



The Chalice and the Flame

Diverse people. Diverse beliefs. One community.

A Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem, OR

January 2024

Class and Discussion Following January 7 Service

"Finding Your Place in the Racial Justice Movement" will be led by Shirlee Geiger and Randy Russel, both former Moderators of the Board at the First Unitarian Church of Portland. Shirlee is a retired philosophy instructor who taught at Portland Community College for 41 years. Randy, also retired, worked earlier in education of indigenous youth, and later in the healthcare sector.

Why do the indicators of well-being for citizens of the U.S. continue to show extreme racial disparities? The UUA has championed one possible explanation: the prevalence of systemic racism within white supremacy culture. In this two-hour, participatory dialogue we will explore this idea, along with alternative explanations from contemporary Black activists and scholars. We will highlight the activist projects that arise from each of the diverse explanations. This is a dialogue opportunity for anyone who has:

- had unsatisfactory conversations with friends or family about race,
- wondered about the actions or strategies of UU "anti-racists,"
- felt uncomfortable asking questions or expressing opinions about oppression as a white cisgender straight male person. (Cisgender is the gender identity assigned to a baby at birth.)

A longer, 5-week class with selected short readings is also available if there is interest.

Memoir Writing Class Starts January 8

Everyone has a story to tell. If you've ever considered that you might want to write your story down, put your journey into words, leave a written legacy as a gift to your family, now is the time to get that adventure started! Gloria Holland, a retired English teacher and a memoir writer, will gently guide you through the process of getting your story told.



Gloria will be offering a 6-week memoir writing class at UUCS each Monday from January 8 through February 12 from 10:00 am to noon. The cost is \$30 (\$5 per class), which will be added to the UUCS Fundraiser budget. This small tuition will be accepted at the first class and may be paid by cash or check. Please make your checks out to "UUCS" and note that it's for the "Memoir Class."

If you are interested in taking this class or would like more information, please contact Gloria Holland at gijiholland@comcast.net or call or text 503-551-0579.

Chalice Circles Program Resumes in January

Chalice Circles (CC), a program of small group discussions that was introduced last spring at UUCS, has been highly successful. The program focuses on external issues/opinions, in contrast to Connections/Soul Matters groups that focus on introspection and feelings. They both foster relationships through discussions, and they both have discussion materials with readings/videos for preparation, as well as questions and or activities to guide the meetings.

The topics for CC thus far have been Homelessness, LGBTQ, Artificial Intelligence, and Defending Democracy. For the January meeting, the topic is the War in Israel.



If you are interested in "sampling" CC by participating in the January meeting and possibly joining, you will be welcomed. This will be the only "open invitation to the community" until August 2024, with membership closed until then. There are currently two groups of CC planned with the same discussion topics. One group will meet on Monday, January 8 at 6:30-8:00 pm, and the other on Tuesday, January 9 from 2:00 to 3:30 pm. Registration for CC is required, but simple. Email Teresa Farnum at teresa5403@icloud.com or call 603 (657) 5921.



Reverential Ramblings

~ Rev. Richard Davis, UUCS's minister

A number of years ago we formed a meditation group here at UUCS so we could gather, meditate in silence, and center ourselves for two thirty-minute periods interspersed with a shorter period of silent walking meditation. At the end of our meditation, we discussed a common text we had agreed to read—like the ancient Buddhist Classic “The Way of the Bodhisattva,” which quickly became one of my essential texts because of its profound psychological insights and its spirit of boundless compassion. There was a core group of us who had had previous meditation experience in Buddhist and UU settings, and we took turns leading the group.

Within a few years a very experienced Zen teacher, Lee Ann Nail, joined our group and our congregation. Within a period of time, she attained the status of Zen Master; meanwhile some of the key members of our original group had moved away. So, we members of our pre-existing group “The Compassionate Mind UU Sangha,” (“*Sangha*” is *Buddhist community*) merged with the Salem Zen Center under Lee Ann’s wise and able leadership, as it has been for many a good year.

