

Unitarian Universalist Church of Davis (UUCD) Theme Journal – April–Emergence

For the last few weeks, I have been taking lots of photos of the beauty of Spring. I've witnessed an emergence of color and new life from almond blossoms, to Redbuds, to Witch's Butter fungus! It is an important reminder that, like the trees and the fungi, all living creatures need time for rest and below-the-surface rejuvenation before we can bloom into our full selves. I've found that humans are most often disconnected to the cycles of nature, thinking instead of linear personal growth which ends with death. Nature reminds us that we, too, need dormant periods and cycles for new growth. In these times we need to store energy, find new nutrients, and strengthen our roots. Then we can begin to bud and blossom, previewing our new ways of being, before emerging fully. Where are you on the cycle? Do you need some time? What's budding and blooming for you? It is a blessing to have a community like ours to explore these ideas and new life.

— Rev. Morgan McLean, Assistant Minister for Congregational Life



Public domain image: <https://pixabay.com/en/cocoon-butterfly-insect-animal-591558/>

Reflect **The Committee on Ministry** (Louise Bettner, Hiram Jackson, Liz King, Elli Norris, Lisa Oakes, Jeannette Robertson) invites you to make the theme part of your spiritual practice:

*Let mystery have its place in you; do not always be turning up your whole soil with the plowshare of self-examination,
but leave a little fallow corner in your heart ready for any seed the winds may bring,
and reserve a nook of shadow for the passing bird; keep a place in your heart for the unexpected guests,
an altar for an unknown God. —Henri-Frederic Ariel*

There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly. —Buckminster Fuller

It can be easy to get caught up in self-examination, self-criticism, the need for control in a chaotic world. When and where have you allowed yourself to let go, becoming open to that which is fresh and unimagined? Spring may be the perfect time to nurture emergence, and to watch the caterpillar in oneself transform into a butterfly.

In this Space

In this space, with atheists and theists,

With pagans and agnostics,

With humanists and theists, and those who reject labels,

What new understandings can emerge if we listen to one another?

In this space full of varied experiences, concerns, and hopes,

What new revelations may come if our hearts and minds are open?

In this space, where we covenant to seek the truth in love and to help one another,

What new ways of life may emerge and come into being?

Welcome to this diverse community—united in values and guided by love.

Alexis Engelbrecht (Soul Matters member)



I love this reading from *Soul Matters* because I think it encompasses much of what we've done as a community at UUCD this year. In September, Rev. Beth led a service in which everyone was invited to stand when their theology was named: Christian, Atheist, Theist, Mystic, and others. The hope was that we would see one another's theology and be reminded that there might be as many different theologies in the room as there are people. While a particular reading or prayer might not speak to everyone, we can hold in love those people that the reading or the prayer is speaking to. As Unitarian Universalists, we believe in the free and responsible search for truth and meaning; we believe this growth can emerge from our relationships with one another in this community if we listen to each other, if we come to the conversation with open hearts and minds, if we seek the truth in love and help one another.

This concept of diverse community is one that we have been expanding on greatly with our UU Campus Ministry students. The group consists of four returning students and six new students, one who briefly attended a UU church growing up. Each student has a different theology, a different view of religion, different hopes for the group, and different hopes for their future. Each week, we meet with the students and new ideas are brought forward, new ways to be inclusive, new ways to communicate with one another, new ideas on to make our community stronger. Each week new ideas emerge from our students: they are strengthening our group as a whole. Together, we created a welcome statement to put on our signs and flyers around campus: "Join us for a free home cooked vegetarian dinner, and reflective and authentic conversation in an intentional environment. All are welcome and embraced." To hear more about what has emerged for our UU Campus students over the past year, please join us as we lead worship on April 15.

– Danielle Lindstrom, Intern & Campus Minister

Sunday Worship

Share the Plate, April: Bee Haven, UC Davis receives 1/2 of Sunday offerings. Check UUCD; memo: Offering. Social service is an important part of the Religious Exploration program. Each year the children and youth choose an organization to support through education and service. Their work, and the organization they choose, is supported by the entire congregation through this collection. <https://beegarden.ucdavis.edu/>



Save the Date: May 6, 12:30pm, All-Church Picnic at the Bee Haven (after Flower Communion). Bring a lunch; bike (2 miles) or carpool if you can. We'll have a ceremony to present them with our donation.

April 1, 9:30 & 11:15am, Easter: Arise, Shine! Rev. Beth Banks, Rev. Morgan McLean, Dani Lindstrom. Easter's message is about the transformation that happens in life, from relationships to nature. Our service will have many expressions of the natural emergence of new life, and ways we can participate in its unfolding.

Easter Egg Hunt 10:30 am, Sanctuary. Bring your basket & follow the bunny! Optional "Under 3/Sugar Free" zone.

