

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF THE GRAND VALLEY NEWSLETTER

December 2023

FROM OUR MINISTER, REVEREND WENDY JONES

"Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of nature, and that is because, in the last analysis, we ourselves are a part of the mystery that we are trying to solve."

Max Planck

I love the concept of mystery!

When people ask me what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, many times I'll say "well, on any given Sunday morning I'll throw out many questions, but I don't usually have very many answers."

Our 4th UU principle honoring the "free and responsible search for truth and meaning," by its nature embraces the concept of mystery. In my experience, Unitarian Universalists in general are comfortable existing within a realm of mystery.

However, we (UU's) also tend to be a tad bit suspicious when we are around people who claim to "know the truth" or have all the answers. For the most part, though, we are fairly comfortable and even enjoy contemplating the questions.

As science, through quantum physics, medical breakthroughs and increasingly elaborate space telescopes reveal more and more of the true expanse of universe, life becomes more mysterious, not less.

>>> continued on page 2

We are an affiliated congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Mountain Desert District



We are a welcoming congregation

We are Vitally
Inclusive.
Justice-Centered
and Spiritually
Alive.



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How large is it really? What all is out there? How do we understand our place/role in the world as we acknowledge that we are not and never have been the center of the universe while being an integral and vital part of it?

My guess, is that Earth isn't the only planet that houses living beings with consciousness. That's fascinating to me, and I am excited for some of those mysteries to be revealed, hopefully in my lifetime.

In my mind, there is a beauty in the mystery. There is a sense of peace in knowing that we don't have it all figured out, nor should we.

What would it like be like if we immediately had the answer to every question we asked? Where would the reflection be, or the deep contemplation, or the invitation to connect with something larger than our minds can comprehend?

One of the mysteries that I find fascinating and love to contemplate is the concept that as large as the universe is, we can go the other way with it also being infinitely smaller and smaller. The continuum of size is infinite in both directions. To me that is absolutely mind boggling.

Something might be said for having all the answers, but I much prefer to live within mystery of the questions.

JOANNA WERNETTE, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Greetings, music lovers!!

Some exciting musical happenings to look forward to this coming month! On December 17th, we'll have our all ages service with some joy-filled world music featuring our wonderful UUCGV Youth Music and UUCGV Choir. We will also be having a music fundraising BAKE SALE that Sunday following the service please mark your calendars!

The following week, is Christmas Eve, and we'll be sharing the fun stories behind some of our most beloved holiday songs together during our morning service. Our Christmas Eve service will feature the UUCGV Choir and some wonderful new music anthems to look forward to!

Since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, we'll be hosting a fun, casual Holiday Cabaret on Friday, December 22 at 7 pm - come sing/play a favorite holiday classic, share a beloved poem, or tell some jokes, and come enjoy a wonderful evening of music making, sing-a-longs, and hopefully cocktails! Stay tuned for more details to come.

We'll be having another all-ages karaoke night during UU night on Wednesday, December 6 from 5:30-6:30 (youth music will still meet from 6-6:30, so kids should plan to sing first!) followed by another 'music reading 101/group voice class' upstairs in the sanctuary from 6:45-7:30.

Hope to see you there!



A SPACE FOR PEACE (A)



We invite you to express messages of peace with chalk on this parking space for peace at 536 Ouray Ave., Grand Junction.

We invite whoever would like to join this campaign to create their own space for peace at their home, place of business or faith community. Take pics often and share #aspaceforpeace



UUCGV Green Team

UPCOMING MEETING: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7 @ 7 P.M. VIA ZOOM



ALL ARE WELCOME!



In living into our 7th Principle, the mission of the Green Team is to guide ourselves, our congregation & our community into a deeper awareness, understanding, and commitment to preserve and protect the "interdependent web of all existence" of which we are part.

The Green Team meets monthly to exchange ideas and provide tips for leaving a smaller footprint. If you're interested in learning more about or joining our group email grandvalleyuu.org.

WE SHELTER

Once again, UUCGV is honored to participate in the winter emergency shelter program sponsored through Grand Valley Peace & Justice (otherwise known as WE Shelter.)