Up until now, the Salem Zen Center’s home has been here at UUCS, yet now good fortune has smiled upon them, and they have acquired their own property, described below. We are so grateful to our friends in the Zen Sangha for all the good you have done while you were here, and we are so delighted that Salem now has its own Zen Center unto itself. We offer you our blessings!

As far as meditation practice at UUCS is concerned, a valuable opportunity now lies before us. In my experience there are always several UU’s in a congregation who have some experience and/or interest in some form of Buddhist or eastern meditation practices or perhaps other contemplative disciplines. In fact, I know of several of you who fall into this category and I’m confident there are more.

So, let’s gather, discover who we all are and consider how we might now provide a ministry of meditation to our members, friends and larger community. On Wednesday January 24 at 5:30 pm I’ll be hosting an organizational meeting here at UUCS (minister’s office) so we can gauge the level of interest and consider our next steps. My hope is that we can begin meditating together soon thereafter.

Buddhist style meditation practices generally dovetail nicely with UUism because there are no required doctrines or beliefs you must adopt, and there are recognized physical, psychological and spiritual benefits. It’s especially helpful to meditate with others and it’s good for novices to have a place where they can get some basic instructions to begin a meditation practice. I am confident we will be willing and able to offer this.

These days our world feels akilter—out of balance—everyone is on edge. This is why it is important to center yourself, however you can, especially during times of stress and struggle. If you make this an established pattern, a daily habit, then you will be on a good path toward reducing some of the stress and suffering in your life and gaining a deeper appreciation for the gift of being. Then, too, meditation helps awaken the spirit of compassion for oneself and others.

May this be the new beginning of a beautiful offering that will bless many more people than we can imagine for longer than we know.

Love, *Rick*

Note: The new location of the Salem Zen Center is the Miao Chung Temple at 1485 Mill Street SE, Salem. Meditation is Tuesday evening at 5:30 and at 7:00 to 8:30 pm. If you are new, arrive at 6:45 pm for the 7:00 pm meditation. All offerings are free; donations are accepted.





Lifespan Religious Education

~Molly Brown, Director, Lifespan Religious Education~

As we embark on a new year, we're excited to delve into the heart of our Lifespan Religious Education Program, focusing on "The Gifts of Our Faith." This overarching theme guides us through ten beloved Unitarian Universalist values, exploring their profound impact on shaping us individually and collectively.

This January, our attention is on "The Gift of Liberating Love." Each session is designed to unfold the layers of love, moving beyond mere comfort to embrace its transformative power. Let's dive into what January holds for our community:

- Session A, **Love Pulls Us**: In this session, we'll distinguish between comforting love and liberating love. While comforting love provides a sense of safety, liberating love propels us to take action and make choices.
- Session B, **Love Pulls Us Upstream**: Explore love as a magnetic force that urges us to address systemic issues, not just symptoms. Our faith calls us to navigate upstream, understanding the root causes that throw people into the river.
- Session C, **Love Pulls Us Back to The Table**: Discover how love, akin to a magnet, draws us back to the table of understanding. It encourages dialogue, resolution, and working through challenges, reinforcing the bonds that hold us together.
- Session D, **Love Pulls Us Toward Self-Acceptance**: This session reflects on the magnetic pull of love towards self-acceptance. Embrace imperfections, for our faith reminds us that self-acceptance is essential, creating a space for genuine love of oneself.

We invite you to join us on this journey of exploration and growth. The Lifespan Religious Education Program is a collective effort to instill these values in our lives, creating a positive impact on ourselves and our world around. Thank you for your continued support and participation.

Warm regards,

Molly Brown (she/hers) (971) 239-7384

Mardi Gras Ball February 10

The UUCS Board of Directors invites one and all to a family friendly Mardi Gras Masquerade and Costume Ball fundraiser on February 10, from 7 to 10 pm in Hanneman Hall. We are proudly hosting featured entertainment from the Imperial Sovereign Court of the Willamette Empire, who will conduct a drag show for us. Wine, non-alcoholic drinks and appetizers will be provided. Admission \$20 per person. Those under 18 will be admitted free and childcare will be available. There will be a mask-making event after services on Sunday, February 4 for all who would like to create their own mask. Contact office@uusalem.com with questions.



