

# Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (UUCD) Theme Journal October–Courage

**When we think of courage**, examples of death-defying actions are used as examples. Here's an edited excerpt from Soul Matters, an All-Church program that helps UU churches collaborate in gathering inspirational resources.

*"In addition to the heroic acts that alter history, there are also the daily choices that prevent history from altering us. Battling evil and bending the arc of the universe toward justice deserves praise, but there's also the ordinary work of integrity and not allowing yourself to be bent.*

*There's the bravery of embracing your beauty even when it doesn't fit the air-brushed images surrounding you. There's the courage of calling out the micro-aggressions that happen almost every day at work. Turning down that drink one day at a time. Making yourself get out of bed when the depression tells you to stay there. Holding your partner's hand in public. Make no mistake, there are dozens of ordinary acts of bravery we rise up to everyday.*

*Maybe we should say there are dozens of ordinary acts of bravery we help each other rise up to every day. Courage is not only noble; it's contagious. The bravery that makes it into the history books may save the world, but our ordinary courage keeps each other going.*

*Watching someone else live with courage helps us endure. Witnessing someone else confront bigotry allows us to bravely be more open about who we are. They say that courage is found by digging deep, but most often it is passed on."*

Getting to know people and joining new groups can take courage, and the effort usually brings rewarding results. We discover inspirational people all around us in this community and, in some ways, we are an inspiration for others.

Risk it. If you've been around for a while and have the same circle of friends, find the courage to step outside your normal routine and try an activity you've never done at UUCD. If you're new to this congregation, look at what's happening and jump in. That's where the new connections are waiting for you.

Here are some ways you can experience the courage of new relationships at UUCD:

There are a few spots available on our teaching teams for Religious Exploration: being with a different generation can spark our inner creativity. There's lots of staff support so, if you're interested, speak with Rev. Morgan.

Curious about how to make a difference in our community? Step into a new group doing social service or social justice. Quilt with others on a Saturday morning, learn about the new Sanctuary movement, or explore racial justice by joining the book discussion, *The Third Reconstruction* by The Rev. Dr. William Barber II. Look in the bulletin or at the "Get Involved" tables in the social hall on Sunday.

Wonder what it's like to get to know others in a small group? Look for the small group ministries sign-ups this coming month and open yourself up to new friendships. Rev. Morgan is your first contact.

Experiences of reaching out build on each other, leading to connection and community. All it takes is a little courage.

– Rev. Beth Banks, Senior Minister

❖ [www.uudavis.org](http://www.uudavis.org) → Events/Publications → 2017-18, October–Courage ❖

Public domain image: <https://pixabay.com/en/roof-brick-colorful-color-light-99895/>



In J.K. Rowling's magical *Harry Potter* series, the wise wizard Dumbledore tells his students "It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends."

In fact, I would say it takes more courage to stand up to friends. It's hard to voice our opinions, ask questions, or reveal a piece of ourselves to people who we will see again and again. In my experience, these kinds of intimate conversations really change people. The love and trust shared by friends creates the right conditions for receptive listening.

It also takes courage to be the friend who is stood up to. All too often we disregard people's stories as soon as we receive them. We make judgements, or insert what we would have done. How can we open our hearts and minds to the people we love without jumping to a defensive place? Courage will help.

It takes courage to be in relationship, and it is there where we find the magic of our lives.

— Rev. Morgan McLean, Assistant Minister for Congregational Life



When thinking about the theme of courage this month, in a moment of complete word association, I imagined Courage as the Cowardly Lion from *The Wizard of Oz*. I thought about his speech to Dorothy and the Gang "What makes the dawn come up like THUNDER?! Courage." I picture the mighty lion who is afraid to do, well, basically anything. Still, with all his fear, he followed the group of unexpected friends to find the Wizard to grant him courage. Only he found, spoiler alert, that he had courage all along.

He gained courage from his relationships with those around him. He faced obstacles he never would have faced alone because he had friends with him. The relationships he found himself in may have seemed unlikely, a scarecrow, a tin man, a girl with her dog—and yet—there they were, facing the dangers of the yellow brick road together. With courage not only gained from their relationships, but the courage to be in relationship in the first place. The courage to think of others, their needs, and to learn and grow from them because you are together.

