



THE UU-LINK *December 2016*

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY

December Services

December 4

Creating Sanctuary Rev. Don Garrett

We'll explore how we can be more present to ourselves and each other as we learn how to make our Beloved Community a safe harbor in the storm.

December 11

Pageant: Many Sources of Light Jansen Wendell & our children

Our annual Christmas Pageant will explore the ways various religions and cultures celebrate the season.

December 18

Christmas in Bethlehem

What are we waiting for to be born this year – in our hearts, in our community, in the world?

December 24, 7pm

Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols Rev. Don Garrett & Worship Associates

Our annual celebration featuring carols and candlelight.

DonSense – by Rev. Don Garrett

Our Theme for December:

What Does It Mean to Be Community of Presence?

Spiritually, presence can mean two radically different things. On the one hand, contemplatives speak of “being present.” Presence from this perspective is all about awareness and remembering to “live in the moment.” On the other hand, theologians tend to come at presence from the perspective of “otherness.” Their concern is not just that we pay attention to the present moment, but that we notice a transcendent Presence that is woven through all moments.

This month, we refuse to take sides. Attentiveness or otherness? Who says we have to choose? Isn't it true that, more often than not, they dance together more than they compete? Isn't it true that when we are most present, a powerful presence emerges? Pay attention to your child and slowly a confidence and unique self unfolds. Pay attention to the flow of your breathing or the flow of the ocean and something bigger than yourself enters the scene. Look for a long time at a singular tree and eventually it presents itself to you as a world in and unto itself.

The underlying message here is that the world is full of unnoticed gifts and grace. It's a message perfectly fit for this month that so often celebrates presents over presence. In the face of commercials and billboards that tell us our lives will finally be complete if we stuff them with a few more shiny objects or plastic gadgets, our spiritual traditions come along and remind us that our lives are already complete.

So how will you engage this dance? What powerful and meaningful presence is waiting for you to be present to it? What gift is waiting and wanting to emerge? What will your awareness bring into being this month?

Mini-Sabbatical, Part 2

Last summer's mini-sabbatical was great. Time spent hiking and climbing in the Rocky Mountains made it possible for me to return to Bethlehem with revitalized and renewed perspective, insight, and energy. And I was delighted to find our congregation was ready to explore exciting new ways of building community. This January and February will be devoted less to traveling and more to spiritual practice, reflection, and study, although there will be some travel to programs and retreats. I cherish this opportunity and look forward to returning in March.

See you in church.

– Don

No Sunday Service on Christmas Day

We've found that, when Christmas falls on a Sunday, attendance is always very low. Our major celebration will be, as always, a Christmas Eve service at 7 pm. We invite you to celebrate Christmas morning at home – we'll see you on New Year's Day!

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Thanksgiving, Family, and Transformational Planning

Thirty-nine years ago, my only sibling (sister, Pat) moved from the Lehigh Valley, where she was born and raised, to California. For a few years, I had a palpable hole in my heart. I kept thinking (hoping?) that something would happen to bring her back. Annual trips to see her would only tease me.

It took 39 years, the tremendously high cost of living in the Bay Area, and the need to sharpen some skills with online courses to bring her back, even if only for a few months. Of the many gifts I have to be thankful for this Thanksgiving, having Pat back here brings me absolutely unbridled joy!

Then, the election of Donald Trump jolted us to the core. Now, my sister is so distraught (and so conscientious) that she's actually considering moving out of the country.

In this time of upheaval and uncertainty, we should look to our faith for guidance and strength. Rev. Don gave a wonderful sermon on the 13th about using our seven principles to find strength and solace after the election:

"We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote..."

- "The inherent worth and dignity of every person"
- "Justice, equity and compassion in human relations"
- "Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations"
- "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning"
- "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large"
- "The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all"
- "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"

Think about each principle in light of your feelings about the election. Hard, isn't it? Yet, as Rev. Don suggested, we are called in this time of deep divisiveness – in fact, now more than ever -- to bear witness to our faith.

