

# Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula

740 E. Main Street, Santa Paula, CA 93060 (805) 525-4647

uucspoffice@gmail.com website: uucsp.org

## February Theme: Inclusion

*We Bid You Welcome*



We bid you welcome,  
who come with weary spirit seeking rest...  
who come with hope in your heart.

Who come with anticipation in your step...  
who are seekers of a new faith.

Who come to probe and explore... ~Gilbert D. Gilbert

## **FEBRUARY SERVICES, SUNDAYS AT 10:30 AM**

### **February 2 The Cult of the Holy Hibernating Bear John Nichols and MaryBeth East**

Join Marybeth East and John Nichols, who will read from Rev. Dr. Marjorie Newlin Leaming's Saving the Earth, Saving Ourselves, including her reflections on hibernating bears and the connection to Jesus' time in the cave after the crucifixion. A special bear may also make an appearance! This service is inspired by Rev. Dr. Marjorie Newlin Leaming's eco-theological insights and facilitated in part by the trustees of the Marjorie Newlin Leaming Capital Fund.

### **February 9 TBD**

### **February 16 The Moral Arc: Black History as Global History Kate English and Ellen Deeb**

"Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America." ~John Lewis

We gather to honor Black History Month by exploring the stories, struggles, and triumphs of Black leaders, past and present, who have shaped our world. Through poetry, readings, and reflections, we will connect the rich legacy of Black history in Ventura County to the broader narrative of justice and liberation. Let us expand our understanding of Black History—not just as American history, but as an essential part of the story of our humanity on Earth. Together, we'll reflect on how we, too, can help bend the moral arc of the universe towards justice.

### **February 23 Fasting for Insight: Reflections on Ramadan**

**Imam Muhammed Shoayb Mehtar and Thomas Weisbecker**

Message from Visiting Minister Muhammed Shoayb Mehtar

"In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful."

I am honored to join your community on this day. Though we may come from different backgrounds, we share universal values like compassion, justice, and kindness. These principles transcend boundaries and call us to work together for a world of dignity and love.

Religion has long shaped societies through service and education, reminding us of our shared humanity. As the Quran teaches: "We created you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another" (49:13). Let us embrace our diversity as an opportunity to learn, grow, and collaborate for the common good.

May we continue to build bridges and inspire hope together.

*About Imam Muhammed*

*Imam Muhammed Shoayb Mehtar is Director of the Islamic Center of Conejo Valley in Thousand Oaks, previously serving as Imam in Salt Lake City, Utah. A leader in interfaith outreach, he promotes understanding across communities and institutions, sharing insights on faith, social justice, and intercultural dialogue. He holds degrees in interpersonal communication and Islamic studies and actively represents Muslims in both media and interfaith efforts.*

The mission of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula  
is to practice inclusiveness, seek justice and foster spirituality.

# Message from Congregational Director

Dear Beloved Members and Friends,

As we settle into the rhythm of a new year, I'm delighted to share reflections and updates from my first month as your Congregational Director. This new role, created just weeks before the end of 2024, opens up exciting avenues for our congregation as we continue in our period of ministerial transition. With the support of so many of you, I'm finding my way and feeling deeply grateful for the warmth and kindness that surround me here. With especial thanks to Ann Hewitt, my supervising Board representative, whose support has been steadfast and encouraging, like that of a guardian angel; and Krystal Johnson, who is behind all things, supporting nearly every facet of our great church.

One of the most poignant moments this month was bidding farewell to Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford, whose wisdom and leadership have left an indelible mark on our congregation. Betty's final service, "Purple: More Than Just a Color," was a moving celebration of her time with us. At her farewell coffee hour, Mayor Pedro Chavez presented her with a token of appreciation on behalf of the city of Santa Paula; and the Caring Committee gifted her a beautiful lavender "purple" rose bush, and the SCAC a Friendship Bridge-inspired traditional handmade artisanal doll, on behalf of a truly grateful congregation.