Lao Tzu wrote that "Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage." Our relationships with one another take courage, give us courage, give us hope that we are not alone, give us strength because we know that we are not alone. May we take courage from and give courage to our relationships with one another. We are all in this together, following the yellow brick road.

— Danielle Lindstrom, Intern & Campus Minister



*"The word 'church' never meant much to me as a kid. Church was something people attended in the movies, or visited on holiday in Europe. Obviously, my childhood was a secular one. This synergized with my interest in science, and I grew into a proud atheist. Unknowingly, I began building my own kind of church and congregation around myself. Science became my religion - the lens through which I viewed and understood the universe, and my place within it. My academic friends had become my beloved community.*

*When I moved to California, I found another community of science-minded friends. For a while, that was enough. Then, last autumn, I lost a very dear friend. Heartbroken, I found myself searching for solace, and for meaning in the face of mortality. One month later, an unimaginable president was elected, and I found myself searching for hope. Suddenly, I was an atheist with urgent spiritual needs.*

*So, one Sunday last November, I stepped tentatively into this church. The moment I entered, warm, kind members of this congregation took me under their wing, and I felt welcome. When I stood to sing my first UU hymn, "Spirit of Life", the music overwhelmed me. Longing and hope, joy and strength, poured out of the music, out of my heart, and out as tears. I knew that I had found a community that could guide me on my unique spiritual journey. A community full of love, working to create a better world. The word Church is finally meaningful to me."*

—Kasia Stepien



# October Sunday Worship, 9:30 & 11:15am

---

**October 1, 9:30 & 11:15am**, *The World is too Beautiful*; Dani Lindstrom; Lily Roberts, Worship Associate. In his benediction, *The World is too Beautiful*, Eric Williams challenges us to remember, “The world is too beautiful to be praised by only one voice... the world is too broken to be healed by only one set of hands.” Being in relationship with other beautiful and imperfect people sometimes feels impossible. How do we have the courage to be together?

---

**October 1, 4pm, Animal Blessing**; Rev. Beth Banks, Dani Lindstrom, Autumn Labbé-Renault. We celebrate the birthday of St. Francis, patron of animals. Dogs, both large and small, must be attached to their human companion by a leash (only well-socialized dogs please.) Cats, and all other small four-footed creatures should be in pet carriers to preserve their sense of privilege. St. Francis loved the peaceful existence, and we will strive for the same at UUCD. ♥ Toy stuffed animals may serve as a surrogate for shy pets. There will also be a time in our service to recognize pets who have died. Bring photos or mementos for the altar. ♥ If you don't have an animal companion at home but want to spend some time with creatures “great and small”, come! Plan to stay for socializing after the service with treats for all. Share the love, spread the word, and bring your friends! ♥ Small gifts to delight. ♥ Slideshow: By Sept 28, send images of your animal companions to Dani Lindstrom, [campusministry@uudavis.org](mailto:campusministry@uudavis.org)

---

**October 8, 9:30 & 11:15am**, *Japanese in California: The Courage of Gaman*; Rev. Beth Banks; Tamara Range, Worship Associate. On Columbus Day weekend, we focus on the people of color who settled in northern California during the decades following California's statehood. This year, Joyce Takahashi has generously offered resources that give the background for some Japanese who settled northern California. They had a deep-rooted cultural response to the oppression they experienced and their stories help us better understand their perseverance in an oppressive system.

