

the Mountain Chalice



Unitarian Universalist Community of the Mountains

February 2025

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 13 for Kid-Centered Activities •••

Monthly Theme: The Practice of Inclusion

February 2 **Word Counts**

Rev. Kevin Tarsa and Lindsay Dunckel, Worship Associate, with UUCM Choir

Within the larger goal of recognizing and honoring the difference between intent and impact, we launch our February theme of "inclusion" by exploring some of the ways that the words we use matter.

February 9 **Inclusion**

Guest Daryl Grigsby, with Rev. Kevin Tarsa and Carol Nimick, Worship Associate

Local author, historian, and frequent prophetic voice in The Union, Daryl Grigsby will draw on his personal experience and knowledge to reflect on this month's theme of Inclusion and what it may be asking of us.

February 16 **There's A Place For Us (Tapestry service)**

Beth Karow and Elizabeth Rose, Worship Associates

As we cultivate a deeper understanding of inclusion, we recognize that there are many ways to feel that we belong. In this tapestry service, we'll hear reflections on the practice of inclusion from a few of us within our UUCM community.

February 23 **What Circle?**

Intentional Acts of Inclusion and Subtle Acts of Exclusion

Rev. Kevin Tarsa and

Randy McKean, Worship Associate

Finally, we turn our inclusion lens to consider what helps us – and, likely, others – know that we belong and that we are fully included right here in this community. If we are called to "live love through the practice of inclusion," what now?

▶ INSIDE THIS ISSUE ◀

Item	Page
Upcoming Services.....	1
From the Minister.....	2
Board of Trustees.....	3-4
Endowment.....	4
Membership Team.....	4
Words from the Worship Team.....	5
Evening Contemplative Service.....	5
Strategic Planning Committee.....	6
Parish & Lay Pastoral Care Teams.....	7
Building & Grounds Team.....	7
Art & Aesthetics Team.....	8
Deep Dialogue Seminar.....	8
Introducing UU History - 6 Session Course.....	8
Feature: Upstairs Downstairs, Kids' Connection.....	9
Justice News and Activities.....	10-11
Community Connections.....	12
UUCM Family Ministry.....	13
UUCM Book Group.....	13
UUCM Contact Info and Office Hours.....	14



Rev. Kevin Tarsa
UUCM Minister

From the Minister

Living Love Through the Practice of Inclusion

“Living love through the practice of inclusion,” our theme for this month, sums up the theological center of our merged Unitarian Universalist tradition, at least in aspiration and direction. Each of our parent traditions gradually followed both intellectual and heart-centered paths that required ever greater openness to differing religious ideas, perspectives, and experiences. “Everybody in!” ultimately. This, they said, is the nature of God and therefore also the highest nature within humanity.

In theory, each of our parent traditions has also called us to open ourselves to other kinds of human difference – difference in skin color, experience, race, culture, class, political stance. And though in many ways we have “drawn the circle wide, and drawn it wider still,” our ability to be fully inclusive has only ever been partial.

I’m writing this column right after the Presidential inauguration, in which again and again the language spoken was thoroughly rooted in a spirit of exclusion. Exactly contrary to our stated UU value of Equity (“We declare that every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion. We covenant to use our time, wisdom, attention, and money to build and sustain fully accessible and inclusive communities.”), the newly sworn-in president denigrated not only the actions, but also the very humanity of the members of the outgoing administration, of immigrants, of trans persons, of anyone who does not agree with his ideas or actions. The values he proclaimed, to the cheers of his crowd, were the antithesis of “living love through the practice of inclusion.”

Martin Luther King Jr., celebrated the same day as the inauguration, preached that by considering our “enemy’s” view we may have a chance to “see the basic weaknesses of our own condition,” and that “if we are mature, we may learn

and grow and profit from the wisdom of [those] who are called the opposition.” I believe that’s true if the opposition in the equation is the general U.S. citizen who voted differently than I did. There is fruitful and important listening, learning, and understanding to be had.

But when the person wielding power is as extreme as the current president, another of Dr. King’s messages better meets the moment: “The question is not whether we will be extremist but what kind of extremist will we be. Will we be extremists for hate or will we be extremists for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice - or will we be extremists for the cause of justice?”

