

the Mountain Chalice

Unitarian Universalist Community of the Mountains



February 2026

UPCOMING SERVICES

Our Sunday Services are at 9:00 AM Onsite ONLY, and 11:00 AM Onsite and Zoom and Kids' Connection.

If you've been exposed to Covid, RSV, the flu, or are just not feeling well, please attend online.

TO JOIN THE ZOOM SERVICE AT 11:00 AM ON SUNDAYS:

Online via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/746107217>

Meeting ID: 746 107 217 # • Passcode: 688010

Audio by phone: Dial in: 1 669 900 6833 or 1 408 638 0968

Meeting ID: 746 107 217 # • Passcode: 688010

... See Page 11 for Kid-Centered Activities ...

FEBRUARY THEME: EMBODYING RESILIENCE

February 1 Embodying Resilience. Again.

Daryl Grigsby, with Worship Associate Cheryl Morris

We welcome back guest Daryl Grigsby, local author, community activist, and board member of Color Me Human and Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital. Daryl will launch our theme of Embodying Resilience by pointing out that we've been here before, and that we are still.

February 8 Becoming a People of Place

The Nisenan Team, with Rev. Kevin and guests, and Worship Associate Carol Nimick

As UUCM prepares to move to a new home, our annual Nisenan-focused service invites this community to approach this new chapter, new land, new place, and new stewardship with deep respect, humility, commitment, and thoughtfulness.

February 15 Fierce Compassion

Rev. Kevin Tarsa, the UUCM Choir, and Worship Associate Marlene Bottenfield

Kristin Neff advocates Fierce Compassion: balancing tender self-kindness (yin) with assertive strength (yang). We'll draw on Neff's insights to help us cultivate our resilience for the sake of our personal lives and for the sake of the world we seek. Plus, the UUCM choir will sing, under the direction of Ingrid Holman.

February 22 Truly Mutual Aid: Resilience in Place

Rev. Kevin and guests, with Worship Associate Beth Karow

Mutual aid is about communities organizing themselves to provide direct, compassionate support (food, housing, skills, care) to meet immediate needs, built on solidarity, cooperation, and trust, rather than charity or hierarchy. It is also about empowering people to create lasting change through shared resources and collective action. Talk about investing in resilience!

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From the Minister

Rev. Kevin Tarsa
UUCM Minister

Editors' Note:

Rev. Kevin was called to Minneapolis the last week of January to provide clergy support there. This week he is in Albuquerque attending a UU ministers conference. He will return to the pulpit on February 15.]

Since he did not have time to submit a column for this month's Mountain Chalice, here are a few excerpts from a note he emailed to our community Tuesday, January 27:

At last, a more substantial check-in with you after my time and experience in Minneapolis, given that I was off last Sunday and next, and won't preach again until February 15. I had intended to make at least a between-service appearance on Sunday, but was in need of rest and time to prepare for another trip.

THE CELEBRATION OF JOEL HOUTMAN'S LIFE

Thank you to all who picked up the threads to support the Celebration of Life for Joel Houtman. Carol Richey accepted my invitation to a lead role and brought her leadership skills to thinking through and preparing for multiple possibilities. Gwen led the organization of hospitality and many of the logistical considerations that surround such an event. Paul Elias and Andy Dooley Miller, with substantial prep from Siobhan covered the audio-visual needs. Kate Canan offered beautiful music, with Kathryn's song leading, and Shanti created not only a beautiful altar but also a meaningful bulletin board to celebrate Joel. Thank you, all!



The above photo is from Joel's Celebration of Life on Saturday, January 24. Many of his fellow Men's Group friends wore some of his favorite t-shirts in honor of his wit and humor.

