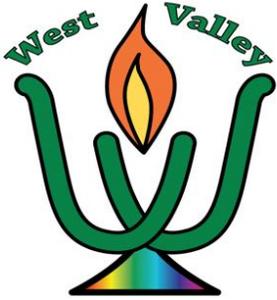


WVUU Times

May 2020

West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church



WEST VALLEY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

5904 W. Cholla St.
Glendale, AZ 85304
(623) 243-6621
wvuu5904@gmail.com
www.westvalleyuu.org

Board Of Trustees

President

Emily Whitmore
emilyawhitmore@gmail.com

Secretary

Sandra Mahoney
s_1mahoney@cox.net

Treasurer

Mark Oelerking
markoelerking@gmail.com

At-Large

Noel Johnson
longroper623@gmail.com

Emily Sulkes
emes3@juno.com

Newsletter Editor

David Moore
mooredavid06@gmail.com

Gavel Talk

Emily Whitmore, President
West Valley UU Church
emilyawhitmore@gmail.com



Another month of social distancing has come and gone. I miss your faces. I miss singing with you, laughing with you, and sharing a meal with you after services. I hope you all are well, and I mean that in every possible sense, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

I hope you have a chance to check out our weekly sermons that are still being published on Soundcloud at <https://soundcloud.com/user-552693741> or on our website at westvalleyuu.org.

I'd like to thank Rev. Cathy Corbin-Mannino, our Worship Services committee, and all those who have volunteered to keep providing thoughtful reflections during this time when many of us need it most. I also hope you are utilizing the member directory to check in on each other regularly.

Just because services have been suspended doesn't mean WVUU members haven't been busy behind the scenes. I want to thank Jim Reay who took it upon himself to complete the pledge drive over the last few weeks all on his own. I want to thank all of you for your pledges and for your continued contributions to the church in these trying times. Your dedication and support mean so much to us.

Our treasurer, Mark Oelerking, will work out our budget for next year by the time of our May board meeting.

(continued on page 3)

Sunday Services

In-person Sunday Services are cancelled
for COVID-19 mitigation.

Go to <https://soundcloud.com/user-552693741> or westvalleyuu.org
for recordings of speakers' reflections.

May Theme: **Sabbath**

May 3: **Why UUs and the Satanic Temple are Natural Allies**

Tom Begush

We'll discuss the differences between the Satanic Temple and the Church of Satan. We'll also compare the seven Tenets of the Satanic Temple to our seven UU Principles. Hail Satan!

May 10: **The Holy Sabbath**

Rev. Cathy Corbin-Mannino

Sabbath is a day set aside for religious observance and cessation of work. Many have had a sabbath foisted upon them due to the coronavirus; others have retired and ceased formal labor. How can we make our own particular sabbath a religious experience?

May 17: **On the Sabbath**

Barry Lyndon

May 24: **Keeping the Sabbath**

Rev. Cathy Corbin-Mannino

What day is the original Sabbath day, and does it even matter? And if we are not Christian or Jewish or Seventh-day Adventist or Seventh Day Baptist, should we even bother to keep the sabbath?

May 31: **Not Your Grandmother's Sabbath**, by Ana Levy-Lyons

Diane D'Agostino

How about a Sabbath practice that consists of a spiritually charged, heart-opening pause button to our regular lives? Let's consider establishing a sacred time and space for ourselves.

Who We Are



West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church is affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

We are a welcoming congregation whose mission is provide a safe place for celebrating diversity, drawing inspiration for living better lives, fostering social and environmental justice, and compassionately supporting each other in our spiritual searches.

We are a theologically diverse community who encourages you to seek your own spiritual path. We provide a caring environment for each adult and child to learn more about yourself and your place in the interdependent web of existence. Sunday services celebrate our community, challenge us intellectually, and engage us spiritually.

Gavel Talk

(continued from page 1)

We will have to push our WVUU congregational meeting to June 14. Social distancing restrictions may be relaxed by then, but if not we can conduct the meeting through Zoom. For members who may not be familiar or comfortable with video conferencing, Zoom has an option in which you can call in and listen to the meeting by phone.

I also want to thank Pax Whitmore for working on our website to make it look more professional and secure and Morgan Oviatt for setting up a Discord server in order to help us all stay connected. The link to join Discord is on our Facebook public group page as well as at the bottom of our website.

Take care everyone, and I hope to see you all again soon!

Children's Religious Education

Mandy Oviatt moonsedai@live.com

I miss each and every one of our fantastic kids in the R.E. Program during this stay-at-home time. I missed having the chance to do our annual Easter egg hunt with the kiddos. I suspect they're all antsy themselves, some wanting to return to school, some struggling with home schooling, or some just not understanding what's going on in the world.

Teachable moments are everywhere, especially in this chaotic time. This is a perfect time to review the seven UU Principles with your children:

1. Each person is important.
2. Be kind in all you do.
3. We are free to learn together
4. and search for what is true
5. Each person has a voice,
6. and we should live in a fair and peaceful world.
7. We care for the Earth's lifeboat.



April WVUUC Board Meeting Highlights

Sandra Mahoney s_1mahoney@cox.net

A virtual meeting of the WVUUC Board was held via Zoom.

In Attendance: Emily Whitmore, Mandy Oviatt, Noel Johnson, Mark Oelerking, Sandra Mahoney, Emilie Sulkes. **Visitor:** Jim Reay.