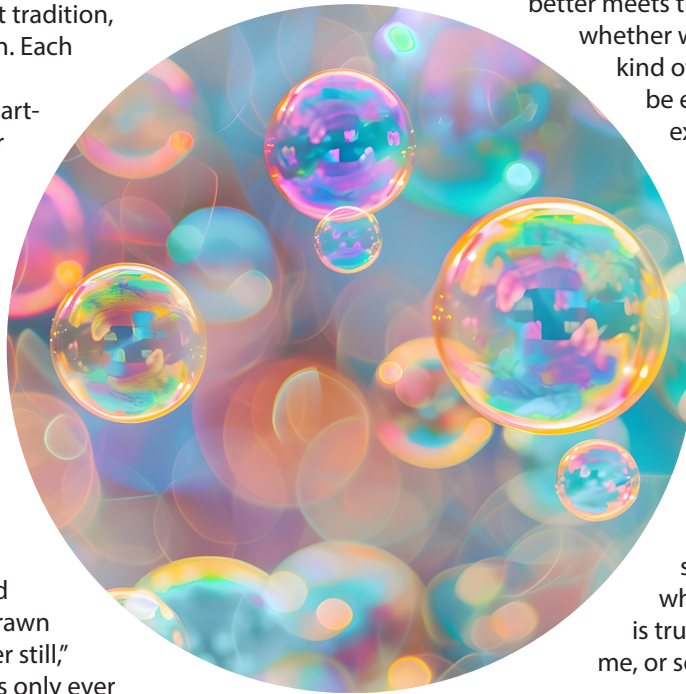
I’m not typically fond of the concept of hate. I don’t usually find it quite accurate or useful, but I do resonate right now with the call to be an extremist for love. Or for inclusion, perhaps. I’m feeling a pull to get my extremist on. The spiritual question, then, is whether what feels like a called-for extremism is true, authentic, and love-centered in me, or something less healthy and whole.

I’ll be trying to find that out.

This month (and beyond, of course), may the call to live love through the practice of inclusion call us to our highest and best selves.

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



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

Board of Trustees

By the time you read these lines, the misgivings of November will have coalesced into the realities of January. The misgivings that we share reveal themselves in many ways. Sunday services have been bursting at the seams as friends and neighbors seek spiritual connection and reassurance to help them address the epochal rents in the fabric of our society. While shopping, dining, or simply messing around in public, random conversations with strangers often turn to the topic of mutual dread with a frequency approaching inevitability.

As a 501(C)(3) nonprofit corporation, we cannot engage in partisan politics either as or on behalf of the UUCM. Although this prohibition might seem like a philosophical gag order, it is not. If anything it is an opportunity for us to explore more precisely the nature of the threat presented by the new presidential administration.

Our shared UU principles and values powerfully inform our personal and political affiliations and affinities. Most of us are progressively liberal and tend to favor candidates who mirror our beliefs. Organizationally, political speech may be constrained, but we are free to advocate strenuously in support of our principles and values. As individuals we are free to broadcast our political passions to our hearts' content and engage in whatever political actions suit our desires. We are not only free to raise a ruckus about the encroachments upon our beliefs, we may be duty bound to do so. As Bishop Budde underscored so eloquently during her address to President Trump at the National Prayer breakfast, a church may without hesitation address and remonstrate and even dress down political figures on behalf of the needy, the afflicted, and the underserved.

"Wokeness," which conservatives and the faux left characterize as the devil's handiwork, is actually at the heart of our philosophy. The Oxford Dictionary defines wokeness as "the quality of being alert to and concerned about social injustice and discrimination." Our denomination's full-throated support of LGBTQ issues and DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) and our opposition to racial, sexual, ethnic, and national origin discrimination is not political. It is a matter of deeply held principle. We can address these and allied issues with every ounce of strength within us and never approach the political limits imposed by the statute. What's more, you needn't be shy about identifying your faith as the source that compels you to action.

I cannot write this month without mentioning the horrors visited upon our friends and families in Southern California. Like many native Californians, I was born and spent my wonder years there. I still have friends there, though, and thankfully they are safe. Compounding the horror and grief victims of the fires feel is the irredeemably vile conduct of conservative

politicians and commentators who seek to advance their brand at the expense of the souls crushed by these terrible circumstances. As the seasonal winds of January, coupled with unprecedented heat and drought turned the lush beauty of the Southland into a raging conflagration, we are treated to cynical lies and distortions that blame it all on people who adhere to our beliefs.

We are not fooled. Neither wokeness nor liberalism caused the winds to blow and the fires to burn. Diversity among firefighters did not excite a single spark to explode into the raging inferno. No more than in red states, where nature seasonally terrorizes residents with tornadoes and hurricanes, are the fires of 2025 the fault of any political or philosophical persuasion.

