



Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula

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

uucspoffice@gmail.com website: uucsp.org



DECEMBER SERVICES, SUNDAYS AT 10:30 AM

Sunday, December 7 “The Quilt That Remembers”

As World AIDS Day is commemorated around the globe, we join in remembering the lives stitched into the great fabric of courage and love known as the AIDS Memorial Quilt. Each square tells a story of loss and resilience, heartbreak and hope. Together we'll reflect on what it means to choose hope even in the face of grief, and how remembrance itself can become a form of healing. will be sharing their beautiful quilts with us that day.

Sunday, December 14

Urban Wildlife Corridors: Building Bridges for Wildlife and People

Cities may seem like tough places for animals to live, but there are remarkable species all around us quietly navigating our neighborhoods, parks and backyards. In this talk, Dr. Zellmer will share how wildlife uses, and sometimes struggles to find, safe pathways across urban landscapes. She will discuss the idea of urban wildlife corridors, why they matter for both animals and healthy communities, and how thoughtful planning can build meaningful connections between people and nature in our neighborhoods.

Amanda Zellmer, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Biology at Occidental College in Los Angeles. Her research focuses on conservation biology and urban ecology, with a particular interest in how wildlife survives, moves, and thrives in cities. She works collaboratively with scientists, community partners, and regional agencies to help guide conservation decision-making in Southern California.

Thursday, December 18 3:00 PM Blue Christmas

A quiet, contemplative service for those carrying grief, stress, uncertainty, or simply the need for a softer place to land. As Therese Lee writes in her reflection on this season,

Sunday, December 21

“Return to the Light: A Solstice Celebration”

All-Generations Service

As the sun rises on this Solstice morning, we gather to welcome the turning of the season and the slow return of light. We'll explore what it means to tend the inner flame when the world feels dim or uncertain. This contemplative service invites us to choose hope, not as optimism, but as a quiet, steady act of faith that helps us move toward the light together.

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



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Wednesday, December 24 “Christmas Eve Candlelight Service”

With familiar carols, readings, and a spirit of joy, we gather on Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of hope in the world. The story of a child born in a humble place reminds us that light often arrives where we least expect it. Come be part of this beautiful tradition of music and candlelight as we choose hope together and welcome the peace of this holy night.

Sunday, December 28 Paul Van Ast.

Paul will share his experience working and volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and describe what San Gabriel Valley Habitat is doing to rebuild after the Eaton fire.

He will be coming along with his wife Tammy Tosounian. Paul and Tammy met on a Habitat for Humanity Volunteer trip in Argentina in 2008. They were married in 2013 at Limoneira in Santa Paula. Paul, Tammy and daughters Sage and Olive live in Altadena and are not yet back in their home after the Eaton fire as the smoke remediation process has not yet been completed.

Paul is the Director of Donor Partnerships at San Gabriel Valley Habitat for Humanity in Monrovia, CA. SGV Habitat is rebuilding for low income families who lost their homes in the fire in Altadena.



***“December is a time to reflect on the blessings
of the past year and to embrace the
opportunities of the coming one.”***

~ Oprah Winfrey

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Message from the Minister

Dear ones,

December invites us into a season of contrasts.

There is celebration and sparkle all around us, decorations going up on Main Street, calendars filling with gatherings, the hum of anticipation. And at the very same time, this month can feel tender. Grief becomes sharper in winter's quiet. Memories rise, some welcome, some bittersweet. The days grow shorter and ask us to pay attention to what carries us through the dark.

As writer Nina MacLaughlin reminds us,

"The solstices are for fire. Summer flames say Keep the light alive. In winter, a more urgent message: Bring light back to life."

(Winter Solstice: An Essay)

In the life of our congregation, we do exactly that, we bring light back to life, together. We hold one another through joy and through sorrow. None of us moves through this season alone.