I. Call to Order, Check-in, and Lighting of Chalice. President Emily Whitmore called to order the regular meeting of the WVUUC Board of Trustees at 12:15 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting. The minutes by Secretary Sandra Mahoney were approved as written.

III. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Mark Oelerking reported that members and friends are paying their pledges, which means the church finances are in good order. Mark's report was accepted.

Jim Reay reported on his canvass of members and friends. He reported \$68,372 in pledges for the next fiscal year from 41 WVUU pledge units.

Jim noted the UUA Annual Program Fund (APF) amount for WVUUC had increased ten percent for the upcoming year. The APF is the only source of funding for the Unitarian Universalist Association, which is the central organization for the 1000+ UU

congregations. Donations to the APF also support the district regions; more information is available at <https://www.uua.org/finance/apf/why-we-give>.)

Jim was thanked for his canvassing of our congregation.

IV. Spring Congregational Meeting. As a result of COVID-19, the spring congregational meeting will be held on June 14. If necessary, this can be a virtual meeting. The meeting will allow us to adopt a budget for the next fiscal year and elect officers and committee chairs as needed.

V. Facilities Report. Noel noted he has turned off the air conditioning and lights in the sanctuary to reduce costs of electricity.

VI. New Business

A. Emily is now using Mail Chimp to send the podcasts of sermons to the congregation. This app could also be used for a newsletter.

B. The church will not re-open for services until at least June 7. The Board will decide when to resume based upon public health recommendations.

C. The next Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for May 17; the next year's budget will be discussed at that meeting. It will be a virtual meeting.



Hospitality

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

With no specific date in sight for a return to church services on our campus, Hospitality is on hold like everything else. During this hiatus, with lots of time to think about what to do going forward, I am facing fears about contamination and possibly triggering the second (maybe third) wave of COVID-19. How can we keep people safe when we serve food?

We know the virus is highly contagious and very efficient at spreading, so limiting contact is important. While our Hospitality Hour is a wonderful social connection time, it also increases the possibility of viral spread.

I'm thinking when we first return to services, we should not encourage close interaction. Maybe we shouldn't even have coffee and cookies, let alone a meal.

Being one of the vulnerables due to my age and medical condition, I would not feel comfortable standing in a tight line then touching others' cups and dishes, at least for a time.

Much is going to look different after the virus' initial wave passes over us. Perhaps suspension of food service for a while is one of those differences.

Please let me know what you think: Is meeting for our services enough in a first phase of our church re-opening? Should we delay the resumption of serving food until the virus is well controlled?



The **Enphase Energy** solar panels installed on our WVUUC sanctuary roof are reducing our carbon footprint:

Your Carbon Offset for this month: 1,702 lbs

You have offset the equivalent of: 20 Trees



Media Review

Kojima, H. (2019). *Death Stranding*. Sony Interactive (PS4) & 505 Games (PC).



Reviewed by Pax Whitmore

Imagine a world where an invisible threat keeps everyone trapped inside, forced into artificial distance, relying solely on virtual communication and the good work of delivery services. I'm not talking about the coronavirus; I'm talking about the video game *Death Stranding*.

We don't often think of video games in the same realm as books and films. Advances in technology have allowed games to create entire worlds,

populating them with photorealistic, fully voiced characters.

The narratives of some of the best games easily rival the best novels in terms of scope, emotion, and ambition. The medium even gives a narrative edge to video games: because the player has agency, you become an active participant in the story. Games use this to not only raise moral questions but to force players to answer them.

In *Death Stranding*, you play as Sam Bridges, a delivery man navigating a post-apocalyptic United States. In addition to making deliveries, the main objective is to reopen a communication network between the disparate human settlements. While there are enemies and combat, these situations are few and far between. Instead, the game relies on the world itself to tell its story. Sam is often completely alone, struggling to get from point A to point B through desolate wilderness. The isolation and

desolation force moral choices. What can be sacrificed to ensure Sam reaches his destination? Who is going to receive their needed supplies, and who won't? The choice is the player's.

The idea of interconnection drives the gameplay, story, and theme. When Sam arrives at a new destination, he connects the communication network and achieves his objective. This allows information sharing, which develops the game's story of social collapse and a breakdown in the barrier between the living and the dead.

(continued on page 7)

Web Presence



Go to this online calendar for WVUU events:

westvalleyuu.org/events/calendar/



Keep up with WVUU church and member news, post comments, and share articles and photos with friends at these websites:

Facebook Group
facebook.com/groups/wvuuc

Facebook Fan Page
facebook.com/WestValleyUnitarianUniversalistChurch

Pin and browse UU-related visuals at this site:

pinterest.com/pin/242772236133017855/

UU Principles and Sources



Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote seven principles:

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

Media Review

(continued from page 6)

Both actions build the theme of *Death Stranding*: the interconnection between life and death, the broken connections that broke the world, and the certainty that reconnection can save it again.

In *Death Stranding*, the connection is called the *Chiral Network*. The Stoics of our ancient world called it *Sympatheia*. And we UUs call it the *Seventh Principle*, the interconnected web of life of which we are a part.

Right now, quarantines and social distance have left our connection strained, and it could yet break. But on this point *Death Stranding* is surprisingly, profoundly optimistic: humans will stop at nothing to reconnect.

