

# the Outlook

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Verdugo Hills  
4451 Dunsmore Avenue, La Crescenta, CA 91214  
[www.uuverdugo.org](http://www.uuverdugo.org)

December 2014  
Volume 19, Issue 12



## A MONTH OF SUNDAYS 10:30 AM

### Children's Religious Exploration Education class concurrent

Unitarian Universalist  
Church of the Verdugo Hills  
818.248.3954  
[uucvh@uuverdugo.org](mailto:uucvh@uuverdugo.org)

**Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford**

**Deborah Rice**  
Ministerial Intern/Candidate

**Elizabeth Brown**  
Director of  
Religious Exploration Education

Ann Kleinsasser, President  
Linda Hunt, Vice-President  
Cindy Lopez, Secretary  
Gary Clark, Treasurer  
Teresa Jones, Administrator



### IMAGINE

a religion that embraces many  
different beliefs.

Where all are accepted; where  
we cherish the process of  
developing our own spiritual  
path;

where we respectfully support  
the paths of others.

Welcome to UUCVH!

### December 7

#### "Under the Bodhi Tree" Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford

This year December 8th is Bodhi Day, the Buddhist holiday honoring the enlightenment of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama. We explore the things that the Buddha may have discovered and shared with his followers. But we also look at the ways we can achieve greater enlightenment. Maybe we can even become more awake to some of the possibilities that we have missed in our own lives.

### December 14

#### "Hanukkah Is Not Just for Children" Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford

If we were to ask those who were brought up in Jewish households, they would probably tell us that Hanukkah is really just a holiday for children. Certainly, there are many parts of the observance that are primarily for children. But the theme beneath this celebration has a much deeper message. On this Sunday we will look for the ways the Hanukkah, whether historically true or not, can give us all hope.

### December 21

#### "Winter Solstice in Words and Music"

This Lay Led Service will provide us with readings and music by many authors, lyricists, and composers to commemorate the shortest day and longest night of the year. Those from our UUCVH congregation will present readings. Our professional musicians will share music. And lyrics will be sung by you. Come and celebrate with us!

### December 24, from 6:00 – 7:00 PM

#### "Night of Wonder and Joy"

#### Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford and Ministerial Intern Debbie Rice

Each Christmas Eve, we Unitarian Universalists try to find a new way to understand the Christmas season. This year is no different. We join together to share stories old and new, music that reminds us of times past and still to come, and the joy of gathering together as a part of this Beloved Community. Bring finger food to enjoy afterward. Beverages provided.

### December 28

#### "Kwanzaa's 7 Principles and Ubuntu" Debbie Rice, Ministerial Intern

We will explore the seven principles found in the African American celebration of Kwanzaa, paying particular attention to the first principle Umoja (unity), which is reflected in the African saying, "I am We," or "I am because We are." This principle relates to the South African concept of Ubuntu, which can be roughly translated as "human kindness." It is the ability to recognize and affirm the deep sharing that connects humanity. In the spirit of Kwanzaa and Ubuntu, we will celebrate the ties that bind us together as one human family today.



**Monday, December 1 at 7 PM**

**All skill levels welcome.**

The holidays are now here & knitting a special gift is always treasured! Also, many of our projects are donated to children in need & local hospitals such as sweaters, blankets, preemie baby booties & hats.

Contact Knitting Circle Chair  
Linda Hunt for more details.



**Thursday, December 4**

**Membership Committee**

**11:00 AM – 12:30 PM**

We meet monthly on the first Thursday. Contact Membership Chair Florence Chase with interests and inquiries.



