

Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (UUCD) Theme Journal January–Intention

Living Our Vision

UUCD Vision Statement: We seek to create a radically inclusive and loving community through vibrant programs, meaningful worship, and courageous action for social justice. (Spring 2017)



Some years ago, a magazine comic strip was popular among some of my friends. The opening frame showed a man just waking up. His head buried in the pillow, he whines, “I don’t want to go to church this morning. I don’t know what to say at coffee hour, I don’t like to sing the hymns, and the sermons are sometimes boring.” His partner responds from outside the cartoon frame, “I understand, but you have to go. You’re the minister.”

My friends and I chuckled because the cartoon admitted that clergy can feel socially awkward. And, as much effort as we devote to the craft of preaching, on any given Sunday, we might wish we were more eloquent.

Before becoming a minister, I made the intentional decision to be active in the life of the UU church. It was a place that appreciated my love for the creating youth programming. Church became the place where most of my friends gathered and there was a never-ending source of people to meet. The ideas from the pulpit and adult Religious Education challenged me in ways I couldn’t have imagined. After ordination, the congregations I’ve served have helped to form my ministry and who I am as a person. Church has been one of my best life investments.

Rev. A. Powell Davies wrote the best explanation of what happens when we invest ourselves in a congregation, and respond to what it asks of us. Churches are unique institutions. At their best, they invite us to experience this:

“Let me tell you why I come to church. I come to church—and would whether I was a preacher or not—because I fall below my own standards and need to be constantly brought back to them. I am afraid of becoming selfish and indulgent, and my church—my church of the free spirit—brings me back to what I want to be.”

“I could easily despair; doubt and dismay could overwhelm me. My church renews my courage and my hope. It is not enough that I should think about the world and its problems at the level of a newspaper report or magazine discussion. It could too soon become too low a level. I must have my conscience sharpened—sharpened until it goads me to the most thorough and responsible thinking of which I am capable. I must feel again the love I owe to others. I must not only hear about it but feel it. In church, I do. I am brought toward my best, in every way toward my best.”

This is what it is like to live the vision statement of a church alive with ideals.

— Rev. Beth Banks, Senior Minister

❖ www.uudavis.org → Events/Publications → 2017-18, January–Intention ❖

Intentional Time

There are ancient traditions which invite people to be intentional in finding a time for reflection and openness to the surrounding world. This intentional time is called a spiritual practice. We are familiar with prayer and meditation, but anything can be a spiritual practice if we bring intention to it. Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh, famously talked about mindfulness while doing the dishes. Spiritual practices are waiting while doing a puzzle, eating dinner with a friend, dancing, and so much more. It takes practice (hence the name!) to be intentional as we go into an activity, and keep our mindfulness throughout. You can start today with even a quick silent moment of gratitude before a meal. On Wednesday, January 17, 7-9pm, in the UU Library, I'm offering a class about spiritual practices. Together we'll examine what spiritual practice is and why it's important in our lives. We'll explore different spiritual practices including mandalas, prayer, lectio divina, movement, and talk about how to develop your own spiritual practice.

— Rev. Morgan McLean, Assistant Minister for Congregational Life

Download or stream edited Sunday services at www.uudavispodcast.org

Our Mission Quiz—Don't worry, this won't be graded.

Q: Do you know where you can find the UUCD Mission statement on Sunday? **A:** Our Mission: To Welcome each and all, cultivating the spirit, serving others in our quest for justice. The headings for each section of Sunday's order of service represent an aspect of our congregation's mission. That's right, worship is modeling our mission statement every week!

As I think about intention, I think of our mission statement. How do we intentionally live into and live out our mission? How do we make it a focus in the new year? How can it guide our work here at UUCD?

Author and educator, Parker Palmer wrote, "Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent."

Our mission offers broad answers to the questions asked by Parker Palmer. It not only represents who we are, why we exist, but also answers the question "what must we do?" Our truths and our values are represented in our mission. We *welcome each and all* because we value all voices, we *cultivate the spirit* through learning and community, we *serve others on our quest for justice* because we believe in supporting one another, our community, and we believe in justice for all.

At UUCD, there are many ways I see our mission in action. I see it in our opening words in worship, where we work to establish UUCD as a place where all are welcome. I see it in our work with the AB540 Undocumented Student Center as we strive, guided by the students, for justice. I see it in our Small Group Ministry program, as we offer places for individuals to reflect deeply on their own experience, cultivating their spirit.

As we enter the new year, as we near the halfway point in our church year, where and how are you seeing UUCD live into our mission?
— Danielle Lindstrom, Intern & Campus Minister



Sunday Worship, 9:30 & 11:15am

Share the Plate: International Rescue Committee, N. CA receives 1/2 of Jan. Sunday offerings. Provides opportunities for refugees, asylees, victims of human trafficking, survivors of torture, and other immigrants to thrive in the Sacramento-Yolo area. <https://www.rescue.org/united-states/sacramento-ca> Check UUCD; memo: Offering.

January 7, 9:30 & 11:15am, Dani Lindstrom; Lily Roberts, Worship Associate. What does it mean to live intentionally? How we live together with intentionality and how our covenant can guide us.

January 14, 9:30 & 11:15am, *Messages of Prophets and New Voices*, Rev. Beth Banks; Tamara Range, Worship Associate. On Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Sunday, our service includes the influence of his messages. We'll also consider contemporary voices emerging and responding to our time.

January 21, 9:30 & 11:15am, Rev. Morgan McLean; Elli Norris, Worship Associate. The Edict of Torda, signed by a Unitarian King, was an unprecedented act of religious tolerance. It was also a significant moment in Unitarian history. This service will celebrate our deep roots and the centuries of religious freedom built from that historic event.

January 28, 9:30 & 11:15am, John Ashby; Rev. Beth Banks Worship Associate. This year's Celebration of Abraham is "Making Space for Otherness" (attend after our service; save the date; details to come). In worship, we'll look at how each of us makes space for Otherness in our lives; how the resulting diversity can be a source of joy; how—when there is no joy—we may need to work even harder to make that space. *John Ashby is UUCD's liaison to The Celebration of Abraham. Begun in 2001, this interfaith group provides brief presentations from each Abrahamic faith, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. Those gathered then address focus questions with members of the Abrahamic faiths.*



Spiritual Practice: *From Soul Matters: What Does It Mean to be a People of Intention?*

What are some songs of hope for you? That's right. Get up. Pick a song you love. And do nothing but sing it or sing along with it. Songs have more power than we give them credit for. Don't underestimate the power of singing as opposed to just listening. When the words come out of your mouth, the music gets more deeply into your body and spirit, enabling the feeling to stay with you and "set the tone" for the entire day. Don't judge your voice—just sing.