WHERE I AM THIS WEEK

FYI This week I am in Albuquerque, but for much happier reasons. Every three years, the UU Ministers Association holds an Institute for the Learning Ministry. It's a chance for meaningful continuing education for us ministers. I've been serving in a small role on the planning team (attending to the quality of our collegiality, the way we are with each other as colleagues), playing piano in one of the daily services, and taking an in-depth preaching course. Our theme this time is "Praxis (meaning practice), Faith, and the Future"

As you can imagine, what's happening in the nation makes our being together, our learning together, our processing together, and the importance of our ministries and communities in these times, our gathering all the more significant. As we say often on Sundays, "It is GOOD to be TOGETHER!"

I return late Friday, and plan to be present on Sunday morning as Daryl Grigsby speaks, though I will not have a role in the service.

Editor's Note:

Rev. Kevin went on to describe some of his thoughts and experiences he had while in Minneapolis... if you have not read it yet, I highly recommend that you do.

His email came on Tuesday, January 27..

MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS



Rev. Kevin's office hours are usually held Tuesday through Thursday afternoons.

Email Admin@uugrassvalley.org or call the office at (530) 274-1675 to schedule an appointment



Board of Trustees

*Carol Richey, President,
UUCM Board of Trustees
President@uugrassvalley.org*

I feel the need to acknowledge the situation in our country as I write about the state of governance affairs in our beloved community. While peacefully protesting unlawful federal law enforcement tactics used in taking immigrants into custody, two citizens in Minneapolis have lost their lives at the hands of violent federal officers. And the violent actions of the officers are being commended by the Trump administration.

As Rev. Kevin returns from Minneapolis after providing clergy support to a community in chaos, I can do little but think about how to respond when our UU values are being challenged so blatantly. What shocks me the most is that a recent New York Times poll shows that 80% of Republicans believe the tactics being used to deport immigrants are about right or have not gone far enough. When combined with Independents and Democrats, almost 40% of registered voters agree with or want more forceful tactics used to deport immigrants. I'm guessing we all know people in that 40%. Now is the time to speak openly of our values and live them proudly. Now is the time to hold our community close. We need each other more than ever and we need to welcome all who need to be held. Pause here for some slow, deep breaths.

When I discipline myself to focus on the work of UUCM rather than the state of our federal government, I am very excited about our upcoming move to the Squirrel Creek property. The month of January has been filled with planning and organizing preparation of the property and assembling team leaders to oversee the many decisions and tasks needed to move forward. Currently, we are planning to move into our new building during the first week of June and hold the first service on June 7. The last service at the South Church Street location will be May 31.

Ideas for meaningful ways to hold rituals around this transition are germinating now.

The Board has formed a new committee that succeeds the Facilities Exploration Committee, called Facilities Preparation

Committee or FPC. Working with Treasurer Gail Schulz, the FPC will allocate funds from the Capital Campaign to necessary preparation and moving costs. The first project, currently underway, is replacing the roof on the building addition (not the tile roof on the sanctuary). This is required by the CA Fair Plan to secure the insurance needed for replacement cost coverage. It's a \$100,000 project being performed by Home Hardening Solutions. We did not plan for such a large expense this early so funds are tight for the first year.



In addition to the Mountain Chalice, we will communicate separately to share plans and begin recruiting people for specific tasks. There will be something for everyone as we make Squirrel Creek church our new home and create an environment where everyone can feel safe, welcomed, and loved.

In service,

- Carol

UUCM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

JULY 2025 - JUNE 2026

Carol Richey

President

Jeff Gold

Vice President

Gail Schulz

Treasurer

Lin Jovanovic

Secretary

Members at Large:

Charlene Dugan, Gwen Eymann, and Mark Grove

Board meetings are open to all members and friends starting at 1:30 PM on the third Wednesday of each month.

If you wish to address the board, please give at least two days notice so the agenda timing can be adjusted.



Words from the Worship Team

Cheryl Morris and Carol Nimick
Worship Team Co-Leaders
Worship@uugrassvalley.org



The January theme of Resistance proved to be a challenging and stimulating one for many, as reflected in comments about the services, posts on UUCMConnect, and our own reactions as members of the Worship Team. We feel we are doing our job effectively when we get people talking and get ourselves stirred up as well. We hope moving into the topic of Embodying Resilience in February will prove equally fruitful.