This month, you are invited into several gatherings that honor the full emotional landscape of December:

• **Blue Christmas - Thursday, December 18 at 3:00 PM**

A quiet, contemplative service for those carrying grief, stress, uncertainty, or simply the need for a softer place to land. As Therese Lee writes in her reflection on this season,

"To the best of your ability, seek out the places and people that allow your sadness... Be gentle with yourself."

("Making Peace with Grief at Christmas")

• **All - Generations Solstice Service - Sunday, December 21**

A celebration of the longest night and the returning light. We will tell stories, sing together, and honor the ancient human longing for hope in the darkness. Or as MacLaughlin says,

"It's dark in there. How deep in the well will you go?"

(Winter Solstice: An Essay)

On this day we go deep together - and we rise together.

• **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - Tuesday, December 24 at 5:00 PM**

A beloved tradition of carols, candles, and community. Come early, bring friends, and let the glow of this night warm you.

And, we are delighted to bring back our **Wednesday Meditation** beginning **December 3 at 6:00 PM**, the first session led by Vibay Weisbecker. This midweek calm returns just when many of us most need it. This is the only meditation offered in December, a more regular schedule will be announced and continue in the new year. This month reminds me that spiritual practice isn't about perfection - it's about return.

Returning to wonder.

Returning to gratitude.

Returning to one another.

Returning to ourselves.

As the days grow shorter, may you find moments of quiet to hear your own heartbeat again.

May you discover flashes of beauty in unexpected places.

And may the warmth of community carry you through every doorway December opens.

With warmth and hope,

Carolyn

Message from Board of Trustees

Hello from your Board of Trustees. Welcome to December.

Our annual canvass / pledge drive began last month (well, the public facing part of it – the Finance committee had been working on it for some time prior to that). Most pledge cards have been received – and we heartily thank you. For those who have not yet completed and turned theirs in, please do so as soon as possible. Once we have “locked in” our projected revenue, we can more accurately work on the 2026 budget creation. It may seem as though our Annual Meeting is a long way off, but the Finance folks actually need to have a “completed” budget to present to the Board of Trustees at their January 2026 meeting. That budget will then be offered to the congregation for approval at the January 25, 2026 Annual Meeting. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Speaking of budgets . . . All those committee chairs and lead people who will be requesting funding for next year are asked to please get those proposals to the Finance committee as soon as you are able. Even if all we hear is “the same as last year” – we will need to hear from you. Mary Beth East, Luisa Haskell, Richard Hauge and Jerry Gray are all in planning mode and are awaiting your input.

The Nominating committee is looking for a few good people (sorry . . . I know we’re all good. I just remembered where that phrase originated!), to fill a couple spots in our Board and committees. If they reach out to you, please consider accepting the nod, as it is a wonderful way to connect with others in the congregation and do something good and fulfilling. We are not large in numbers, but if we each take a part and perform a task, the amount we accomplish is amazing.

This time of year, often sees some folks catch a “humbug” or real bug. If you’ve missed someone, reach out to them. A phone call, text, or note can really make someone’s day and keeps us all well and feeling cared-for.

We thank you for your diligence and for all you do throughout the year to keep our congregation active and vital. See you in church!

People and Doings



2024 4th QUARTER 1st SUNDAY OFFERING

December 7

Established in 1973, Interface Children & Family Services is the region's most comprehensive nonprofit social services agency providing direct, responsive, wrap-around services to address the complex needs of clients and our local community.

As a critical safety net for children and families, Interface provides 30 distinct programs across seven core program areas including [mental health & trauma treatment](#), [domestic violence & child abuse prevention](#), [youth crisis & homelessness](#), [human trafficking prevention & intervention](#), [justice services](#), and [211 information & assistance](#) in 31 California counties.

Today, Interface serves tens of thousands of local individuals annually, assists 250,000+ callers through the 211 call center across the state, and continues to earn the respect of individuals, businesses, and foundations, which provide grants, donations, and in-kind services to ensure that the work of Interface is sustained.

