

the Outlook

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Verdugo Hills
4451 Dunsmore Avenue, La Crescenta, CA 91214
www.uuverdugo.org

January 2015
Volume 20, Issue 1



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

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*
Terresa 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!

January 4

"New Beginnings" Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford

In the New Year, we are encouraged to look at things in new ways and resolve to do things differently. But how have your religious beliefs changed over the years? Maybe it's time to dust off some of our assumption and look at things with fresh eyes. Are we Unitarian Universalists really "God's Frozen People"? And what would it take to make changes as we move ahead? Are you up to the challenge? I hope so.

January 11

"The Wi\$dom Path – Money and Life" Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford

Most of us formed our ideas about money at a very young age – perhaps from our parents or other relatives, from our friends, or from our experiences. The UUA has recently piloted a program to help us discover the ways we think about money and how it affects the quality of our lives. No, this is not the beginning of our Annual Canvass. But you may be surprised at what you discover about yourself.

January 18

"Choice Without Access is Not Justice" Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford

Back in an earlier period in our history, we were encouraged to think of reproductive justice as a matter of choice. Now we realize that laws may have changed, but the ability of some women to obtain reproductive services is not guaranteed. But If we UUs believe in "the inherent worth and dignity of every person" and "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations," we must care about all women, not just those who are in the privileged class. So what can we do?

January 25

"Facing Your Fears" Debbie Rice, Ministerial Intern

H.P. Lovecraft says, "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown." What are some things you just can't seem to face due to fear? Does change make you squirm? Do you fear death? Rejection? Intimacy? Heights? Let's explore some of the things that we dread and ways we can work toward overcoming them so that we may experience growth and expand the possibilities in our lives.

Saturday, January 3

1:00-4:00 pm

**Museum of Jurassic
Technology**

*Sign-up sheet in
Fellowship Hall*

Contact Paula for carpool info.

An offbeat museum that is
home to many bizarre relics!

Museum located at
9341 Venice Blvd.,
Culver City 90232

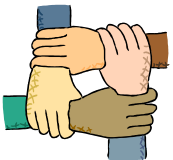
Admission:
Age 22-59 is \$8
Age 13-21 is \$5
Age 60+ is \$5
Under 12 is Free



Sunday, January 4

At 11:30 AM

**First Sunday of the Month
Potluck Lunch**



Sunday, January 4

Shared Ministry Team

12:30 to 2:00 PM

When you need someone to talk
to in confidence, Shared
Ministry Team at UUCVH is here
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 complicated issues, contact
Rev. Betty to schedule an
appointment for pastoral
counseling. We all want to
support you in living a more
abundant life.

MINISTER'S MUSINGS

I recently came upon a reading that was a part of my ordination service back in 1998, written by one of my UU ministerial heroes. It provided encouragement to me then, and it has been, at various times in my ministry, an inspiration for my continued journey. So I would like to share it with you. For I believe that it can give us all a way to enter the New Year with deep compassion for ourselves and others. And it may even help us to cope with the despair that many of us have felt over recent acts of violence in our country and the world. So here it is:

"Life Is Always Unfinished Business"

By Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert

"In the midst of the whirling day,
In the hectic rush to be doing,
In the frantic pace of life,
Pause here for a moment.

Catch your breath;
Relax your body;
Loosen your grip on life.

Consider that our lives are always unfinished business;
Imagine that the picture of our being is never complete;
Allow your life to be a work in progress.

Do not hurry to mold the masterpiece;
Do not rush to finish the picture;
Do not be impatient to complete the drawing;
From beckoning birth to dawning death, we are in process,
And always there is more to be done.

Do not let incompleteness weigh on your spirit;
Do not despair that imperfection marks your every day;
Do not fear that we are still in the making.

Let us instead be grateful that the world is still to be created;
Let us give thanks that we can be more than we are;
Let us celebrate the power of the incomplete;
For life is always unfinished business."

As we move into the New Year, let us remember that there is still time to do what is needed to make our lives and our world better. And the good news is that we are not alone as part of this Beloved Community.