These are times in which we are all digging deep in so many ways. Meanwhile, the clock is ticking toward our move to our new church home. This will provide its own set of challenges and opportunities, and as always, we want to hear what you are feeling and what you are hoping for. We are looking forward to all being back together on Sunday morning, but with space and breathing room and the fresh creativity that comes with a new physical place.

Now let's explore Resilience!

- Cheryl & Carol



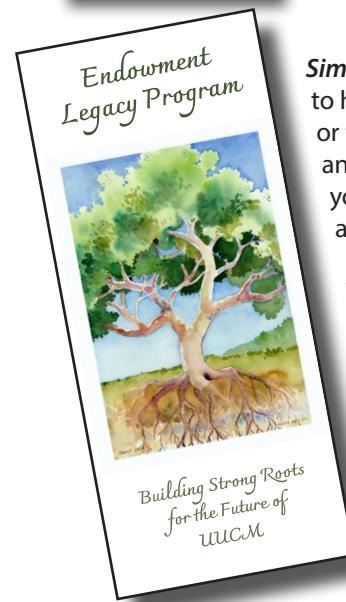
Upcoming Soul Matters Themes

February:	Embodying Resilience
March:	Paying Attention
April:	Embracing Possibility
May:	Awakening Curiosity
June:	Flourishing Together



Endowment

Kathryn Young
Endowment Committee
Endowment@uugrassvalley.org



Simple Gifts are always a great way to honor special events in your life, or the passing of friends, family, and fellow UUCM-ers, or anything you feel like acknowledging with a special contribution.

We would love to talk with you about other kinds of Endowment Gifts, too. We have brochures and packets to give you more details on **Legacy Gifts**...please let us know if you would like one.

Monthly Evening Service



JOIN US FOR AN EVENING CONTEMPLATIVE SERVICE
FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH, 7:00 TO 8:00 PM
GENTLE MUSIC BEGINS AT 6:30 PM

This month's service: **Monday, February 2, 2026 at 7:00 PM**

It's a simple but moving service. We will sing hymns, join in meditation, and take part in a Joys and Sorrows ritual where all are welcome to share aloud with the group the joys and/or sorrows in their hearts that night.

Stewarding Guidance



Who we can **BE**, what we can **DO**...

The Excitement is Building!

COMBINED PLEDGE DRIVE AND CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DINNER
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2026 AT 5:00 PM
AT WESLEY HALL, GRASS VALLEY METHODIST CHURCH

Now that our move to Squirrel Creek is a reality, the excitement is building. The 2026 Stewardship Team will kick off a combined Annual Pledge Drive and Capital Campaign with a fun, inspiring dinner for members and pledging friends on February 28. Invitations are coming by email, and should be in your inbox! Please respond, and include entrée choice!

In the weeks following the dinner, members serving as visiting stewards will schedule one-on-one meetings to discuss UUCM's day-to-day needs as well as plans for our new facility. The combined fundraising drive, which involves a large number of volunteers, is being co-chaired by Gail Schulz and Gail Johnson Vaughan.

Thank you for supporting our work and this wonderful community!

YOUR STEWARDSHIP 2026 TEAM:
Shannon Dooley-Miller, Charlene Dugan, Paul Elias, Ellen Goodwin, Keith Johnson, Gail Schulz and Kathryn Young

Strategic Planning

Plan Draft Turned Over to Board

By Lesley Champlin

After several months of collaborative development and making refinements to the draft, the committee submitted the proposed UUCM Strategic Plan to the UUCM Board of Trustees in January. Next steps are review and discussion with the Board at this month's meeting, followed by a presentation and feedback session with the congregation.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:
Lesley Champlin, Charlene Dugan, Lindsay Dunkel, Jeff Gold, Laura Harter, Carol Richey, Allison Rivers, Rev. Kevin Tarsa, and Alan Weisberg



Parish Care

Gwen Eymann
Coordinator, UUCM Parish Care
Caring@uugrassvalley.org

WE ALL NEED EXTRA CARE SOMETIMES ON OUR JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE.