April 8, 9:30 & 11:15am, That Which Colors the Mind, Matthew Grasso & Rev. Beth Banks. Immerse yourself in the spiritual experience of ragas (a feature of Indian music) through learning, listening, chanting.. *Matthew Grasso is on faculty at Sac City College, American River College, CA College of the Arts, and teaches privately. He's designed courses in North Indian and western music.* www.scc.losrios.edu/music/faculty-and-staff/matthew-grasso/

April 15, 9:30 & 11:15am, UU Campus Community Students & Dani Lindstrom, Campus Minister.

April 22, 9:30 & 11:15am, "And the Questions Are . . ." **Bring a Friend Sunday.** Rainer Maria Rilke advised a young poet to "Live the questions . . . into the answers." Revs. Beth Banks & Morgan McLean offer their perspectives on questions we hear from new and longtime UUs. Our music celebrates Earth Day.

April 29, 9:30 & 11:15am, Rabbi Seth Castleman; Autumn Labbé-Renault, Worship Associate. Juuliebells perform. We welcome Rabbi Seth, a dynamic storyteller and speaker whose faith journey incorporates Judaism and Buddhism. He received Yolo County's The Multicultural Community Council award for promoting multi-cultural dialogue in our community programs, justice system, and public safety. He offers Mindfulness Meditation at Bet Haverim, Davis.

Listen

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

Spiritual Practice: Notice Your No's & Let Some Yes's Loose! from Soul Matters

We say “no” more often than we are know. We come up with reasons: Not enough time. Too risky. One has to pick and choose . . . “No” narrows our sight. This month, say, “YES,” with Patricia Ryan Madson’s, spiritual discipline: “Say yes to everything. Accept all offers. Cultivate all the ways you can imagine to express affirmation. When the answer to all questions is yes, you enter a new world of action, possibility, and adventure. It is an exaggeration to suggest that we can say yes to everything, but we can say yes to more than we normally do. Once you become aware, you see how often we block personal relationships out of habit.”

Try it for 2-3 days and see how it goes. Print these words on a card and place it where you will see throughout the day: Go along with the plan. Support someone else's dream. Say: ‘right’; ‘sure’; ‘I will’; ‘okay’; ‘of course’; ‘yes, and’ (instead of yes, but) and ‘YES!’

What kind of Yes:No ratio do you experience? How do your Yes's and No's impact those around you? Who taught you that Yes's are risky and No's are safe? Who desperately needs your Yes, but you've been too busy to notice?

Learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nmafmr1eet0>



Say YES to Worship Associates!

Throughout April, we're accepting applications for those who would like to be UUCD Worship Associates. There are some good reasons to answer yes, to this opportunity.

Taking on another commitment in my hyper-busy life might have seemed at odds with a new emphasis on self-care, but saying 'Yes' to being a Worship Associate was a great move. I've loved every minute of the challenges, growth, and camaraderie; the intentionality of time for study and writing; the opportunities to delve deeper into faith, theology, and creativity, and the overall deepening of my connection to this church and its people. —Autumn Labbé-Renault

What are the qualities we look for in a team of Worship Associates?

Curiosity. Associates benefit if they're curious about an array of ideas and are willing to consider others' perspectives.

In support of our UUCD community, being a Worship Associate challenged me to take deep dives below surface knowledge and experiences, shape-shifting hidden prejudices and perceptions into greater compassionate awareness and belonging. —Kirk Ridgeway

Balanced Representation. We look for a balance of theological perspectives among the applicants as well as diversity of age, sexual and gender orientation, race, class perspective, and length of membership. With the support of clergy and other members of the team, each Associate engages with new topics, or writes about some aspect of themselves for the Sunday they have chosen.

Creating Belonging. Associates often find that their relationship to the congregation deepens, so we look for people who want to be in relationship with our members and friends. The Associates offer their service, and receive so much more.

I've received a profound connection to our church family and I truly feel like I'm cared for and supported... Not only myself but my whole family. —Tamara Range

Loves Learning. Every year, our trainings offer writing instruction from a UDC Davis instructor, explore emerging worship design theory, and engage with music, concepts of prayer & meditation, and spiritual practice.

Being a Worship Associate gives me a feeling of making a contribution to the church community—and being a part of it—in a special way. I am challenged to express my thoughts and feelings in a way that speaks to my listeners. Working with Beth and Morgan and Dani, is a gift. I've learned much from them about how the worship service is created. —Elli Norris

It's important that Associates enjoy working as a part of a team.

If you would like to be a part of the Worship Associate team, please complete an application (available from office@uudavis.org or at <https://tinyurl.com/UUCD-WA1819>). Answering the questions, gives you a taste of the experience, and offers information about what you hope to gain from the experience. Return completed application by April 1. Return to RevBanks@uudavis.org