to feature a less formal Christmas tree, and the A&A team is inviting members of the congregation to bring homemade ornaments to decorate our tree during the service on December 15th. The ornaments can be newly made or a treasured family favorite, simple or elaborate, and will be returned when the tree comes down in January if you want them back. (Please mark them if you do.)

If you are looking for inspiration, a good place to start would be the traditional paper snowflakes, origami birds and butterflies, candy canes and gingerbread cookies. The photo above is of gingerbread-style ornaments made from paper bags, stuffed with cotton balls! It would be a great family craft project!

Watch for the eChalice each week to get additional suggestions and instructions!



Unitarian Universalist Community of the Mountains

246 South Church St., Grass Valley, CA 95945

Telephone: (530) 274-1675

Website: uugrassvalley.org



MOST UPDATED VERSION OF THE UUCM CALENDAR:

<https://www.uugrassvalley.org/calendar/>



Sunday Services are held at 10:30 AM by Zoom or on-site

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1:00 TO 5:00 PM

(Our Administrative Assistant is available remotely on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.)

Rev. Kevin Tarsa Office Hours:

Rev. Kevin's office hours are currently held by appointment.

Contact Rev. Kevin at (231) 883-1058 or minister@uugrassvalley.org

UUCM STAFF MEMBERS

Reverend Kevin Tarsa, *Minister*

Siobhan Boylan,
Administrative Assistant

Toby Thomas-Rose, *Music Director*

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Minister@uugrassvalley.org

Admin@uugrassvalley.org

Music@uugrassvalley.org

TELEPHONE

(530) 274-1661

(530) 274-1675

(530) 274-1675

Mountain Chalice Newsletter submissions are due by the 20th of the month prior to publishing.

Submit by filling out the online announcement form on our website, or here:

[Article Submission Form](#)

VOLUNTEER TEAM MEMBERS: *Kathryn Young, Design/Layout; Lesley Champlin, Editing/Proofreading*