UUCM Parish Care is here to help organize practical support for members and friends through times of need, offering support such as home or hospital visits, transportation to local appointments, a ride to UUCM on Sunday, preparing or delivering a meal, shopping, and essential errands. The Parish Care volunteers also send cards of caring and celebration, make friendly phone calls and visits, and assist with hosting and refreshments at memorial services.

As Unitarian Universalists we believe that we all share in the responsibility for one another's care, and we invite all members and friends of UUCM to become actively involved in this wonderfully important opportunity for service. If supporting this work interests you, please fill out this brief [Parish Care Volunteer Survey](#) to identify tasks you would be willing to do on occasion. The Parish Care coordinator will contact you as needs arise.

For more information, to request care, or to share word of someone in need of care, please contact us at: Caring@uugrassvalley.org

Lay Pastoral Care Team

ARE YOU FACING A LIFE CHALLENGE?

UUCM's Lay Pastoral Care Team (LPCT) offers a confidential, caring presence to congregants undergoing stressful life challenges. With the support and guidance of the minister, team members commit to be available for weekly caring conversations of up to one hour, and for the duration of a congregant's current challenge or until a time of closure arises naturally.

Please contact a member of the Lay Pastoral Care Team when you are facing difficult and stressful portions of your journey and if you feel that a companioning presence from one of our team members might be helpful to you.

LAY PASTORAL CARE TEAM MEMBERS:

George Dunstan, Gwen Eymann, Carol Grant, Sue Gregory, and Corrie Silva, or you can email the whole team: LayPastoralCare@uugrassvalley.org

Special Feature

Resilience

A Special Feature by Jenny Dewey

My decision to remain silent came from my belly, not my head. None of the other kids at the boarding school asked me for the reasons for my silence. No interest surfaced by anyone, teachers included. The staff soon got the message: this kid doesn't talk.

It was my freshman year. I was isolated from familiar sights and sounds and experiences, and yet glad to be alive and in tune with memories of life before being sent away to school. I knew about memory, about remembering. The memories sustained me.

My conviction to remain silent led to consequences. My silence worked both ways.

A mid-winter break was scheduled: a ten-day trip to Yosemite. Boys and girls who wanted to go signed up for the trip. My

home was thousands of miles away. There was no chance I would be given the chance to go there. A house mother signed me up for the trip.

A bunk was assigned to me, one in a cabin shared with three of my classmates. I didn't know the three girls, beyond knowing their names and their reputations as "popular."

One night the three girls told me they knew of a boy they wanted me to meet. They said he was shy, like me, and kind.

I left the cabin thinking I'd take the chance and meet the boy. Maybe the three girls were trying to make friends

with me. I went to the designated spot and no boy showed. I waited. It was January and cold. I shivered and ground my teeth and waited; the boy was late, that was all.

Finally, I decided not to wait any longer. I walked back to the cabin, looking forward to the warmth of my bunk and wooly blankets. I knocked. The cabin door didn't open. It was locked from the inside. I realized this was the girl's strategy from the start.

I had my own strategy. Silence. No knocking. No rapping on one of the windows.

A side door of the dining room was unlocked. I went in and spent the night sitting by the warmth of the industrial-sized oven.

I never told anyone what happened. My best bet was to resist shame, to resolve to be resilient. Resilience meant I would never relinquish my power. The three girls never approached me. I saw frustration, even anger, in their side-long glances.

Resilience: This one compelling word became my mantra.

A year passed and I made a best friend. My silence ended. My belly and soul told me it was okay to speak.

