

Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (UUCD) Theme Journal – December–Hope

When Hope is Hard to Find

The lyrics of one popular hymn we sing, say, “Come sing a song with me, when hope is hard to find.” Hope is all around us, but it isn’t an ethereal feeling that descends. If we had to wait for it, we might wait forever. The good news is that it’s something we participate in making real. Hope begins with a conscious decision to believe that—despite challenges of disappointments, even tragedy—there is an abundance of love and that we are worthy.

During December, there are many ways to seek and create hope at UUCD. There are opportunities for joy and giving: on “Deck the Hall” Sunday we’ll create beauty, then give the gift of music by caroling with people in their homes.

- ❖ There are gatherings to discern how we wish to bring change to this hurting world (look for the PICO/ACT trainings and gatherings at UUCD). Join our team at Community Meals. Start scheduling your time at the Interfaith Winter Rotating Shelter.
- ❖ Attend the Longest Night services to reflect on losses of the year that has passed, then end in light and a commitment to hope. The Christmas Eve services are filled with messages of hope for our lives. Bring your family. Or, especially if you are alone for the holidays, come.
- ❖ When gathering with friends, consider using this month’s Spiritual Practice of Hope*. It offers a framework for telling stories to bring you closer to long-term and new friends. The ways we tell about our past informs who we are now and how we move into the future.
- ❖ Find hope in the worship music offered by a variety of musicians: a guest choir, Juuliebells, piano, and you joining others to fill our space with music. Be reminded that we can bring more beauty into the world together than alone. To join Sparks Choir, contact Alison Skinner, skinneralisonjane@gmail.com

Come, be a part of creating hope.

– Rev. Beth Banks, Senior Minister



*Spiritual Practice of Hope

From Our Soul Matters UU Program

Spend some time remembering how you’ve been saved by hope, then share your story of hope with a group.

Hearing of others finding their way through the dark helps us trust that light is waiting. Others share their sources of hope and we notice the resources available to us. Light travels the dark on the tales we tell each other.

This month, give each other the gift of hope by sharing stories. There is the story about the person whose belief in us enabled us to believe in ourselves. One of us will name that moment when we realized that the darkness actually contained a gift. One of us will likely talk about “faking it until we made it.” Others may share their experience of stumbling upon one of those “It Gets Better” videos (giving hope to lgbtqia youth). The details are less important than the act of bringing all the stories together. Surrounded by each other’s stories, the circle fills with light.

Consider bringing a small token that represents the essence of your story to create an altar together.

❖ www.uudavis.org → Events/Publications → 2017-18, December–Hope ❖

Where do we find hope after all of this? This question was raised during our immigration justice trip to the Arizona/Mexico border. As we stood at the border wall, a large steel fence—topped with barbed wire, guard towers, and the occasional helicopter flying over—I felt like it was screaming, “We don’t want you. We need to protect ourselves from you. You are not welcome here.” I thought about how that was opposite the message I had been taught growing up, that we are a nation of immigrants, that we say, “give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” I long ago realized this was no longer the message the United States sends, but it was made clearer by the massive steel wall. Where is hope in the face of such a wall?

While at the border, we participated in a march and a rally that took place on both sides of the wall. It ended with a stage on each side and border patrol watching up the street. The native Tohono O’odham people in the Sonora desert, whose land is divided by the wall, lead a ritual of giving to one another sacred items through the wall. They called on the border patrol to put down their weapons and walk away, they lead chants about the wall, “Who will tear down this wall? We will.” There is hope in people coming together for a common purpose: recognizing our shared humanity, a humanity that, try as it might, even a steel fence cannot take away.

I find hope in the work that different humanitarian aid groups are doing: leaving water in the desert, visiting LGBTQ individuals in immigration detention centers. I find hope in the work being done at UUCD, a congregation that has pledged itself to work on immigration justice and that realizes the wall isn’t very far away. It is not an Arizona problem, but an injustice that reaches far beyond, an injustice we are responding too. I find hope in people, hope in the unrelenting human spirit, hope in everyone who has been and will be a part of our work towards justice.

— Danielle Lindstrom, Intern & Campus Minister



Make Hope Real, Dec. 12, 7pm, UU Library: UUCD meets with Gabby Trejo, the head of ACT (Area Congregations Together, the Sacramento branch of PICO [People Improving Communities through Organizing]). Gabby met with us during our discernment process; she returns to lead us in orientation and organization. Participate in an opportunity and challenge to make good on what we believe in and to work alongside activists of all faiths and backgrounds: come start the work of supporting the new sanctuary movement for immigrants’ rights, or come learn more!

Following our unanimous vote to engage with immigrant rights and sanctuary, join others in hope. Many have signed-up for trainings and participation in ACT. Add your hope to theirs; act on hope.



