



SUNDAY SERVICES IN MARCH 2024

Please note that given the changing nature of the world, topics may change to address the needs of our times. Below are the topics being considered.

- March 3: Reformation 2.0? --Rev. Sian
- March 10: "Transforming our lives by living our Principles." --Rev. Sian
- March 17: Becoming Transformers! --Rev. Sian
- March 24: The Gifts of Friendship --Wendy Karn, Intern Minister
- March 31: Transforming Easter --Rev. Sian



March promises to be a busy month again with the kickoff of our annual operating pledge drive and hopefully some great progress on getting to construction. It is a great time to contemplate what it means to be in community and traveling our paths together.

Our operating pledges are the annual commitments we make to the programs and impact of our congregation. It funds our staff salaries, routine building costs and all the programs we create and support. It only happens because we make it happen. Please listen closely to the upcoming testimonials and pledge materials. We have a culture of generosity to continue!

We are in community in other ways, too. We have a dream of a new sanctuary, and it is so hard to be patient! Watch for updates but know that the Sanctuary Construction Committee is doing all it can to make it happen as soon as we can. The Committee Members are having the most difficulty cultivating patience!

The momentum we are creating with our generosity and potential new sanctuary is inspiring more programs and energy. We have several new classes starting this Spring. As we grow, it is inevitable that we will sometimes run into each other, either literally or in the use of resources. The only meeting time that has a monopoly is Sunday Worship, and even that is shared with Religious Education! All other

A dark blue box with white text and a logo. The logo is a stylized flame above a chalice. Below the logo, the text reads 'Many Different Beliefs, One Loving Community'. At the bottom, there is a white video camera icon in a circle, followed by the text 'JOIN FOR OUR SERVICES SUNDAYS AT 10:30' and the Zoom link 'https://zoom.us/j/3931579606'.

groups should expect that they might need to share.

We will get there! We are traveling a path together in community.

Nancy Loughrey
president@ocuuc.org



Transformation

Butterflies have always intrigued me. I mean, they start out as a caterpillar, a weird long bug with a bunch of stubby legs that eats leaves, and then transform into this winged creature with only six long legs that drinks nectar. In fact, caterpillars get put in a kind of blender that jumbles them all up and has them coming out differently. That can't be painless or easy.

It's not hard to find the human equivalents, let's be honest. Who hasn't been jumbled up in the blender of life and gotten transformed, even a little bit? I just can't help but wonder - why does it have to be so painful? Transformation is never easy - it's usually painful, difficult and annoying as all get out. But it is as natural as the change from a caterpillar to a butterfly.

We will all change or transform multiple times in our lives. From being a parent to retirement; going from one career to another; falling in love to breaking up. But the hope is, at the end, we become something even better, even

more beautiful. Maybe we've learned empathy, how to let go, how to love deeply, how to change more gracefully. Each transformation is a gift, if we choose to see it that way.

May your transformations be smooth, easy and with lots of good lessons!

With love,
Rev. Sian

INTERN'S CORNER

BY WENDY KARN

I spent the first week of February in Chicago for a week of intensive study at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. It was a week of learning, but also a week of deepening my connections with my cohorts. Some of the best conversations I've had in my life have been in the community kitchen of the school during class breaks. Currently, I'm a few weeks into my 4th semester of seminary. Much of the work I do there is in community with small groups online. As time has gone on, some deep friendships have formed in those small groups. It got me thinking about small group ministry and how learning and sharing together can be a power accelerant to forming new and lasting relationships.

Friendship doesn't seem to be as well examined as other relationships, yet it is deeply important in our lives. Rev. Sian did a sermon a few months ago about the Surgeon General's report that identified epidemic loneliness in the United States. One of the things identified in the 72-page report was the statistic that half the adults in this study experienced loneliness regularly. The rate was even higher among young adults. The most shocking thing about this for me was that this study was started in 2019. These numbers came out even before the Covid 19 pandemic. How are we doing now?



