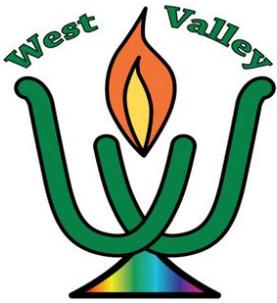


WVUU Times

August 2020

West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church



WEST VALLEY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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Gavel Talk

Mandy Oviatt, President
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I struggled with what to write about this month. I've restarted this *Gavel Talk* probably seven times in the last few days while I tried to come up with the best topic or thing to write about that didn't leave me feeling sad.

So, instead of thinking about any of the things that have brought down this year, I want to take a few minutes to look at some pieces of news that stand out to me from the last couple of months.

Last month, a female soldier graduated from the U.S. Army's Special Forces course, becoming

the first woman to join a Green Beret team. The Veteran in me is cheering her on, hoping she succeeds at a level that does not make her the only female Special Forces member.

The second story involves one of my hobbies: *Dungeons and Dragons*. In June Wizards of the Coast, publisher for the game, announced it was going to make some changes to its flagship title. These changes include removing racist descriptions to certain character types and adding diversity to the writing staff. No longer will darker, monstrous characters be considered inherently evil. Even if the characters people play are fictional, I'm seeing a highly influential and successful company making a positive change to show the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

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Sunday Services

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

Online Sunday Services begin on Zoom at 10:30 a.m.

This is our Zoom link:

[https://zoom.us/j/96290210227?](https://zoom.us/j/96290210227?pwd=and3SmVnVE9aWkZ0aXhMWFU2YWNFdz09)

[pwd=and3SmVnVE9aWkZ0aXhMWFU2YWNFdz09](https://zoom.us/j/96290210227?pwd=and3SmVnVE9aWkZ0aXhMWFU2YWNFdz09)

This is our WVUUC YouTube channel link where services are shared:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLkUpO_UT7wEX5kQNi4UJgw/featured

August 2: **Secrets of Sattvic Vegetarian Food**

Ma Udaysree

August 9: **Compassion in Buddhism**

Randy Nowell

August 16: **Compassion around Death and Dying**

Cyndi Hacker

August 23: **The Next Right Thing: Stoicism and Compassion in a Time of Crisis**

Pax Whitmore

August 30: **How To Be An Antiracist**

Jim Reay and Valerie Lynch



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

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The third thing is not an international news story. If anything, it is only of consequence to a small population right here in Maricopa County, Arizona. To me, however, these are some of the most important people in the world.



This great news is that West Valley Unitarian Universalist Church is now streaming our weekly services via Zoom. That's right, every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. we stream our services through the web. If you haven't already done so, join us! It's a lot of fun!

This is one superb way to keep our small community together while we must remain apart.

Until next month, Live Long and Prosper!

Hello, Goodbye

David Moore mooredavid06@gmail.com

Hello to Roz Cook as the incoming editor of the WVUUC newsletter. She will start editing the September 2020 issue. I am thrilled Roz is taking over this position!

Goodbye to my editorship of the *WVUU Times*. To all who contributed to this newsletter, I offer a final, profound thank you.

The news is said to be the rough draft of history. Here is an assortment of items reported in the *WVUU Times* during my August 2016 to 2020 tenure that might go into an institutional history of WVUUC. On the other hand, you might call the following just my personal walk down the *WVUU Times'* memory lane.

Gavel Talks: Board Presidents delivered *Gavel Talk*, a monthly commentary featured on the front page. Their comments at the beginning of their terms of office are noteworthy. In 2016 Barry Linden urged us to promote justice in our larger community. In 2018 Diane D'Agostino described opportunities for WVUUC congregants to serve our "little church that could." In 2019 Emily Whitmore wrote about increasing and maintaining our membership. And in 2020 Mandy Oviatt emphasized our need for togetherness while physically distancing during the COVID-19 crisis.

Facilities: Modifications to our wonderful new Sanctuary included solar panels, window blinds, rain gutters, an art display, an entryway sunshade, and eventually a working sound system.

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Hello, Goodbye

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The Hospitality building gained a new kitchen. Our substantial mortgage was refinanced in 2019. Campus clean-ups occurred every month. Thank you, Noel Johnson, for heading all this!

Fund Raising. Efforts to boost WVUUC income beyond our regular pledge drives and Sunday plate collections involved community rummage sales, flea fairs, arts and crafts markets, and clipboard auctions.

Pulpit Supply Ministers. From 2015 to 2018 Rev. Christiane Heyde presented 63 sermons to WVUUC. Rev. Cathy Corbin-Mannino began as our pulpit minister September 2018.

Roy Zimmerman. A musical satirist, Roy Zimmerman presented “funny and forceful affirmations of peace and social justice” at WVUUC concerts in 2017 and 2019.