Well, that's not entirely true, is it? Climate change, that is, anthropogenic influences on the global environment, are very

UUCM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

JULY 2024 - JUNE 2025

Taylor Carey	<i>President</i>
Carol Richey	<i>Vice President</i>
Gail Schulz	<i>Treasurer</i>
Lin Jovanovic	<i>Secretary</i>

Members at Large:
Chuck Champlin, Jeff Gold & Charlene Dugan

UUCM Committees:
Finance • Governance • Endowment
Nominating

Board meetings are open to all members and friends starting at 1:30 PM on the third Wednesday of each month. An email announcing the meeting and a Zoom link will be sent to the community each month, one week prior to the meeting.

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

Continued on page 4...

Board of Trustees

Continued from page 3...

much at the root of both California's fires, North and South, as well as the intensifying cataclysms in the midwest and southern states. Climate change – the phrase is Kryptonite to conservative philosophy – stands near the top of the staircase of responsible contributors to Mother Nature's excoriating wrath. Being alert to and concerned about social injustice and discrimination played no part whatsoever in the fires or in the responses to them. To the extent that errors were made in judgments or decisions, these were made by human beings reacting to the best of their training and abilities to the crises in front of them. Does a fire hose held by a woman instead of a man put out less water? Does a helicopter flown by lesbian instead of a straight man fly any differently? Is courage a lesser quality among spiritually evolved individuals than among those who hate diversity? Current examples of political cowardice among those of the conservative persuasion in Washington D.C. would suggest not.

We may be faced with four years of systematic nonsense masquerading as the new gospel, but we are not required to sit idly and absorb it like gamma rays. We are in for the fight of our lives. UUs have been there before. Shrinking from challenges is not what we do. Hunker down my friends, we are just getting started.

-Taylor



Endowment

Kathryn Young
Endowment Committee
Endowment@uugrassvalley.org

Simple Gifts Thank You

**Thank you to Laura Harter
who celebrated her birthday with a gift to
the Endowment Fund.**

Simple Gifts are always 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. We have brochures and packets to give you more details on **Legacy Gifts**...please let us know if you would like one.



Membership

Laura Harter
Leader, Membership Team
membership@uugrassvalley.org

As we all know, the election has brought increased interest in UUCM and many new guests! Thank you for making room in our sanctuary, foyer, walkways, and in your heart with your sensitive and warm welcomes.

We really appreciate how you all are finding a seat up front and reserving the back rows for families and guests who may arrive late. It makes our flow so much easier. I wanted to share that I tried sitting in the Channing Room and found it a surprisingly intimate way to experience our Sunday Service. I enjoyed hanging out with four others; we were respectful and quiet and generated good energy together. I surprised myself by singing! Who knows, some of us might prefer sitting in there?! Give it a try - trying it out will not relegate you to sit there each week; it's nice to rotate this gesture of welcome by sacrificing your spot in the main sanctuary one Sunday. Please know that if there is room in the Sanctuary after services start, a Greeter will let you know.

And finally, the Membership Team is excited to report that our Starting Point series has just begun with 11 participants! I am excited to be part of it! I did Starting Point over four years ago on Zoom during COVID. It was great then, but it is a lot of fun to attend this fundamental UU experience as a UU member. It is helping me broaden and deepen my understanding and identity as someone who attends and participates in a UU religious community. I've come a long way from my skepticism and reluctance about religion to being proud to claim UUCM and UU values as instrumental to how I intend to show up in the world.

The Membership Team thanks you for all the ways you show up and contribute to our beloved UUCM.

Laura Harter, Leader,
Jim Bair, Laurie Bell, Ruth Edwards, and Susan Merrill





Words from the Worship Team

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



I discovered UUCM during the depths of the pandemic, on Zoom, of course. I was drawn in by the quality of the services each week and marveled at the wonders of technology that made them possible. A service I remember clearly was one in which people named (via chat) their word for the year and watching the word cloud grow and change as more words were added. I thought it was very cool, and I still do.

The actual practice of choosing a word for the year at first struck me as a bit of a gimmick, too simplistic to be very meaningful. But I went along with it and discovered how wrong I was. The process of thinking about the coming year, what I wanted and needed, and what word could represent that...just that alone was valuable. Then, keeping the word in mind, incorporating it into my daily meditation, actually living with it...that was valuable, too.

I now look forward to choosing a word; this will be my fifth time. I remember all the previous ones, and I can see how one led to the next, and how representative they are of my life journey through these years.