Looking ahead, our Worship Team, under Ruth Ricards' capable leadership, is gearing up for an exciting year of services. February features a tapestry of themes, including the Jewish holiday TuBishvat, Black History Month, the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, and a whimsical exploration of *The Cult of the Hibernating Bear*, presented by John Nichols and Marybeth East. In the months to come, we'll honor World Down Syndrome Day, the Spring Equinox, Easter, LGBTQIA+ Pride, Trans Day of Visibility, and much, much more. I also look forward to contributing up to two spirit-filled sermons each month, including in March: *Simply Messing About in Boats*, in which I will hope to share with you my passion for the sea. We'll also welcome a variety of guest speakers – from ministers and authors to sages and storytellers – who I hope will bring fresh perspectives and eternal wisdom to our pulpit.

Our church's commitment to pastoral care remains strong. I've had the privilege of supporting our active Caring Committee, which "carefully" offers timely aid to members and friends in need, including Mary Nelson, Rev. Dr. Audrey Vincent, and others.

Meanwhile, we've added donation-based evening all-level yoga classes led by my husband, Vibay Weisbecker, to our weekly yoga offerings. And as zazen remains a cornerstone of my own spiritual life, I am so pleased that Rev. Sei Kai from the Santa Paula Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple has generously offered to lead us in meditation on the first Wednesday of each month at 6pm PST. These gatherings should not only enrich our spirits with the peace of "Buddhism" but also strengthen our bonds within the wider community.

We also said goodbye to long-time member Allan Atmore with a beautiful memorial service that necessitated the raising of our great wood-paneled doors. This collaborative effort showcased the best of our congregation, with heartfelt contributions from Rev. Betty, Logan Hardison, Alice Henderson, Leslie Nichols, Marybeth East, Vincent Sorisio, Giselle Larios, and others, including young members

## Message from Congregational Director

of the Atmore family who rang our bell. The lovely service and outdoor reception were well attended and professionally catered; varieties of fresh yellow flowers – Allan’s favorite color – including lemons and avocados, commemorating Allan’s love of agriculture in this valley; and the sounds of young families, filled our space, a reminder of the profound memories, vitality, and potential of our community. Allan was an impressive and beloved father, grandfather, husband, and friend, and will be dearly missed, yet I am comforted that his legacy lives on in our hearts and actions. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jyl, Tom, Doug, and family during this time of great loss.

As a volunteer member of our Social Concerns Action Committee, I am pleased to report that our group is focused on tackling important local issues, including the potential impacts of federal immigration policies. Collaborating with groups like Poder Popular and a local coalition calling itself *Somos Inmigrantes*, we are reflecting on what it truly means to be a sanctuary church. These discussions are critical as we prepare to meet potential challenges with compassion and clarity, while embodying our values as Unitarian Universalists.

