

Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (UUCD)

January: Courage

I listened to an interview with an 87 year old Phil Donohue a few weeks ago. It was fascinating to hear about his early years of reporting on cutting-edge cultural shifts in our country. He spoke with anger at our use of the military, from the Vietnam War to our current use of drones. His voice softened when he talked about one regret that weighs heavily on his mind. He wishes that he had raised his family with the abundant love he witnesses parents giving their children today.

One of his earliest memories of his professional career is when he worked for CBS as a 27 year old. He was sent to cover a mining tragedy in Appalachia. He was at the staging area for miners who were going down into the shattered mine to try to rescue their trapped companions. In the night, the men huddled around the smudge pots lit for warmth, and sparks flew up into the night air, spiraling up toward the stars.

The men gathered around the village preacher, who came for the duration of the rescue effort. He prayed, "Give us the strength to rescue our fellow miners, and may the Lord keep them safe."

Phil Donohue was completely enraptured by the power of the men's desire, the preacher's focus, and the scene of the sparks flying up into the dark night.

Suddenly, he realized that he had lost a great moment for CBS.



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The tragedy could be witnessed and felt by thousands of people if the preacher and the men would reenact the prayer and their murmured responses. Of course, he was thinking of his own potential fame as a reporter.

Phil Donohue asked the preacher, "Sir, will you please pray again, so I can record it for **CBS?**"

The preacher quietly responded, "I have already prayed, sir. I have already prayed to my Lord."

And Donohue continued, saying that people in bars would hear the preacher's words, and be swayed. Didn't the preacher want to influence people who were in the bars? Didn't he realize that he was speaking to someone from CBS? "No," the preacher patiently responded, "I have already prayed."

It was weeks later when Phil Donohue realized what he had witnessed. It wasn't just a headstrong preacher. He had experienced a person of moral courage, who stood up for what he knew was right. The pain of these people, and the holy moment of their hope were not for the listeners of CBS. This miner's preacher was not one of the luminaries of our century written up in history books. He was just a simple man in Appalachia. And his prayers did not save one man in that mine shaft. He was just doing what he knew was right.

When we look at our lives, each one of us has the opportunity to live with courage in simple ways that are building stones for how we understand ourselves. Courage invites more courage. It's contagious. Pass it on.

UUCD January: Courage

Worship Services 9:30 & 11:15am

January 5, 9:30 & 11:15am, *The Heart of a Lion: Wishing for Courage*; Rev. Beth Banks. Worship Associate: Autumn Labbe Renault. Life Journey: Elizabeth Hall.

Often we think about courage as grand feats of action in the face of danger. The names that come to mind can be the luminaries of our time who have done great things against all odds. However, each of us is asked to be courageous every day. We decide if we will dare greatly or turn away from the possibilities. What is a life of courage, and how do we live it?

11:15am “First” Sunday style worship: First Sunday Format for 11:15 service with a special welcome to families. During our First Sundays, families and children are our greeters, and lead readings and sometimes present their original writing on the theme.

Jan 12, 9:30 & 11:15am, *Becoming Courage: Leading with Our Hearts*; Caitlin Cotter. Worship Associate: Eldridge Moores. Life Journey: Marty West, Chair of the Board.

What does it mean to be courageous? The root of the word courage is *cor*—the Latin word for heart, and in Middle English courage was used broadly for “what is in one’s mind or thoughts”. The charge to be courageous can lead us to be vulnerable, empathic, and compassionate; to face into our fears and our shame; and to embody our values in the world. Join with us as we explore how we can take heart and become courage in our day-to-day lives.

Spirited Family Worship, Jan 12, 19, 26, 10:30-11am, Senghas Meeting Room. All are welcome.

Jan 19, 9:30 & 11:15am, *Let Us Not Wallow In the Valley of Despair*; Rev. Beth Banks. Worship Associate: Ellen Rosen. Life Journey: Scott Ragsdale and Carol Corbett.

3rd Sunday Special Collection: Yolo Interfaith Immigration Network—a group serving and advocating for immigrants in Yolo County. Checks: UUCD, memo: YIIN.

Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday - The parts of Martin Luther King’s great Civil Right’s speech that have become a mantra were improvised in the moment. The last sentence from his planned speech was “Let us not wallow in the valley of despair. . .” We should be aware of the ways that our society and our lives are not perfect, but we cannot waste our time lingering in the land of despair. Too much has been accomplished, and there is too much good work to be done. One salvation is the opportunity to work with others in sympathy with our ideals. Surprises wait for us.

Jan 26, 9:30 & 11:15am, *Gospel, Jazz & Praise*; Suzanne Kimmel and John Ashby. Life Journey: Jessie Chabot—Girls Rising.

When Reggie Graham was a guest choral leader for our congregation several years ago, we moved the piano to the center of the “preaching-singing center” of the church, and he wove stories, keyboard virtuosity and congregational singing into one seamless piece.

Thanks to Nancy Lower’s friendship with Reggie, he will be with us for both Sunday services. His music will be front & center once again. One of his recordings, “I Just Want to Be Holy,” is described as Music with a Gospel Reality, a Jazz Musicality and a Praise Mentality.

The Rhythm of Love: Monday, January 20, 7pm

Sparks Choir and Free Range Singers will give a Martin Luther King Day concert in the Sanctuary, celebrating rhythm, courage, and love. What is the rhythm that keeps you moving toward your truth? What are the songs that carry you into courage? Performing requires courage, but it is not merely an act of will, or even of heart. Singing is an act of the body. How do you embody courage?

The rhythms of this music will stretch from the gentle waves of Eric Whitacre’s Seal Lullaby to the infectious lilt of Sting’s Love Is the Seventh Wave. Learning these songs, the singers carry the words and rhythms inside themselves, and they are encouraged and sustained. Yolo Interfaith Immigration Network is the fundraising recipient this year because of their local justice related work.

—Laura Sandage

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Resources for Further Exploration

On your own or with friends

Reflect

With the recent passing of colossus Nelson Mandela, we are reminded of his stance on the virtue of courage:

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

Consider also a few other well known perspectives on courage:

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'"

—Eleanor Roosevelt

"Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage."

—Maya Angelou

Reflective Question(s):

The concept of courage means different things to different people.

In what type of situation have you had to show courage?

What did you learn about yourself in the process?

Committee on Ministry: Steve Reynolds, Karen Naliboff, Karen Urbano, Lorraine Visher, Sarah Keith and Lucas Frerichs.

Watch

"Invictus"

Nelson Mandela gave us one of our greatest examples of courage, as he brought former enemies into conversation through the process of reconciliation. He had the courage to forgive, to empathize, and to reach out to those who had oppressed him.

The movie "Invictus" is a great look into his daring work to bring South Africa together.

—Caitlin S. Cotter, Intern and Campus Minister

Attend

A Taste of the Mystics: Mystics have been the ultimate spiritual guides for all cultures, a path that requires the courage to face personal and cultural shadow. They can keep us in tune with our deepest humanity and their wisdom is often timeless.

Join Gerry Hair for poetry, readings, and meditation in the way of these wise ones with opportunities for questions and interactions around this material.

Facilitator: Gerry Hair, a spiritual director and teacher for 43 years, approaches spiritual practice with a mix of traditions, including Christian mysticism, Buddhism, Sufism, and Hinduism.

Register by contacting: re@uudavis.org

Resources for Spiritual Awakening: These meetings focus on spiritual teachings from both Western and Eastern traditions, and on modern teachers such as Eckhart Tolle, Ken Wilber, Adyashanti, Gangaji, and Byron Katie. In these meetings, we inquire directly into the nature of existence and our place in it. These meetings are open to all. To learn more, please contact Jack Whitsett, jack42@pobox.com or Rich Bradley, richbrad@sonic.net.

On-the-Path: 4th Tuesdays, 7:30pm, Library. At On-the-Path meetings, we explore spirituality from a UU perspective. "On-the-Path" meetings provide a context for your spiritual quest where you can inquire and recognize what is true and liberating at the core of your existence. This exploration focuses on the work of teachers such as those listed above. Often, we show a video of spiritual teachers. We also provide a period for quieting and meditation and an opportunity for discussion.

Listen

www.uudavispodcast.org



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