



# Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula

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## FEBRUARY SERVICES, SUNDAYS AT 10:30 AM



### Theme: Embodying Resilience

#### Sunday, February 1

##### Six More Weeks of... What?

Carolyn Bjerke and Ruth Ricards

Groundhog Day has become a kind of cultural parable: waking up to the same day again and again, wondering if anything can change, wondering if *we* can change.

This service explores resilience as the slow, real work of transformation: what it means to keep showing up when life feels repetitive, stuck, or heavy. Not with forced optimism, but with the kind of courage that says, *Even here, something can shift*. Even here, we can practice a new way of being.

*1st Sunday Plate offering to: Poder Popular*

Stone Soup coffee hour

#### Sunday, February 8

##### The Strength of Being Seen

Carolyn Bjerke and Ken Stock

Resilience isn't only what we carry alone. Sometimes resilience is what happens between us - when someone stays near, tells the truth gently, makes room for tears, or helps us remember who we are.

This service leans into a countercultural practice: vulnerability as strength, tenderness as a life skill, honesty as a form of courage. Not the kind of vulnerability that performs pain, but the kind that opens a door and says, *I'm here. I'm human. I need you*.

#### Sunday, February 15

##### Change Is a Place of Possibility

Carolyn Bjerke and Ruth Ricards

Many of us were taught to fear change - to treat it as a disruption, a threat, a loss of control. But can change is also be a doorway?

In this service, we'll explore resilience as the ability to stay present while life rearranges itself - seeking not certainty, but possibility. Not perfection, but aliveness. Not armor, but the steady practice of becoming.

#### Sunday February 22

##### Mid-Winter and Our Interbeing

Guest Speaker Mahri Mendenhall and Ellen Deeb

How do we sit with the cold and walk in light- a light that warms and nourishes. What we become we do not know. It is in working together that unleashes our possibilities.

Mahri's work in environmental justice is rooted in the interdependence of life with a focus on spiritual and societal impacts. She serves with the Bishop's Commission on Climate Change for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, California Interfaith Power and Light, and Ventura County Climate Alliance.

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

# Message from the Minister

Resilience is often mistaken for toughness, pushing through, powering on, pretending we're fine. But the deeper kind of resilience is something else entirely. It's the courage to stay honest and tender. To soften instead of harden. To let ourselves be changed by what we've lived through, without letting it make us smaller.

This month, we'll explore resilience as breaking the loop: noticing the patterns that keep us stuck, worn down, or shut off - and learning, little by little, to live them differently. Not through sheer willpower, but through small, sacred shifts: choosing honesty over hiding, connection over isolation, possibility over fear. Not perfection. Not armor. Just the steady, human practice of becoming.

Most of us know what it feels like to fall into a loop. The same worry returning at 2 a.m. The same inner voice that tightens our chest before we even realize it's speaking. The same dynamic in a relationship that leaves us feeling small, defensive, or alone. The same habits of overextending, overthinking, or shutting down - patterns that may have once protected us, but now quietly keep us from living fully.

And sometimes the loop isn't dramatic at all. Sometimes it's just exhaustion. The way we keep saying yes when we're already empty. The way we drift through the week without ever really landing in our own bodies. The way we carry the weight of the world without letting ourselves be carried.

So what does resilience look like in a moment like this?

It might look like pausing long enough to notice what's happening inside us.

It might look like choosing a different response.

It might look like telling the truth to someone we trust.

It might look like asking for help without apologizing for needing it.

It might look like rest - not as a reward, but as a practice of staying human.

Because breaking the loop doesn't always mean we escape the hard thing. Sometimes it means we stop abandoning ourselves as we are in it.

That's what I hope we practice together this month: the kind of resilience that isn't about "getting over it" or "getting back to normal," but about becoming more free, more alive, more connected to who we really are, and to one another.

As always, you don't need to arrive "put together" to belong here. You don't need to have it figured out. You don't need to be resilient in the shiny, impressive way our culture loves to celebrate. Just come as you are... tired, tender, uncertain, hopeful. We'll practice together, one small shift at a time.

Carolyn Bjerke, Minister

# Message from Board of Trustees

I am late again, as usual.

Whenever I am tasked with writing one of these board reports, my head seems to be either empty of thoughts or swimming with too many of them. At the moment, it is more of the latter. Probably a lot of us are feeling much the same way these days.

Expressing what is in your heart and mind can be a more difficult assignment than it might seem. Sometimes, you can't honestly claim to be completely certain of what you are feeling, or why.

When I "signed the book" and became a member of this congregation a little more than five years ago, I'd been a "friend of" for many years before that. My standard quip was that I came to church whenever there was food.

I always knew, down deep, that this was never entirely true. For one, there is practically always food. For another, I'd been running my film series at the church for years by then. Who was I kidding?

In reality, my hesitancy was more about admitting that I already felt part of this community. This is a big leap for many of us, especially if we were raised in another faith tradition. It feels like you are giving something up. In fact, you are bringing something with you, something that is valued here. A-ha! It took me a while to get it.