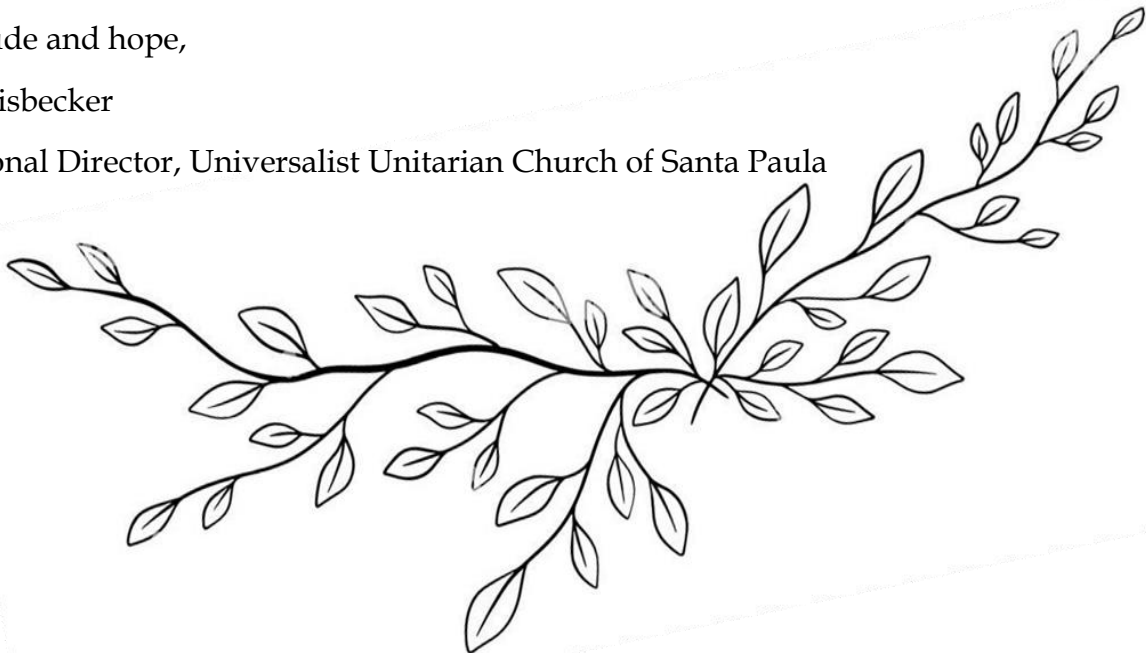
On a personal note, I will soon initiate a new phase of my academic journey, as I pursue ministerial fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association. This path will include coursework in UU history and polity, as well as chaplaincy work. I look forward to sharing milestones with you as I work toward prospective ordination.

As I reflect on my first month, I’m struck by the incredible spirit of collaboration, resilience, creativity, and wisdom that defines our congregation and its individuals. I believe that together, across faiths, generations, genders, orientations, hair styles, and body types, we are crafting a vibrant path forward for our historic church! Thank you for your trust. I look forward to walking the walk with all of you in the months and years to come.

With gratitude and hope,

Thomas Weisbecker

Congregational Director, Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula



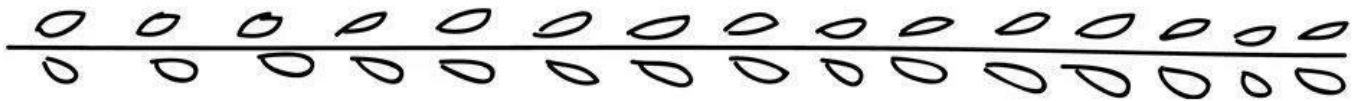




# Spiritual Growth Center

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH CENTER

*In 2015 we gathered some of activities we already did and those we hoped to do under the umbrella of the Spiritual Growth Center at the Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula. It provides opportunities and programs to awaken and sustain love, compassion, service and personal transformation. Our goal is to help individuals discover how spiritual practices, learning, and community service can transform their lives and move the world toward peace and justice. The activities of the center are yoga on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Meditation on Wednesday nights at 6 PM and Twilight Gathering on the second Tuesday of the month, coordinated by Kate English. Over the years we have had Singing Meditation, T'ai Chi, Sound Baths and more. There is room for book discussions, craft events and the sky's the limit. All it takes is the ideas and someone to organize them. For questions be in touch with the office.*



### SOARING HEARTS YOGA

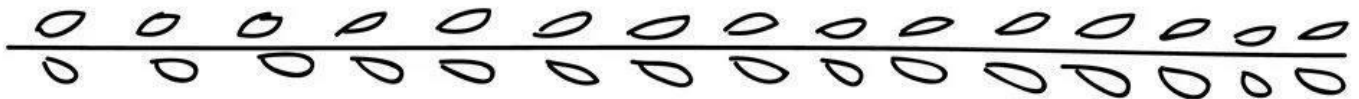
Soaring Hearts Yoga meets in the Parish Hall. Join them on

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:30 AM.

Bring your own mats and props.