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March 3: Reformation 2.0? The Reformation of the 16th Century changed everything for Christianity, launching numerous denominations. But as we look to the future is it time for a new Reformation? As Unitarian Universalists look to transform some of our own ways of being, what might the future hold? Rev. Sian

March 10: "Transforming our lives by living our Principles." This is part of our Mission Statement at OCUUC. But how do you live our Principles? How do you make ethical decisions that are in line with them and your values? We all make choices, but how we make those decisions is important. Rev. Sian (*Note: topic comes from auction item winner Maureen McCOnaghy*).

March 17: Becoming Transformers! "Transforming our communities by living our Principles" is the second half of our mission statement. How do we do this as Unitarian Universalists? Rev. Sian (*Note: This is our annual Pledge Drive Launch!*).

March 24: The Gifts of Friendship. We humans are social animals and seeking companionship is part of our nature. How does friendship, or even the simple act of being friendly enrich our lives? You might be surprised by how much we really need each other. Intern Minister: Wendy Karn

March 31: Transforming Easter. Easter has many different threads from Christianity to Paganism. How might we make it our own this Sunday? Rev. Sian

MUSIC NOTES

From Our Director of Music



LOOKING AHEAD

As February comes to a close my role as a choir director starts to ramp up. The 2024-2025 choral season, as I like to call it, is quickly approaching. But how does that affect me? It simply means that I need to start finding music! This article will give a little preview of what's to come for my first music Sunday in May as the Director of Music Ministries. It will be titled: *Rise Up! Music by Women Composers*. Below I'll highlight some of my favorite pieces and why I picked them:

O Quante Volte in Van Cor Mio Ti Chiamo-Vittoria Aleotti (1574-1646): During the time that Aleotti was alive, women were not allowed to compose music. She was well known as an organist, composer and nun during her time. Aleotti, in this piece, talks about unrequited love. The love interest is described as a "sweet bait, and sweet hook" that she ultimately ended up falling for. The voices and the entire piece sounds like we are continuing to chase after this love that hurt us so bad. This will be the opener of our Music Sunday!

TaReKiTa-Reena Esmail (1983): Composed for the Urban Voices Project in LA, Esmail described TaReKiTa as a "vibrant and joyful piece." This piece uses an Indian Classical framework titled *jog*; it includes major and minor modalities while the voices mimic the sounds produced by Indian Instruments. This piece is easy on the easy, but has some tricky spots for the choir! It's

a great way to introduce us to forms of music from different cultures.

To Sit and Dream-Rosephanye Powell (1962): With a text by Langston Hughes, Powell pulls out all the emotional stops with this piece. Hughes begs us to dream of a better world where peace, justice and equity reign. Powell is influenced by Jazz and Blues harmonies in this piece, creating cluster chords among the voices and piano. The middle section is almost yearning in nature as Hughes writes "I reach out my hand to you." Powell creates this beautiful ostinato between all the voices almost as if our hands are reaching out and almost grabbing the better world that we dream to be in one day. This will be our closer for our Music Sunday!



SANCTUARY UPDATE

I know that people are anxious to find out the latest news on the sanctuary project since our last communication.

We were cautiously optimistic that we were in the final stage of the permitting process with the city. However we were thrown yet another curveball. The Department of Public Works reviews each project and issues conditions that have to be met as part of the overall property improvement. To comply with current ADA standards we are forced to remove the two existing driveway approaches and replace them with the required slope to meet the new standard.

Further, we have to amend our application to reflect this mandatory change. This should happen in a few days with our architect working

together with our civil engineer. After the submission of the amended application the city has ten days to review and then we hope to have met all the requirements and expect to receive the building and demolition permits soon after that time.

In closing, it's realistic to expect receiving the permits by the middle of March and we should consider setting a date for the official groundbreaking.

The Sanctuary Building Committee appreciates everyone's patience as we come to a close on this long drawn out and sometimes frustrating process.

Craig Spery, on behalf of the Sanctuary Building Committee



UU MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

SAVE THE DATES:
April 19-21, 2024

The Unitarian Universalist Men's Fellowship (UUMF) is hosting the 2024 Men's Spring Renewal at deBenneville Pines Camp in Angeles Oaks, California. All who identify as men are invited to attend.