When I did finally sign, I was provided with an opportunity to write about myself for the newsletter. I was probably late on this task, too — if only because I faced some challenging questions. For one, I was prompted to talk about what I expected to get out of becoming a member, or something along those lines.

I admitted to having no idea how to answer that one. It took me a while to figure out some part of it. I feel now as if I have, if in an unexpected way.

Amid all the compulsive doom-scrolling we are all doing now, and the feeling of being set adrift in a country we once thought we knew, this church has become a life-raft. I look around the sanctuary each Sunday and see my fellow passengers. Five years ago, I could not have predicted this as a reason to join. Sometimes the most meaningful journeys are the ones you did not plan.

So, speaking of journeys, it has truly been an honor to serve the congregation as your Board President for the past two years. This wasn't something I planned when I signed the membership book, either. Nor could anyone have anticipated the events of the past two years that we were all called upon to navigate. Another unexpected voyage.

This year we welcome Ariel Alexander to the board, as Ann and I switch hats; she as president and I as secretary. Jerry, we are happy to report, will continue on as treasurer, and Ken as vice-president.

We all remain your fellow travelers, and I hope not arriving too late — at least not on my account.

With thanks and gratitude to all, on behalf of the UUCSP Board,

Mitch

# People and Doings

**2026 1st QUARTER  
FIRST SUNDAY OFFERING  
February 1, March 1**



Poder Popular in Santa Paula, CA, is a vital community organization focused on empowering residents, especially agricultural workers, by providing essential resources like a food pantry (with groceries, diapers, formula), health/literacy workshops, and advocacy for better living/working conditions, operating through local partnerships and community engagement to strengthen the Santa Clara River Valley community's well-being.



## **SOARING HEARTS YOGA**

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



## **MEDITATION WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 6:00 PM**

We'll continue our First Wednesday meditation with Vibay Weisbecker, creating space for reflection and grounding in the middle of the week. This will be in person and online

## **CANDLELIGHT SOUND MEDITATION Thursday, February 6 at 7:00 p.m.,**

Featuring Award-Winning Vocal Ensemble SERAPHOUR Comes to Santa Paula. The Universalist-Unitarian Church of Santa Paula will host Sound Meditations: Santa Paula, an immersive candlelight sound meditation experience featuring the award-winning vocal ensemble SERAPHOUR, joined by members of the Los Robles Children's Choir and partnering with VC VibeWell Initiative.

These sound meditations are inspired by classical sacred music and feature unaccompanied vocal repertoire drawn from Gregorian chant and Renaissance music. The sessions blend the beauty of classical traditions with singing bowls, and organic vocal resonance, creating space for deep listening, calm, and connection. The evening offers a contemplative atmosphere designed to support renewal through sound, stillness, and resonance. Voices and singing bowls will fill the candlelit sanctuary, inviting participants into an experience of reflection and embodied listening.

## **SIP AND CHECK IN TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10 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.



# People and Doings

## **“SPIRIT TALK” (Book and Discussion Group)**

Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 3:30 to 5:00 P.M., Zoom.

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. We will continue with our first selection, “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 to our group. Talk to Karen, Sharon or Margaret for more information.

## **Song Circles: reclaiming the joy of singing together**

Before screens and earbuds, people often gathered in living rooms and around tables to share music, not as an audience, but as participants. In many ways, we’ve lost something in the shift from making art together to mostly consuming it.

That’s one of the reasons why we’re starting monthly Song Circles at UUCSP

A Song Circle is communal singing in its simplest form: we sit in a circle and share songs that are easy to learn and remember, and sing them together, sometimes adding harmonies or layered parts as we go. You do not need to be trained, confident, or even particularly comfortable. You can lead a song, request one, pass, or simply listen until you’re ready. All genres are welcome. You are welcome and invited to bring an instrument!

We also practice a couple norms that help everyone feel safe: this is not a performance space; it’s a shared practice. There is room for all voices.

Our first monthly Song Circle: **February 11th 6-7:30 pm.**

Snacks and beverages are welcome.

If you’ve been waiting for a low-pressure way to “try your voice,” this is it. Come as you are, and let the circle hold the song with you.



# People and Doings

## SANTA PAULA CINEMA SOCIETY



American filmmakers found themselves in a bind in the early 1940s. Tackling serious subject matter practically demanded acknowledging that much of the world was at war. With the U.S. on the sidelines, only a handful of pre-Pearl Harbor films dared to draw attention to the plight of our European allies – among them, "Foreign Correspondent" and "The Great Dictator" (1940), and from 1942, "Mrs. Miniver."

But none of these films had the satirical bite of Ernst Lubitsch's "To Be or Not to Be." Like some other 1942 releases, this project was developed before the Pearl Harbor attack and released shortly after to a much-changed American audience. A film like this one could not have been conceived even weeks later than it was.