Here, at the end of January, I encourage you to join in the practice of choosing a word for the year. It has become a tradition at UUCM and offers opportunity for growth and discovery. As we each choose a word, and then see what others have chosen, it can be both validating and challenging. The Worship Team looks forward to hearing from you about what you have learned from this practice.

- Cheryl & Carol

Soul Matters Themes



Soul Matters Themes for 2024-25 Living Love through the Practices of...

February:	Inclusion
March:	Trust
April:	Joy
May:	Imagination
June:	Freedom



The Worship Team having fun planning together



Join us for an Evening Contemplative Service

SECOND THURSDAYS OF EACH MONTH, 7:00 TO 8:00 PM
GENTLE MUSIC BEGINS AT 6:30 PM

This month's service: Thursday, February 13, 2025

It's a simple but moving service. We will sing hymns, join in meditation, and take part in a Joys and Sorrows ritual where all are welcome to share aloud with the group the joys and/or sorrows in their hearts that night.

Strategic Planning Committee

The 2025 Strategic Planning Committee is Underway!

By Jeff Gold



As many of you know, the Strategic Planning Committee came out of the Board's retreat when annual goals were formed. The Board's top priority goal was stated: *"...to develop a 5-year Strategic Planrelated to member development, programs, financial stability and facility needs..."* This is an ambitious goal, and it's an opportunity to define visions and incremental steps for our UUCM future!

In September Charlene Dugan and I stepped forward as Board members to head the planning process, and the Committee was soon formed with Board direction. The Committee includes Carol Richey (our Chair of Finance and Board VP), Laura Harter representing Ministry Council, Lindsay Dunckel from the Worship Team, and Lesley Champlin, Allison Rivers, and Alan Weisberg as "Members at Large." Our ninth member is Rev. Kevin.

Three documents guide our work: our *mission statement*, our *Covenant of Right Relations*, and the *UUA Green Sanctuary 2030 Program*. We are familiar with the first two; but we will be getting acquainted with the *UUA Green Sanctuary 2030 Program*, as it is a robust set of action steps for long-term environmental care and climate justice work.

The Committee has met five times since October to review and distill a lot of good data from the 2009 UUCM strategic plan and recent surveys and reports from the Congregation – including:

- the 2021 Facilities survey
- the 2022 'Next Steps' survey
- the 2023 Board "Open Questions," and
- 2024 Activities Report by the Stewarding Guidance Group

This information will be available to everyone as our basis for developing the new plan.

The Planning Committee's Workshop held on January 18 surpassed our expectations with the energy and enthusiastic contributions of the 45 attendees! Besides the pride in who we are as a community, there is a strong interest in making

it known to others. From three 'visioning' exercises and open discussion, a great range of ideas and themes emerged. Our committee met this week to identify the most frequently expressed themes, as follows:

- **First: UUCM is envisioned as a cultural "hub"** – for educational and spiritual offerings and as a wellspring for community action and justice work. This suggests outreach and engagement with the larger community and creating opportunities to collaborate beyond our "four walls."
- **Second: UUCM is envisioned as a multi-generational congregation.** This calls for inclusive engagement of young people and families.
- **Third: UUCM's future calls for strengthening our three "T"s – Time, Talent & Treasure.**
 - **For TIME:** hone our **"culture of service"**. This includes assessing volunteer energy, passion, and capacity for successful outcome.
 - **For TALENT:** we want a Leadership Development Program that invests in our leadership skills to drive our Mission forward.
 - **For TREASURE:** we need to grow the endowment, fund the strategic plan, and sustain annual stewardship.
- **Fourth: UUCM will be empowered by a new home** – one that includes: more room, outdoor space, accessibility, parking, central location, and a welcoming place expressing our values.

These themes will be discussed and developed with the Congregation in the months ahead.

The Strategic Planning Committee's next steps include monthly meetings, a mini-retreat in March, a Congregation-wide survey to gauge priorities, and circulating a rough draft of the Plan for your comments in May or June. Watch for monthly updates in the Mountain Chalice and in your email.

To see the Strategic Planning Power Point from the Strategic Planning Workshop, click [HERE](#).

Please email your questions to: strategicplanningcommittee@uugrassvalley.org



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

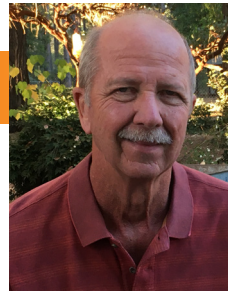
Are You Facing a Life Challenge?

