



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Las Vegas Newsletter

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Monthly Theme: Generosity

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Rev. Clations!

Rev. Rachel Allen Baker

February 2019

An Introduction to the Monthly Theme: Generosity By the Rev. Kirk Loadman-Copeland

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul listed generosity as one of the fruits of the spirit. Generosity is also a fruit of gratitude. In Judaism, *tzedakah*, a Hebrew word, is equated with charity. This act of kindness, however, combines generosity with justice. Ironically, such giving is understood to spiritually benefit the giver more than the recipient. *Tzedakah* is similar to one of the five pillars of Islam, which is *zakat*. It refers to charity, but also means both "purification" and "growth." In Buddhism, the practice of giving and the virtue of generosity are called *dana*. It is one of the "ten perfections." At its essence, dana is considered to be revolutionary, as are tzedakah and zakat, because it is giving freely without any expectation of receiving something in return.

As these examples imply, generosity is a spiritual practice. Generosity is framed in different ways to try to capture its profound nature: revolutionary generosity, extravagant generosity, generosity of spirit, compassionate generosity, generosity seeding possibility, sacred generosity, storms of generosity, etc. Unitarian Universalist minister Tom Owen-Towle writes, "A synonym for generosity is magnanimity, which adroitly combines two Latin words for 'large soul' (*magna* and *anima*)."

The Indo-European root of the word generous, *gene*, means "to give birth" and gives rise to words like germinate, generate, genius, and kin. Generosity is the act that creates beloved community, connecting people through a mutuality of giving and receiving. In Buddhism, the simple rice bowl becomes the monk's begging bowl, a symbol of a vow of poverty. Daily the monks go out into the town or countryside to have their bowls filled by the people living there. This ritual is one of profound reciprocity: the lay people in the community provide physical support to the monks and the monks provide spiritual support to the people in the community. Sue Bender writes that "the essential practice of a monk is to accept what is placed in the bowl—and be grateful." Because the relationship between the monk and the community is one of profound mutual benefit, the term begging bowl is inadequate. It is, in fact, a bowl of generosity and possibility, a bowl of compassion. This kind of bowl is also a symbol for a beloved community. Each week, a congregation forms the bowl of community into which members place gifts, and from which members partake of the love, support, and encouragement of others.

This concept of generosity is compellingly conveyed in the movie *Pay It Forward*, which was directed by Mimi Leder. twelve-year-old Trevor McKinney accepts the challenge offered by his new social studies teacher, Mr. Simonet. The assignment is to think of something that will change the world and then put it into action. Trevor comes up with the idea of paying a favor—not back to the person who helped you, but forward with new good deeds done to three people. The ripple of one good deed, paid forward to 3 people, then 9, then 81, illustrates the exponential power of generosity as each person pays it forward to three others. By contrast, failure to pay things forward has a chilling effect. As Unitarian Universalist Barbara Rohde writes, "Gifts that are not received die. Gifts that we try to hoard die. Gifts that we cannot or do not hand to another die."

Tom Owen-Towle reminds us that, "Generosity undergirds and underwrites all other values [that are required to grow a beloved community]. Without generosity, one loves sparingly, if not stingily; without generosity our acts of justice happen rarely; without generosity we hoard our precious gifts of time and soul and other resources."

Some Questions to Reflect on this Month:

- What has been freely, generously given to you? Do you remember ever receiving an anonymous gift? What happened and how did you feel?
- What and from whom else have you learned about giving?
- When you have felt good about giving generously?
- How do you fill yourself up (spirit, soul, energy), and how does that relate to your generosity?
- If generosity is not about the amount of giving of time or money or love, what are the barriers to generosity that affect you in your daily life?
- Do you have a practice of generosity or can you imagine one? What does/would the practice look like?

Stewardship Drive News

I cannot believe that it's already the middle of January and that you are reading this in the February Sunrise. I still have the three seeds that I was given from the first service that I use to keep myself on track with what I set out to do during this year. It is working!!!