The setting is Warsaw in the days following the German invasion of Poland. The story is of a theater troupe putting one over on their Nazi occupiers. Far from the safest subject for comedy, Lubitsch molded this dangerous material into one of his most trenchant satires.

Not that every critic at the time agreed. With the nation now at war, Lubitsch's portrayal of our deadly enemies as comical buffoons in a screwball situation came off to some as crass and tasteless – or ill-advised, at least. Lubitsch got the last word. The film is now considered a classic. It is fascinating, and fun, to watch – playing today more as daring and irreverent than offensive.

In one of his best film roles, Jack Benny plays himself more convincingly than anyone else could. This is also Carole Lombard's final film, as she died in a plane crash shortly before its release – ironically, returning from a war bond drive. With a great supporting cast including Lubitsch favorites Felix Bressart and Sig Ruman.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 13, 2026  
SANTA PAULA CINEMA SOCIETY  
Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula • 740 E. Main Street •  
7PM • Free! • Enter Side Door

## SOCIAL CONCERN'S ACTION COMMITTEE Wednesday: February 18<sup>th</sup>

The February meeting of the Social Concerns Action Committee (SCAC) will be held on Wednesday, February 18th on zoom. It will begin at 3:00. There is always so much to discuss in our ever changing political climate. As we are venturing closer to the 2026 midterm elections, what can each of us do to "move the needle"? Join us! All are invited!

## CARING COMMITTEE will meet on Thursday, February 19 at 4:00 PM

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES will meet on Thursday, February 19 at 6:30 pm in the Parish Hall.

## WORSHIP TEAM will meet on Tuesday, February 24 at 3:00 pm

## MEDITATION Wednesday, February 25 6:00 PM

We'll hold a Taizé-style meditative service, an evening of simple singing, readings, silence, and candlelight, inspired by the contemplative tradition of the Taizé community. This service isn't about learning something new or solving anything. It's about resting the nervous system, sharing quiet, and remembering that we don't carry life, or resistance, alone.

## MARY A. LIVERMORE SOCIETY Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup> 11:30 AM

The February meeting of the Mary A's will be held in the Parish Hall on Thursday, February 26th. This will be a potluck lunch meeting with the topic of YOU! We will set up at 11:00. The meeting will start at 11:30. Please let Constancia know if you are coming as she needs to send you an interesting questionnaire that needs to be filled out before the meeting and then shared during the meeting. Also, since it is a potluck lunch, let her know what you would like to bring!

# People and Doings

DAY	DATE	TIME	EVENT/MEETING	Zoom/In-person
Sunday	1-Feb	10:30 AM	Worship service	both
Monday	2-Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Wednesday	4-Feb	6:00 PM	Meditation with Vibay	In-person
Thursday	5-Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Friday	6-Feb	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	
Friday	6-Feb	7:00 PM	Sound Meditation	In-person
Sunday	8-Feb	10:30 AM	Worship service	both
Monday	9-Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Tuesday	10-Feb	10:00 AM	Board Retreat	In-person
Tuesday	10-Feb	4:00 PM	Sip & Check In	zoom
Wednesday	11-Feb	3:30 PM	Spirit Talk	zoom
Wednesday	11-Feb	6:00 PM	Song Circle	In-person
Thursday	12-Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Friday	13-Feb	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	
Friday	13-Feb	10:00 AM	Finance Committee meeting	zoom
Friday	13-Feb	7:00 PM	SP Cinema Society	In-person
Sunday	15-Feb	all day	Newsletter submission deadline	
Sunday	15-Feb	10:30 AM	Worship service	In-person
Monday	16-Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Wednesday	18-Feb	3:00 PM	Social Concerns Action Committee meeting	zoom
Thursday	19-Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Thursday	19-Feb	4:00 PM	Caring Committee meeting	In-person
Thursday	19-Feb	6:30 PM	Board of Trustees meeting	In-person
Friday	20-Feb	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	
Sunday	22-Feb	10:30 AM	Worship service	In-person
Monday	23-Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Tuesday	24-Feb	3:00 PM	Worship Team Meeting	In-person
Wednesday	24-Feb	6:00 PM	Taize Meditation	In-person
Thursday	26-Feb	9:30 AM	Yoga with Lisa	In-person
Thursday	26-Feb	11:00 AM	Mary A's meeting	In-person
Friday	27-Feb	7am - 1pm	Church Cleaning	

THE UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN  
CHURCH OF SANTA PAULA

740 East Main Street  
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**Sunday Worship Services at 10:30 am**

Carolyn Bjerke, Minister

Board of Trustees:

Ann Hewitt, President,

Ken Stock, Vice-President

Mitch Stone, Secretary,

Jerry Gray, Treasurer

Ariel Alexander, Member at Large

Krystal Johnson, Office Administrator

Vincent Sorisio, Church Musician

Tech Support Team:

Monika Murillo Giselle Larios

Rev. Maddie Sifantus, Minister Emerita

**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](mailto:office@uucsp.org)

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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