In our transformational planning effort, we seek to strengthen our congregation through trust, compassion, accountability, and, yes, love. The journey will be long and not without times of hesitation and reassessment. Let us each begin the journey by looking inward to strengthen our individual commitment to our principles.

Peace and Love, **Bob**

SHARED PLATE FOR DECEMBER

The Shared Plate for December is our Emergency Shelter. Every Wednesday night throughout the cold months of winter, many heart-centered volunteers man our basement so that homeless men can get food, shelter and a good shower.

HOSPITALITY REPORT

December Hospitality will be provided by the Central group led by Cecilia Eberhard, Jean Davis and Sarah Johnson. If you live in zip codes 18015 or 18018 please sign up to be a greeter, usher, donate flowers or provide some snacks when the invitation arrives in your in box from SignUp.com.

We welcome your children to join you to greet or "ush." Snacks do not need to be homemade, store bought is just fine. Thank you for helping to make our Sunday morning welcoming for members and visitors. Please direct any questions to hospitality_central@uucvpa.org

THE UU-LINK

The UU-Link is published and mailed monthly, and is also available on our website.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley

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Religious Educ: lec@uucvpa.org
The Link email: thelink@uucvpa.org
The eNews: uucvnews@uucvpa.org
Sunday Bulletin & OOS: sunday@uucvpa.org

We're on the web at www.uucvpa.org

2016 SERVICE AUCTION RESULTS: A SUCCESSFUL EVENT!

We want to thank all of our members and friends who supported this year's service auction. It was a huge success with plenty of offerings, helping with set-up, preparing foods, welcoming at the door, serving drinks, and cleaning up. Having the voice auction at the beginning of the evening, set the pace for an enjoyable fun night that followed by silent auction bidding wars, signing up for dinners and services and ending with our grand raffle of the theme baskets. The auction raised over \$14,600 of which \$812.00 was raised by the raffle baskets, \$175.00 from donations at the bar and \$570.00 door entry fees. Go to our church website to see all the auction results. Once again, this year's auction was a lot of fun and thank you for your support!

-- The Service Auction Committee

SERVICE AUCTION FINAL RESULTS & WHERE TO FIND THEM

Our final results are now on the church website. This is where you will find those who purchased your event, dinner, outing and other items. It is easy to access the pdf file. Just go to our church website at www.uuclvpa.org, and on the home page click on "Read More...", then click on the result in the yellow highlight.

Hope this is helpful. As the months go on, if some of the dinners or outings still has available space, you will be receiving an email on "Things to do with UU's". Thank you again for supporting our church's major fundraiser - We raised approximately \$14,500 in total!

--The Service Auction Committee

PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

Our current UUCLV Church Directory and 2016-17 UUCLV User Guides can be picked up at the Welcome Table during Coffee Hour, following the Sunday service.



DECEMBER BREAKFAST FORUM

December 4

Monthly Worship Theme: Presence

Rev. Don Garrett, Facilitator

There will be a brief presentation, followed by a small-group discussion format and a reuniting later to share what we've learned on the theme, "Presence." Join in this adventure in speaking, listening, thinking, reflecting and sharing together in a new way; another way to live our values of compassion, nurture, and justice in our beloved community.

December 11

Breaking Through Power, Pt. 2

Victor Madeson, Presenter

*Victor will continue his introduction to the **Breaking Through Power** series of talks - over 150 activists - that was coordinated by Ralph Nader's Center for the Study of Responsive Law. This hour will focus on the core moral beliefs that have driven advocacy for democracy over the past fifty years. A free schedule will be available to facilitate individual viewing (YouTube) of both four-day events*

December 18

Birth of Islam, Pt. 2

Cari Poole, Presenter

We will show part 2 of a PBS video describing in brief the story of Muhammad and the growth of the Islamic faith narrated by Ben Kingsley.

December 25

Christmas and Easter, a Symphony in Two Movements

Bill Bekkenhuis, Presenter

The separate accounts of the birth of Jesus by "Matthew" and "Luke" tell us little or nothing, historically, about the birth of Jesus. But they are both "gospels in miniature" which tell, in brief, two divergent theological understandings of Christmas and Easter, incarnation and atonement. We will look at both in the context of the larger gospels to which they belong.