More Happenings and Highlights

Exploring UU Roots Begins January 14

Join Starting Point, which will cover the historical and theological roots of Unitarian Universalism. This experiential group involves the participants personally, through the sharing of their spiritual journeys, and provides guidance on how to get involved in the life of the congregation. For those who are new to our community, the group can help them decide if this congregation is the right fit for them. For established members, the series is a great way to refresh their personal search for truth and meaning and an opportunity to get to know new friends.

The program will run 4 weeks from noon to 2 pm at the church on these Sundays: January 14 and 28, February 4 and 11. Lunch will be provided. Childcare will be provided upon request two weeks before the first meeting.

The group will be facilitated by the Membership Team and Reverend Rick. After the first session, the group will be closed to new attendees. The four sessions are: 1. Your Journey, Sharing Our Stories and Spiritual Roadmaps; 2. The Unitarian Universalist Journey & The Journey of Our Church; 3. Our Journey Together, The Three Paths of Unitarian Universalism; 4, part 1 The Three Paths of Unitarian Universalism; and 4, part 2. Finding Your Journey Group. [Use this online form to register.](#)

Special Men's Group Meeting After January 14 Service

The Men's Group will meet at UUCS from 12:30 to 3 pm following the service on Sunday, January 14 as a follow-up to the December retreat.

Jolly Diners Dinner January 24

Jolly Diners was extremely Jolly in December, but we kept the Jolliness in check just enough to not be kicked out of the restaurant. Nothing unJolly crept into the conversation. We will meet again, at Marco Polo restaurant, on Wednesday, January 24 at 6 pm. Something for everyone on the menu!

Restorative Communication to Resolve Conflicts

UUCS is committed to being a congregation and a workplace free of sexual harassment or abuse of any kind. Anyone who has a concern or knowledge of sexual harassment or abuse in our church is urged to contact a member of the Safer Congregation Committee for further consideration. A newer offering is a Restorative Communication program that helps resolve conflicts between members using a mediation-type process. Our committee has training and expertise to help resolve difficult interpersonal issues. Contact any member of our committee to talk about it. We are the folks with the blue ribbons on our name tags. Stephanie Jernstedt, Gil Nicholson-Nelson, Cheryl Randall, Virginia (Ginny) Merriman, Jack Tally, Molly Brown (Director of RE), and Rick Davis (Minister).

2023 UUCS Microfinance Sale Results

We are very pleased to report that our UUCS Microfinance fundraising in November has raised a total of \$6,071 to date! Of this amount \$1,337 resulted from our sale, thanks to the very generous donation of eleven beautiful handmade quilts by Lorna Youngs and Elenie Smith's handcrafted pendants, pins and magnets. We are also thrilled that our donation to The NEO Fund will be matched, thus magnifying our contribution.

Why is our project important? Our Microfinance projects are focused on empowering very poor women and helping them boost their standard of living so they and their children can have better nutrition, schooling, healthcare and housing. To date, our projects have benefited people in Laos, Peru, Nicaragua, Kenya and India.

Your donations have helped women like Madaleyne who lives in Nicaragua and supports four children and four grandchildren. She started her small grocery after suffering a spinal injury at the company where she had worked for thirteen years. She could only find loans from loan sharks whose interest demands consumed more than her earnings. When she obtained her first NEO Fund loan of \$200 and a subsequent loan of \$700, she was able to expand her business, so her income jumped from \$2.50 per day to \$30 per day. The NEO Fund ensured her success with coaching and business assistance.

Thank you so much for making such a big difference to women and their families struggling to be free of poverty in Nicaragua!