**Saturday, December 6**

**UU Justice Ministry**

**Party & FUNdraiser**

**At Sepulveda UU**

9550 Haskell Ave.

in North Hills

**3:00 - 5:00 PM**

The UUJMCA Presents: A fabulous Party and FUNdraiser! Find out about the UUJMCA; enjoy guest speakers, food, drink, & entertainment with UUs from the Valley & LA Cluster. For more info & RSVP, contact Ministerial Intern Debbie Rice, our UUJMCA Ambassador.  
**uujmca.org**

**MINISTER'S MUSINGS**

I will have to confess that the season set aside for the celebration of Christmas has always been one of my favorite times of the year. As a child growing up in Atlanta, Georgia, I seldom experienced snow in any significant amount. But there was a nip in the air that made it different from any other season. And then there was the excitement of parties and family gatherings, the anticipation of gifts, special foods, music, storytelling, and laughter. And even though we were not rich, I could always count on my stocking being filled with nuts, candy, oranges, and a bottle of green olives with stuffed pimento centers – my unique treat – and some special gifts from Santa and my parents.

But when I entered high school, I became aware that all people didn't celebrate Christmas. Because there was a large number of Jewish students in my school, I found out about the celebration of Hanukkah. In fact, my public school was adorned with both Christmas and Hanukkah decorations throughout the halls. It was a chance for me to learn early on about religious diversity and interfaith dialogue, and I have always been grateful for those opportunities. In many ways, those experiences provided me with some of the seeds for my later introduction into Unitarian Universalism – a gift that I continue to cherish.

Now that I am considerably older, I am looking forward to celebrating Christmas with my interfaith and no-faith family members. But I find that some people in our country are trying to build fences around their religious beliefs and holidays and put down those who worship in a different way or do not worship at all. And I find that very sad. So I hope that during this holiday season, we UUs will find all the ways we can to embrace our commonalities and our differences and celebrate together with those of all faith traditions or none. And I wish for all a joyous Christmas, Hanukkah, Solstice, Yule, Kwanzaa, Chalice, and ...!

Happy Holidays,  
Rev. Betty



**December 25 – January 1**

**Rev. Betty and Tom** will be spending the holidays with family on the east coast. Please call the UUCVH Office in case of an emergency requiring ministerial coverage.

**The Shared Ministry Team will be available for other support.**



**Sunday, December 7  
First Sunday Potluck at  
11:30 AM**



**Sunday, December 7  
Shared Ministry Team  
12:30 to 2:00 PM**

Have you needed someone to talk to in confidence about things going on in your life that is creating a problem for you? The Shared Ministry Team at UUCVH is ready to help with pastoral care.

The team members are: Jerry Buchanan, Celia Eiben, Linda Hunt, Deane Phinney, and David Tyner - under the supervision of Rev. Betty.

For more complicated issues, contact Rev. Betty on her cell to schedule an appointment for pastoral counseling. We all want to support you in living a more *abundant life*.



**HOLIDAY WREATH  
Orders...**

Elizabeth will hand deliver all wreaths and distribute them at Church on **December 7<sup>th</sup>**.

Thank you so much for your support! – Elizabeth, DRE

**PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE**

The Christmas spirit is in the air, with several special events and activities happening this month around our church!

One of my favorite activities at UUCVH is our annual gift-giving to foster children within the system of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. Even though it is only once a year, it is a good feeling to know we may help Christmas to be a little brighter for these children. Our Social Action Circle sponsors this project along with several others. In fact, December is a month with five Mondays, which means we will be serving dinner at Ascencia homeless shelter on December 29. Please talk to Jerry Buchanan if you are interested in helping.

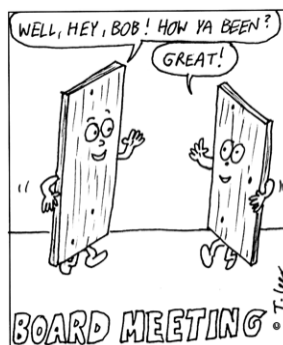
It will be "deck the hall" after church on December 7, when we get out all of our greenery and tinsel to get ready for the holiday season and our Holiday Party on Saturday, December 13. After you enjoy the salad luncheon, get in the holiday spirit and help decorate the "hall"! And please join us for much fun and merriment at the party/potluck dinner!