FROM THE LIFESPAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

TALKING WITH OUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE ELECTION

I have been pondering whether to and how to talk about Trump's election with our RE students. Even if they don't bring it up in class, I am sure they are sensing the fear and anger in us adults. The youth group has already spent a Sunday morning talking about the election and I am sure they will revisit it regularly. You can be sure that our children are noticing our fear and anger. They may be fearful in school because of increased bullying. Their parents may be edgy, impatient or quick to anger or they may be unusually silent. If relatives visit that don't share the same perspective, family gatherings may be silent and stiff or they may become heated. Even if the extended family is in agreement politically, there may be a lot of talk at the dinner table about a dark future. Kids pick up our vibes and our stress and they are not very good at sharing their fears.

We need to talk openly but calmly about these things with our children. It is important that we share our fears but not our fear fantasies. There is no need to play out scenarios of apocalyptic Trump world with your children and you should avoid doing that at the dinner table. I recommend you talk about how your family's values are different from Trump's. You can talk about your fear and anger and things you plan to do to make your voice heard and what activities you will do to keep you calm and grounded. Give a hopeful vision for your children's future while sharing that it may take longer than we thought and it may take struggle to get there. Martin Luther King's message was one of hope at the same time seeking redress for wrongs. It was not sugar coated. Be mindful of what messages you are giving your children and by all means give them opportunities to share their fears and thoughts and validate them.

In faith,
Jansen Wendell,
Director of Lifespan Religious Education
(lec@uuclvpa.org)

HOLIDAY PAGEANT: The Many Sources of Light

(Sunday, December 11 multigenerational service)

For most major world religions, light is an important element in celebrating their winter holidays. This play is a series of vignettes that take place at a Unitarian Church as their minister prepares to celebrate Divali, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Children participating in the play should be able to attend the Dec 4 rehearsal and arrive early for the Dec 11 pageant.

OUR WHOLE LIVES FOR KINDERGARTEN & 1ST GRADE:

(starting in late January)

Our Whole Lives curricula exist for age levels from K-1 all the way to Adult. The award-winning curriculum is regularly offered for our Middle School students. This spring we will offer it for our Kindergarten and First grade students. This program supports parents in educating children about birth, babies, bodies and families. Following a Parent Meeting and Parent/Child Orientation, the 8 sessions engage children with stories, songs and activities and include a weekly HomeLink - a homework project for parents and children to do together. It promotes dialogue between parent and child.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

OWNING YOUR RELIGIOUS PAST

(1st session is Sunday, January 8 at 9:00am, RE library)

This is a five-session program designed to help participants reckon with their religious upbringings and integrate them into their current religious lives.

MINDFULNESS PRACTICE GROUP

(Tuesday evenings, 7:00 - 8:30, the Community Room)

With the help of conscious breathing, we are able to touch and be nourished by the peace and joy that are available within and around us, in the here and now. With continued practice, we shall touch and understand the roots of the pain that lie deep within us, such as fear, anger, despair, thus making transformation and healing possible. Contact Rev. Don Garrett atminister@uuclvpa.org, or Janice Lovegrove, co-leader 610-882-1136, for more information.

LONG STRANGE TRIP: 2000 YEARS OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST HISTORY (DVD series):

This set of 6 DVDs, available for loan, trace the history and evolution of Unitarianism, Universalism, and the

merger of the two into today's Unitarian Universalism. If you want to find out about how our "Uncommon Denomination" came to be what it is today, from its roots in the Reformation to the American Revolution to the Civil War to the Transcendentalist Movement to the present, these movies are entertaining and captivating. Contact Jansen Wendell to arrange to borrow DVD's.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR: DECEMBER & JANUARY

Dec 4: Pageant rehearsal in the gym for preK-6th grades; 7-8 grade OWL meets in room 304, senior high youth group meets in room 306

Dec 11: Holiday Pageant and multi-generational service: The Many Sources of Light; RE Committee meeting in room 212, 9:00 am.