As Stewardship Chair, I want to thank everyone who has taken some time and bravely stepped up to share with the congregation how you have live your UU values. I have found each one of these minitestimonials to be inspiring and strengthen my sense of community in this Congregation. I know that I am not alone in being affected by these talks. Thank you. If you have not already done so, take some time and think about how you live your UU values, then write those ideas down so that you can share them. If you are not inclined to speak in front of a crowd, just going through the exercise may give you something to talk about with somebody new during Social Hour. If you are interested in sharing, please send an e-mail to a Worship Associate.

It is now that time of year where the Congregation is asked to pledge for the coming Church Year that starts on July 1. We usually start this at the end of January but decided to postpone it a month so that there is a good break between calendar New Year and the start of the Pledge Drive.

For this Annual Pledge Drive, we will be doing something a little different to inspire you to give. Between the first week of February and Commitment Sunday, when we kick off the drive, there will be something 'growing' in our Welcome Hall. I challenge each of you to guess what it is. We will be using what has grown as an analogy for our annual pledge drive. Please come to Church on February 24th, prepared to commit (in the analogical way) and getting your hands dirty (if you so desire) to ensure that our church is healthy for another year.

In Peace

Mark Bergtholdt – Stewardship Chair

Topics for Upcoming Services

Feb. 03, 2019: Your Greatest Self – Cooper Garrett

As Unitarian Universalists, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people. However, we often forget to include ourselves in this statement. We let culture tell us who we should be or what we should look like instead of being authentically ourselves. Set to the theme of the musical *The Greatest Showman*, come worship with us this Sunday morning as we celebrate our holy, divine selves.

Feb. 10, 2019: That Was Fast. I Mean Life - Rev. Rachel Allen Baker

"That was fast. I mean life," a poem by Ron Padgett, offers a vision of growing older. Today we will explore some of the challenges and gifts of aging. This service is the 2018 auction winner.

Feb. 17, 2019: ■ Music Makes the People Come Together ■ Cooper Garrett & Kate Weinberg

According to Madonna, music...makes the people...come together. Rightly so, our hymnals are full of various spiritual songs that celebrate our six sources. Come worship with us this morning as we sing the living tradition.

Feb. 24, 2019: Commitment Sunday – Rev. Rachel Allen Baker

"The bud stands for all things, even for those things that don't flower, for everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing; though sometimes it is necessary to reteach a thing its loveliness, to put a hand on its brow of the flower and retell it in words and in touch it is lovely until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing..." writes Galway Kinnell in his poem, St. Francis and the Sow. Today the congregation remembers how to flower from within during our annual Commitment Sunday, the beginning of the Annual Pledge Campaign. Unitarian Universalist congregations are financially self-supporting. Each year we collect pledges for substantial financial gifts for the following year. With the pledge income the congregation lives out its purpose in the world. The congregation will have an opportunity to pledge, commit to the future of the congregation, and sign the new Covenant of Healthy Relationships that was voted on at a recent Congregational Meeting.

February 2019 50/50 Sundays: Las Vegas Street Medics

The UUCLV February 2019 50/50 offerings will be shared with **Las Vegas Street Medics**. The Las Vegas Street Medic collective offers care to our community; to participants at protests, those having health issues that are without shelter, and those with extreme mental health states. Believing that friends make the best medicine, they strive to offer care and compassion to all.



UUCLV Board Meeting Minutes, 18 December 2018 6:30 pm reported by Lisa McAllister

Call to Order: by Keith McMillen at 6:32pm: In attendance: Keith McMillen, Bruce Turner, Kathy Espin, Stu Webster, Shannon Porter, Lisa McAllister, Rev. Rachel Baker.

Chalice Lighting: by Rev. Rachel "For Joy"

Accountability: everyone swears they did what they were supposed to do.