The weekend event is on April 19-21, 2024. It will be an opportunity to refresh, celebrate, and renew our cherished bonds established and nurtured over many years, establish new ones, and to open our hearts to songs of life and fulfillment.

In the beauty of the mountains and the safety and fellowship of our brothers, we may unpack issues, support each other, and just hang out together. The weekend will include

workshops, deep sharing, music and drumming, silence, ritual, songs, laughter, great food and just spending quality time together.

The working theme for the weekend is "On the Road of Life." Our Unitarian Universalist Men's Renewal welcomes men of all ages, backgrounds, and diversities. Scholarships are available so that no brother will be denied for financial reasons.

The Camp is located near Angeles Oaks in the San Bernardino Mountains at 6800 feet elevation.

Registration is now open through the following link: [UUMF Renewal Registration](#).

Questions can be directed to Cory Brown at KG6EP@AOL.COM.



The 2024/25 Pledge Drive Gets Underway!

It is the time of year when we begin our annual pledge drive campaign. This year's pledge drive theme is just that: **"Continuing Our Culture of Generosity."** The campaign kicks off on March 17 and we hope to wrap up the campaign by May 1

As members and friends of OCUUC, we rely on our minister and staff and our fellow volunteers to keep our church a spiritual center and a loving source of support and friendship. We, of course, need funds to maintain these benefits.

What is a Pledge Drive and why do we keep doing it?

The OCUUC Operating Fund Pledge Drive has as its purpose to renew the promises we all make to sustain and revitalize our fund for day-to-day expenditures that keep our buildings usable and keep our staff paid for their services.

We do this annually so that yearly pledges can be used by our Finance Committee to complete an annual budget to guide us financially. We can only count on pledges made or renewed each year in producing that budget. Last year we asked for a sizeable increase in pledging and most of us stepped up as we were able. This year we know that we have asked members and friends to make yet another New Sanctuary pledge on top of their Operating Fund pledge, so we are limiting our ask for any increase to just the increase in the national Cost of Living which is about 3%. As always though your pledge should fit within your budget and we respect that.

Each year we run a new Pledge Drive for our FISCAL year, which is July 1-June 30. Please consider carefully how you can help this year by making a generous pledge when you are asked.

Mark your calendars to attend the **pledge drive kick-off brunch and program on March 17th, in the OCUUC courtyard and in Daniels Hall immediately following the Sunday church service.**

A brunch including an egg dish, salad, mimosas, champagne, coffee, tea, and lemonade to be served. Vegan, gluten free and vegetarian dietary needs will be accommodated. No cost to attend. There will be a short program and pledge cards will be distributed.

Tom Loughrey
2024-25 Pledge Drive Chair

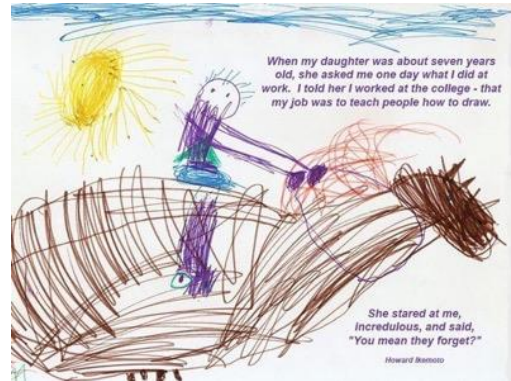


UU ANIMAL MINISTRY

OCUUC is in the process of forming a chapter of the Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry. The UUAM began in 1986 as Unitarian Universalists For the Ethical Treatment of Animals, and became the UUAM in 2009. There are currently about 35 chapters in the US, plus one Canadian chapter. "UUAM Chapters work to promote compassion for all species, at the local level." Chapter activities have included fund raisers to buy pet food for homeless people, tours of animal sanctuaries, the presentation of documentaries about animals, providing a vegetarian/vegan meal for the congregation, letter writing regarding animal issues, etc.