Justice News and Activities

Bending the Arc Task Force: UPDATE ON THE 2026 POSTCARDING BEGINNING FEBRUARY 15

By Gail Johnson-Vaughan

2026 ELECTION POSTCARDING BEGINS SOON

On January 11, Rev. Kevin spoke with clarity when he said "The kind of resistance we are talking about today, arises when something in us says, 'This is not right.' 'This harms.' 'This violates the human spirit and the dignity of life.'"

We all know what he is talking about. In response we invoke the words of one of our beloved hymns, "the tide is rising and so are we."

For the past three years UUCM has earned the coveted distinction of being a UUA Good Trouble Congregation for rising with that tide by writing tens of thousands of postcards to educate and empower voters of color in voter suppression states. Without question, getting out the vote in the 2026 elections is our most important postcard work yet.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

- Center for Common Ground (CFCG) provides us the addresses of voters of color experiencing voter suppression in targeted states. They also send us scripts, samples, and instructions to assure postcard content with the highest impact.
- The Bending the Arc task force orders the postcards and stamps and prints the address lists, info labels, scripts, and sample cards and assembles them into packets.
- You let Gail JV know how many packets you'd like to write so she can order adequate supplies. Writers who are able to do so reimburse UUCM \$13 per packet. Others not able to write contribute money to support writers who commit their time and energy but cannot reimburse the cost.

DO THESE POSTCARDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

- Yes, every campaign we have participated in has had a measurable increase in the turnout of voters of color.

WHERE AND WHEN DO WE START?

- Virginia special redistricting election – similar to California
- Campaign launches February 23 or March 2 (waiting for final date from CFCG) The special election date is April 21.
- Virginia's state legislature has passed four progressive state constitution amendments, which include a redistricting map amendment that must be approved by the voters.
- As always, the script of the postcards uses non-partisan language to let voters know the impact of both the "yes"

and "no" vote on issues they care about and includes a strong Get Out the Vote message.

- The campaign targets 450,000 registered Black voters in the four largest Virginia counties. That will give us six to seven weeks to write our postcards, depending on the postcard launch date. If the amendment is approved, Virginia primary dates will be in August, or in June if the amendment fails. Please as soon as possible email gailjv@uugrassvalley.org how many packets to make for you so the team can have adequate supplies ready. Note: there will also be a limited number of single packets available to pick up.

2026 MIDTERMS: The 2026 midterm elections will, of course, be the main event for us in the coming year. At present, Center for Common Ground does not see a compelling case for participating in the primaries. We expect postcard campaigns for the November General elections will begin in July or August with mail dates in September and October. More information will follow as detailed plans are made.



Nisenan News

Becoming a People of Place

As UUCM prepares to move to a new home on the Squirrel Creek property, our annual Nisenan-focused service on February 8 asks this community to approach a new chapter, new land, new place, and new stewardship with deep respect, humility, commitment, and thoughtfulness.

Justice News and Activities

Share the Plate

UUCM's December *Share the Plate* partner, [Hospitality House](#), received \$1,055, thanks to generous UUCM members, friends, and visitors. During December, our treasurer performed magic and took advantage of a matching contribution. An interim contribution added another \$444 to our total. These weekly donations add up. Thank you!

As of this writing, we are finishing up collections for our January partner, [Community Beyond Violence](#).



Hospitality House Donations

Our continued generous support of Hospitality House is greatly appreciated by the guests and staff!

Currently, Needed Items Are:

- Men's Casual Pants
- Men's Jackets and Sweatshirts
- Disposable Hand Warmers
- NEW Men's and Women's Underwear/Bras
- Men's and Women's Shoes
- Twin-Size Fitted Sheets, new pillows and pillow cases
- Towels and Blankets
- NEW Unopened Toiletries - Shampoo, Conditioner, Razors, Soap – *Travel size ideal.*

For the most current update on their needs, please check their website: <https://hhshelter.org/>

Please leave donations in the designated bin in UUCM's Alcott (refreshments) room.