Please contact Lisa Hammond at 831-801-2276 or

[soaringheartsyoga@gmail.com](mailto:soaringheartsyoga@gmail.com) for more information.



## Evening All-Level Yoga Classes

Led by Vibay Weisbecker in our parish hall

Tuesday, February 4 6:00 pm

**Tuesday, February 11 NO YOGA**

Tuesday, February 18 6:00 pm

Tuesday, February 25 6:00 pm

*Free will offering*

# Spiritual Growth Center

## MEDITATION PRACTICE GROUP

*In person in the Parish Hall and on Zoom and FB  
Call church office for the Zoom address and password.  
Like the FB page: Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula*

***February 5 with Rev Seikai & Thomas***

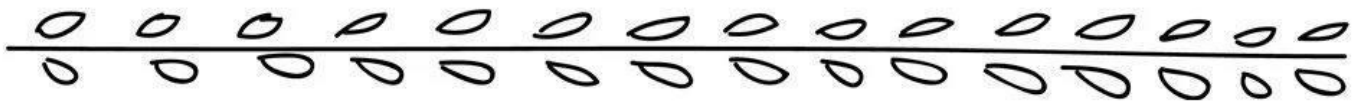
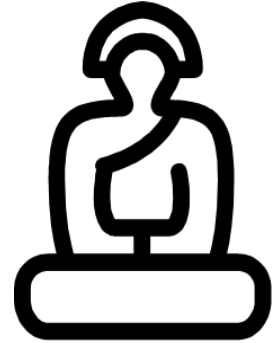
***February 12 with Jim Coler***

***February 19 with Thomas Weisbecker***

***February 25 with Jim Cole***

***EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 6 PM***

*For Zoom info, email [office@uucsp.org](mailto:office@uucsp.org) ~Free Will Offering*



# Twilight Gathering

**Tuesday, February 11 7:00 PM**

Led by Kate English

Poetry by Atul Ranchod

Please refer to the Friday Blast

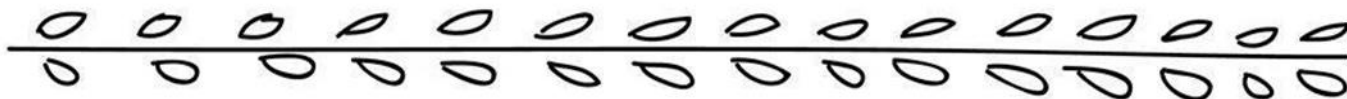
In person at the Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula  
740 E Main Street, Santa Paula  
OR ON ZOOM

Free will offering (\$5-20 suggested)

# People and Doings

## Message from a Member:

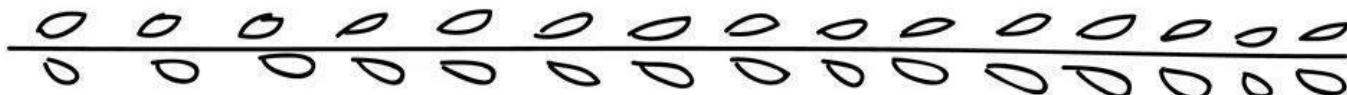
*Huge thanks to so many church friends who provided beautifully prepared meals from linguine with clams in the shell to a rich polish soup: Thomas Weisbecker, Ellen Deeb, Dotty, Karen Harris, and Constance Leshin. Thanks also to those who accompanied me on essential afternoon neighborhood walks: Margaret Wilson, Thomas Weisbecker, Maureen Kimberly, Karen Harris, Maddie Sifantus, and many many well-wishers sending greetings and phoning messages. Your love and support surrounds me, my heart is overflowing. ~Audrey Vincent*



**2025 1st QUARTER**  
**1st SUNDAY OFFERING**  
**February 2, March 2**



Poder Popular represents the power of grassroots organizing, which has been essential in driving meaningful social change. By amplifying important voices, it brings a rich community perspective to the table, offering valuable input and raising new issues of concern. It continues to harness the passion for equity and social justice, championing democratic values and striving to fulfill the promise at the heart of the American dream.