Interface works collaboratively with many other service providers. We are the only agency with a presence in all existing, formalized "under one roof" facilities across Ventura County. With collaboration, Interface best provides family support, domestic violence intervention, outreach, and youth activities, as well as prevention and counseling within economically challenged communities. To establish a foundation of violence prevention and mental health, Interface embeds five family-strengthening objectives into its programs:

- Help parents develop resiliency
- Help families develop a support system
- Help families secure practical help when they need it
- Teach parents how to raise healthy children
- Help children to develop socially and emotionally



**Social Concerns Action Committee & Mary A. Livermore Society
will not meet in December. See you in January!**



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 for more information.

People and Doings

We are delighted to bring back our **Wednesday Meditation** beginning **December 3 at 6:00 PM**, the first session led by Vibay Weisbecker. This midweek calm returns just when many of us most need it. This is the only meditation offered in December, a more regular schedule will be announced and continue in the new year.



Holiday Decorating

Sunday, December 7 after our service
Join us for joyful music and holiday decorating of
our sanctuary.

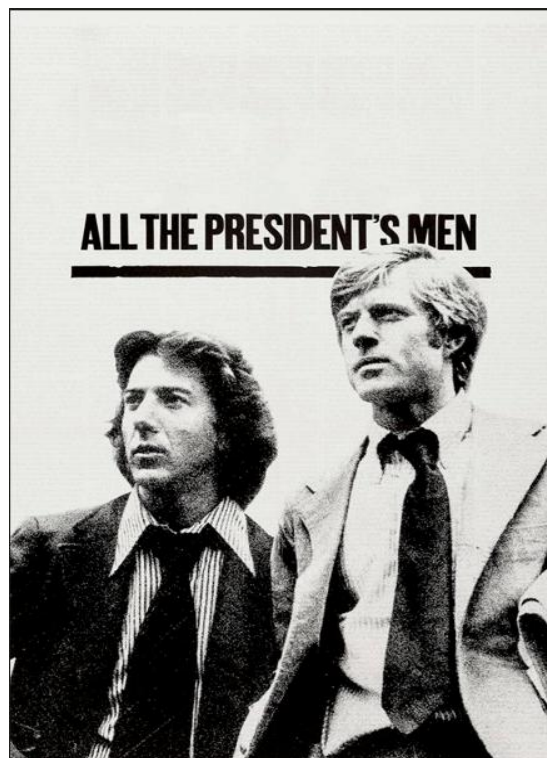


SIP AND CHECK IN TUESDAY DECEMEBER 9 AT 4 PM ON ZOOM

Each month, on the second Tuesday, Sharon Kufeldt graciously offers members of the congregation an opportunity to connect with one another on Zoom. This unstructured segment of time (between 4 and 5 p.m.) gives those who do check in, whether regularly or occasionally, a chance to share. Oftentimes one doesn't wish to express anything directly, yet it is another avenue for fellowship with one another.



SANTA PAULA CINEMA SOCIETY



Few films resonated more completely with the times than Alan J. Pakula's "All the President's Men." When it arrived in 1976, the Watergate scandal remained fresh in the minds of an American public skating on the thin edge between cynicism and hope. Based on the book by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, the film offered more of the latter through the unlikely means of glamorizing the tedious and inherently unglamorous work of investigative journalism.

Robert Redford (Woodward) and Dustin Hoffman (Bernstein), in their only film together, are unlikely heroes. The film studiously avoids the action scenes found in more conventional thrillers in favor of the fluorescent glare of the newsroom, phone calls, knocked-on doors, and hushed conversations in shadowy parking garages. There are no shootouts or car chases here, only the grinding accumulation of facts. These 007s have a license to type — not kill. Jason Robards, as the gravel-voiced Washington Post editor Ben Bradlee, supplies the journalistic guts required to allow Woodward and Bernstein to pursue the facts no matter where they might lead.

