

Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (UUCD) Theme Journal – November– Story

This month we focus on stories and how they shape lives. It is equally true that our lives shape the stories we tell. Throughout November, we'll look for inspiration from the twists and turns of our lives and the lives of others.

Guest at Your Table boxes will be given to the congregation at both November 6 worship services. There is one story for every week of the month, and each week we can learn a story about refugees or immigrants.

Throughout the month, we'll also hear stories and see photos of some of our former interns and what they're doing now. We are part of their ongoing life story, and their time here continues to influence us. Our UUCD internship program—which bridges the church and UC Davis campus—is an important part of our ongoing story.

There's also the inspiration each of us finds when we consider the story of our own life. Monday, November 28, at 7pm, you're invited to participate in a spiritual practice exercise, "Remembering the Wisdom of Your Plot Twist." Remember an unexpected event that changed your life. Meditate on it, write in your journal, or talk about it with a friend. Then join us with an object that represents what you learned from the surprising twist in your life. We'll create an altar together. Through story, we'll create a new level of belonging with those who attend. Bring your friends! *Read more on page 3.*

– Rev. Beth Banks, Senior Minister



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It is often easier to share our opinions, and facts we've learned, than to share the feelings and experiences that formed those opinions or gave context to those facts. In sharing our stories, we allow others to see us more fully. In hearing stories, we begin to understand and appreciate others in new ways. I am thankful for the opportunities I've had to share my stories and to be known by other people. I am also thankful for the trust of people in the church in telling me their stories.

Last year, I was in a small group of colleagues where we had a list of leading questions, and just one minute each to speak to the different topics. The questions ranged from, "What is the silliest thing you've done in your ministry?" to "What's something you regret doing or saying?" Even though I was only sharing snippets, I was surprised how good I felt sharing. I expected to tell, and hear, repeat stories, but the more I shared the deeper I went. Some of the things I shared I didn't even realize I was holding onto—both the good, and the things I needed to let go.

There are several opportunities to practice telling, and listening to, stories coming up in our Adult Religious Exploration program (look at those opportunities for details). Elizabeth Assenza, our ministerial intern, is offering a 3-session UU History course, Nov. 13, 20, & 27, where you will hear the stories of our faith tradition. Nov. 15, join me and Jeanette Robertson for one of the "Becoming a Caring Companion" sessions, where we'll practice active listening and being more present with others. Nov. 19, join me for "Leading, Teaching, and Facilitating in Church," where we look at ways to lead small groups of people in church to be intentional in creating space for deeper sharing. Nov. 28, join Rev. Beth for "Diving Deep: Remembering the Wisdom of Your Plot Twist" reflecting on unexpected events that have led to insight.

Thank you for making this community more sacred by sharing your stories.

– Rev. Morgan McLean, Assistant Minister for Congregational Life

Sunday Worship **November 6, 11:15am ONLY**, *Yes, We're Really Different*; Rev. Beth Banks; Ben

Bazor, Worship Associate. **FIRST SUNDAY** (children & youth participate first 30 min., then go to RE classes). Our country has experienced many divisive elections, but the 2016 national election has raised the anxiety of most Americans. We already knew ourselves to be a country divided into red and blue. Now the focus has shifted to a form of conservatism that is an open expression of fear of those perceived as outsiders, strangers, an ever-widening circle of humanity. This service won't fix the rifts, but may help how we understand our family members with whom we have vast differences of religious or political opinion. The holidays are coming; attend for your own peace of mind.

Spirited Collection: World Wildlife Fund. Make checks out to UUCD, memo: WWF.

⊕ **UU Service Committee Guest at Your Table boxes** will be distributed: *Faces and stories of grass roots human rights workers join your table for a month (via your Guest Box). When you eat, put enough money in your Guest Box to feed one more person. Dec 4, bring a check for the total to support UUSC's human rights work. Make checks out to UUCD, memo "UUSC." Or, write "UUSC Membership" in the memo of your check to join UUSC's mailing list.*

<http://www.uusc.org/welcome-to-guest-at-your-table>

⊕ **TUESDAY, November 8, 7-8pm**, *Election Night Candlelight Service of Hope*. Take a break from watching election returns and create a community of hope. Gather in the UUCD sanctuary, bring friends and neighbors, or every person at the election party. How will we contribute to the spirit of this country? There will be readings, candlelight, and ritual. As a part of our time together, we'll create messages of hope on smooth stones. Leave words of encouragement in our neighborhoods, downtowns, someone's yard, or outside the grocery store. Give messages of hope to friends, or someone you don't know. We'll end our service lifted up.

We've extended an open invitation to the community, including UU Sacramento Society.



November 13, 9:30 & 11:15am, *No One Leaves Home, Unless . . .* International Refugee Committee (IRC) and Rev. Beth Banks; Elizabeth Assenza, Worship Associate. What makes someone leave their home country, abandoning everything that is familiar and loved? Warsaw Shire explains in her poem, "no one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark." Members of the IRC join Beth in the pulpit to tell the stories of refugees coming to N. CA., and how we can help. *IRC representatives will host a 30 minute Q&A after each service.*

⊕ **Refugee Welcome Kit Collection Day is November 13**. Bring items to the Senghas Room. We will pack them for the IRC to furnish apartments for arriving refugees. Between services, help create welcome cards to tuck inside. *Though the Refugee Welcome Kit project was never envisioned as a "healing" activity, that is what people are saying. As a congregation we will give three refugee families a warm welcome to their new home. It's not too late to participate. Sign-up to donate items at the social hall table 10/30 or 11/6 or write a check to UUCD with "Refugee" in the memo line.*

November 20, 9:30 & 11:15am, *The Greatest Gift*; Rev. Beth Banks; Elli Norris, Worship Associate. New Member Ceremony, 11:15am. Generosity is a guide for our lives, a spiritual practice of joy, and the result is a deep sense of belonging. This Sunday we'll hear stories of those who have given and received, and how it changed their lives.