Winter Solstice will be celebrated in verse and song on Sunday morning, December 21. Let this morning be a respite from the hustle and bustle of the holidays, and a time to feel centered in celebrating the beauty of nature in this season.

Christmas Eve is always a special and lovely time at our church. I hope you will join us on this special evening for the short service and festive refreshments in our warm and cozy Friendship Hall! If you have family or friends visiting, consider bringing them along join in the festivities.

Wishing you a warm and enjoyable holiday season!

Ann Kleinsasser



**Thursday, December 11  
UUCVH Board Meeting  
7:00 PM**



**Monday, December 8**  
**UUCVH Staff Meeting**  
**6:30 to 8:00 PM**



**Friday, December 12**  
**Women's Group Potluck**  
**Luncheon**  
**11:30 AM**

Contact Deane Phinney, our  
 Women's Group Chair, if  
 you'd like to join us! You are  
 also welcome to "just show  
 up" for potluck lunch!

**\*Aesthetics Committee**  
**following lunch!**

Contact Aesthetics Chair, Paula  
 Hallowell to chip in with the  
 never ending projects she takes  
 on that help makes UUCVH our  
 church home!



**Sunday, December 14**  
**Spiritual Explorers Group**  
**12:30 - 2:00 PM**

All are welcome to join as we  
 talk about a different  
 spiritual and/or religious  
 topic each month with  
 openness and respect. For  
 more info about the group,  
 contact Rev. Betty or come to  
 the next meeting.

## INTERN'S INSPIRATION

Season's Greetings,

I can't believe the holidays are already upon us! I know that this can  
 be a bittersweet time of year for many people, so I'd like to offer  
 these words by the influential theologian Howard Thurman:

The Season of Remembrance

Again and again, it comes:  
 The Time of Recollection,  
 The Season of Remembrance.  
 Empty vessels of hope fill up again;  
 Forgotten treasures of dreams reclaim their place;  
 Long -lost memories come trooping back to me.  
 This is my season of remembrance,  
 My time of recollection.

Into the challenge of my anguish  
 I throw the strength of all my hope:  
 I match the darts of my despair with  
     the treasures of my dreams;  
 Upon the current of my heart  
 I float the burdens of the years;  
 I challenge the mind of death with my love of life.  
 Such to me is the Time of Recollection,  
 The season of Remembrance.

May you find strength in your hopes, dreams, and love of life this  
 holiday season and beyond!

Peace and Love,  
 Debbie



**Saturday, December 13**  
**HOLIDAY POTLUCK FAMILY NIGHT**  
**6:00 pm**

*Come and celebrate the holiday season with festive food, sparkling  
 company, games, prizes, singing and more! Sign up in the  
 Fellowship Hall for a potluck dish to go with the baked ham and  
 roast chicken which will be provided. Sparkling apple cider, coffee  
 and tea will be available, but bring along a bottle of wine if you  
 wish. Bring a wrapped white elephant gift for a lively gift-  
 exchange. Hope to see you there!*





**Monday, December 15  
(New Date)**

**Worship Committee Meeting  
7:00 – 8:00 PM**



**Tuesday, December 16  
Committee on Ministry  
meeting  
7:30 – 9:00 PM**



**December 16 to 24  
Hanukkah**

**FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS,  
FEAST OF DEDICATION**

Eight days celebrating the rededication of the Holy Temple (the Second Temple) in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire of the 2nd century BC.



**Wednesday, December 17  
Gnu UUs Dinner Meeting  
5:30-7:00 PM**

**India's Flavor restaurant  
3303 N. Verdugo Rd.  
Glendale CA 91208**

**Contact Paula Hallowell, Chair  
of the Gnu UUs for details!**



## **ANOTHER BOOK DISCUSSION?**

*Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande is a book I would like to discuss with other UU's. Currently, this book heads the NY Times Bestseller list for non-fiction, so we know that many other people are interested in the issues it raises.