Dec 18: Children's Worship service for preK-6th grades in room 208; 7-8 grade OWL meets in room 304, senior high youth group meets in room 306

Dec 24: Christmas Eve service for all ages at 7:00 pm

Dec 25: No Worship Service or Religious Education

Jan 1: Multi-generational worship service; no Religious Education classes

Jan 8: Story for All Ages followed by regular RE classes; RE Committee meeting in rm. 212 at 9:00 am

Jan 15: Multi-generational service: Martin Luther King

Jan 22: Story for All Ages followed by regular RE classes

Jan 29: Story for All Ages followed by regular RE classes and Chinese Dragon parade

DECEMBER BOOK DISCUSSION

Please join us for December's book discussion on Dec. 11th in the RE Library after the service at 12:00 noon. The book we are reading is *Breakfast at Sally's* by Richard LeMieux. The story is the author's memoir documenting his sinking into homelessness. The once successful businessman had owned three luxury cars and was an avid golfer before he lost it all. We learn how he still retained his dignity.

In January we will be discussing *The Hill Billy Elegy* by J.D. Vance. For more information contact bookdiscussion@uuclvpa.org

DECEMBER MEN'S GROUP

The December meeting of the UUCLV Men's Group will be held at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 5 in the FM kitchen. The topic for discussion will be the holidays - what are your fondest memories, do you have any negative memories, how has celebration of the holidays changed over the years.

The UUCLV Men's Group is open to all men affiliated with the UUCLV and their men friends. Please bring food and/or beverage to be shared. For more information, please contact men@uuclvpa.org or Frank Claps at 610-346-7629

GETTING THE WORD OUT!

Sharing information is very important to our church family. That's why it is so important to know where to send your announcements. Please follow these guidelines when submitting your information.

Information sent to the wrong place won't be re-routed.

THE LINK

Send all material to thelink@uuclvpa.org

Deadline is the 3rd Sunday of the prior month.

THE ENEWS

Send articles to uuclvnews@uuclvpa.org only.

The eNews is published once a week on Wednesday or Thursday, with an occasional weekend reminder.

ORDER OF SERVICE & SUNDAY BULLETIN

Send all announcements and info to sunday@uuclvpa.org.

Deadline is Thursday at noon.



HOLIDAY STOCKING STUFFERS

Do you need an idea for that hard-to-shop-for person on your holiday list? Why not get them tickets to the remaining Second Sunday concerts? February 12, March 12, and April 9 are the remaining dates, and the tickets will fit in any one's stocking. So consider giving the joy of music to a loved one— or anybody else! - this season. Tickets make great gifts as a random act of kindness, as well. Contact the concert series committee for more information. Tickets can be obtained from Jan Phillips 610-821-1118, jcphllps@enter.net.

The Concert Series Committee is: Ellen Bell, Bob Cohen, John Diamant, Barb Forry, Pat Herring, Jan and Sue Phillips, Allen and Ilse Zinnes.

JOIN US FOR A LINK PIZZA PARTY!

Consider yourself invited to join us for the monthly UU-Link Pizza & Mailing Party! Every month, volunteers meet in the FM kitchen at 12 noon on the 2nd Wednesday after the 3rd Sunday of the month for Link-folding, labeling, socializing and fresh, delicious pizza from Lehigh Pizza. If you'd like to join in the fun and help out, just RSVP to the office at uucv@uucvpa.org.

OFFICE UPDATES

When requesting printing, copying, materials, etc from the UUCLV staff, please:

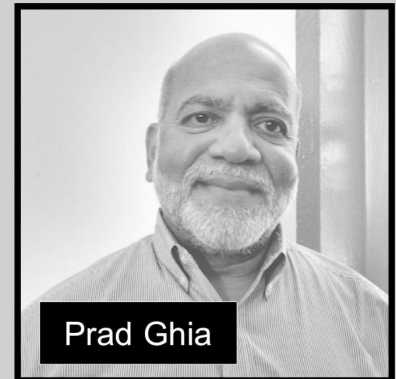
- make the request early enough that the staff have adequate time to prepare the materials,
- leave the request in the staffer's hall mailbox or email inbox – *not* on their desk, or slipped under a door.