The story of these two dogged reporters relentlessly pursuing the scandal that toppled the Nixon presidency plays today as both a procedural thriller and a historical document. But its message about the indispensability of a free press and the power of simply asking the right questions is no less powerful today. Winner of three Academy Awards.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 12, 2025
SANTA PAULA CINEMA SOCIETY

Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula • 740 E. Main Street
• 7PM • Free! • Enter Side Door

People and Doings

Worship Team will meet on Tuesday, December 16 at 3:00 pm in the parish hall.

Board of Trustees will meet on Thursday, December 18 at 6:30 pm on Zoom.

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, January 14, 2026, 3:30 to 5:00 P.M., Zoom

“Spirit Talk” (Book and Discussion Group)

In “Spirit Talk” our goal is to ponder and wonder over the age-old questions and mysteries of life, death and life in--between life (if it exists). We are not trying to convince anyone to believe in a particular belief system, but to explore what can be gleaned from science, personal experience and ancient knowledge. We are not missionaries, but seekers of knowledge to enhance our personal growth. Our first selection is **Journey of Souls, Case Studies of Life Between Life**, by Michael Newton, PHD.

“Now considered a classic in the field, this remarkable book was the first to fully explore the mystery of life between lives. Journey of Souls presents the first-hand accounts of twenty--nine people placed in a "superconscious" state of awareness using Dr. Michael Newton's groundbreaking techniques. This unique approach allows Dr. Newton to reach his subjects' hidden memories of life in the spirit world after physical death. While in deep hypnosis, the subjects movingly describe what happened to them between lives. They reveal graphic details about what the spirit world is really like, where we go and what we do as souls, and why we come back in certain bodies. Through the extraordinary stories in this book, you will learn the specifics about:--How it feels to die--What you see and feel right after death--When and where you learn to recognize soul mates on earth--Different levels of soul: beginning, intermediate, and advanced--What happens to "disturbed" souls--The purpose of life and manifestation of a "creator". (Excerpt taken from Hoopla)

Everyone who reads the book is invited and welcomed. Talk to Karen, Sharon or Margaret for more information

JUST FOR FUN

The flowers December



Holly

Holly symbolizes protection and respect and is often associated with winter solstice celebrations and holiday decor due to its glossy leaves and red berries.



Narcissus (Paperwhite)

Narcissus are native to the Mediterranean, these fragrant flowers are cultivated for their beauty and are a popular choice for indoor arrangements during winter.

People and Doings

REMEMBER – the scoundrels don't take breaks for the holidays. Stay vigilant !!!

Holiday Scams

When shopping online during the holiday season—or any time of year—always be wary of deals that seem too good to be true. Don't become a scammer's next victim.

Every year, thousands of people become victims of holiday scams. Scammers can rob you of hard-earned money, personal information, and, at the very least, a festive mood.

Scams include:

- **non-delivery scams**, where you pay for goods or services you find online, but you never receive your items
- **non-payment scams**, where you ship purchased goods or services, but you never receive payment for them
- **auction fraud**, where a product you purchase was misrepresented on an auction site
- **gift card fraud**, where a seller asks you to pay with a pre-paid card

According to the [Internet Crime Complaint Center's \(IC3\) 2024 report](#), non-payment and non-delivery scams cost people more than \$785 million that year. Credit card fraud accounted for another \$199 million in losses.

The IC3 receives a large volume of complaints in the early months of each year, suggesting a correlation with the previous holiday season's shopping scams.

Protect yourself

Whether you're the buyer or the seller, there are a number of ways you can protect yourself—and your wallet. Remember: If it seems too good to be true, that's because it is.

Practice good cybersecurity hygiene.

- Don't click any suspicious links or attachments in emails, on websites, or on social media. [Phishing scams](#) and similar crimes get you to click on links and give up personal information like your name, password, and bank account number. In some cases, you may unknowingly download malware to your device.
- Be especially wary if a company asks you to update your password or account information. Look up the company's phone number on your own and call the company.