Blessings and hugs,
Rev. Betty

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE



Monday, January 5
UUCVH Staff Meeting
6:30 to 8:00 PM



Monday, January 5 at 7 PM
All skill levels welcome.
Winter is colder than usual here in SoCal! Come knit up something beautiful and cozy with our group of UUCVH knitters! 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.



January 8 at 11:00 AM
Membership Committee meeting is 2nd Thursday this month. Contact Membership Chair Florence Chase with interests and inquiries.

Happy New Year! Have you made any resolutions yet? Our UUCVH Board is way ahead of the game on this front ☺ At our retreat back in August we updated a “vision” and “strategic plan” of things we would like to work toward or accomplish this year. I’d like to summarize and share these goals with you here and invite your comments and feedback.

During 2014-2015 the UUCVH Board would like to:

- Be welcoming—see growth in membership
- Be progressive
- Be committed to social justice
- Be active in the local community
- Be visible
- Be strongly supported by a large and healthy congregation
- Have strong and vital Religious Education for all ages

How do we plan to accomplish these goals? Several steps have been taken already! You may have noticed our new banner hanging outside to make us more visible to our neighbors and passersby. Also, take a look at the religion page of the Crescenta Valley Weekly to see our ad. With Terresa’s help we are increasing our presence on social media. We are looking into ways to increase our presence at community events, and working to find outside speakers other than Sunday mornings on political and social justice topics. And we have hired Elizabeth Brown who is energetically and capably creating a vital RE program for our youngest members.

Please share your comments and ideas with me or any member of our UUCVH Board: Linda Hunt, Vice President—Cindy Lopez, Secretary—Gary Clark, Treasurer—Pat Berberian, Trustee—Celia Eiben, Trustee—Howard Richman, Trustee. We look forward to hearing from you!

Ann Kleinsasser



Thursday, January 8
UUCVH Board Meeting
7:00 PM



**Friday, January 9
Women's Potluck
Lunch-Bunch
11:30 AM**

Deane Phinney chairs our Women's Group. No appointment needed, just come and show-up for potluck lunch!

***Aesthetics Committee with
Paula Hallowell following
lunch!**

A special Thank You to
Deane Phinney
who previously served as
Chair of Aesthetics -- all of
the planning and doing... the
job is finally done!

To All: join the next
meeting for new
developments!
See you there!
- Paula



**Sunday, January 11
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, contact Rev. Betty or just come to the next meeting.

INTERN'S INSPIRATION

Hello everyone,

Happy New Year! I hope that you all had a marvelous holiday season! I begin each new year with thoughts on what I want to do differently (not resolutions per se). This year what immediately jumps to mind is the need to get back to my spiritual practices. I used to meditate, take long walks or hikes, and write in a journal to quiet my mind and relax me, but I have recently convinced myself that I just don't have the time or the energy to put into my spiritual practices. This has left me feeling ungrounded and anxious at times. Therefore, I know that I have to cut the excuses and get back to my life – affirming practices.

I wonder if you might also have some spiritual practices you need to start doing or recommit yourself to. Have you ever tried doing a body prayer each morning? Rev. Tom Owen – Towle has one that I just love so I want to share it with you. He says,

“Upon rising from bed, I plant my feet firmly on the floor. After finding my body's center of gravity, I slightly bend my knees and cup my hands in a receptive mode, right above the navel. I affirm my very being with words such as: “I am a child of the universe. I belong here. It's good for me to be alive.” Then my hands lift, barely touching, fully stretched to the sky in prayerful gesture, and I continue speaking out loud: “I thank You God for most this amazing day” (E.E. Cummings), or similar words of bone – deep gratitude. When my arms reach their apex, I open wide my hands and shape them into a chalice to welcome all the manifold gifts, both challenges and comforts, to be delivered on this irrepeatable day. My words pour forth: “Into my hands are received today's delights and difficulties, sorrows and joys.” Then, slowly, in circling fashion, I draw my extended hands back to the beginning position, while assertively uttering: “I promise to spread these blessings to every living entity that I greet this precious day.” (Theology Ablaze: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary Year of Unitarian Universalism, pp. 146-147)

If you are looking for an energizing, meaningful way to start your morning, give this body prayer a try. Please let me know how it works for you or any other spiritual practices you are engaging in. It sure helps to keep one another accountable!