This year we will be opening our building from December 31st through January 13th. This is an amazing opportunity to step out of our comfort zones, get to know our unhoused community and offer your valuable time.

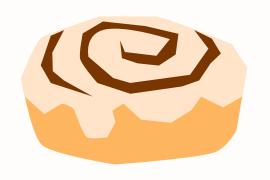
We will need people to spend the night, help prepare breakfast & dinner. If you are willing to provide, food, money or your time **reach out Tom Acker or Rev. Wendy Jones**. Contact information can be found in the UUCGV directory or call the office at 970-257-0772. We will have sign-up sheets on Sundays after church.

This program is literally saving lives as it provides and opportunity for our unhoused neighbors to be safe & warm during the coldest winter months.

THE LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

Join us for an evening of reflection, acknowledging the darkness, and embracing the light. We will have an indoor service at 7:00 p.m. on December 21, followed by a parking lot bonfire with a release ritual and s'mores.





CINNAMON ROLLS, SONGS & STORIES

Don't miss this fun, informal Christmas Eve morning. We will enjoy cinnamon rolls (and other treats) while we sing and learn about the stories behind some of our favorite carols.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDELIGHT SERVICE

The Carol of the Stranger

In this more traditional evening service, we'll explore how the Christmas story tells us what it means to welcome a stranger.



SUBMIT YOUR FAVORITE UUCGV PHOTOS!!



"GREEN" FINANCIAL INVESTING - JOEL PRUDHOMME, GREEN TEAM MEMBER

Our UU seventh principle has environmentalism at its heart and our UUCGV Green Team is offering information to help our congregants live that principle.

We all make choices everyday with our money--- whether making consumer purchases, giving it away to others or investing for our futures. Focusing on the last choice, how do we invest our money to support a better environment i.e. to be "greener"?

We need to know what businesses and individuals are employing good "green" practices. These practices might involve low pollution releases/ better waste management / recycling, employing renewable energy sources or using greener business suppliers in their operations. Unfortunately, the information needed in these areas is often not readily apparent to us citizens. So, in recent history, nomenclature was developed to categorize major corporations/stocks/mutual funds/bonds by their Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) or Environmental Social & Governance (ESG) or Social & Environmental Responsibility (SER) reputations. The social and governance matters in these classifications include criteria such as human rights, social justice, non-profit organization donations etc.

It is often difficult to separate the social and governance ratings from the environmental ones but a good resource for identifying national corporations' "greenness" is the Invest Your Values section in the As You Sow (asyousow.org) website. This is a non-profit educational entity offering information/ratings on investing via categories such as fossil-free or deforestation-free funds. Another good source is "The Better World Shopping Guide" published by New Society Publishers. This guide rates major consumer corporations on their ESG and often makes specific comments on the environmental practices of many of those. [The Better World Guide is a consumer purchasing guide as well ---rating products in 74 different categories]. Good Money Inc. has a website that is also very helpful in identifying "greener" investment opportunities, as well.

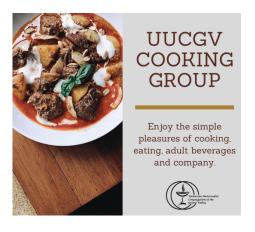
Traditional business publications like U.S. News and World Report, Business Week and others will periodically relate articles about environmental successes by major corporations. Other entities like Morningstar.com report financial returns of corporate stock mutual funds/ bonds of ESG entities. Once again, the environmental record of a business reported may be lumped in with those social and governance issues. Investopedia is also a web-oriented investments source that makes suggestions for green investments in various sectors like agriculture, transportation, energy etc.

Interestingly, Wall Street, state legislatures and many financial advisors have often railed against ESG investments because the returns from interest, dividends or stock sales were not as big as those from fossil-fuel or heavy industry corporations. However, with climate change, new consumer habits and recent governmental regulations many "green" investments are outperforming the old-school companies. Morningstar recently showed that the top five ESG mutual funds had returns of 65% to 114% over the last five years.