*Thank you for your generosity,
Laurie Bell & Keith Johnson*



VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED

IFM still needs volunteer food sorters, checkers, and distribution drivers. If you are interested, contact Victoria at IFM for more information.

UUCM WORK GROUP

The UUCM Work Group for IFM meets every second Tuesday of the month from 2:00 - 4:00 PM at IFM. If you would like to be a part of this fun and worthwhile project, please contact Karl Snyder or Keith Johnson at: justice@uugrassvalley.org.

INTERFAITH FOOD MINISTRY

Recycle for IFM!

Last Saturday of Every Month | 9AM-12PM

Peace Lutheran Church – 828 W Main St, Grass Valley

Bring your **CLEAN & SORTED** recyclables to support IFM!

PLEASE SORT CLEAN ALUMINUM, GLASS AND PLASTIC SEPARATELY

- ✓ CRV bottles & cans (aluminum, plastic, glass)
- ✓ Plastics #1, #2, #5 (check the triangle, and sort separately)
- ✓ Paper/plastic grocery bags & cardboard egg cartons

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO IFM!

Community Connections

WEEKLY @ UUCM

[Subscribe to the weekly e-Chalice](#) for Zoom links and phone numbers. If you need links, please contact our Office Administrator at Admin@uugrassvalley.org.

**SUNDAY SERVICES - 9:00 AM - IN PERSON ONLY,
AND 11:00 AM VIA ZOOM OR IN PERSON**

Make Connections at UUCM

Please contact the organizers if you are interested in joining!

WALKING GROUP

TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS, OFF-SITE - MEET AT 8:00 AM

Email Walking@uugrassvalley.org

We meet on **Tuesdays** at the Wolf Creek Trail/Northstar Mining Museum parking area, and on **Thursdays** at 418 Chapel, Grass Valley. Be sure to ask our Office Administrator, Siobhan (Admin@uugrassvalley.org) to include you on our walking group mailing list so you can hear about last minute changes.

MEN'S GROUP

WEDNESDAYS FROM 8:30 - 10:30 AM AT UUCM

Men gather to enjoy each other's company.

Contact for the group: Men@uugrassvalley.org

SINGING MEDITATION CIRCLE

FIRST THURSDAYS, 7:00 PM, ONSITE AND VIA ZOOM

Contact SingingMeditation@uugrassvalley.org



WOMEN'S GROUP
MONTHLY POTLUCK –
SECOND MONDAYS, 6:00 PM
AT UUCM

Our next meeting is Monday, February 9 at 6:00 PM.

We'll have a potluck dinner AND then an "Aging Backwards" class. Bettina Lewis is a certified teacher who has taught at UUCM and now teaches at the Senior Center. The class helps lubricate joints, release arthritic pain and release tension and more. She has modified this so it can be done in a chair.

Join the Women's Group email list by emailing a request to our Office Administrator at: Admin@uugrassvalley.org.



SPIRITUALITY SHARING CIRCLE
FOURTH SATURDAYS, 2:00 - 4:00 PM,
ON-SITE AND VIA ZOOM

Questions? Need a Zoom link? Contact: Spirituality@uugrassvalley.org



HUMANISM DISCUSSION GROUP

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 10:45 AM

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, February 4, at 10:45 AM at UUCM. We will begin a UU Humanism Discussion Series consisting of 10 sessions, each with a purpose, suggested readings before the meeting, suggested agenda, and discussion questions.

Our UUCM Humanism Discussion Group is a gathering for both those who identify as humanists and those who are interested in learning about this philosophy.

Our group's purpose is to connect and intellectually explore the issues that touch our daily lives through Humanism's values and principles. Humanism emphasizes ethical living, critical thinking, and social justice while aiming to inspire compassionate action and mutual understanding.

Topics for group discussion are chosen by participants, and optional readings on the topics are made available prior to the meeting. When health precautions allow, we meet in person at UUCM. If you would like to take part via Zoom, request the link by emailing Humanism@uugrassvalley.org.