Peace and joy,
Debbie



Tuesday, January 13
Committee on Ministry
meeting
7:30 – 9:00 PM



Friday, January 16
6:30 PM
"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.



Newsletter

Friday, January 16
Outlook Newsletter
deadline for submissions!

RE CORNER

This month we have been working on the 3rd Principle "Everyone has the right to learn together". We have had several opportunities to learn new things together, from making origami to creating countdown chains for the holiday. The children have enjoyed having the opportunity to help one another with things that might not come as easy to one person as it does to another. We have talked about differences and how when you start to learn something it isn't always easy, but there is always someone who can help you get through the challenge. This principle is near and dear to my heart as someone who has worked in the field of education for many years. Our children must have space to learn in, they must feel safe to make mistakes, fail and of course succeed. As the mother of a three year old daughter, I work hard not to say "good job", but rather acknowledge how hard she is trying and that she stuck with it and moved through a challenge. It is only through failure and mistakes that real success is born.

This month we are also focusing on the holiday season. We have had the opportunity to explore the story of Christmas, Hanukah, and we will explore Winter Solstice and Kwanza. The purpose of dialogue about and learning about these holidays is to give our children the opportunity to understand that many different people have many different beliefs and the ability to see the world through many different lenses.

We would like to wish you and your family a happy holiday season and a very happy new year!

Elizabeth



"Under A Banana Tree" with Rev. Betty



Monday, January 19
Gnu UUs Dinner Meeting
5:30-7:00 PM
Contact Paula Hallowell,
Chair of the Gnu UUs or
Rev Betty for details!



Thursday, January 22
"WRITING AS A
SACRED PRACTICE"
7:00- 9:00 PM

With Debbie Rice,
 Ministerial Intern.
No writing experience
necessary.
Open to all!



Sunday, January 25
Internship Committee
Meeting
12:00 - 1:00 PM
Chaired by Deane Phinney



Friday January 23 at 1:00 pm

BOOK GROUP

Being Mortal by Atul Gawande
 (NY Times Bestseller)

Where? At Edith & Jerry's house!

Let Edith know if you plan to attend. If you prefer an evening meeting, we might be able to arrange another meeting too.

"Being Mortal, planning ahead for the last stage of life" is being widely discussed. The wait-list for this book at La Crescenta library is over 90 people long! Why don't 2 or 3 people buy a copy and share it?

And even if you do not read the book, since we are talking about universal experience, you are already equipped to discuss the topic.

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.

In the meantime, if you can lay hands on a copy, read it.

Edith

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

2015 The Year of the Sheep is an excellent period for all the Chinese zodiac signs. According to the Chinese calendar, the element for this year is Wood and the lucky color is Green. This Chinese New Year 2015 starts from **February 19th, 2015 up to February 7th, 2016.**

The Sheep is the eighth sign in Chinese astrology and number "8" is considered to be a very lucky number. It symbolizes wisdom, fortune and prosperity.



**Monday, January 26
(New Date)
Worship Committee
Meeting
7:00 – 8:00 PM**



All of the children with
Los Angeles Department of Children's Services
appreciate the Christmas Gifts you generously provided!



**Thursday, January 29
Valley Cluster UU Ministers
meeting at UUCVH
11:00 AM – 1:30 PM**



Sunday Greeter Volunteers

January 4 Florence Chase
January 11 Celia Eiben
January 18 Ann Kleinsasser
January 25 Ann Miller Rillo /
Tom Stapleford



A very merry evening was had by all at our UUCVH Annual
Holiday Family Night potluck & party!