Often, smaller local businesses like energy-efficient home builders, family farms, cooperatives etc. have more "green" characteristics than major corporations. Their environmental practices can be more evident, and they are often looking for loans, partners and common stock purchasers. Obviously, more risk and private investigation needs to be done by a UU congregant looking for green investments with these smaller local businesses.

It is obvious that a UU congregant can invest in themselves i.e., start their own "green" business ---whether it is an organic farm or becoming a consultant on renewable energy. Obviously, someone should have some business background, develop an extensive written business plan and get as much advice as possible before this kind of "green" investment. Our local Business Incubator Center and the federal government Small Business Administration (SBA) offer much help to entrepreneurs.

Many UUs have a financial advisor or stockbroker to help pick a national corporate stock/bond/mutual fund investment. There are also on-line brokerages (like E-TRADE, Charles Schwab, TD Ameritrade, Fidelity) for self-directed "green" investing via the internet. We all know that many businesses are "greenwashing" their bad products and policies so be sure to use trusted third-party sources before throwing your green money into "green" investing.



UUCGV COOKING GROUP

A monthly gathering for adults to experience the joys of cooking together, sharing meals, exploring new cuisines and styles, sampling adult beverages, and having no other agenda. We meet on the third Thursday of each month.

Contact Mark McKenney | mckenneyd@qwetst.net | (970) 256-7907

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 21 at 6:00 p.m.

CARE FOR CAREGIVERS

Come share with this confidential discussion group the joys and struggles of caring for a loved one.

We meet every other Thursday @ 11 a.m. at UUCGV

Next Meetings: December 7th & December 21





AGING GRACIOUSLY

Open to everyone of all ages! The discussion will be lead by Rev. Wendy. Held on the fourth Thursday of the Month.

No Meeting In December: Next Meeting January 25, 2024

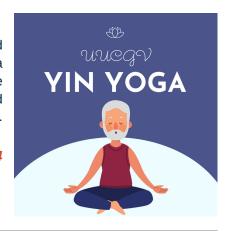
Go to grandvalleyuu.org/aging-graciously for the Zoom link.

YIN YOGA WITH MIRIAM DEMING

Yin yoga is a quiet, contemplative practice for all ages of adults. It uses longer held seated poses and gravity to target the deep connective tissues of the body. This is a contrast to the more dynamic yang yoga practices, such as Vinyasa, which target the muscles. The benefits of yin include increased calm, flexibility and energy, reduced stress, improved sleep, fosters self-love, self-discovery, and releases stored emotions.

No Yin Yoga in December - Classes will resume January 18, 2024

Drop In Class - \$8/class | 5 Class Punch Pass - \$25



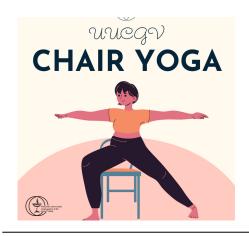


BLACK CANYON DISCUSSION GROUP

1st Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. in the Cedaredge area.

Topic: What are you doing individually to deal with limited world resources as we have an increasing world population?

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 6 Ouestions? Call 970-856-4226



CHAIR YOGA

Are you interested in the benefits of practicing yoga?

Perfect for people who are new to yoga or who have mobility issues. For questions contact Maya at programs@grandvalleyuu.org

Mondays 3:00 p.m. @ UUCGV (Please arrive around 2:45 to get settled in)
Drop In Class - \$8/class | 5 Class Punch Pass - \$25

No Chair Yoga 12/25/23 or 1/1/24

100% of the class fees go to support church programming. We also have a pay-it-forward jar, so if the class fee is unavailable to you, you are still encouraged to join us!

SOUP KITCHEN SATURDAY

Soup Kitchen Saturday is the **second Saturday of every month** at Catholic Outreach, located at the south end of 1st Street between Pitkin and Ute Avenues. A group of folks join to create, cook, serve & clean up a delicious meal for our neighbors.

Saturday, December 9 @ 8:30 a.m.

Please contact Chris Jauhola (chrisjauhola@aol.com | 703-216- 6479) for more information and to let us know that you plan to volunteer.





PEACEFUL MEDITATION

Join us at the church for 20-30 minutes of silent meditation for healing our world.

Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

No Meditation December 27th, UUCGV Offices Closed.

