



Do I contradict myself?
 Very well, then
 I contradict myself,
 I am large,
 I contain multitudes.
 – Walt Whitman

Are we the same person we were ten years ago? 25 years ago? The answer for most of us, is ‘Yes’ and ‘No’. There is a central core emotional and spiritual identity, just as there is a physical similarity to who we were a decade ago. Beyond this center kernel of identity, we are always undergoing change. It’s natural to acknowledge gaining a new sense of self when there is a personal landmark like a birthday, or graduation. Children say, “I’m FOUR!” demanding that we respond appropriately to their new identity. Students of all ages suddenly feel the pressure to accomplish new goals upon graduation.

But life doesn’t wait for milestones. A change of identity can happen at any time. A great love may enter your life and your sense of who you are changes. You may discover that you are not cut out for your job as an accountant, but you shine as a social worker. Some people discover a new sexual orientation or gender identity. Perhaps something in the news flips an internal switch and we become more courageous and outspoken, or generous and kind-hearted.

Imagine your life is a home. You go through closets and garage. You wonder why you purchased something, why you kept it. You rediscover another thing you thought was lost, polish it better than new, and use it again. Life colludes with us to shape and reshape our identity.

As we interact with people from other faith traditions and cultures it’s important to know our own identity. Who are you in February 2017? Who is this congregation, and how will we belong in this world? We’ll kick off this discussion at the February 5 worship services.

– Rev. Beth Banks, Senior Minister

We have many pieces to our identities. It is the unique combinations of experiencing the world through those identities that gives this church community such depth. It can make us feel vulnerable to share from the fullness of who we are, and often we don’t fully explore those pieces of identity with ourselves.

I have found that the most difficult times in my life have been when pieces of my identity have been changing or challenged. When we are able to name our identities, especially the tender ones, we can reach a deeper understanding of ourselves. We can also find more compassion and understanding for others.

In this church community, we seek to create respectful and caring opportunities for such intimate sharing. This month you have the opportunity to join a Small Group Ministry, where participants use guided sessions to explore set topics. There are also many Adult Religious Exploration programs focusing on personal reflection and community action.

One way of sharing who you are is with a Caring Companion. Members of our congregation are available as a listening ear and compassionate presence for each other. You might meet for coffee, go for a walk, or want a companion at a doctor’s visit. To inquire about a Caring Companion, please contact me. Blessings, Rev. Morgan McLean, Assistant Minister



Sunday Worship, 9:30 & 11:15am

Hymn of the Month, *Seed of Hope* by John Kramer

February 5, *Shape for the Spirit to Move*; Rev. Beth Banks; Ben Bazor, Worship Associate. **FIRST SUNDAY** (children and youth participate first 30 min., then move to RE classes). We'll return to the topic of covenant as the Committee on Ministry prepares to launch a process for our congregation to create an all-church covenant. This is a historic time in our country, and a well-crafted covenant can serve us by keeping us focused on what is important.

"A covenant is not a definition of a relationship; it is the framework for our relating. A covenant leaves room for chance and change. It claims: I will abide with you in this common endeavor, be present as best as I can in our becoming." – Lisa Ward

Does your small group ministry group or committee have a covenant? Send it to RevBanks@uudavis.org by Feb 2.

Spirited Collection: World Wildlife Fund. Checks to UUCD, memo WWF.

Revision of our Covenant of Right Relations: *Covenants are living, breathing agreements that groups of people make to each other. Our current covenant has provided a guide as to the right relations we hold vital to a healthy spiritual community. It has served us well. Yet now is the time to revisit our covenant. The intent is to reframe it into a short phrase (two to three sentences), an easily remembered statement of the intrinsic values we aspire to in our congregational relationships. It is to be a statement that expresses what is important to us, rather than a set of rules. It is to describe how we promise to interact and connect with one another on an ongoing basis with behaviors that encourage, nurture, and support our deepest relational values.*

The Committee on Ministry (CoM) will seek input from the congregation at the February 5th Sunday services by asking everyone to write a one sentence answer to a question on a card that will be handed out. Answers will be displayed in the Social Hall. Throughout the month other input means will be used (an online survey) to provide opportunity for all to participate who may miss the February 5th service. Using this input, the Committee on Ministry will craft a new Covenant of Right Relations to be submitted at the annual congregational meeting for consideration to adopt. Participation by all will help ensure a new covenant reflects the congregation's aspirational goals.

