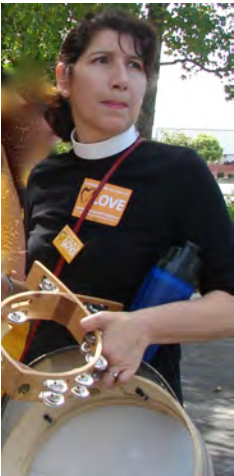


Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Kern County

A Message From Our Minister



"Listen privately, silently to the voices that rise up
From the pages of books
and from your own heart. Be still and listen to the voices that belong
To the streambanks and the trees and the open fields. There are songs and sayings
that belong to this place,
By which it speaks for itself and no other.

Found your hope, then, on the ground under your feet. Your hope of Heaven,
let it rest on the ground
Underfoot. Be it lighted by the light that falls
Freely upon it after the darkness of the nights
And the darkness of our ignorance
and madness. Let it be lighted also by the light that is within you,
Which is the light of imagination. By it you see
The likeness of people in other places
to yourself
In your place. It lights invariably the need for care
Toward other
people, other creatures, in other places
As you would ask them for care
toward your place and you."

---A portion of a poem on hope by Wendell Berry

I found Wendell Berry reading this poem about hope on Youtube. It is a long one, but I took the part that spoke to my chosen principle for this month. As you may recall, I will be meditating on the 7th principle: Respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence of Which We are a Part.

This poem stopped me in my tracks as I listened to Berry's soothing voice. But it also reminded me of our homework assignment to read and listen to my heart as I interact with my chosen principle this month. It reminded me to listen to nature, thus beckoning me to meditate more outdoors. This is what I affirm to bring hope into my life:

I will meditate in the sunlight. Perhaps, I will walk more by the water as I watch the sunlight glisten upon the waves. Berry reminds me that this light will give me hope in people, in nature, and in God as I recognize the light that comes after darkness. So, too, the potential for people to change from dark to light is there. It will teach me to care for one another and the environment as well. It will remind me that heaven is found on earth and so I must care for this heaven.

May others remember to care for this land of ours this December, too. May I recommit to a life that fights for our environment -- a life re-committing to our children and our children's children. May I find hope as I do so...

Namaste and may you find hope this December,

Summer

HOPE

Christmas is on its way and with me, if I think about HOPE in relation to Christmas I'm six years old again. How about you? Is it all centered in surprises under the tree and in our elaborately decorated stockings? Is it ...

I hope! I hope! I hope!

I want! I want! I want!

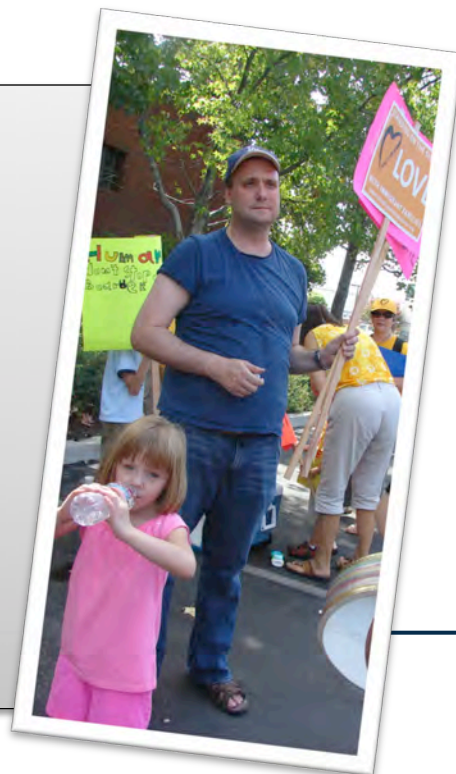
Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!

"No!" says the newly converted Grinch within each of us. "Perhaps Christmas is a little bit more!" He is right because I'm imagining within my heart that sprinkles of magic will drift down throughout this Christmas season, will drift down upon all of the world. Somehow hearts will become softer and somehow the passages within the various Holy Books of the world that lead weak souls to unimaginable violence, perhaps those passages will melt off the pages and every heart will turn more toward love for each other, respect and care for our wondrous planet and its many species and varied landscapes. Perhaps if we all hope enough, flowers will be more brightly colored, birds will sing more sweetly, families will be more patient and affectionate and all of us will rejoice with the recurring gift of each day we are here and aware of all of it. A new world is peeking at us from just around the corner and it's certain to be better if we all have hope.