Know who you're buying from or selling to.

- Check each website's URL to make sure it's legitimate and secure. A site you're buying from should have https in the web address. If it doesn't, don't enter your information on that site.
- If you're purchasing from a company for the first time, do your research and check reviews.
- Verify the legitimacy of a buyer or seller before moving forward with a purchase. If you're using an online marketplace or auction website, check their feedback rating. Be wary of buyers and sellers with mostly unfavorable feedback ratings or no ratings at all.
- Avoid sellers who act as authorized dealers or factory representatives of popular items in countries where there would be no such deals.
- Be wary of sellers who post an auction or advertisement as if they reside in the U.S. but then respond to questions by stating they are out of the country on business, family emergency, or similar reasons.
- Avoid buyers who request their purchase be shipped using a certain method to avoid customs or taxes inside another country.

Be careful how you pay.

- Never wire money directly to a seller.
- Don't pay for items with [pre-paid gift cards](#). In these scams, a seller will ask you to send them a gift card number and PIN. Instead of using that gift card for your payment, the scammer will steal the funds, and you'll never receive your item.
- Use a credit card when shopping online and check your statement regularly. If you see a suspicious transaction, contact your credit card company to dispute the charge.

Monitor the shipping process.

- Always get tracking numbers for items you buy online, so you can make sure they have been shipped and can follow the delivery process.
- Be suspect of any credit card purchases where the address of the cardholder does not match the shipping address when you are selling. Always receive the cardholder's authorization before shipping any products.
- <https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/scams-and-safety/common-frauds-and-scams/holiday-scams>

People and Doings

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT/MEETING	Zoom/In-person
Tuesday	2-Dec	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Wednesday	3-Dec	6:00 AM	Meditation with Vibay	In-person
Thursday	4-Dec	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Friday	5-Dec	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	
Sunday	7-Dec	10:30 AM	Worship service	both
Tuesday	9-Dec	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Tuesday	9-Dec	4:00 PM	Sip & Check In	zoom
Thursday	11-Dec	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Friday	12-Dec	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	
Friday	12-Dec	10:00 AM	Finance Committee meeting	zoom
Friday	12-Dec	7:00 PM	Santa Paula Cinema Society	In-person
Sunday	14-Dec	10:30 AM	Worship service	both
Monday	15-Dec	all day	December Newsletter deadline	
Tuesday	16-Dec	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Tuesday	16-Dec	3:00 PM	Worship Team Meeting	In-person
Wednesday		3:00 PM	NO Social Concerns Action Committee meeting	zoom
Thursday	18-Dec	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Thursday		11:00 AM	NO Mary A's meeting	In-person
Thursday	18-Dec	3:00 PM	Blue Christmas by Caring Committee	both
Thursday	18-Dec	6:30 PM	Board of Trustees meeting	zoom
Friday	19-Dec	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	
Sunday	21-Dec	10:30 AM	Worship service	In-person
Tuesday	23-Dec	9:30 AM	NO Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Wednesday	24-Dec	5:00 PM	Christmas Eve Candelight service	both
Thursday	25-Dec	9:30 AM	NO Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Saturday	27-Dec	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	
Sunday	28-Dec	10:30 AM	Worship service	In-person

THE UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN
CHURCH OF SANTA PAULA

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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.

office@uucsp.org

Visit our website to see more about UUCSP and see
what's new at www.uucsp.org

Join our Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/uucsp

Sunday Worship Services at 10:30 am

Carolyn Bjerke, Minister

Board of Trustees:

Mitch Stone, President,

Ken Stock, Vice-President

Ann Hewitt, Secretary,

Jerry Gray, Treasurer

Margaret Wilaon, Member at Large

Krystal Johnson, Office Administrator

Vincent Sorisio, Church Musician

Tech Support Team:

Monika Murillo Giselle Larios

Rev. Maddie Sifantus, Minister Emerita

Dated Material
Time Value

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