(Please view the UUCM website calendar for the most up to date meeting info.)



ARTS & CRAFTS CIRCLE
SECOND & FOURTH FRIDAYS, 1:00-3:00 PM
AT UUCM - ALCOTT ROOM
arts-n-crafts@uugrassvalley.org

Come and meet with other UUs on **Friday, February 13 and 27 at 1:00 PM** to work on your own art or craft form! Enjoy each other's company while working on independent projects. No teacher or facilitator.



BUILDING & GROUNDS WORK PARTY
FOURTH SATURDAYS, 8:30 - 11:30 AM
AT UUCM
RSVP TO: B&G@uugrassvalley.org

Meet people while doing fun and interesting things. Newcomers are always welcome.

Community Connections

Open Mic Fun!

We had a fantastic Open Mic evening at UUCM on January 14. Wonderful entertainers, songs, and music! Hats off to our musicians: Kate Canan, Taylor Carey, Heather Grove, Mark Grove, Bob Polucha, Michael Stavros, Rev. Kevin, Tom Wernigg and Kathryn Young.

It was a treat to have Tom Wernigg back in town as our emcee, too, and we also had a mighty fine audience! Watch for another Open Mic in the spring.



Come Sing in the UUCM Choir Now until February 15!

There's still time to sing in the UUCM Choir through February 15! Ingrid Holman, director of the New Peace Choir of Nevada County, directs our choir 6:30 - 8:00 PM on Tuesdays through February 10, and the choir will sing a pair of pieces in the services on Sunday, February 15. (Note the change of day to Tuesdays for this cycle.)

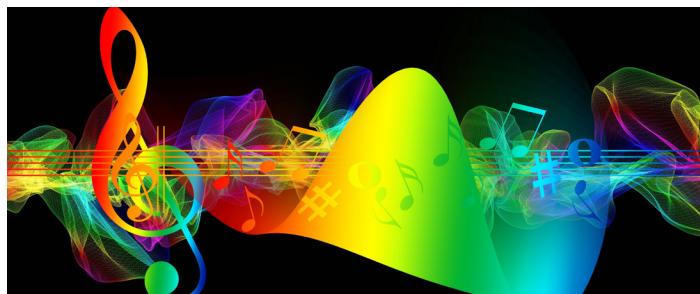
SCHEDULED CHOIR REHEARSALS WITH INGRID HOLMAN:

Tuesdays from 6:30 to 8:00 PM
February 3, and February 10

Performance on Sunday, February 15
at both Services

All singers are welcome!

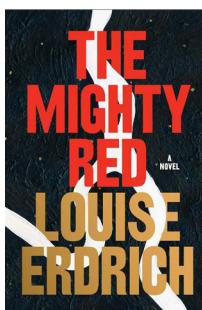
For more information, contact music@uugrassvalley.org.



UUCM Book Group

THE FOURTH TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 5:30 PM
IN THE CHANNING ROOM AT UUCM Books@uugrassvalley.org

Our book group reads a variety of fiction and non-fiction books. Join us for any or all of these discussions. We have changed our meeting time to the *fourth Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM* in the Channing Room.



February 24, 2025:
The Mighty Red
by Louise Erdrich
2024, 384 pages
Facilitated by Theresa Houtman

A love triangle and a wedding gone awry is the focus of a small farming community in the Red River Valley of North Dakota as the wider community faces environmental and financial changes after the 2008 financial crisis. Erdrich is a Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winning author.

UUCM Book Group on our website: [UPCOMING BOOKS](#)
[Tuesday Book Group Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 927 1111 8322

Passcode: 472984

Please give at least one week's notice if you plan to attend by Zoom so we can have the equipment set up.

Resilience and Children

By Cheryl Spaulding, Family Ministry Team Member

What does resilience look like in children? That is the question I posed to myself as I sat down to write this article for the Mountain Chalice. To get my intellectual juices flowing, I Googled “resilience in children” and began reading.