⊕ **Special Collection – International Rescue Committee** (IRC) in Northern California. To provide opportunities for refugees, asylees, victims of human trafficking, survivors of torture, and other immigrants to thrive in the Sacramento-Yolo area. <https://www.rescue.org/united-states/sacramento-ca> *Checks out to UUCD, memo Refugee.*

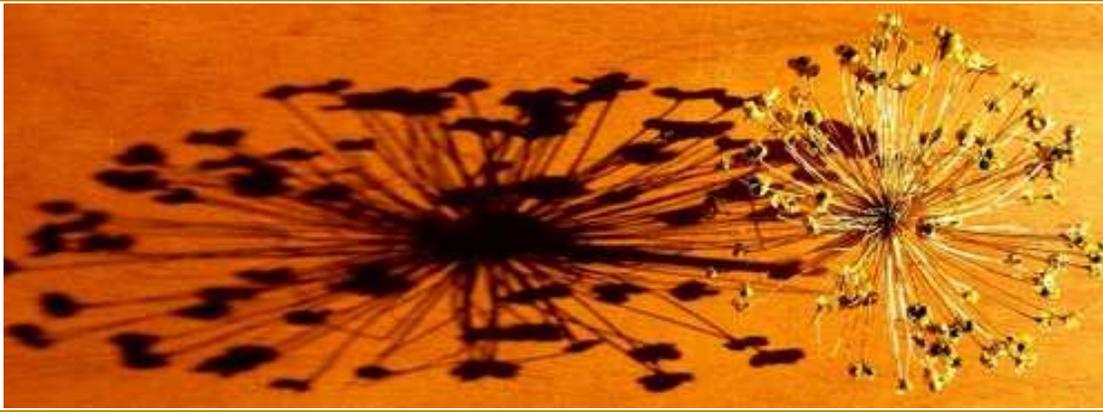
November 27, 9:30 & 11:15am, *Owning Our Stories*; Elizabeth Assenza. Each of us carries stories of our history, our family, our communities. Some are individual stories: they belong to us uniquely. Others are communal stories we pass back and forth and carry through generations. Together we explore how we are shaped by our stories and how we shape the stories of our futures. Public domain image: <https://pixabay.com/en/candle-meditation-hand-keep-heat-335965/>

Reflect **The Committee on Ministry** (Stefan Harvey, Hiram Jackson, Lisa Oakes, Kirk Ridgeway, Susan Steinbach) invites you to make the theme part of your spiritual practice: *What story would you tell a new friend to describe yourself?*

Tell me the facts and I'll learn. Tell me the truth and I'll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.

– Native American proverb

People are hungry for stories. It's part of our very being. Storytelling is a form of history, of immortality too. It goes from one generation to another. – Studs Terkel, writer



Attend **Adult RE: Remembering the Wisdom of Your Plot Twist**, Rev. Beth Banks, Mon, Nov. 28, 7-8:30pm, Library.. No one gets through life without a plot twist. Unexpected events happen to us all: a death, illness, a divorce, loss of a job. And it's not always something bad: we get a job offer out of nowhere, stumble into love, or learn we are pregnant right away—when we thought it would take awhile. Good or bad, the unexpected event usually comes with an unexpected insight. An important value is clarified. A truth is written in neon lights. All those mundane worries and to-do lists are put into perspective. Over time, the hard-won moment of clarity often fades. The plot twist's wisdom is forgotten. Our resolve to remember takes a back seat to those daily to-do lists once again.

This spiritual practice invites you to bring the clarity back:

- Reconstruct and remember the story of your plot twist.
- Make time to meditate on it, write about it, or discuss it with a friend.
- Find an object that represents the insight of your plot twist.

Join us, ready to share your plot twist story and the object that represents the insight it gave you.

Read ***Kitchen Table Wisdom* and *My Grandfather's Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge, and Belonging***. Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D., a cancer physician and master storyteller, reminds us of the power of our kindness and the joy of being alive. The human tradition of shared experience reminds us that the things we cannot measure may be the things that ultimately sustain and enrich our lives. <http://tinyurl.com/js5na5h>

“The Stories We Tell Ourselves” by Terri Schanks. The stories of a person, a family, a culture, a country — they hold us, bind us in ways which are potentially fruitful or harmful, and give us an identity. <http://www.onbeing.org/blog/the-stories- we-tell-ourselves/7634>

Listen Download or stream edited Sunday services at www.uudavispodcast.org

“The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Adichie, novelist. Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice—and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding. <http://tinyurl.com/jobdkb9>

The Moth's mission is to promote the art and craft of storytelling and to honor and celebrate the diversity and commonality of human experience. <https://themoth.org/podcast>

Watch ***Boyhood***, a sprawling investigation of the human condition. www.rottentomatoes.com/m/boyhood/

Race: The Power of an Illusion “We discovered is that most of our common assumptions about race - for instance, that the world's people can be divided biologically along racial lines - are wrong. Yet the consequences of racism are very real.” http://www.pbs.org/race/000_General/000_00-Home.htm

The Thin Blue Line, a documentary and detective story. A great adventure into how deeply we can believe that we possess the “truth of the story” and be wrong. https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/thin_blue_line/