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



A & A

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

Deep Dialogue Workshop

DEEP DIALOGUE ACROSS DIFFERENCES -

SATURDAYS, MARCH 22 & MARCH 29: 10:00 AM - NOON
WITH REV. CAT COX, M.A.T., M.Div.

ON ZOOM, WHETHER FROM HOME OR WITH A GATHERED GROUP AT UUCM

How do we repair connections across seemingly irreconcilable differences and unresolved hurt feelings? Do we have to simply accept the loss of relationships - actual or possible - cutting the world into smaller and smaller slices of the people we can relate to? Our faith as Unitarian Universalists calls us to another, far more hopeful and inclusive way. The path is available to anyone bringing curiosity and goodwill! [DEEP DIALOGUE RSVP LINK](#)

Join us for this two Saturday morning workshop series:

Saturday, March 22: an even deeper dive than in our previous introductory workshop into understanding the mindsets that drive differing beliefs and actions and the dialogue skills that enable us to bridge those differences. We really can connect in care and mutual respect, opening the way to solutions everyone can support.

Saturday, March 29: we will apply these dialogue practices concretely, addressing unhealed hurts still present in the life of your congregation!

Rev. Cat is a UU community minister. She has been offering her ministry of spiritual guidance, *The Path of Joy: Awakening~Alignment~Action* to individuals, couples, congregations and leaders nationwide for over 25 years. Offering guidance in the practices of deep listening, conflict resolution and collaborative decision-making is at the heart of her ministry.

Don't Miss our Mosaic Art Exhibit



Lin
Jovanovic
MOSAIC EXHIBIT

IN THE UUCM
LIBRARY
THROUGH FEBRUARY

The Art and Aesthetics Team continues an exquisite 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. Lin's artwork will be on display through the month of February. She is offering some pieces for sale.

Please contact her at secretary@uugrassvalley.org.

Introducing UU History – A New Course Offering

UU History -

*A chance to get our historical bearings.
Or at least a start on 'em.*

UU History is a 6-session introduction to concepts and people from our history. In this series, part of a Faith Forward program Rev. Kevin is sampling, we'll approach history from the starting point of compelling stories and personalities. We will explore the questions those people faced and make connections with our own lives and the world around us today. The overarching question is: how can history be translated into our religious life and practice? In addition to learning about history, we hope you will learn about yourselves.

Join Rev. Kevin Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30 PM or Thursday afternoons from 1:00 to 2:00 PM, at UUCM and on Zoom. Drop-ins welcome, and it's okay to mix and match Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please sign up here: [UU History](#).



UU HISTORY

CLASS SCHEDULE AS FOLLOWS:

- Feb 25 @ 6:30 PM or Feb 27 @ 1:00 PM - A Question of Conscience
- Mar 4 @ 6:30 PM or Mar 6 @ 1:00 PM - A Question of Love
- Mar 11 @ 6:30 PM or Mar 13 @ 1:00 PM - A Question of Experience
- No sessions March 18 and 20
- Mar 25 @ 6:30 PM or Mar 27 @ 1:00 PM - A Question of Resilience & Courage
- Apr 1 @ 6:30 PM or Apr 3 @ 1:00 PM - A Question of Identity
- Apr 8 @ 6:30 PM or Apr 10 @ 1:00 PM - A Question of Calling

Upstairs Downstairs, Kids' Connection

by Jenny Dewey

Cheryl Spaulding and Lindsay Dunckel are members of the Family Ministry Team. They work together to plan and organize Kids' Connection, the program that happens upstairs every Sunday with the children of UUCM parents. There are plenty of others, volunteers who scramble around on the floor where toys abound and there is never, ever, not something to do.

And there is more. Lots more.

Cheryl Spaulding quotes from John Dewey, one of her favorite philosophers: "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself." These words describe the basic approach to what happens upstairs in Kids' Connection.

Boiling Dewey's quote down to simple explanatory sentences is impossible. One way to summarize the meaning is to say teachers teach children and children teach teachers. Kids' Connection is a template for people of all ages. The learning experience travels from child to adult and from adult to child and in the process, both are "educated."

Imagine time, usually an hour, spent with kids varying in age from two to ten or twelve.

The kids are sometimes rowdy; always busy with feet, legs, arms, and hands. How best to teach these kids? How best to infuse this bunch with Unitarian Universalist values?

One answer is to describe what Cheryl calls "mirroring what happens downstairs."