DINNER IN OUR HOMES - CIRCLE SUPPERS

Social dinner groups, involving around 8 people, who get together 3-4 times in their homes or at church for a casual dinner. This is a great way to get to know other people in the congregation in an informal, small group.

Current Circles are Full. Accepting more people for February 2024 Groups.

Please contact Debbie Buchele (debbiebuchele1517@gmail.com) for more information.





PICK YOUR SUNDAY GREETER DAY!

As scary as it might sound, volunteering a day or two a year to welcome congregants and visitors to Sunday Worship can be a rewarding and relaxing experience.

Greeters help hand out hymnals and order of service pamphlets. They direct guests to sign the guest book, count how many are in attendance, pass around the offertory baskets, and collect and count the money received before turning it in at the Administrator's Office.

If everyone picked a day or two we'd have the year covered!

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FROM DIR. OF PROGRAMMING & COMMUNITY OUTREACH - MAYA KRAUSHAAR

My grandfather shared with me the gift of wonder for nature and awe of the magical power contained within a seed. The connection I now have with plants undoubtedly took root though time spent with him in his incredible garden when I was young.

Still with the same sense of awe, he wrote to me years later,

"Make sure that you take time to marvel at the miracle of growth. It still amazes me that a minute seed can produce such magnificent plants. You are just the facilitator - the rest is up to nature."

This sense of wonder is the magic that makes life rich. It's in *not* having all of the answers which allows us to feel amazement and humility.

This month in our children's programming we are going to take a look at *how* we choose to perceive anything and everything can transform it from mundane to miraculous.

Last month we dove into practices to deepen our feelings of appreciation and made the connection that gratitude and generosity are fundamentally interconnected. We can now take it a step further, making yet another connection - we can also feel gratitude for the things we don't understand, for the mystery of it all.

Join us this month as we practice recognizing the mystery behind the ordinary and seek truth within the miracles.

Independent Documentary Film Series

The Independent DocuFilm Screening Series, co-hosted by Junktown Cinema Club and UUCGV, is intended to serve as a platform to shed light on topics related to humanitarianism, environmentalism, and social justice with the idea that by meeting with the film creator/s after the showing, we equip the community with the information and tools to take steps of action inspired by the film.

The film series will resume in January with one film screening each month. Go to www.grandvalleyuu.org/films for info on past and future features.

Ghildren's Religious Education Schedule

December 2023



The Gift of Mystery

December 3

The Mystery of Our Amazing World

We are going to explore mystery as a way to remind ourselves how lucky we are to live in such an awe-inspiring world!

December 10

Noticing Mystery in the Ordinary

We will use the idea of a magic wand to highlight how mindfulness can change the ordinary into a mysterious miracle.

December 17

All Ages Service Joy Throughout the World

Enjoy beautiful musical representations of diversity & joy from around the world.

December 24

All Ages Christmas Eve Service

Christmas history through songs, stories, cinnamon roles & Christmas carols.

December 31

All Ages Service Time Capsule Service

A fun annual tradition revealing last year's predictions and making new guesses of what 2024 has in store for us.

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS





November 19th
The Gift of Connection



November 12th - The Gift of Gratitude



October 28th - A Haunted Auction Children's Party





Jewelry Swap - November 11th



Sound Healing Gong Bath - November 2nd













Downtown GJ & GJ Parks and Rec

Holiday Happenings Around Town

Saturday, December 2@5:00

Parade of Lights - Downtown Grand Junction

Friday, December 8 @ 5:30

Spirit of Christmas Walk Friday, December 8 - Enstrom's Chocolate Walk. More info at 970-254-3864

Wednesday, December 6 @ 5:15

Holiday Light Tour 50+ @ Lincoln Park Barn. Contact City of GJ for more info. 970-254-3866

Saturday, December 9 @ 10 a.m.

Candy Cane Hunt @ Lincoln Park Barn

Homeless Winter Immersion Experience

Have you wondered what being houseless might be like?

First Christian Church, 1326 N. 1st Street is hosting an immersion experience on **Friday, December 1** starting at 5:00 p.m. This event serves as a fundraiser for United Way's "United to Solve Homelessness Fund". The event will provide a greater understanding about what life is like for our unhoused neighbors in our community. Gather to share food, listen to speakers on topics like surviving winters, poverty and other challenges living outside brings.