The issue here is persuading Americans to deal more realistically with the conditions of old age, a very interesting stage of life which requires serious adjustments to the life style of its members, and also of the generation made up of their children, right now the historically populous group called "the baby boomers."

A practicing physician, Dr. Gawande has been writing books and articles that help the general public to understand medical issues since his senior year at Harvard. He is an engaging author, leading us into a discussion of larger issues by means of actual examples. He also footnotes his sweeping conclusions. Best of all, he is both honest and practical, presenting good models for readers' consideration.

**What if we schedule for January two or three times when a group of people might get together to discuss this book?  
In the meantime, if you can lay hands on a copy, read it.**

**Edith**



## **CHALICA**

Chalica is seven days long and runs from the first Monday in December through to Sunday. Each day represents a different Unitarian Principle: a chalice is lit each day and actions, gifts, or volunteering that expresses the day's Principle are given and received. One can have seven different chalices or one common chalice.

- ⊕ Monday: We light our chalice for the inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- ⊕ Tuesday: We light our chalice for justice, equity and compassion in human relations.
- ⊕ Wednesday: We light our chalice for acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth.
- ⊕ Thursday: We light our chalice for a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- ⊕ Friday: We light our chalice for the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in society at large.
- ⊕ Saturday: We light our chalice for the goal of world peace, liberty and justice for all.
- ⊕ Sunday: We light our chalice for respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.



UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST  
MINISTERS  
ASSOCIATION

**Thursday, December 18**  
Valley Cluster UU Ministers  
At Emerson UU  
1:00 – 3:00 PM



### Celebrate Guest at Your Table!

Our Guest at Your Table program is going strong! So many families and friends have brought human rights home and welcomed our "guests" into their lives. Thanks to your support, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is working throughout the United States and around the world to advance human rights.

Your beautiful *Stories of Hope* booklet introduces you to people whose efforts in partnership with UUSC have helped change people's lives. Each week, with family and friends, we can focus on a different story of hope as we gather and consider our many blessings.

Meet Chrisantus Mwandihi, a Kenyan human rights defender who is working to address the impacts of climate change on his community's food supply and native forests. His work — developing food projects, setting up educational programs for children, and preserving and replanting native trees in the Kakamega Rain Forest — has been so successful that government agencies and local universities are now exploring it for models to replicate!

**If you have not yet picked up your Stories of Hope booklet and Guest at Your Table envelope, you may do so now in Fellowship Hall or emailing a request to the office at [uucvh@uuverdugo.org](mailto:uucvh@uuverdugo.org). Your gift to Guest at Your Table is tax deductible – be sure to complete the form on your envelope to receive your acknowledgement. Remember, gifts of \$125 are eligible to be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, doubling the impact of your support!**

Meet Don Mario Pérez, who grows organic coffee beans using sustainable farming techniques. Through Equal Exchange, a fair-trade organization that UUSC works with, small farmers like Don Mario receive more secure and fair compensation for their products. When you buy those products through the UUSC Coffee Project, a portion of the proceeds goes into UUSC's Small Farmer Fund, which supports other human rights initiatives with UUSC partners. And we all enjoy the fruits of this labor!

Meet Nancy Vilce and Marie Obethe Moise, leaders of the Association for the Promotion of Integral Family Healthcare in Haiti who have organized the Art Oasis Café. They partner with community members by using produce from urban garden projects to prepare nutritious and affordable meals for city residents, and then use proceeds from the restaurant to support their work with youth. This collaboration strengthens community and can serve as a model for Guest at Your Table gatherings!

**We will be collecting contribution envelopes at our Christmas Eve or December 28th service.**

**Thank you for participating in this very important project!**

### **Thursday, December 18** **WRITING AS A SACRED** **PRACTICE**

With Debbie Rice,  
Ministerial Intern  
7:00- 9:00 PM

No writing experience is  
necessary. Open to all!