New Minutes Approval Committee: Shannon, Bruce, Keith

Reports:

- Minister: pledge campaign plan in progress with Mark Bergtholdt (Feb. 24 to begin); hired Erma; Athena taking over OWL; what would the BOT like to see on minister's report?
- Finance: Kathy Espin presented report as of Nov. 30; tracking on camp scholarship funds all in 2.500.170; possible fundraiser in January; power bills are lower this year than last, despite damaged solar panels. New version of policy 3.01 will be sent for BOT approval.
- Facilities: Stu Webster presented report to be put in Dropbox; insurance has paid for repair of solar panels and roof damage; working on new cleaning schedule through May; having trouble locating main shut offs for gas, water.
- Special Committees: no report
- January Congregational Meeting and Town Hall plan: Future Plans Task Force report will be presented; new covenant presented and voted on.
- Audit Committee: need 2 replacements eventually; BOT will appoint replacement for Rych Anderson, due to his imminent move to NE.

New business: Security concerns/solutions—consideration of camera systems to increase safety for folks working in building; compare Tyco to other alarm providers; consider security doors to protect glass doors; add windows to doors in offices.

Athena has organized two events that have reached out to our neighbors (trunk and treat; caroling and cookies) for which she should be commended more.

Adjourned by Keith at 8:15 pm

Accountability:

- Keith: NPR sponsorship info; minister's report—what would you like to see?; check w/Gail on necessary notice for January meeting (BEFORE 12/21); publish policy 3.01 to BOT for vote, then print, sign, distribute, post; minutes approval; speak to Dave Richards about Audit
- Bruce: send photo; minister's report—what would you like to see?; check on UNLV surplus or wherever for doors; minutes approval

- Gail: minister's report—what would you like to see? assist Keith with meeting/town hall;
- Kathy: send photo; minister's report—what would you like to see? close out last fiscal year; write thank you letter for donors in year-end statements; letter to committee chairs re: budget
- Shannon: send photo; minister's report—what would you like to see? minutes approval; contact Cassie re: The Center; share last year's budget letters with Kathy
- Stu: send photo; minister's report—what would you like to see? find out about shut offs; call Robyn about stripping floors;
- Mary Jane: minister's report—what would you like to see?
- Lisa: December minutes—send to committee, then to BOT, Steve, Erma; ask folks who donate
 to KNPR (\$150+) if they would donate their messages via Hangout, announcement, newsletter
 (Keith Gmail address); minister's report—what would you like to see?; prepare presentation on
 new covenant for January meeting; provide copy of covenant updated (BY FRIDAY 12/21)
- Rev. Rachel: thank you to painters in OOS; write spiel for KNPR; upload minister's report before meeting; re-evaluate "emergency phone list"; connect Mark and BOT re: donors thank you;

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Las Vegas Town Hall Meeting Minutes, January 13, 2019

Chalice Lighting: Rev. Rachel Baker read opening words as the chalice was lighted.

Quorum: Congregation President, Keith McMillen, called the meeting to order in the church sanctuary at 12:10 p.m. after the secretary, Gail Knapp, confirmed that with 38 members having signed in, a quorum was present.

Covenant of Good Relations: The Safer Congregations Committee report was presented by Lisa McAllister. The committee worked for a year holding meetings, surveys, and giving opportunities for members to provide input into the creation of a new covenant. She stressed that if the document is adopted, it should be considered a work in progress since the membership can and should amend it as the need arises. After some questions and comments, a voting card vote of the assumed motion to approve this covenant was adopted.

Report of the Task Force on the Future of the UUCLV congregation: A written report of the task force is attached to these minutes. Karin Metcalf gave a verbal report and handled many questions, and suggestions. Since this task force was tasked with gathering data and information, but it was not expected to provide any recommendations, there was no motion or action taken. The report will be given to the board for further action. Keith McMillen explained that there will be Focus Groups meeting in members' homes over the coming months to discuss exactly what the congregation wishes to see as our goals and priorities for the future. These are needed in order to fully understand what physical facilities would be best to accomplish this vision. All members are encouraged to participate so that their ideas can be included in any final decisions.

Meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.

Gail Knapp, Secretary

2019 PSW District Assembly Registration Goes Live Feb. 1

The keynote speaker for the 2019 PSW District Assembly has been announced and he has a few simple questions for every member of every UU community:

- Are you engaging your congregants on the deepest and most meaningful levels possible?
- Are you impacting their lives through your worship services to the point that they
 want to go out into the highways and byways to spread compassion, grace and
 radical hospitality?
- Are you ready to "upcycle" your community's worship?

If so, then you need to attend the 2019 **Pacific Southwest District Assembly** April 26-28, 2019, at the UU Church of Long Beach, California.



Donald Milton III, director of music at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, will lead the keynote presentation entitled "Upcycling Church Music for Deeper Engagement." Together we will explore new ways of approaching hymns, music, readings, rituals and sermons to make them more meaningful, impactful and fully engaging.

Donald Milton III is the director of music at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, the largest UU congregation in the Southeast. Milton runs one of the most eclectic and exceptional music programs in the UU movement. He wrote a chapter on upcycling church music for the recently released book, "Upcycle Your Congregation: Creative Ideas for Transforming Faith Communities."

Registration for the 2019 PSW District Assembly will be available Feb. 1.

The district assembly's theme will be "From the Ground Up: The Power of Our PSWD Communities."

Along with Milton's keynote presentation, there will be opportunities for worship, workshops, a youth con, social justice field trip and plenty of chances to connect with UUs from throughout Southern California, Arizona and Southern Nevada. Plan to be there: April 26-28 in Long Beach!

Diane Brinson | Administration Manager | Pacific Western Region

The Lunch Bunch will gather at 12:00 PM on **February 3rd** at the Desert Pines Golf club located at <u>Address</u>: 3415 E Bonanza Rd, Las Vegas, NV 89101 **Phone**: (702) 388-4400 Here is the <u>menu</u>. We hope everyone can join us. -- Rick and Lisa Bleyle

Help Us Promote UUCLV

UUCLV is trying to come up with new ways to reach potential visitors. Would anyone who donates to KNPR at the day-sponsor level be willing to use your day-sponsorship to promote UUCLV? We will provide the message that would be read on air. Please respond by e-mailing Keith at kgmcmillen@gmail.com. Day-sponsorships are available to those who donate \$15 or more per month. Thanks!

Meet Unitarian Universalist Association Representatives Rev. Rachel Allen Baker

Las Vegas UU Meet and Greet with the UUA Co-Moderator, and members of the election task force: Members and friends of the Las Vegas UU Church are invited to join the UUA Co-Moderator, Elandria Williams, as well as members of the UUA Elections Task Force, for a meet and greet and q and a, on Tuesday, February 5th, from 5:30 - 6 pm. The Elections Task Force, which includes Ms. Williams, the Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti (co-editor of the current UUA Common Read, "Justice on Earth"), and eight others, is meeting at your congregation on Monday and Tuesday, and would be glad to say hello to your members and leaders. Elandria Williams will provide a short update on highlights of the work at the UUA and answer a few of your questions.

Circle

Supper

Friday, February 8th

6:30 pm at UUCLV

Everyone is welcome to the next Circle Supper. We'll focus on getting to know one another via topics that are not religious in nature. Sign up on the poster next to the Book Shelf in the Social Hall to help organize your gifts of food or drink. Questions to karinmetcalf@gmail.com

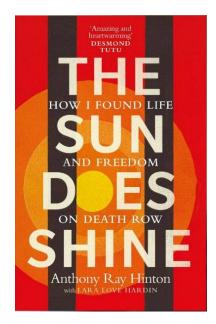
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The Las Vegas Bookies will meet from 7-9 p.m. on Tuesday, February 19, 2019, to discuss *The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row* written by Anthony Ray Hinton and Lara Love Hardin