Children sit quietly (sometimes) before going into the playroom, and an adult leads them through the rituals of

altar preparation, chalice lighting, Joys and Sorrows (tiny glass stones in water), and moments of silence. A storybook is chosen (by majority rule), a story subtly expressing UU precepts and principles.

To quote Cheryl herself: "The program is always evolving." New ideas, practices, and directions are constantly added to

the basic structure. Nothing about Kids' Connection is static.

At present the children are learning about silence. As Cheryl puts it, "Silence as a spiritual practice." (Read more in Cheryl's Family Ministry update on page 13!) This is achieved through kid-friendly meditations as well as reading books on silence. The practices reflect what goes on in the Sanctuary and they give kids the opportunity to learn while the adults present are also learning. It's a win-win situation.

Most people understand education to be what we learn in school, in formal settings with desks, chairs, a blackboard, and a teacher. We question how Algebra or Chemistry will help us navigate adulthood! But John Dewey's words mean life is composed of

experiences from which we continue our education. Rituals observed upstairs at UUCM give kids opportunities for self-expression, self-discovery, and learning through activities.

Chemistry and Algebra have their place, as do childhood meditations and learning about silence. As a final word: the Family Ministry Team is always interested in UU members who wish to know more about what the team does. There is a range of opportunities for volunteers, so don't be shy.



Ama, a regular participant in our Kids' Connection program



UUCM Honored as a Good Trouble Congregation

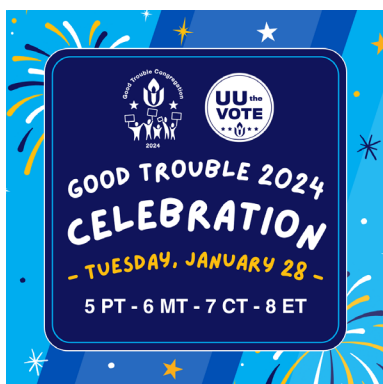
By Gail Johnson Vaughan,
Bending the Arc
Task Force Member

Rep. John Lewis coined the term “Good Trouble” when he said, “Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”

Of the 1,000 UU congregations in the US only 53 qualified to be recognized as a Certified 2024 Good Trouble Congregation, and UUCM is one of them! YOU are the reason for this honor. Here’s what you did:

- **Postcards:** Sent 33,000 Get-Out-the-Vote postcards to Black voters experiencing voter suppression. Some of you wrote postcards, some of you contributed money for stamps for those who couldn’t, some of you recruited lots of others outside UUCM to join our campaign. All that was done by 175 individuals plus even more who generously donated funds to cover stamps for those who couldn’t.
- **Phone bank calls:** You made over 5,100 calls.
- **Local Candidate Profiles:** We researched and published local candidate profiles and helped community members access the League of Women Voters’ Forums.
- **We registered 23 new voters**, had an official poll worker, and had folks doing door-to-to canvassing.
- **We held Worship Services that educated and inspired** attendees to see social justice as a spiritual practice.

Our postcard goal for 2024 was 18,000; our actual count ended up being close to 33,000! We had about 175 people writing postcards; 80 from UUCM and 105 we recruited outside of UUCM, and lots more people who funded stamps.



Celebrate with us
Tuesday, January 28,
at 5:00 PM at UUCM
as we attend the
national online Good
Trouble celebration and
recognition of our role.

Postcarding for the Wisconsin Supreme Court Race

By Gail Johnson Vaughan,
Bending the Arc Task Force Member

We will be joining the campaign to write to 93,000 registered Black voters throughout the state of Wisconsin. Once again the ideological balance of Wisconsin’s highest court is at stake in this race. While the contest is officially non-partisan, the two candidates have starkly different views on reproductive rights, union rights, voting rights, and other fair government laws that are critical elements of our democracy. You can read more about the race from [Wisconsin Public Radio](#).

Postcard packets will be available in the foyer beginning February 2. Postcards need to be mailed between March 1 and March 11. The election takes place on April 1, and early voting begins on March 18. Monday Morning Postcard Parties will begin Monday, February 3.

STILL TO COME IN 2025 - THE VIRGINIA STATEWIDE ELECTIONS

Later this year, we will have campaigns in support of the Virginia State elections. Virginia holds its statewide elections in years with no federal election. In 2025 the election will include races for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and all members of the House of Delegates. We may have a small campaign starting in April for the VA Primary on June 17 and will certainly have addresses available in September for the VA General Election on November 4.

As before, we will assemble packets of 20 postcards, stamps, and other supplies needed. We ask those who are able to cover the \$10 cost of the packet. No writer will be turned away if they can’t cover the cost. If you want to help but not write, please consider donating funds for those who can’t fund their own packets.