Newsletter

**Friday, December 19**  
**Outlook Newsletter**  
**deadline**  
(always the Friday after the  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday)

**Sunday, December 28**  
Internship Committee  
Meeting  
12:00 - 1:00 PM  
Chaired by Deane Phinney

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**Deadline for copy is always  
the Friday after the third  
Thursday of the month.**

Editor reserves the right to edit for  
content and/or space. © 2014  
UUCVH



**I want to Thank  
Pres. Ann Kleinsasser and the  
Board Members  
for thinking of me** and getting  
me a mug to hang on the Church  
rack. I definitely needed  
one! Whilst writing I also wish  
to *thank all* those members who  
pitch in and help in the  
Kitchen. Rev. Betty & Tom have  
often stayed behind when  
everyone has left the premises  
to help me to clean up. I so  
appreciate all the help I get.

**Thanks again.  
Celia**

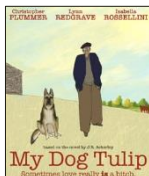


New fascia was installed along the entire building  
by Handy Man James Michael Nail.  
Thanks for overseeing such a big job, Paula!



**MOVIE NIGHT**  
Theatre is dark in December.

**NEXT MONTH**  
January 2015, Date TBA  
"My Dog Tulip"



**2009 NR 81 minutes**  
Cast: Christopher Plummer, Lynn  
Redgrave, Isabella Rossellini

Based on J.R. Ackerley's 1956  
autobiographical novel.  
Ackerley, a middle-aged writer,  
is changed forever when he  
adopts an 18-month-old  
German shepherd. Despite not  
being a dog lover, he finds his  
truest companionship with his  
skittish pup, Tulip. And so  
begins a 14-year friendship  
filled with the mischief, wonder  
and unconditional love a dog  
can bring.

### Sunday Greeter Volunteers

December 7	Ann Kleinsasser
December 14	Florence Chase
December 21	Tom Stapleford
December 24	Tom Stapleford
December 28	Celia Eiben

### Sunday Usher Volunteers

December 7	Carol Holst
December 14	Jerry Buchanan
December 21	Gary Clark
December 24	needed
December 28	Howard Richman

### Sunday Sound Technician Volunteers

December 7	Jerry Buchanan
December 14	Alan Kleinsasser
December 21	David Tyner
December 24	needed
December 28	Jesse Silver

## MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE



This is the point in time when our Search starts to get exciting! We've completed our research and compiled the information into an online Packet of essays and charts. Now, we have a chance to breathe a little bit while our UUCVH profile circulates through the UUA online match-making process.

Coming up soon... BCT! (What's that?)

BEYOND CATEGORICAL THINKING

THINK OF A MINISTER. DON'T THINK OF AN ELEPHANT.

Chances are you thought of both. And distinct images perhaps came to mind. In terms of a minister, what images came to mind? Was it a person of a particular gender, race, or age?

Beyond Categorical Thinking is a highly recommended part of the search process for our congregation. In finding the person who would be the best match for our minister, we could potentially overlook or even let biases keep us from knowing that a particular person would be the best match for us.

Other congregations have assumed that their ideal minister looks a certain way, and often ministers who are not white or male or heterosexual or able-bodied or of a particular age or class are discounted and seen as "less than" in some ways.

Ministers in our faith who are people of color, bisexual, gay, lesbian, female, transgender, differently-abled, young, old, ethnically different, or of a different class—all of these credentialed ministers still face discrimination as part of the ministerial search process.

In our efforts to find the best match, UUCVH is planning to host a Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop.

We will have trainers come and facilitate a 2-3-hour conversation where we will have a chance to examine how we can avoid letting prejudice become a part of our search process. This is yet another way for us to put our faith into lived experience and improve the odds that regardless of identity, we will find the minister who is the best match for us and will serve us well. This opportunity allows the entire congregation fuller participation in the search process. It will allow us to explore our hopes and concerns for a new minister, learn more about the search process, and see how our own history (both personal and congregational) might interfere with our efforts in this search.