---

**October 15, 9:30 & 11:15am**, *Courage at the Threshold*; Rev. Morgan McLean; Dani Lindstrom, Worship Associate. Fear is part of the human experience. Sometimes fear keeps us alive. More often fear closes doors and keeps us from fully embracing life. The old wisdom of facing our fears turns out to be great advice, but we must first acknowledge them. How can we find and face our fears while opening doors to life around us?  
*This Sunday includes a Quilt Blessing for Progress Ranch.*

---

**October 22, 9:30 & 11:15am**, *What does it mean to be a community of courageous people?* Rev. Beth Banks; Autumn Labbé-Renault, Worship Associate. Courage looks different in each person's life. The richness of our lives is measured by the courage we bring to our relationships of love and commitment. What was a moment of courage for you?  
*This Sunday we will give thanks to our AV Team.*

---

**October 29, 9:30 & 11:15am**, *Dia de los Muertos*; Rev. Beth Banks, Rev. Morgan McLean, Dani Lindstrom. We cannot know what is behind the veil of death, but we know how to keep the essence of a person who has passed in the world of the living. *You're invited to bring photos and mementos for our Dia de los Muertos altar. Guest musicians: Mariachi Puente, a local youth mariachi band lead by Hiram and Ximena Jackson. Children and youth will remain in the worship service for 30 minutes to experience the altar.*



---

## Hymn of the Month, “We Resist” by Mark Miller.

Miller wrote this song for a ceremony honoring Malcom X. He intended that it could be sung in worship or at rallies of resistance. Listen to Miller leading a small, informal group of college students, (Un-mute the link at the bottom of the video image): <https://oneworldhouse.net/2017/04/08/we-resist-an-anthem-for-our-time/>



---

## Share-the-Plate Sunday Collections: Mosaic Children's Museum, Woodland

<http://www.mosaicchildrensmuseum.org/>

Dedicated to inspiring and empowering children through science, art, imagination, and creativity. Our vision is to become a full-lifecycle community resource for all ages. Our downtown Woodland location will contribute to a downtown accessible to all ages and contributing to Woodland's sense of community. We are beginning construction soon and hope to be open in 2018.

Each month, a different nonprofit organization receives half of non-pledge contributions to the Sunday collection. To ensure that your donation goes where you intend, please CLEARLY mark your memo line on EVERY check.

Examples Make check out to UUCD, Memo: Collection (will be split between UUCD and the non-profit of the month); Memo: Pledge (100% will go to your pledge); Memo: OWL fees (100% will go to RE's OWL program).

Non-profit organizations are nominated annually by UUCD congregants; nominations are reviewed and recipients chosen by a Board subcommittee. For more information, please contact [office@uudavis.org](mailto:office@uudavis.org)  
Donate anytime: <http://tinyurl.com/DonateUUCD>



---

## Spiritual Practice:

Prop Up The Courage of Others: We all have people in our lives who inspire us with their courage. But have we ever told them? We know how important it is to have our courage noticed, so let's be sure to offer that gift to others this month. Write a letter, give a symbolic gift, or treat them to lunch or coffee—whatever it is, find a way to tell someone that their bravery is seen and matters. It's said that courage is contagious. But how would one ever know that their bravery has inspired many, unless we tell them so? —Rev. Beth

Living in Religious Diversity—Walking Our Faith: Do we have the courage to enter into a conversation about living in a religiously diverse community? It isn't always easy to be in close relationship with others whose religious beliefs, culture, and rituals are different from our own. On Sunday, October 22, 4pm, in Central Davis, you're invited on a 2.5 mile walk that links three faith communities near the center of town. At each faith community, we'll be given questions to answer about how we maintain our religious identity, while being open to the beliefs and practices in our interfaith community. More details will be shared soon! Meanwhile consider, what are the UU beliefs central to your life? When you engage with people whose beliefs and practices are different from yours, how do you respond?

There will be opportunities to discuss these questions at UUCD in the month ahead of the Faith Walk. —Rev. Beth

From The Committee on Ministry (Hiram Jackson, Liz King, Lisa Oakes):

*“I ask people... think of the last time you did something that you thought was really brave or the last time you saw someone do something really brave. And I can tell you as a researcher—I 1,000 pieces of data—I cannot find a single example of courage, moral courage, spiritual courage, leadership courage, relational courage, I cannot find a single example of courage that was not born completely of vulnerability. We buy into some mythology about vulnerability being weakness and being gullibility and being frailty because it gives us permission not to do it.” —Brené Brown*

Think about something you do even though you feel vulnerable. What gives you the courage to do it anyway? What's the reward? Now think of something you are afraid to do. Where can you find the courage to do it anyway? What might be the reward?