Please note your name, what you're requesting, amount needed, by what date, and where you would like the materials left.



Amy & Bill Nyberg

UUCLV
Welcomes Its
Newest Members
October 2016



Prad Ghia



Dave Shields



The Aplins
Gordon, Charlotte,
Savannah, and Judy

Today < > December 2016 Day Week Month 4 Days Agenda More ▾ ⚙️ ▾						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 9 Breakfast Forum-CR 10:30 Sunday Service 11:30 Global Mamas: CR 11:45 Town Hall-CR 12:10p Hospitality: FM/Brid 4p Yoga: 310	28 10 Yoga: 310 12p Buy The Farm: Kitcher 6p Yoga: 310 7p LRP: RE Lib	29 10 Buy The Farm: Kitchen 4p Mu Do Kan: Gym 5:45p Yoga: 310 6p Red Sugar: Kitchen 7p Mindfulness Practice: C	30 12p Link Mailing Party-CR 6p Yoga: 310 7p HAVEN: Rm 100/CR 7:15p Beacon Choir: Sanct	Dec 1 12p Zuzu: Kitchen 1:15p Community Listener 4p Mu Do Kan: Gym 6p Yoga: 310 7p Board Mtg: CR	2 9 Valley Youth House: CR 5:30p Yoga: 310	3 8:30 Shape Note: Gym/Kitc 4p Carrero party: CR
4 9 Breakfast Forum-CR 10:30 Sunday Service 11:30 Global Mamas: CR	5 12p Buy The Farm: Kitcher 6:30p Men's Group: FM	6 10 Buy The Farm: Kitchen 4p Mu Do Kan: Gym 6p Red Sugar: Kitchen 7p Mindfulness Practice: C	7 3p Men's Shelter: Gym/kitc 7p HAVEN: Rm 100/CR 7:15p Finance: RE Lib 7:15p Beacon Choir: Sanct	8 12p Zuzu: Kitchen 4p Mu Do Kan: Gym 7p ACLU: FM 7p Worship: RE Lib	9	10 10 Yoga for Every Body: 31 11:15 Yoga for Stiff Old Guy 3p Contra Dance: Gym 4p Snedding/Contra: CR
11 9 RE Comm: 212 9 Breakfast Forum-CR 10:30 Sunday Service 12p Book Discussion: RE 12:15p Membership: Rm 1	12 12p Buy The Farm: Kitcher 7:15p Social Action: FM	13 10 Buy The Farm: Kitchen 4p Mu Do Kan: Gym 6p Red Sugar: Kitchen 7p Mindfulness Practice: C	14 3p Men's Shelter: Gym/kitc 7p HAVEN: Rm 100/CR 7:15p Beacon Choir: Sanct	15 12p Zuzu: Kitchen 4p Mu Do Kan: Gym	16	17 11 Tao Study: RE Library 12p Rivera: CR 7p LV Pagans: 304 TBD
18 9 Breakfast Forum-CR 10:30 Sunday Service 12p Property: RE Lib 5p The UU-Link deadline	19 12p Buy The Farm: Kitcher 7p Program Council: CR	20 10 Buy The Farm: Kitchen 4p Mu Do Kan: Gym 6p Red Sugar: Kitchen 7p Mindfulness Practice: C	21 3p Men's Shelter: Gym/kitc 7p HAVEN: Rm 100/CR 7:15p Beacon Choir: Sanct	22 12p Zuzu: Kitchen 4p Mu Do Kan: Gym	23	24 7p Christmas Eve Service
25 9 Breakfast Forum-CR 10:30 NO SUNDAY SERVICE	26 12p Buy The Farm: Kitcher	27 10 Buy The Farm: Kitchen 4p Mu Do Kan: Gym 6p Red Sugar: Kitchen 7p Mindfulness Practice: C	28 3p Men's Shelter: Gym/kitc 7p HAVEN: Rm 100/CR	29 12p Zuzu: Kitchen 4p Mu Do Kan: Gym	30	31

UUCLV

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