News of the Community

Hey, have you heard the exciting news? Well, you will hear some of it here. Some of the fun things that people have been doing or will be doing soon are:

Rebecca Harrison (Becky, or if over in Korea, Rebecky) a few years ago decided to volunteer in Korea because of her many Korean friends here at home. During her initial trip over, so many wild and fun things occurred, not just with the land and culture, but the overwhelming friendliness of the people that after her third trip to Korea, she realized this would make a fun, historical, and humorous adventure to put into a book ... "So, I did," she said. It is a lighthearted view of her travels and teaching English in the city of Gwangju and then later volunteering at the Buddhist Jogyesa Temple. And, even more exciting, "I just completed an audio book of my paperback, *Travels with Kimchi*, read by Tina Marie Cruz, her Korean being so much better than mine." Here is a link to both the [hardcopy of the book](#) and the [audiobook](#).



Greg Gregg: I took this photo [on the left] of Margrethe and our grandson Roland on a magical spring day just before they found a small tree covered with thousands of ladybugs. Children and grandchildren need moments like this to remind them that magic happens in the world. Each one is a memory that shapes our spirits. It's one of my favorite photos because it reminds me that these moments don't happen unless we spend time outdoors with our little ones. Plus, it helps to have a magical elf for a grandmother.

Simenfalva news: The Reverend Erzsebet Denes and her family (to the right) send their holiday greetings.



Do you have something you want to share for the January Newsletter? Email me at sara@uusalem.org by January 25 or catch me some Sunday and tell me!

~Sara Pickett

Social Justice Comments

Fellowship, Social Justice, and You

Social justice is as much a fellowship activity as a social justice activity. A successful social justice action is the result of people working together, and a fellowship activity, to achieve a shared goal or interest such as reducing, if not eliminating, a social injustice. A social justice activity that attracts people builds community which helps them make UUCS their spiritual home.

Investopedia says, "Social justice refers to a fair and equitable division of resources, opportunities, and privileges in society." (Investopedia's online article on [Social Justice Meaning and Main Principles Explained](#) is the best discussion of social justice I've seen and is well worth reading.) It broadens the more common definition of social justice which is "recognizing and protecting the rights of individuals." Purists say social justice should not include social services, however, UUCS supports Family Promise which is a social service program. I see social justice including social services.

You, a member or friend of the congregation, are essential to a successful social justice program. Your suggestions, ideas, observations, and comments are more valuable than you realize.

The YouTube whiteboard video [Where Good Ideas Come From](#) by Steven Johnson (4 minutes) is a brief explanation of how good ideas evolve and emphasizes that small things from many sources can have a big influence on an idea, in this case a social justice action. For example, if a potential social justice action is increasing the supply of affordable housing, we need to determine if we are going to focus on supply or affordability. If the focus is affordability of housing, we need to identify what we can do to increase housing affordability. Once we agree on *what to do*, we need to identify *how to do it*. At any point we can decide not to address housing affordability. Others will know or see things I don't, which makes for better decisions.

Social justice actions build community while making a difference in the lives of others. Your ideas, observations, and comments make our social justice efforts successful. I want to hear your ideas, feel free to drop by the social justice table during the coffee service.

~John Prohodsky, Social Justice Chair

Splinters from the Board

Board Report

Budget

At this time the overall budget is on track. As long as pledges continue to come in on a regular basis and groups/teams are able to create some fundraising events, we should be able to meet the current expectations.

Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball Fundraiser

Along that line, the Board is working on their fundraiser. Please put February 10, 2024, on your calendar for a Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball sponsored by the board. There will be fabulous entertainment, food and dancing to our own Jon Chinburg's band. This is a family friendly event, and we hope all can attend.

Organizational Chart

The organizational chart produced by Ben Cavaletto and the Team Council was approved by the Board. It will be on the website shortly if it isn't there already.

Receipt of Gift Guitar

The Board approved the generous gift of a \$1500 guitar from the estate of Rich Ford.