Welcoming Congregation: WVUUC completed the UUA’s 2018 program for renewing our commitment to LGBTQ+ people. We remain current in this essential endeavor.

Community Building. Efforts to enhance our WVUUC community included hospitality hour meals following Sunday services along with potlucks and circle suppers.

Other enhancements included a Sunday discussion group, a men’s fellowship group, and *Dungeons and Dragons* gaming. Notable social justice efforts in our larger community provided for immigrant and homeless people.

Remembrances. Memorials were held for departed WVUUC congregants Lisa Cook, Mary Lou Cornell, and Doug Pope.

Safety. In 2018 the *WVUU Times* twice described practices for coping with an active shooter on our campus. Due to COVID-19 mitigation, the April 2020 newsletter declared the suspension of face-to-face Sunday Services and related functions. And the July 2020 issue followed with a notice that Sunday Services would be available only through Zoom then uploaded to YouTube.

Along with relating the events listed above, the *WVUU Times* regularly announced future Sunday Services, reported highlights of Board meetings and committee activities, described children’s RE classes, profiled individual members, advocated ways to live out UU principles, enumerated WVUUC finances, and reviewed media.

Four years of reporting what we WVUUC members care about and do has been a privilege. I feel like I’ve been in a catbird seat!



Religious Education

Sharon Moore leadmoore@gmail.com

RE is Not Just for Kids

Religious Education is important on many levels and for all ages. As the new WVUUC RE chair, I truly believe this.

I know we mostly think of RE as where the kids go during the adult services. However, Religious Education is something all UUs do and should participate in as we believe there should be “a free and responsible search for truth and meaning” as well as “encouragement to spiritual growth.”

In that vein, Terry Mead was asked about re-starting the adult discussions held prior to Pre-Pandemic Sunday Services. These 9:30 sessions were well-regarded as was shown by the solid core of people who regularly participated. Starting them up again will help connect us during this time of physical distancing.

In the past, WVUUC has conducted a variety of adult RE programs that the UUA provides. I was in *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* decades ago and learned much about the role of the goddess and the divine feminine in early religious expression down to today.

If you know of an adult discussion group that you think we should be sponsoring, please let me know. Maybe we can find more ways to stay connected and grow spiritually.



What is Happening for Kids' RE?

We are wondering how we can re-open RE classes safely as the summer is coming to a close. Safety is the topmost issue as we wonder how a quality education can be delivered.

Fortunately, with all the digital tools available, we do know there are lots of curricular options available. It's hard to tell you what the plan for WVUUC is because there are so many uncertainties.

I have prepared a questionnaire for the parents of our regular attendees in the RE program last year. It is to gauge parents' level of comfort with a variety of options. Any member of the congregation, however, is welcome to see and respond to the questionnaire. Just contact me: leadmoore@gmail.com

So I'm not sure what RE will look like going forward, but here are some options:

We currently have access to online RE content that two UU congregations are willing to share with us. Once we determine when RE officially begins for the new church year, I will send those links to parents for them to use (or not) as we are in this holding period of no in-person classes.

I would also like to Zoom with children so they can get to know me and what is coming up for them.

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Religious Education

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The Zoom meetings would be short and would include a story as well as an opportunity to share what's going on in their lives.

When the Board decides that in-person church services will resume, we will ensure, as best we can, that children and teachers are safe as they join to learn together. This will include outdoor classes, protective measures (masks, sanitizer, etc.), physical distancing for activities, and indoor classes with additional precautions.

We will have bags of materials for each child with no sharing to help prevent the spread of the virus. Children will bring their own masks (fun ones, I hope!), but we will have

disposable ones for them if they forget as well as for visitors.

I will be writing curriculum to reinforce UUs seven principles through children's literature. Once in-person classes resume, I'll be asking various members of the RE team to teach classes for that curriculum. I'm also going to tap congregants who do not have children in the program to extend the connections we should all have with our children.

These are some of my thoughts. Do you have other ideas for us to consider? Please contact Sharon Moore if you do. We all need to figure out our new normal together.

Carbon Offset

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



June Finances

markoelerking@gmail.com

Pledge Income	<u>\$2,420</u>
Bank Mortgage	\$956
Member Mortgage.	\$2,339
Prop/Liability Ins.	\$198
Security	\$116
Total Expenses	<u>\$3,609</u>

Thank you, everyone, for continuing to make your pledge payments in a timely manner. The church has been able to continue meeting its ongoing financial obligations. Again, thanks so much!

Getting to Know Rev. Darren Reale

Sandra Mahoney s_1mahoney@cox.net

Rev. Darren Reale was reared in Modesto, CA and lived there until he was 15. After his mother remarried, the family relocated to rural Pennsylvania where the nearest town was 12 miles away. After graduating high school, he attended Chapman College in Orange, CA where he studied mass communications, theatre arts, and music.