**Plan to attend and participate in this BCT program provided by the UUA.**

**Schedule details will be announced as soon as possible – we're aiming for January, 2015.**

The BCT program is now 20 years running and proves very useful and valuable to the congregations in the search process.

Your Search Committee Team,

Deane Phinney,  
Co-Chair

Terresa Jones,  
Co-Chair

Jerry Buchanan

Roy Lopez

Howard Richman



## December 2014 at UUCVH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> 7:00 pm Knitting Circle <i>Chalica begins</i> 	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 11:00 am Membership Comm.	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 3:00 pm UUJM Party & FUNdraiser at Sepulveda
<b>7</b> 10:30 am "Under The Bodhi Tree" 12 noon Potluck Lunch 12:30pm Shared Ministry Wreath Order Delivery <i>Chalica ends</i>	<b>8</b> 6:30 pm Staff Meeting	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 7:00 pm Board Meeting	<b>12</b> 11:30 am Women's Group Potluck Luncheon (Aesthetics following)	<b>13</b> <b>6:00 pm Holiday Potluck Family Night Party!</b>
<b>14</b> 10:30 am "Hanukkah Is Not Just For Children" 12:30pm Spiritual Explorers Group	<b>15</b> 7:00 pm Worship Comm	<b>16</b> 7:30 pm Comm on Ministry <i>Sundown, Hanukkah begins</i>	<b>17</b> 5:30 pm GNU UUs Dinner at India's Flavor restaurant	<b>18</b> 1:00 pm Valley Cluster Ministers at Emerson UU 7:00 pm Writing As A Sacred Practice	<b>19</b> <i>Outlook Newsletter Deadline</i>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b> 10:30 am "Winter Solstice" <i>Winter Solstice Exactly at 3:02 pm</i>  Sunrise 6:54 am  Sunset 4:47 pm	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>6:00 pm "Night of Wonder &amp; Joy" Christmas Eve Service</b> Collection of Guest At Your Table gifts	<b>25</b> <i>Christmas Day</i>	<b>26</b> <i>Kwanzaa begins</i> 	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> 10:30 am "Kwanzaa's 7 Principles & Ubuntu" 12 noon Internship Comm	<b>29</b> 2:00 pm Cook at UUCVH & carpool to Serve Dinner at Ascencia	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> <i>New Year's Eve</i>	<b>January 1, 2015</b> <i>Happy New Year!</i> <i>Kwanzaa ends</i>	<b>2</b> !	<b>3</b>

## ***SAVE THE DATE!***

- Dec. 1 Knitting Circle, 7pm  
Chalica UU Holiday begins (7 days)
- Dec. 4 Membership Comm. 11am
- Dec. 6 UUJMCA Party @ Sepulveda UU, 3pm
- Dec. 7 "Under The Bodhi Tree" 10:30am  
Potluck Lunch @ noon  
Shared Ministry 12:30pm  
Wreath Order delivery
- Dec. 8 Staff Meeting 6:30pm
- Dec. 11 Board Meeting 7pm
- Dec. 12 Women's Group Potluck 11:30am
- Dec. 13 UUCVH Annual Holiday Potluck Family Night Party 6pm
- Dec. 14 "Hanukkah Is Not Just For Children" 10:30am  
Spiritual Explorers 12:30pm
- Dec. 15 Worship Comm. 7pm
- Dec. 16 Gnu UU Dinner @ India's Flavor restaurant 5:30pm
- Dec. 18 Cluster Minister's @ Emerson 1pm  
Writing As A Spiritual Practice 7pm
- Dec. 19 Newsletter submission deadline!
- Dec. 21 "Winter Solstice" 10:30am
- Dec. 24 "Night of Wonder & Joy" Christmas Eve Service 6pm
- Dec. 28 "Kwanzaa's 7 Principles & Ubuntu" 10:30am  
Internship Comm 12noon
- Dec. 29 Cook & Serve for Ascencia 2pm, 5pm



## ***the Outlook***

**Unitarian Universalist Church of the Verdugo Hills**

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