Ministerial Search

The Board approved the required covenant to continue with the search process through UUA. The January and February Board Forums will be devoted to gathering congregational input regarding an interim minister. Specifically, we will be asking what traits congregants want in this minister and what issues we see needing to be resolved. Please join us at one or both upcoming forums. There is more information in an article elsewhere in this newsletter.

Extension Cord Issues

After the fire alarm was triggered from an overheated bathroom sending our Family Promise guests into the parking lot at midnight, we had our annual Fire Marshall inspection. There were only two major problems to correct. Many of the exit lights needed their batteries replaced. Also, we had a serious problem with incorrect use of extension cords. Currently, we have taken care of all issues regarding the cords. Please be aware that no extension cords can be used except fused power strips. Residential extension cords are not allowed in a public building. In the future Facilities will be removing any inappropriate cords from the building. Our fire extinguisher and our fire alarm system were checked previously, and re-inspection is scheduled for early January.

The Board wishes to extend a Happy New Year to all. Remember to calendar the February 10 gala event—Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball.

~Lynn Cardiff, Board Chair

Interim Minister Hire Group Report

The board will continue to hold monthly Board Forums to keep congregants informed and included in the decision-making process of hiring the Interim Minister. Interview questions will be solicited at these meetings. A budget has been referred to the Finance Team for salary, benefits and moving expense considerations. Our Committee on Human Resources will be consulted regarding the Interim Minister contract. A search profile per UUA guidelines is being compiled, including an accurate count of our membership; it will be submitted by mid-April.

~Christine Ertl, Lynn Cardiff, Robert Galloway, Interim Minister Hire Planning Group

Sunday Services and Religious Education

Religious Education <i>In person, during service</i>	Sunday Service <i>In-person and Live-streamed</i>	Fellowship Time <i>In person</i>
10:30 am	10:30 am	After Service
January Share the Plate Recipient: Family Promise		

Sunday, January 7

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

"A Community of Memory and Hope"

When People lose all memory of their past, they are suffering from amnesia and lack of sense of who they have been and where they might be going. The same holds true for a congregation - it's important for us to be "a community of memory and hope."

Celebrant: Barbara Stebbins-Boaz

Music: Loriann Schmidt and Dennis Fisher

Sunday, January 14

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

"The Status of the Dream"

As we approach the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., it's important to reflect on where we have been, where we are and where we might be going as we continue our journey toward justice.

Celebrant: Janet Stevens

Music: UUCS Choir

Sunday, January 21

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

"Poetry Sunday - Refuge"

Seven local poets from The Peregrine Poets Group will honor us with their original poetry on the theme of "refuge."

Celebrant: Gloria Holland

Music: Bob Nogash, flute; Terry Bay, piano; Barbara Stebbins-Boaz, voice

Sunday, January 28

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

"Do You Need to be Converted?"

How do we grow and change? Or not? How do we enhance or hinder ourselves? How do we get stuck? Unstuck?

Celebrant: Brenna Norval

Music: UUCS Choir

Sunday, February 4

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

"Embodied Theology"

During my studies for the ministry many years ago I studied our UU history and theology. In all my reading of many dense tomes I was looking for something without realizing it. Then, in one obscure passage in one of the books, I found it! A model for my ministry.

Celebrant: Nadene LeChimenant

Music: Marcia Christenson, voice, guitar

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This issue was edited by Bob Muir with help from Vicki Cunningham, Elsa Struble, Kathleen McKinney.

EVENT SCHEDULING: use the [Event Scheduling Request](#) form on the UUCS website to add events to the UUCS calendar and/or reserve a UUCS space.

PUBLICITY and ANNOUNCEMENTS: Fill out the [Publication Request](#) form on the UUCS website for any announcement, event or news item. This form is a one-stop place to put a notice in the monthly newsletter, the UUCS website, the *This Week* email and/or Facebook.

DEADLINES:

Newsletter: The deadline for the next newsletter is 8:00 pm on Friday, **February 2, 2024.**

This Week submissions are due by **Wed.** noon.