Attendees will then camp on the Church lawn. For more information contact First Christian Church at 970-778-5473. Register at gjdisciples.org/events. You may also sponsor someone to camp to help raise more donations.

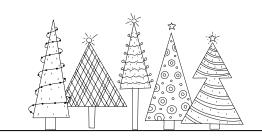
Winter Solstice Blessing

May the longest night and the shortest day bring rest to your mind and soul, I pray.

May you find guidance and may you find peace as the circle of light will slowly increase.

Embrace the magic that the darkness bears breath deep in the chill and shift in the air.

May you always be blessed with the light from within and may well-being be yours as a new cycle begins.





Each month we collect change (coins) from the offertory baskets and donate the funds to a local charity. On average, this effort usually brings about \$100/month.

The change collected during November went to The Gift of Love. They provide individualized care packages for people in need.

Change collected during the month of December will go to support the UUCGV's participation in the WE Shelter Program that we are hosting December 31 through January 13.



If you have a local charity that you would like to suggest be a Change for Change recipient, please send the organization's details to administrator@grandvalleyuu.org.





COMMUNITY. CONNECTION. CONVERSATION.

Wednesdays @ 5:30 p.m.

December Themes

12/6 - Charcuterie Bits

12/13 - Homemade Happiness

12/20 - Comfort and Joy

12/27 - No UU Night No Youth Music (Happy Holidays)

Happy New Year!

UU Night Schedule

December 13th & 20th

5:30 - 6:30 - Pot-Luck Dinner

6:00 Youth Music (downstairs)

6:45 UUCGV Choir Rehearsal

December 6th

5:30-6:30 Pot-Luck & Karaoke/Open Mic

6:00 Youth Music

6:45-7:30 Music Reading 101 & Group Singing Lessons

POT LUCK

*childcare is available through choir rehearsal

CHOIR REHEARSAL

YOUTH MUSIC

Let's connect and grow our community

SOULFULSUNDAYS

UPCOMING SUNDAY SERVICES

Please join us virtually or in-person at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday Zoom link at: grandvalleyuu.org

View the Order of Service & Music at grandvalleyuu.org/sunday-services

children's programming and childcare provided

December 3

Deep Time, Deep Space, Our Space

Guest Speaker: Bill Conrod

December 10

Realms of Mystery Rev. Wendy Jones

December 17

Joy Throughout the World All Ages Service

December 21

Longest Night Service - 7 p.m.

December 24

10:30 a.m.
History of the Christmas
Songs & Stories
All Ages Service

7:00 p.m. Carol of the Stranger

December 31

Time Capsule Service
All Ages Service

LIVING INTO LEADERSHIP

Board

President — Richard Hyland
Vice President—Angie Ecker
Past President — Laurel Carpenter
Treasurer — Kitty Tattersall
At-Large — Elizabeth High & Dave Collins

<u>Leadership Development Team (LDT)</u>

Wendy Metzger & Debbie Buchele

UUCGV BOARD

The Board's primary responsibility is to carry out the UUCGV mission through wise governance of the physical, financial, administrative program, and operational resources of the Congregation.

Below are the highlights from the last Board meeting. Our UUCGV Board will meet again on **Thursday, December 14 , 2023 at 4:30 pm**. We welcome and seek direct dialogue with members and friends of our congregation.

If you would like to discuss a matter at the Board meeting, please contact Board President Richard Highland at 281-467-4779.

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- WE Shelter may need to utilize the UUCGV again to host the program.
- Discussion of various fundraisers organized by the UUCGV and their effectiveness and whether or not the congregation is becoming tired of the same events.
- Draft of the Code of Conduct was discussed and presented. Closer to a finalized document.
- Mutual Aid Partners distro day may be moving locations in December with the new City Resource Pavilion.