**SIP AND CHECK IN WITH SHARON KUFELDT**  
**TUESDAY, February 11 AT 4 PM ON ZOOM**

After a few minutes of casual chat as people arrive, we light a chalice with a reading and then invite people to take turns checking in about what's going on for them, answering the question, "How is it with your spirit today?" If there is still time left after the individual check-in's, the group will chat about topics of shared interest to them all or the monthly theme. We aim to be inclusive of everyone present who wishes to talk or ask questions.

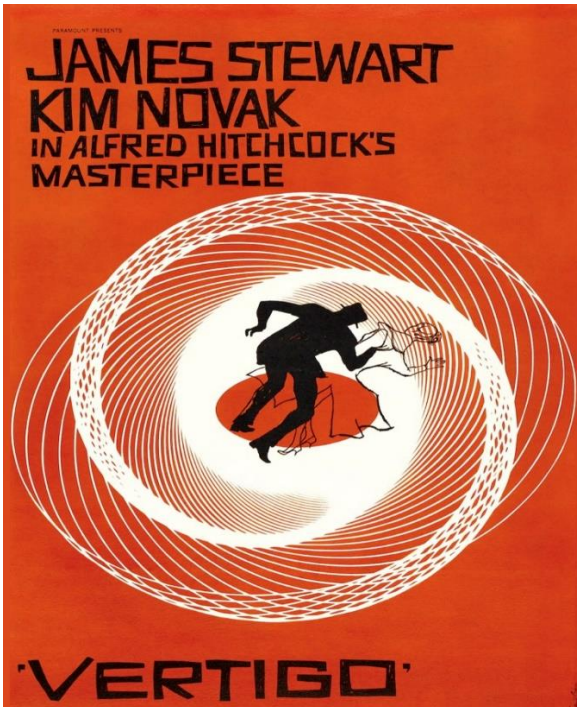


**Join Zoom Meeting** <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/7312177775>  
Meeting ID: 731 217 7775 Password: uucsp93060



# People and Doings

## SANTA PAULA CINEMA SOCIETY



A time comes in almost every great filmmaker's career when they are widely seen as having totally lost their minds. It happened to Buster Keaton with *The General*, and to Stanley Kubrick many times, but especially with *Barry Lyndon*. Hitchcock's moment of supposed madness came with the release of *Vertigo* in 1958. Though it arrived sandwiched between two of his blockbusters, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *North by Northwest*, critics and audiences alike were horrified by *Vertigo*, generally shocked and revolted by this strange tale of sexual obsession. Thematically it was just too much to accept, especially from the master of suspense, and particularly in the context of the neo-Victorian mores of the 1950s. The film fell into obscurity – partly for this reason – and also due to a copyright dispute that set it adrift for years, with only poor prints remaining in circulation. When the film was finally rediscovered and restored decades later, Hitchcock's vision for the film was seen again as he intended it to be seen, and reevaluated with contemporary eyes. And like the works of those other filmmakers who supposedly had gone completely insane, *Vertigo* was declared to be one of Hitchcock's masterworks, and an essential film in his catalog. Hitch will forever have the last laugh on all of us, it seems. Featuring James Stewart, Kim Novak, Barbara Bel Geddes, Tom Helmore, and a hypnotic score by Bernard Herrmann. (128 minutes)

SANTA PAULA CINEMA SOCIETY  
FRIDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2025  
Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula • 740  
E. Main Street • 7PM • Free! • Enter Side Door



## THE SOCIAL CONCERNS ACTION COMMITTEE

Our Mission Statement states: "We join together in Beloved Community to experience and act in support of environmental and social justice in our community, our state, our country, and our world."

We are greatly concerned about the real possibility of mass deportation of our neighbors and members of the larger Ventura County community. We are exploring options on what we can do to support and protect this community.