Moderator: Faye Manning Hosts: Binnie and Clay Wilkin Contact: Linda Farley bookiesuuclv@gmail.com

The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row by Anthony Ray Hinton and Lara Love Hardin ** Oprah's Book Club Summer 2018 Selection and a New York Times Bestseller



In 1985, Anthony Ray Hinton was arrested and charged with two counts of capital murder in Alabama. Stunned, confused and only twenty-nine years old, Hinton, knew that it was a case of mistaken identity and believed that the truth would prove his innocence and ultimately set him free. But with no money, an incompetent defense attorney, and a deeply biased criminal justice system that works against the poor and people of color, Hinton was convicted and sentenced to death by electrocution.

With a powerful forward by Bryan Stevenson, founder and executive director of The Equal Justice Initiative, *The Sun Does Shine* is an extraordinary testament to the transformative power of love, faith, and hope sustained through the darkest of times. Woven into the vivid descriptions of life behind bars are flashbacks to the author's childhood, court transcripts, police documents, news clippings, and correspondence that reveal the roles racism, poverty, and fear played in Hinton's conviction, his thirty-year incarceration, and his attempts to find justice.

(Summary from Kirkus Review and Amazon.)



Biblical Heroes Sunday, Feb. 24 12 noon Convener Bill Jacobs

"Biblical Heroes" will be profiled at our February 24th HUUmanist Forum. Gary DeVaney has the rap sheet on Abraham, Noah, David, and Solomon which may dismay believers as Gary reveals the amazing truth behind the source of Christianity. Join us at noon on Sunday and bring your critical mind, questions, and comments.

— Child Care is provided. —

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Many Voices Meeting

Reported by B.L.W.

January, 2019

Themes: Circle of Life & Irony

The first 2019 storytelling meeting was like any New Year celebration filled with memories, sadness, joy and joviality. Storytellers found the themes both challenging and daunting.

The evening began with a video presentation telling a tale of family, growing up and discovery. Life's "circle" led to recognition that, by society, a gay father had been forced to repress his sexuality. Several people spoke of motherhood being the vehicle by which acute recognition of the "circle of life" occurs. One person asserted that the beginning of new life prepares us for the death of older loved ones. Another spoke about constant reminders of life's continuity provided through observing the stages, growth and changes in children. Hardly an eye was dry in the room as hopes were shared that a granddaughter would be spared an experience from the teller's past. Each previous generation had faced tragic and difficult death of spouses.

"Irony" provided humor and levity as one person told of following a dream and making money, although discouraged by her spouse. The irony was that, without his discouragement, she could have made more, and the dream never again recurred. A treacherous winter car trip, with the need for intervention and aid from good Samaritans, was finally finished by ironically removing rather than adding a car part. The group also heard about one person's mischievous, troublemaking friend who finally received minor recompense when left literally "holding the bill" for a group's evening of wine tasting



Did you know you can donate 0.5% of allowed purchases just by using your Smith's reward card every time you shop?

*If you were enrolled in the previous donation program through Smith's and haven't already re-enrolled, please re-enroll using the instructions below:

Dear Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Las Vegas (BE260),

The Kroger Co. Family of Stores is committed to bringing hope and help to the local neighborhoods we call home. Our stores are on a mission to go beyond being a part of the community to also helping create a stronger community. We recognize that every community is different and has unique causes that need support. Smith's Food & Drug launched Inspiring Donations, July 1st of this year, to give customers the opportunity to donate to local causes that matter to them. Thank you for being such an important organization in our community.

We are committed to carefully protecting our customer's personal information. In order to meet their expectation of privacy, we have adopted a simple policy to never share a customer's personal information. Our privacy policy applies to Inspiring Donations participation as well.