For more information, contact Gail Johnson Vaughan:
GailJV@uugrassvalley.org.



A diligent group at one of our many postcard-writing parties.

Justice News and Activities

Share the Plate

UUCM's December Share the Plate recipient, [Hospitality House](#) received \$1,416.17, 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 January partner, [Sierra Roots](#).



Our February Share the Plate recipient is [Community Beyond Violence](#). CBV heals the trauma of sexual assault and domestic violence by providing crisis intervention, safety, advocacy, and education to survivors and our community. We envision a future free of interpersonal violence, where everyone in our community lives in a culture of safety and personal dignity.

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



Updates from IFM

IFM gives a heartfelt thanks for the good support they got for the Sponsor a Family program.

The bird flu is temporarily halting egg purchases. The situation may stabilize in late March or early June.

Exciting News: In July, the City of Grass Valley awarded Sierra Harvest and IFM Measure E funding for a planning grant to explore the potential uses of DeVere Mautino Park. IFM envisions a Community Food Campus, a collaborative initiative to transform areas of the park into garden spaces to enhance food access, foster community learning, and strengthen social connections. This will highlight the unique contributions and shared goals of both organizations.

IFM needs your voices to help shape this vision! Join us at upcoming community listening sessions to share your thoughts. [Interfaith Food Ministry website](#)



Hospitality House Donations

UUCM supports Hospitality House by collecting donations of needed items for their guests.

*Due to the generosity of Nevada County neighbors and their limited storage space, Hospitality House is **NOT accepting donations OTHER THAN FOOD at this time.***

Many of the food items needed are **perishable** and cannot be left at UUCM. **They would need to be brought BY YOU to:**
Hospitality House, 1226 Sutton Way,
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Needed perishable items include: Eggs, dairy items, fruit and vegetables, meats, sandwich meat, bread, and butter

Non perishable items that can be placed in the designated bin in UUCM's refreshments room are: Snacks for lunches such as bags of chips, cookies, granola bars, as well as peanut butter and jelly, coffee and sugar.

Hospitality House does **NOT NEED:** Canned goods, rice, beans and pasta. (They receive a lot of those items from Interfaith Food Ministry, another of our partners.)

For updates on UUCM's partnership with Hospitality House and their most up-to-date donation requests, please visit our website [HERE](#).

Thank you for your generosity, Laurie Bell & Keith Johnson

Organics 'Recycling' at UUCM!

Thanks to SB 1383, Waste Management of Nevada County is now collecting organic waste (compost) curb-side!

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR UUCM?

- The amount of trash UUCM sends to the landfill will be drastically reduced! Hooray!
- All food scraps (including tea bags, citrus, & even bones!) and food-soiled, non-waxy paper & boxes must be collected separately from trash and recycling - look for the compost pail at Sunday social hour!
- One volunteer has stepped up to make sure the kitchen pail gets emptied into our large curbside bin throughout the week and after Sunday services or other "food" events.
- When the pail contains food scraps, please keep it in the fridge or freezer to reduce odors and pests.
- Check out the signs posted in the kitchen and refreshment room for details on what can go in the trash, recycling, or compost - hint: it's more than you might think!

Questions? Contact the office at admin@uugrassvalley.org.

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, OFF-SITE - MEET AT 8:30 AM

Email Walking@uugrassvalley.org

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



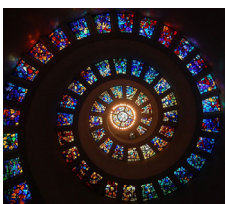
WOMEN'S GROUP

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, February 10 at 6:00 PM at UUCM**. We will be having a potluck and then astrologer Tifin Dillon will lead a fun interactive activity to introduce us to the energies of the zodiac, using our own sun signs to give us new insights about ourselves and others in the group.

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.



SPIRITUALITY SHARING CIRCLE

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

Questions? Need a Zoom link? Contact: Spirituality@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, February 5, at 10:45 AM at UUCM, and our topic will be "Our Culture's Denial of Reality" and "Post-truth vs Science."
(Please view the UUCM website calendar for the most up to date meeting info.)