Please do join the conversation on Zoom, Wednesday, February 19th at 3:00 pm.



## MARY A. LIVERMORE SOCIETY

The Mission Statement of One Step A La Vez is "to serve the community of the Santa Clara River Valley by providing a safe environment for 13-19 year olds and preparing informed and empowered youth who are equipped with the tools to lead, cultivate cultural awareness bridge the gaps of inequality and advocate for fair, just and healthy individuals and community."

Our February meeting, featuring this worthwhile organization, will be held in the Parish Hall on Thursday, February 27th at 11:30.

Bring a sack lunch and your own good energy!



# People and Doings

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT/MEETING	Zoom/In-person
Sunday	2- Feb	10:30 AM	Worship	both
Tuesday	4- Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Tuesday	4- Feb	6:00 PM	Yoga with Vibay	In-person
Wednesday	5- Feb	6:00pm	Meditation - Rev Seikai & Thomas	both
Thursday	6- Feb	10:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Friday	7- Feb	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	
Sunday	9- Feb	10:30 AM	Worship	both
Tuesday	11- Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Tuesday	11- Feb	4:00 PM	Sip & Check In	zoom
Tuesday	11- Feb	7:00 PM	Twilight Gathering	both
Wednesday	12- Feb	6:00 PM	Meditation with Jim Cole	both
Thursday	13- Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga	In-person
Friday	14- Feb	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	
Friday	14- Feb	9:30 AM	Finance Committee meeting	zoom
Friday	14- Feb	7:00 PM	SP Cinema Society	In-person
Saturday	15- Feb	all day	March newsletter deadline	
Sunday	16- Feb	10:30 AM	Worship	both
Tuesday	18- Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Tuesday	18- Feb	6:00 PM	Yoga with Vibay	In-person
Wednesday	19- Feb	3:00 PM	Social Concerns Action Committee	zoom
Wednesday	19- Feb	6:00 PM	Meditation - Thomas Weisbecker	both
Thursday	20- Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Thursday	20- Feb	6:30pm	Board of Trustees meeting	In-person
Friday	21- Feb	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	
Sunday	23- Feb	10:30 AM	Worship	both
Tuesday	25- Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Tuesday	25- Feb	6:00 PM	Yoga with Vibay	In-person
Wednesday	26- Feb	6:00 PM	Meditation with Jim Cole	both
Thursday	27- Feb	10:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Thursday	27- Feb	11:30 AM	Mary A's	In-person
Thursday	27- Feb	5:00 PM	Worship Team meeting	zoom
Friday	28- Feb	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	

THE UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN  
CHURCH OF SANTA PAULA

740 East Main Street  
Santa Paula, CA 93060  
Office: 805-525-4647



[office@uucsp.org](mailto:office@uucsp.org)  
[www.uucsp.org](http://www.uucsp.org)  
[www.facebook.com/uucsp](https://www.facebook.com/uucsp)

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**Sunday Worship Services at 10:30 am**

Rev. Maddie Sifantus, Minister Emerita  
Krystal Johnson, Office Administrator  
Vincent Sorisio, Church Musician

**Board of Trustees:**

Mitch Stone, President,  
Ken Stock, Vice-President  
Ann Hewitt, Secretary,  
Jerry Gray, Treasurer  
Margaret Wilaon, Member at Large

**Tech Support Team:**

Monika Murillo Giselle Larios

## HOW TO CONNECT WITH UUCSP

**JOIN US SUNDAYS AT 10:30 AM IN PERSON,  
ON ZOOM**

Read our newsletter which you can find at

<https://uucsp.org/newsletter/>

Contact our office if you want to be added to our  
Friday email and our monthly newsletter email or  
want to have a nametag for in person events.

Visit our website to see more about UUCSP and see  
what's new at [www.uucsp.org](http://www.uucsp.org)

Join our Facebook page at

[www.facebook.com/uucsp](https://www.facebook.com/uucsp)

*Dated Material*  
*Time Value*

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of Santa Paula  
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