Our first meeting is planned for Sunday, March 10, at 1:30 p.m. in the Victoria Room and on Zoom. For more information, contact maureenm@ocuuc.org.

There are many ways to help reduce animal suffering, from cutting plastic rings to make sure that no sea creature or bird gets stuck in them, to donating money to organizations, to writing to your representatives about legislation to protect animals, to being a full-time animal rights activist. Everyone can do something, even if no one can do everything.



CALL FOR ARTWORK OCUUC ART EXHIBITION

Are you a member or friend of OCUUC and would like to submit your artwork for a new exhibition in the RE/admin lobby? Laurie Motalipassi's beautiful art quilt exhibition will be ending on March 31 to make way for a new exhibition--*"The Art of Travel"*-- which will be in place throughout this spring and summer.

To submit your photography, paintings or prints, bring them to the lobby on Sunday, April 7 either before or after the service. A few guidelines:

-All art should be framed and ready for hanging.

-Art should be original work submitted by the member or friend of OCUUC and depict travel experiences close to home or far away from 2022 to the present.

-The exhibition is limited to OCUUC members and friends. RE children and teens are also welcome. (1-2 artworks per person).

-Please include a title for the artwork and a brief description of the location and experience depicted. It can be handwritten or typed.

-Artwork on display will not be for sale but if there is interest in a particular artist's work, a buyer can contact the artist directly.

Questions? Contact lindaspery@gmail.com or 562-212-5317.

NONFICTION BOOK CLUB

DATE CHANGE

The Nonfiction Book Club now meets on **first** Sundays (instead of third Sundays), from 12:30 to 2:30pm.

For information, contact [Maureen](#).



STITCHWITS

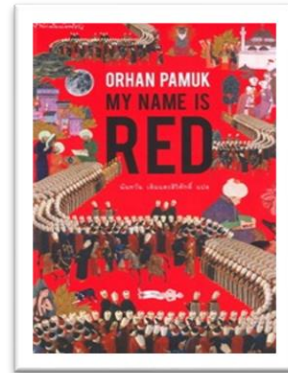
Do you knit, crochet, sew, or enjoy any other crafts? Do you believe in using your skills to help others? Then you might be a Stitch-Wit! Stitchwits meet on Zoom every Saturday from 10:30am to 12:30pm and are knitting, crocheting, or sewing items for different needs. Find the Zoom link [here](#) on our website or contact Barbara at harper0117@gmail.com



AGNOSTIC/HUMANIST/ATHEIST GROUP

This is a discussion group supporting humanists, agnostics, atheists, deists, and others who view human activity as the basis for moral systems, and view humans as an integral part of the nature of the cosmos.

Their next meeting is Sunday, March 3rd at 12:15pm. Featuring Erwin Chemerinsky, video at University Synagogue. Keeping students safe while protecting free speech on campus, discussing what constitutes hate speech from a legal perspective; while religious hatred swirls. Find the Zoom link [here](#).



FICTION BOOK CLUB

Please join our Fiction Book Group at 7:00pm, online, on Monday, March 4th to discuss *My Name is Red* by Orhan Pamuk. We are fortunate to have our former minister, the Reverend Karen Stoyanoff, leading the discussion. Check the church website for the link.

If you wish to read ahead for the April 1st meeting, we'll be discussing *The Nurse's Secret* by Amanda Skenandore. Co-chairs are Eva Goodwin-Noriega and Marcia Hackett.