FREE DRAWING SESSIONS

WITH JENNY DEWEY

1ST & 3RD FRIDAYS FROM 1:00 TO 2:30 PM
AT UUCM - ALCOTT (REFRESHMENT) ROOM
RSVP to: JennyDewey@uugrassvalley.org



All welcome, beginners or old-timers, kids and adults - instruction based on "the natural way to draw" - a well-known, respected method useful to everyone - those starting up, as well as those who've been drawing forever. **This month's sessions are on Friday, February 7 and 21.**



ARTS & CRAFTS CIRCLE

2ND & 4TH FRIDAYS, 1:00 TO 3:00 PM
AT UUCM -ALCOTT (REFRESHMENT) ROOM

Come and meet with other UUs on **Friday, February 14 and 28** at 1:00 PM in the Alcott/Refreshment Room to work on your own art or craft form! Enjoy each other's company while working on independent projects. No teacher or facilitator. Contact: arts-n-crafts@uugrassvalley.org

Offering many ways to serve the life of the community.

FamilyMinistry@uugrassvalley.org

2nd Sunday Book Group

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

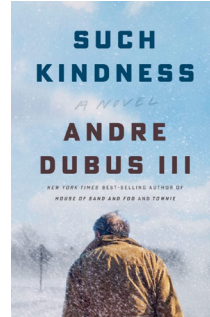
CONTACT: Theresa at BookGroupInfo@uugrassvalley.org

Sharing Stories in January

By Cheryl Spaulding, Family Ministry Team Member

What is silence? And how is silence related to listening? While not exactly the same thing, silence and listening do overlap each other. One definition of silence could be eliminating the noises or sounds that we make so that we can take note of, or listen to, noises or sounds that we are not making. Sometimes those noises come from outside of us— such as winds howling, dogs barking, or friends talking. But we can also listen to those ephemeral visitors in our consciousness that come, unbidden—the nearly constant flow of feelings, thoughts, and memories that arise, stay awhile, and dissipate, all on their own.

So why all this focus on silence? Well, in Kids' Connection on Sunday mornings, I am planning to include more opportunities for the children to learn about, experience, even play with the concept of silence. We have already incorporated a kid-friendly meditation experience that introduces the concept of silence. We all sit, with one hand raised in the air. Then, we play an extended sound—a chime—that lasts for about ten seconds before fading away. We keep our hands in the air until we cannot hear the sound anymore. Interestingly, the hands come down one at a time. Finally, we attempt to extend that moment of silence after the chime ends. The operative word there is "attempt." I like this meditative sequence because it starts out with silence brought on by listening to sounds from our physical environment (the chime) and ends with an opportunity to shift our listening to noises from our psychological environment (our thoughts, feelings, memories). A few weeks ago, after completing this meditative exercise, I read to the children a book entitled "The Silence Slips In" by Alison Hughes and Ninon Pelletier. In this book, silence is anthropomorphized. It has a face and ears— although it looks more like a giant bunny than a human being. This larger, cloud-like being with a face and ears drifts into various situations that call for silence (e.g., bedtime, moments of frustration, time for cuddling with a dog). When the silence slips in, the imposing, green being with a face, known as noise, steps out of the picture to make room for silence. This is a lovely book that makes a clear statement about how silence and noise move back and forth, taking turns, throughout our days, throughout our lives. My hope is to build gradually the children's understandings about what silence is and how it can be valuable for individuals and groups of people to know when and how to let silence slip in.



February 9, 2025:
Such Kindness by Andre Dubus III,
 Presenter: Keith Johnson

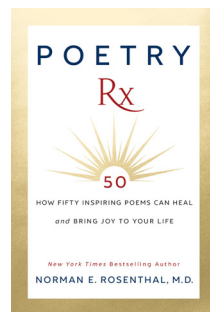
A working class man has a terrible fall. In constant pain and addicted to pain pills, he struggles to figure out who he is and who he will become. Dubus brings compassion with an edge of dark absurdity, forging a novel as absorbing as it is profound.



March 9, 2025: **Gretel and The Great War**
 by Adan Ehrlich Sach, 2024, 224 pages
 Presenter: Theresa Houtman

A young girl wanders the streets of Vienna following the Great War. She does not speak. A neurologist concludes the girl has no exposure to language and writes her story for a medical journal, but gets a letter from a sanitarium patient who says he is wrong. The writer is the young girls

father and sends along a collection of 26 bedtime stories to tell her of the times in Vienna.



April 13, 2025:
Poetry Rx by Norman E. Rosenthal,
 2021, 380 pages
 Presenter: Judith Gropp

This fascinating book explores the concept of poetry as a healing modality, coupled with poignant bio regarding renowned poets from global backgrounds across the centuries and infused with current vignettes from contemporary issues. This is one of several books I would bring to a desert island.

.....

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](#)



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*