Sunday Usher Volunteers

January 4 Carol Holst
January 11 Jerry Buchanan
January 18 Gary Clark
January 25 Howard Richman

Sunday Sound Technician Volunteers

January 4 Jerry Buchanan
January 11 Alan Kleinsasser
January 18 David Tyner
January 25 Jesse Silver





**Thanks for a Successful
Guest at Your Table
program!**

Congratulations! This year, UUCVH was able to raise a sizable contribution to our Guest at Your Table program.

Plus each of our gifts of \$125 or more are being matched dollar for dollar, by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y.

Learn more about the important human justice work your contributions make possible through UUSC at
<http://www.uusc.org>

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

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MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

*Even en route to lunch,
the Search Committee
Kept their eyes peeled...*



© 2010 Dan Pegoda. More at LeadershipJournal.net/Caricatures

A quick update from your UUCVH Search Team...

We have our third meeting with Ministerial Search Representative Rev. Ken Collier on Saturday, January 3rd. We will be discussing our next steps in the process of finding our next UUCVH Minister.

For a limited time, you can check out our online profile-packet that prospective candidates will be looking at to get to know us. Here's the website:

UUCVH Ministerial Search Committee Online Packet:

<http://uucvh.uuministerialsearch.com>

login: candidate

password: 818candidate

Keep a look out for email and Sunday announcements that we will be sending for our upcoming "Beyond Categorical Thinking" Workshop and luncheon to be held at UUCVH. This workshop will be a great opportunity for our whole congregation to get together and explore the ins and outs of how we can select a good fit for our church ministry's future.

Your Search Committee Team,

Deane
Phinney,
Co-Chair

Terresa
Jones,
Co-Chair

Jerry
Buchanan

Roy Lopez

Howard
Richman

January 2015 at UUCVH						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>Happy New Year!</i>	2	3 1-4 pm Jurassic Museum 4 pm Search Comm
4 10:30 am "New Beginnings" Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford 12 pm Potluck Lunch 12:30pm Shared Ministry	5 6:30 pm Staff Meeting 7:00 pm Knitting Circle	6	7	8 11 am Membership Comm 7:00 pm Board Meeting	9 11:30 am Women's Group Potluck Luncheon (Aesthetics following)	10
11 10:30 am "The Wi\$dom Path – Money and Life" Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford 12:30pm Spiritual Explorers Group	12	13 7:30 pm Comm on Ministry	14	15	16 <i>Outlook</i> Newsletter Deadline 6:30 pm Movie Night "My Dog Tulip"	17
18 10:30 am "Choice Without Access is Not Justice" Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford	19 5:30 pm GNU UUs Dinner meeting	20	21	22 7 pm "Sacred Writing"	23 1 pm Book Group at Edith's "Being Mortal"	24
25 10:30 am "Facing Your Fears" Debbie Rice, Ministerial Intern 12 pm Internship Comm	26 7 pm Worship Comm	27	28	29 11am-1:30 pm Valley Cluster Ministers at UUCVH	30	31 1-4 pm Slumgullion BBQ at CV Park

SAVE THE DATE!

January 3 Jurassic Museum of Technology 1:00pm
January 3 Search Comm meeting
January 4 First Sunday Potluck 11:30am
January 4 Shared Ministry 12:30pm
January 5 UUCVH Staff Meeting 6:30pm
January 5 Knitting Circle 7:00pm
January 8 Membership Comm 11:00am
January 8 Board meeting 7:00pm
January 9 Women's Group Potluck Lunch 11:30am
January 11 Spiritual Explorers 12:30pm
January 13 Committee on Ministry 7:30pm
January 16 Movie Night "My Dog Tulip" 6:30pm
January 16 Newsletter submission deadline!
January 19 GnuUU Dinner meeting 5:30pm
January 22 Sacred Writing 7:00pm
January 23 Book Group @ Edith & Jerry's 1:00pm
January 25 Internship Committee 12 noon
January 26 Worship Committee 7:00pm
January 29 Valley Cluster UU Ministers @ UUCVH 11:00am
January 31 GnuUU Slumgullion BBQ @ CV Park 1:00pm



2015

Happy New Year!

the Outlook

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