As a reminder, Smith's Food & Drug donates .5% of every eligible purchase made by participants to the organization their *rewards* card is linked to. **The amount (01-Oct-2018 to 31-Dec-2018: 18 Households, \$81.05 Total Donations)** is the first payout through Inspiring Donations and there is

room to grow your donations! We encourage you to ask your supporters to link their *rewards* card to your organization. **Inspiring Donations** is easy to understand and easy to explain! The more your supporters' shop with us, the more money your organization will earn!

Thank you for being such an important organization in our community,

Inspiring Donations Staff

Enrollment Instructions

- You must have a registered Smith's rewards card to enroll in the Smith's Inspiring Donations program.
- Do you use your phone number at the register? Call 800-576-4377, select option 3 to get your Smith's rewards card number.
- If you do not yet have a Smith's rewards card, they are available at the customer service desk at any Smith's store.

To Create a Smith's Online Account:

- Visit our website at www.smithsfoodanddrug/inspire.com Click on Smith's Inspiring Donations.
- Click on Create an Account or use the 'Register' button at the top of the web page.
- Enter your email address and create a password.
- Enter your zip code in "Your location", select your favorite store.
- Click on Create an Account: a message will appear stating your account was successful.
- Enter your rewards card number and your Last name. Click 'Save'.
- You will then be directed to the Account Summary page. Under Personal Information click' Edit' and enter your personal information then click 'Save'.
- Under Smith's Inspiring Donations click 'Enroll'. Enter UUCLV's number (**BE260**), or at least 3 letters of "Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Las Vegas" and click 'Search'. Click the button next to our name. Click **Enroll** to complete your enrollment.

*Already have a Smith's online account? Enroll in Smith's Inspiring Donations:

- Visit <u>www.smithsfoodanddrug/inspire.com</u>. Click Sign in. Enter your email address and password.
- Click on your name under Welcome back! To View Account Summary.
- In Account Summary the last option is Smith's Inspiring Donations.
- Click on Enroll
- Enter our NPO (Non-Profit Organization) number (BE260), or a few letters of the organizations' name then Enroll
- Select an organization from the list and click Enroll
- To verify you are enrolled correctly, you will see the organization's name on the Account Summary page.

REMEMBER, purchases will not count until after you register your rewards card and link to an organization. Members must swipe their registered Smith's rewards card or use the phone number that is related to their registered Smith's rewards card when shopping for each purchase to count.

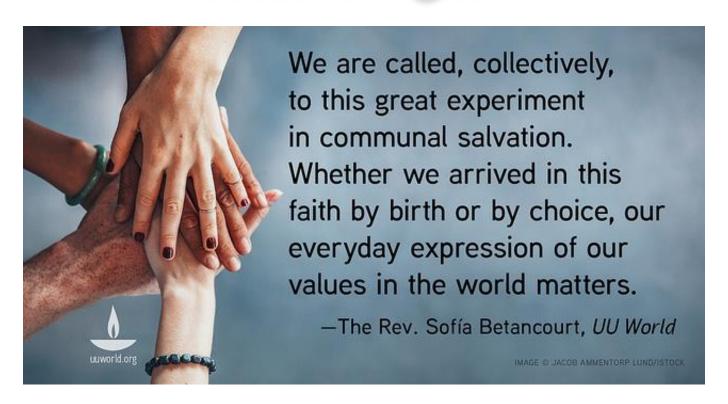
Adult Faith Development News

Rev. Rachel Allen Baker

Resistance and Transformation: Social Justice in Unitarian Universalism

This series helps Unitarian Universalists delve deeper into the heart of their faith. Many people come to Unitarian Universalist congregations because of our movement's reputation for engaging in social justice work as a matter of faith. This program presents stories, activities, and questions for engagement and reflection to deepen participants' understanding of the place social justice work holds in Unitarian Universalist heritage, culture, and identity. All sessions are open to anyone, even if you have not attended previous sessions. The third Sunday of every month, October through June, 12:15 - 2:15 pm in the Learning Area. Sessions will be led by UUCLV members, friends, and staff.

Final Thought



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