Details: contact CoM (Stefan Harvey, Hiram Jackson, Lisa Oakes, Kirk Ridgeway, Susan Steinbach) or CoM@uudavis.org



February 12, *Flying Together*; Rev. Vail Weller; Rev. Beth Banks; Music: Juliebells. What inspires the starling to move in harmony with the other birds in the group? How does your living generously lead to increased generosity in others? How might abundance transform your community? *The Rev. Vail Weller is Congregational Giving Director at the UUA (she manages the Annual Program Fund that encourages congregations to support other congregations through covenantal giving to the Association). Vail loves visiting congregations across our movement, and has seen a lot of them as a lifelong UU as well as a parish minister. She has served in West Virginia, Michigan and now San Mateo. She shares her life with her children, Zinn and Denison, and her husband, David, and knows how to find her favorite restaurants in airports across the country.*

February 19, *UU Women*; Rev. Morgan McLean; Elli Norris, Worship Associate. Women have shaped our tradition past, present, and future. **Special Collection – Davis Phoenix** works to prevent hate-motivated violence through the Davis Pride Festival & Upstander Carnival. <http://www.davisphoenixco.org/> Make checks out to UUCD, memo Phoenix.

February 26, *Growing Up UU* led by UNIQUE; Support: Elizabeth Assenza. Our high school youth explore what it means to grow up UU, how their faith has shaped their lives, and how youth have helped to shape UUism!

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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: *How do UU principles and ideas connect to your identity?*

“When I discover who I am, I’ll be free.” — Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” — Mahatma Gandhi



Soul Matters: A Reunion with Your Former Self – Chris Porsz took pictures of people around town. Thirty years later, he showed them those old pictures and gave them a reunion with their younger self. Check out pictures: <http://twistedstifter.com/2016/11/reunions-by-chris-porsz/>

Have a reunion with your former self. Find 2 pictures of your “younger self” that best represent your core identity at that time. Then spend some time thinking about what you would say to and ask that younger self if given the chance: *What story would you want to revisit? How would you thank your past self? What warnings/encouragement would you offer?*

Share **In All Thy Getting, Get Understanding**, Rev. Beth Banks; Wed. Feb 8, 7–8:30pm, Library. [RSVP so Beth can get in touch with you before the session, RevBanks@uudavis.org](#) At the annual UU General Assembly, Rev. Nancy MacDonald Ladd gave a sermon that held ministers and laity spellbound. We’ll watch this powerful sermon asking “Can we be a place of deep encounter where borders are crossed and faiths connect, where real stories and real struggle intersect and understanding arises anew?” Post-election 2017, it will challenge most people’s understanding of belonging, and how to be effective in the world around us. The music, readings, and sermon create a powerful and surprising service; you’ll be brought into the process. This evening will feel like worship with the added benefit of discussion. To consider before our time together: “Do you want to belong to a place where you get what you want?”

Soul Matters: Bring Your Identity to Dinner — Aunt Audrey’s pie crust recipe; great-grandpa’s knife used at every family gathering; with these dinner traditions, the old stories come out and we are able to tell ourselves into being once again. Host an “Identity Dinner” for your family to pass on traditions. Invite neighbors or congregants. Ask everyone to bring a dish and a story that celebrates a piece of their heritage and informs who they are.

Note: For many, heritage and identity now feels under threat. Gathering around a table as a Hispanic or Muslim doesn’t feel as safe or celebratory as it should. This is part of the exercise as well. Find a way for the dinner to honor the way our identities are under threat; make sure the dinner involves a commitment to help others feel safe as they embody theirs.

Read & Respond **The Fire of Commitment: History + Theology**; *UU Identity*; Rev. Beth Banks; March 1 & 15, April 5 & 19, May 3 & 17, 7-9pm, Senghas Room. Using John Buehrens’ book, *Universalists and Unitarians in America: A People’s History*, we will explore stories of our tradition. Each session will include an added perspective from *A People’s History of the United States*, by Howard Zinn, helping us see how our faith responds to each time era. Ultimately we will engage on the question: How can we act from theology of Unitarians and Universalists today? Sign-up required by Feb 20, RevBanks@uudavis.org Buehrens’ book is available on Amazon Kindle or through the UUA Bookstore. Please email re@uudavis.org if cost is an issue.

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