December is upon us, and soon the Christmas spirit will dominate windows and airwaves. I love that this month brings out such joy in people. I am inspired by the hope we celebrate in the story of a baby’s birth, especially in the UU tradition, knowing that each night a child is born is a holy night. Each child that enters the world has the potential to change humanity for the better. In our congregations, we honor the unique gifts each child brings to us through our baby and child dedications. This special ritual acknowledges that the congregation shares in the task of raising children by teaching and demonstrating our shared values and by providing a safe and loving community in which a child can explore who they are becoming. There is so much hope when we’re part of a child’s life. During our service on Sunday, December 17th, we will dedicate several children into our community, and celebrate that shared hope for a better world because of them. I hope you will be part of this celebration with us. If your family would like to participate in this ritual, please connect with me to learn more.

— Rev. Morgan McLean, Assistant Minister for Congregational Life

December Worship

www.uudavispodcast.org

Share the Plate: Davis Phoenix Coalition receives 1/2 of Dec. Sunday offerings. DavisPhoenixCo.org works to prevent hate, intolerance and bullying for a world where all people are safe and respected. Check UUCD; memo: Offering.

December 3, 9:30 & 11:15am, *Deck the Hall*, Revs. Beth Banks & Morgan McLean; Lily Roberts, Worship Associate. The worship service is a joyful thirty minutes of music and story, followed by decorating our social hall and sanctuary for the holidays. Festivities include singing by our multigenerational choir, lead by Sparks Director, Alison Skinner, making decorations and trimming the tree. Those who love caroling may join Sparks Choir and Alison Skinner in caroling (carpooling available) at the homes of those UUs unable to attend worship services and programs.

December 10, 9:30 & 11:15am, *Hope*, Rev. Beth Banks, Autumn Labbé-Renault, Worship Associate. Hope isn't a peaceful resting place for the spirit, soothing us into complacency. Quite the opposite. Hope helps us create formerly unimagined visions for the future and pushes us to do that which seems impossible. In this season of increasing darkness, come into services of increasing light.

Please bring a check for the total amount collected in your Guest at Your Table box. Checks to UUCD, memo Guest.

December 17, 11:15am ONLY, *The Wholly (Holy) Wonder-fully Human Family*; Rev. Beth Banks & Rev Morgan McLean; Worship Associate: Tamara Range. We celebrate the many forms of family: singles who find family with chosen friends; a husband and wife; same-sex couples; with children and without; adopted children and foster children; the list of possibilities is almost endless. We ask, "How is your family sacred?" We'll have a Child Naming Ceremony in which we welcome families with new babies and young children into our congregation; contact RevMcLean@uudavis.org by Dec. 10 to participate in the ceremony. Juuliebells performs.

December 17, 5pm, Longest Night, Rev. Morgan McLean; Dani Lindstrom; Autumn Labbé-Renault, Worship Associate. Darkness invites us to reflection and turning inward. At this season of gift-giving and caroling, our evening offers time to remember what has been lost and to honor yearnings yet unfulfilled. The Threshold Singers blend their music with readings, songs, and candlelight. We end our hour together with hope and light. A light reception follows. Please note this is **not** a Solstice service, which serves a different purpose.

DECEMBER 24, CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

NO MORNING WORSHIP SERVICES.

December 24, NEW TIME 4pm. Celebrate the season through story and song! All are welcome to participate in our "no rehearsal" pageant.

December 24, 8pm. A traditional night of carols, readings, homilies, and Sparks Choir singing to bring us peace and goodwill. We end with candlelight, reminding us that our individual flames can illuminate the world.

★ Christmas Eve Special Collection: IRWS, UUCD Hosts the Interfaith Rotating Winter Shelter, Jan 28-Feb 3. We provide a safe sleeping spot and food for 40 homeless guests. We become a part of something bigger than ourselves, connected to our Davis faith community. <http://www.interfaith-shelter.org/> Checks made out to UUCD; memo, IRWS.

December 31, 11:15am ONLY, *Letting Go*, Rev. Morgan McLean; Elli Norris, Worship Associate. We say goodbye to 2017, letting go of anxieties, incomplete projects, and unfinished business. We look with hope to the new year.

January 7, return to 9:30 & 11:15am.

Reflect The Committee on Ministry (Hiram Jackson, Liz King, Elli Norris, Lisa Oakes, Jeannette Robertson) invites you to make the theme part of your spiritual practice: Emily Dickinson:

"Hope is the thing with feathers / That perches in the soul, / And sings the tune without the words, / And never stops at all"

How do you find the hope that perches in your soul? How do you remind yourself of that hope when things go wrong?