Although his mother was Episcopalian, they attended Unity Church and at age 10, Rev. Reale knew he was a pagan. Rev. Reale struggled to make a living as an actor and musician; eventually he realized he needed a day job, and he became an insurance building safety manager. He was transferred to Phoenix in 1990 after being promoted to a managerial position.

After the early 1990's recession, he moved back to Modesto but soon realized he was in a job with a limited future. He attended a large UU church there which had a CUUPS group with 30-40 members. He felt like he had found his religious home.

While searching for a new career, he realized he liked teaching music to children, so he decided to return to Chapman University where he received a post-baccalaureate degree in Elementary Education and later an M.A. degree in Music Education from ASU.



He interviewed with the Laveen school district and was hired in 1998 to teach music, band, and choir. He eventually became music director and has taught there for 23 years. He plays all band instruments and has recorded one album of guitar music which had moderate success.

A few years ago, he and his wife attended a craft fair at WVUUC which is within walking distance of their home. When he first encountered Unitarian Universalism 25

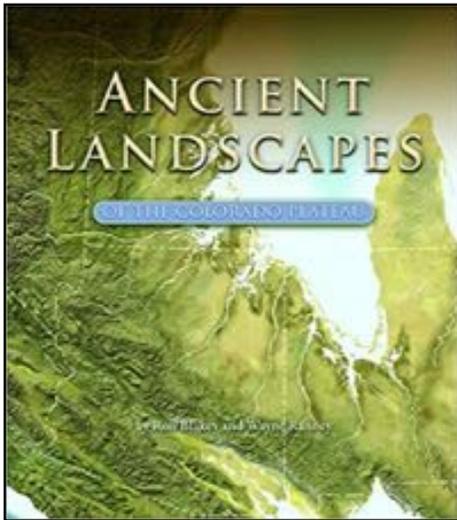
years ago, he found UU's to be accepting of all religions and practicing that in how they interact with others. He soon joined WVUUC and was finalizing the papers for a CUUPS chapter when the pandemic hit.

He was ordained as a pagan priest through a small church doing pagan outreach and is now a minister for the Sacred Spiral Pagan Church in Mesa. Rev. Reale and his wife have been married since 1988 and have a daughter who lives in Peoria.

He enjoys walks with his dog, day hikes in the mountains, and is an avid reader of nonfiction and esoteric New Age literature. He has completed training to be a certified yoga teacher. He hopes people see him as approachable, as someone who takes religion seriously, and as someone who is able and willing to talk about paganism, druidism, and music.

Media Review

Blakey, R., & Ranney, W. (2008). *Ancient landscapes of the Colorado Plateau*. Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon Association.



Reviewed by David Moore

The Colorado Plateau is my favorite place to be outdoors. Much of it is red-rock country intricately marked by mesas, buttes, canyons, and cliffs. It is home to nine national parks and 18 national monuments. I think of it as a combination art museum and adventure park.

What's more, erosion and tectonic faults have uncovered layer upon layer of sedimentary rocks, and the plateau's arid climate keeps them exposed. So the region

also serves as a geology demonstration lab.

When I began traipsing around the Colorado Plateau -- and the Grand Canyon in particular -- I wanted to know how the rock layers, the strata, got there. I wanted to understand the geological past in order to make sense of the present. I wish had *Ancient Landscapes of the Colorado Plateau* then.

This book skillfully and beautifully explains the origins and unearthings of the Colorado Plateau's strata. It combines straight-ahead writing with dramatic full-color charts, cross-sectional diagrams, illustrations, and photographs. It is stunning.

Its master stroke is the more than 70 state-of-the-art paleogeographic (*ancient geography*) maps. They are the life's work of the first author, Ron Blakey, an eminent NAU geologist. His digitally produced maps synthesize esoteric fieldwork to portray the region's changing landscapes.

Ancient Landscapes' account of the Colorado Plateau's evolution begins about 1,750

million years ago. It shows landmasses drifting about the globe. The supercontinent *Rodinia* emerges, creates the region's basement rocks, then fractures. Seawater periodically moves in, deposits sediments, then retreats. Wind-blown sand dunes dominate then succumb. Continental crusts and mountain ranges rise and fall. Rivers pour onto the region then leave freshwater remains. Shorelines and swamps make their marks. The place is uplifted into a plateau and tilted onto its current position.

Ancient Landscapes of the Colorado Plateau explains the geology of this region like none other. To my mind, it shows how the abiding dynamics of Earth encompass the sacred; it shows why nature deserves reverence. *Ancient Landscapes* supports viewing this region as a cathedral and comes close to being a sacred text.

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.

Unitarian Universalist principles are drawn from six sources:

1. Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
2. Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
3. Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
4. Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
5. Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit; and
6. Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.