



Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (UUCD)
Theme Journal – April – Transformation

It happens every year around this time. I am awestruck at a budding tree, as if I've never experienced Spring before. Spring brings us the annual reminder of transformation.

Witnessing the season's change shows me that there is always hope present. Nature forgives the cold, the cutting back, the neglect of the sun, and nature pushes through to a new season of promise and beauty.

In 1798, William Wordsworth observed this pleasure, as he calls it, in "Lines Written in Early Spring." He writes of the sweet mood of listening to the sounds of nature, the flowers enjoying the air they breathe, and the playfulness of birds. His poem ends (in 18th century gendered language):

*If this belief from heaven be sent, / If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament / What man has made of man?*

I, too, believe in Nature's holy plan: that new seasons bring new hopes, and that the cycles of nature are a promise for all of us, transformation and possibility. Unfortunately, as Wordsworth observes, "man has made of man" a society that doesn't feel part of that hope. There is reason to lament when we disconnect from the promise of change and rebirth.

We humans can bring the same excitement to spring that the bunnies have in their search for food. We have the same strength to emerge from the dark, as do the poppy and lilac. We have the same ability to change and grow stronger, as do the forsythia and crabapple. We can add our voices and thoughts into the harmonious sounds of nature. Each of us, with our unique beauty and perseverance, can join with others to create a message of expectation and splendor.

Blessings, Rev. Morgan McLean, Assistant Minister for Congregational Life

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: *April brings us the theme of transformation. The Committee on Ministry looks to the timeless story of Winnie the Pooh and Piglet by A.A. Milne.*

"How does one become a butterfly?" Pooh asked pensively.

'You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar,' Piglet replied.

'You mean to die?' asked Pooh.

'Yes and no,' he answered. 'What looks like you will die, but what's really you will live on.'

What core values/traits have you carried forward or hope to carry forward through a personal rebirth/reorientation? From your experience, what might you shed or have already shed from a transformative experience?

Every time we step outside our comfort zone we are changed in some way. Last month, some people joined the choir for one month—to risk adding choir to their lives for four weeks. Others were invited to join Worship Associates preparing for services. Everyone was encouraged to dance to the final hymn of a service, and many of you danced in the aisles. In one service, we were asked to risk in personal ways that felt important to us. One person texted an estranged friend, offering a gesture of caring, with no expectation of reconciliation. When we accept the invitation to take a risk we experience change, and it's often not a change we expect.

In April, we prepare for transformation. We create a new kind of Easter service: be ready for a message of wonder and fun. We experience transformation through the creativity of our Campus Ministry. We begin to explore what The New Sanctuary Movement means in 2017: how can we be a part of offering sanctuary to those at risk of deportation? Worship, discussions, decisions we make this season, will be transformational. — Rev. Beth Banks, Senior Minister

Spiritual practice from our Soul Matters curriculum: We say “no” more often than we are aware of. It’s often our default. We come up with reasons: Not enough time. Too risky. One has to pick and choose . . . “No” separates, narrows our sight. This month, say, “YES,” with Patricia Ryan Madson’s, spiritual discipline: “Say yes to everything. Accept all offers. Cultivate all the ways you can imagine to express affirmation. When the answer to all questions is yes, you enter a new world of action, possibility, and adventure. It is an exaggeration to suggest that we can say yes to everything, but we can say yes to more than we normally do. Once you become aware, you see how often we block personal relationships out of habit.”

Try it for 2-3 days and see how it goes. Print these words on a card and place it where you will see throughout the day: Go along with the plan. Support someone else's dream. Say: ‘right’; ‘sure’; ‘I will’; ‘okay’; ‘of course’; ‘yes, and’ (instead of yes, but) and ‘YES!’

Sunday Worship, 9:30 & 11:15am

April 2, FIRST SUNDAY (children and youth participate first 30 min., then move to RE classes). *Embracing Difference*, Elizabeth Assenza. Unitarian Universalists strive to create ever more inclusive and accessible communities. As we work toward greater justice for children, youth, and adults, how are our energies renewed by our UU histories and theologies? When we expand the ways individuals living with disabilities can access our faith, we invite a change that will strengthen us and deepen our connection to one another and to all that is sacred in the world.

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

April 9, Wild Imaginings of a Better World, Rev. Beth Banks; Elli Norris, Worship Associate. Juuliebells perform. In the 1980s, UUCD engaged in lively dialogue and discernment about whether we would become an official Sanctuary congregation. It’s time again for us to decide how we will respond to the need of those at risk of deportation. The population who lives in the shadows, fearing deportation, is more diverse than thirty years ago, and the ways in which sanctuary can be provided is more widely defined. For Beth, the question is not whether to provide sanctuary, but how.

April 16, EASTER, Rev. Morgan McLean. Both services are ALL AGES, featuring family-friendly stories and songs, as well as the Family Choir. **Egg Hunt 10:30am, Sanctuary for ages 1-12. Please bring a basket!**

Special Collection – Friends of Yolo Adult Day Health Care: all-volunteer org. working to promote the health, dignity and independence of frail older and disabled adults and their caregivers by supporting Yolo Adult Day Health Center. www.friendsofadultdayhealth.org/ Make checks out to UUCD, memo Care. This donation honors Marie Graham, UUCD’s volunteer water operator who has donated (literally) 1000s of dollars per year (starting in 2014) of her time and expertise to keep UUCD’s water system safe and legal. This is another organization for which Marie volunteers.

April 23, Earth Day Celebration: Gaia, Mother Earth and The Oneness of Everything; Jim Scott, UU Composer & Activist; Karen Klussendorf, Worship Associate. Jim Scott has made it his business to create and perform music of the Earth, justice, and peace with lyrical melodies and memorable verses. It is a wake-up call and an uplifting celebration of the beauty, the fragility, and healing power of our ecosystem and of humanity on this finite planet. Jim has visited over 700 UU churches in 30+ years. His songs are in our hymnbooks and he helped create the Green Sanctuary program. Jim created the *Earth and Spirit Songbook: 110 songs of earth and peace by contemporary composers*. He’s recorded 7 albums of original music and published a growing line of choral music. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAvai4ukcYI>

April 30, What Will You Create? Campus Ministry Students & Elizabeth Assenza. Many of us find art a deeply meaningful tool for expression. We consider how our lives as artists, or art appreciators, are integrated with our spiritual identities.