One article quickly resonated with me. It was a list of ten ways that adults can help children to be more resilient. While all ten of the items made much sense, two jumped out at me as hugely significant features of our Kids’ Connection program on Sunday mornings. I will use the remainder of this article to illustrate how those two examples are evident in our work with UUCM’s children on Sunday mornings.

The first item on the list was simply termed—“Make Connections.” Well, there is nothing that we do better than make connections in our aptly named Kids’ Connection program. The article went on to explain that connections are enhanced when we help our children experience empathy for each other by listening carefully to each other. This observation immediately reminded me of our weekly routine of sharing joys and sorrows during our sanctuary time. Unlike the routine for sharing joys and sorrows downstairs, we actually have children come up to our altar, put a stone in our vessel of water, and then tell us about their joys and/or sorrows. We have been encouraging the children to face forward and look at the others when they speak. Simultaneously, we ask the children who are the audience for this sharing of joys and sorrows to listen carefully to each speaker. They are encouraged to listen with their ears, eyes, and hearts. Obviously, listening involves ears. But what about listening with eyes and hearts? We remind the children to listen with their eyes by looking at the person who is talking. And while the sharing is taking place, we model listening with our hearts when we pat our hearts with our hands to remind the children that the person speaking

is sharing some important feelings that they had or are still having. Overall, the goal is for each of us to experience empathy for the person who is sharing. A sense of resilience can emerge when we make strong, empathetic connections with others through the regular process of deeply listening.

Our routines to support deep listening are foundational to who we are as UUCMers. They create a sense of belonging and connectedness that gives each of us the confidence to face the challenges in our personal and collective lives. If that is not an example of supporting resilience, then I do not know what is.

The second example from the article is “Routines.” Routines and rituals are a regular part of church life. We adults take comfort in the fact that each week we greet each other, we light the chalice, we sing the children out of the sanctuary, and we now have a Wonder Box to explore. Our many routines and rituals help to create a sense of familiarity, a sense of

“groundedness,” a place where we feel secure. These feelings are foundational support for a person’s resilience. The ability to bounce back from hardship is enhanced when people feel as if their environment is ordered and predictable and comprehensible. Our routines upstairs in Kids’ Connection are very similar to the ones the adults have established downstairs. Each week, we build an altar, we light the chalice after speaking some familiar words, we share our joys and sorrows, we open and explore the contents of the Wonder Box, and usually we have a story of some kind related to the month’s Soul Matters theme.

Last week, we had nine children at our upstairs Kids’ Connection service. I was delayed in getting upstairs because I was holding the hand of a child who was

reluctant to come upstairs. When I finally walked into the room hand in hand with my walking companion, the other eight children were already eagerly working on constructing the altar, with the teaching assistants just standing on the side watching the whole process with delight. Such is the power of routines. Our UUCM children are empowered to implement independently the routines that they have internalized over their many Sundays spent in Kids’ Connection. Empowered, well-connected children are likely to be resilient children. May our UUCM children be empowered, well-connected AND resilient.

-Cheryl



Unitarian Universalist Community of the Mountains

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Telephone: (530) 274-1675 Website: uugrassvalley.org

MOST UPDATED VERSION OF THE UUCM CALENDAR:
<https://www.uugrassvalley.org/calendar/>

**Sunday Services are held at 9 AM onsite only
and at 11:00 AM onsite and via Zoom.**

Kids' Connection is offered at the 11:00 AM service only.

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1:00 TO 5:00 PM
(Our Office Administrator is available remotely on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.)

Rev. Kevin Tarsa Office Hours:

Rev. Kevin's office hours are currently held by appointment.

Contact Rev. Kevin at (231) 883-1058 or minister@uugrassvalley.org

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Mountain Chalice Newsletter submissions are due by the 20th of the month prior to publishing.

Submit by filling out the online announcement form on our website, or here:

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