Team Leadership Circle (TLC)

Worship — Catherine Black-Ward
Religious Education (RE) — Maya Kraushaar
Green Team — Ann (Angeline) Barrett
Social Action — Tom Acker
Membership — Debbie Buchele
Property Team — Maggie Eagleton &
Barb Preston

UUCGV TLC

Team Leadership Circle, TLC, maintains the Programs of the church and the church calendar which live into the Mission, Vision, and Principles of UUCGV.

TLC communicates with the board about the day-to-day operations of the church and provides support to the teams if they need it.

TLC meets the **second Thursday** of the month at 3:30pm. Typically directly before the Board Meeting

Email <u>tlc@grandvalleyuu.org</u> for questions and comments.

TLC MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Sound Gong Bath was a success. Approx. 40 people in attendance. Looking into hosting another one.
- Cloud Appreciation event raised \$700 to donate to CMU's Environmental Sciences Scholarship Program.
- Auction was less attended this year.
 Discussion on changing event or being more considerate of the date in the future.
- Circle Suppers have started. 15 participants so far.
- Temp Housing Resource Building to open mid-December. MAP will likely move Tuesday's Distro there.
- WE Shelter is a go. UUCGV will host 12/31/23-1/14/24. Lots of leaders and vols needed.

Devember 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
3 10:30 Worship 10:30 Children's RE 11:30 Blood Pressure Checks	4 3:00 Chair Yoga	5 10:00 GJ Mutual Aid	6 10:30 Meditation 11:00 Care Team 4:30 Choir Rehearsal 5:30 Black Canyon Discussion Group 5:30 UU Night! 5:30 Karaoke 6:00 Youth Music 6:45 Music Reading	7 11:00 Caregiver Support Group 7:00 Green Team (zoom)	1 1:00 Women's Self Defense 8 1:00 Women's Self Defense	9 8:30 Soup Kitchen Saturday
10:30 Worship Service 10:30 Children's RE	11 12:00 Finance 3:00 Chair Yoga	12 10:00 GJ Mutual Aid	13 10:30 Meditation 4:00 Nonviolence Study & Action Group 5:30 UU Night! 6:00 Youth Music 6:45 Choir Rehearsal	14 3:30 TLC 4:30 Board	15 1:00 Women's Self Defense	16
17 10:30 All Ages Service 11:30 Choir Bake Sale	18 3:00 Chair Yoga	19 10:00 GJ Mutual Aid	20 10:30 Meditation 4:30 Choir Rehearsal 5:30 UU Night! 6:00 Youth Music 6:45 Choir Rehearsal	21 11:00 Caregiver Support Group 6:00 UUCGV Cooking Group 7:00 Longest Night Service	1:00 Women's Self Defense 7:00 Holiday Cabaret	23
24 CHIRSTMAS EVE 10:30 All Ages 7:00 Christmas Eve Service	25	26 10:00 GJ Mutual Aid	27 Slosed For Ho	oliday	29 1:00 Women's Self Defense	30
31 New Year's Eve 10:30 All Ages Time Capsule	1	2 • W	³ /E Shelter	4	5	6

Please Remember that all meetings & events MUST be scheduled through the administrator 970-257-0772 or administrator@grandvalleyuu.org.

Unitarian Universalists Congregation of the Grand Valley

P.O. Box 1053 Grand Junction, CO 81502



"Vitally Inclusive Justice-Centered Spiritually Alive"

Minister: Rev. Wendy Jones 257-0772 x2 or minister@grandvalleyuu.org

Director of Music: Joanna Wernette music@grandvalleyuu.org

Dir. Of Programming & Community Outreach: Maya Kraushaar programs@grandvalleyuu.org

Church Administrator: Valerie Stow 257-0772 x1 or administrator@grandvalleyuu.org

Facilities Coordinator: Trent Nakagawa facilities@grandvalleyuu.org

Office Hours:

Tuesdays through Thursdays: 10:30 am - 2:30 pm 536 Ouray Ave, Grand Junction, CO 81501

www.grandvalleyuu.org

Find us on Facebook and Instagram:

@grandvalleyuu

THE SHROUD OF
MYSTERY ADDS TO
THE MAGIC OF
PURSUIT.

~ANONYMOUS

We meet via Zoom and in-person on Sundays at 10:30 am for Worship