Irene Heath

**"Drumming in the New Year"
Intergenerational Drum Circle
Saturday, January 4th 2014
4pm-6pm**

Come join our New Year drum circle! Bring a drum or use one of ours. We will drum and dance for a prosperous and healthy 2014! Also, bring a potluck item to share with friends. All are welcome. So, bring the family or bring a friend. See you there!



GUEST AT YOUR TABLE



The Guest at Your Table fundraiser for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is underway. This is the major fundraising effort for the (UUSC). The UUSC supports projects that promote civil liberties, advance economic and environmental justice, and provide humanitarian aid in times of crisis.

If you haven't already done so, you are invited to bring home a Guest Box or envelope to place on your dining table. With each meal, place money (real or virtual) in the box that would be spent to feed a guest. During January the monies from the boxes will be collected and forwarded to the UUSC so that they can continue their work around the globe.

I would appreciate it, if instead of bringing your coins and dollar bills to church, you turn your donation into a check made out to the UUSC. If you would like more information please check out the UUSC's website at UUSC.org or contact Pat Berthold at pberthold@earthlink.net or 661-747-3769.



December 8

Speaker:

Summer Albayati Krikeche:



December 15

Andy Kendall - Title: Intergenerational Service

December 22

Summer Albayati-Krikeche:

December 29

Speaker: Larry Taylor - Title: "The Christmas Nativity Story and The Bible"



The Christmas season is almost over and we have all experienced a number of nativity scenes and heard a number of stories about the birth of Jesus. How biblical



The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Kern County MITTEN TREE will be up and ready for your donations on Sunday, December 8th. Please bring your donations of warm mittens, gloves, hats, and socks to decorate the Mitten Tree. The children and youth will be collecting your donations during the Time for All Ages. Items are needed for all ages and all sizes. The donated items will be taken to the Bakersfield Homeless Center. If you have questions please call Pat Berthold at 747-3769.

This was in HuffingtonPost.com in September. It rang so true to me, I thought it might be worth sharing. No author is provided.

In fellowship

Julie Means

23 Things You Should Never Say To A Childfree Woman

Whether or not a woman wants to have children is a very personal decision. Unfortunately, it's also one of those things that everyone seems to feel empowered to comment on.

Pieces written by women who are childfree by choice reveal the extent to which their choices are constantly questioned and dismissed. "Early on, I learned that the worst thing I could do was to give an honest answer," Carolina A. Miranda wrote in an August 2013 Time magazine piece. "Saying 'I don't want kids' simply set me up as a challenge to be surmounted."

In another August 2013 Time article, Lauren Sandler argued that: "If you're a woman who's not in the mommy trenches, more often than not you're excluded from the discussion." And in a March 2011 blog for The Huffington Post, Stefanie Iris Weiss summed up popular opinions to childfree women:

People react to the idea of women not having children with total incredulity, shock, and worst of all, pity. They assume it's a case of infertility in disguise, a lack of a relationship, or that women without kids "hate children." In the majority of cases, it's none of the above.

We're strongly of the opinion that women shouldn't have to justify their reproductive decisions to anyone. Really, everyone else should simply stop commenting on them. So we polled our Twitter followers on what you should never say to a woman who doesn't want to have kids.

23 Things You Should Never Say To A Childfree Woman

1. "What a bad decision."
2. "Now that I have children, my life has true meaning!"
3. "You're a crazy cat lady in training."
4. "You think you're tired? You don't know what tired is."
5. "You're being selfish."
6. "You'll change your mind when you meet the right man."
7. "What are you waiting for?"
8. "Your mom had you!"
9. "You're missing out on one of the best things in life."
10. "It's a mom thing."
11. "That's a shame. You might regret it."
12. "What's wrong with you?"
13. "The size of that house and just the two of you? It's a waste of space."
14. "But you would be such a great mom!"
15. "Just find a donor and have kids. I'll babysit."
16. "You think you don't want children, but once you have them you'll change your mind."
17. "Don't wait too long."
18. "You'd better hurry up and give your husband a child before he finds someone who will."
19. "You don't have children, so you won't understand."
20. "You don't know what real love is."
21. "Wait until your biological clock kicks in."
22. "Aren't you worried there'll be no one to look after you when you're old?"
23. "Tick tock."