Saturday, March 2

StitchWits, 10:30am on Zoom

Sunday, March 3

Meditation Group, 9:45am Youth Room & Zoom

Worship Service, 10:30am Daniels Hall & Zoom

RE, 10:30am on Site

AHA Group, 12:15pm Zoom

Nonfiction Book Club, 12:30pm on Zoom

Monday, March 4

Fiction Book Group 7:00pm on Zoom

Thursday, March 7

Choir Rehearsal, 7pm Daniels Hall

Saturday, March 9

StitchWits, 10:30am on Zoom

Sunday, March 10

Meditation Group, 9:45am Youth Room & Zoom

Worship Service, 10:30am Daniels Hall & Zoom

RE, 10:30am on Site

Writing Group, 11:45am Victoria Room

Dream Group, 12pm Suite 7

UU Animal Ministry, 1:30pm Victoria

Room

Monday, March 11

Anti-Racism Reading Group

Wednesday, March 13

Comm. on Ministry, 6pm

Thursday, March 14

Choir Rehearsal, 7pm Daniels Hall

Saturday, March 16

StitchWits, 10:30am on Zoom

Sunday, March 17

Meditation Group, 9:45am Youth Room & Zoom

Worship Service, 10:30am Daniels Hall & Zoom

RE, 10:30am on site

Pledge Drive Brunch, 11:45am Daniels Hall & Courtyard

Tuesday, March 19

Life Changes Group, 12pm on Zoom

Sci Fi and Philosophy Group, 3pm on Zoom

Wednesday, March 20

Finance Council, 5pm Zoom

Thursday, March 21

Choir Rehearsal, 7pm Daniels Hall

Saturday, March 23

Board Meeting, 9am Victoria Room

StitchWits, 10:30am on Zoom

Sunday, March 24

Meditation Group, 9:45am Youth Room & Zoom

Worship Service, 10:30am Daniels Hall & Zoom

RE, 10:30am on site

Women's Circle, 12:00pm Victoria Room and Zoom

Monday, March 25

Anti-Racism Reading Group

Wednesday, March 27

Cluster Meeting, 10am

Thursday, March 28

Choir Rehearsal, 7pm Daniels Hall

Saturday, March 30

StitchWits, 10:30am on Zoom

Sunday, March 31

Meditation Group, 9:45am Youth Room & Zoom

Worship Service, 10:30am Daniels Hall & Zoom

RE, 10:30am on site

Program and Committee Fair, 11:30am Victoria Room



MARCH PLATE SHARE

A locally based program, Bracken's Kitchen was founded in 2013 by Chef Bill Bracken who wanted to use his skills and expertise to meet the need he saw for nutritious and tasty food for those who need it most, using a food truck. Ten years later, in 2023, the program served almost two million meals to families, home bound seniors, struggling college students, military veterans and those battling homelessness. Fifty-three agency partners pick up hot (ready to serve), cold (reheatable) and frozen meals daily. In addition to the Food Truck community feeding program, Bracken's Kitchen now includes a culinary training program, where students are prepared for employment, through participation in a working kitchen, and a rescued food program. Dignity, respect, and pride are three areas that the program is intent on preserving for those they serve. Bracken's team feels that providing services to this population should and can be done in a dignified manner. OCUUC supported this program in its early days, and now, noting its success and

community impact, we have an opportunity to celebrate the stated mission of "rescuing, repurposing and restoring both food and lives" with our March plate sharing. To explore this program further, see <https://www.brackenskitchen.org>.



MEDITATION GROUP

In our fast-paced culture, more than ever before we need to set time aside to quietly be in touch with ourselves and our surroundings in the present moment. True presence, termed mindfulness, is a quiet state of mind that, when practiced regularly, increases concentration, reduces stress and creates opportunities for significant personal growth over time.

Mindfulness practice allows us to set aside our worries, regrets and plans for a brief but important period of time, opening us up to refreshing, real elements of nature (both within us and around us!). As we all know, regular practice (for even very brief periods) is essential for turning a new skill into a healthy habit.

Practicing with a group is always easier than developing this new skill on one's own. Please join us any Sunday before church service (9:45 – 10:20 AM in the Youth Room) for a brief meditation practice, followed by an opportunity to briefly share something about our experience along the path. Newcomers are most welcome! In person and on Zoom. Link is [here](#).

There are many ways to connect with our OCUUC community online



OCUUC.org website



Facebook Group Page



Methods to Give to OCUUC

<h3>1. Our Website: OCUUC.org</h3>	<h3>2. Vanco Mobile</h3>	<h3>3. Baskets</h3> <p>Those worshipping onsite will have our traditional offering baskets available at the door for check and cash donations.</p>
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