

December 2018
Volume 12

The LEAVES

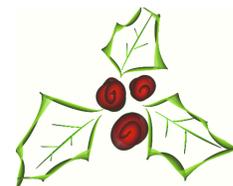
EMERSON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

7304 Jordan Avenue Canoga Park, CA 91303
www.emersonuuc.org (818) 887-6101

Rev. Matthew McHale, Minister
Lynne Masuhara, President

Sunday Morning Worship – 10:30 a.m.

DECEMBER WORSHIP THEME: MYSTERY



December 2nd - "Transcending Mystery and Wonder" - Rev. Matthew McHale and Linda Fitzgerald, Worship Associate The living tradition of Unitarian Universalism draws from many sources. This Sunday we will explore our first source: "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life."

The Emerson Choir will sing "La canción del caminante," text by Antonio Machado, music by Scott Rieker.

December 9th - "Let The Mystery Be" - Rev. Matthew McHale and David Early, Worship Associate

For ages, humans have been wondering about our existence and our universe, and telling countless stories about where we come from and where we are going. But how important is knowing the answers to living a good life? What is to be said for, "letting the mystery be," as Iris DeMent sings?

Special Music: "Let The Mystery Be" by Iris DeMent, offered by Elizabeth Altman, Paul Mahdavi-Bernstein & Kevin Mathie.

December 16th - Holiday Pageant Rev. Matthew McHale and Cleo Anderson; Barbara Calvi, Worship Associate

This year's multigenerational winter holiday pageant will re-enact the biblical Nativity story, but in a very UU sort of way. Children, youth, and adults will be able to participate easily in this fun "no-rehearsal" pageant: when roles are announced by the narrators, anyone can raise their hand to jump up, receive a costume, and join the performance! Come and join us for this always-enjoyable holiday celebration!

The Emerson Choir will sing "Glow" by Erik Whitacre



December 23rd - "Hope in the Dark" Rev. Matthew McHale & Todd Covert, Worship Associate.

The solstice marks the time of the year when the nights are longest... but it is also the time of the years when the light begins to return. When life is challenging, what are our sources of hope, strength, inspiration, and light?

Monday, December 24—Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (6:00 pm)

Rev. Matthew McHale and Julie Borden, Worship Associate - Join us for our annual candlelit Christmas Eve service to sing carols, share the ancient story of the rebirth of hope and reflect on the meaning of Christmas in our lives and in the world. Like the gifts wrapped up under the Christmas tree, the service will be something of a mystery, a creative and participatory service full of surprises.



December 30th, "Next" - Gregory C. Carrow-Boyd, Guest Speaker & Melissa Marote, Worship Associate - The eve of a New Year presents opportunity, uncertainty and wishful thinking. In this time, our hopes for the year ahead are both distinctly achievable and infinitely elusive. Yet, how we manage to move through this tension, mindful that we might not have achieved all of our goals in the past year, is a bit messy. Gather on this final Sunday in 2018 as we explore the mystery of why we dare to hope when all signs tell us not to bother.

We are excited to welcome back to our pulpit **Gregory C. Carrow-Boyd, a religious educator and seminarian** who studies at Claremont School of Theology. Greg serves on the Board of Trustees of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). He enjoys original content from online streaming services and quality time with his loved ones and accomplices in justice. Greg also works as the Coordinator for More Than Sex-Ed, a Greater LA-based sexuality education collective that brings the UUA- and United Church of Christ comprehensive sexuality education curriculum, Our Whole Lives, to schools, home school groups and the greater community.



Soul Matters

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Mystery?

Unitarian Universalists love puzzles. We proudly announce that we are the religion that loves questions and questioning.

Or to put it another way, we love figuring out life's mysteries. But what if mystery isn't just something to figure out? What if it's also something to be listened to? This is the lesser recognized call of our faith.

Being a people of mystery isn't just about engaging life as a marvelous puzzle. It's also about allowing yourself to be spoken to by life's wonder. One of the most elegant articulations of this comes from the poet Mary Oliver, a much-loved poet of Unitarian Universalists. In her poem, "Wild Geese," she writes,

"Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting— over and over announcing your place in the family of things."

Oliver's call to listen for life's announcements implies a letting go. Mystery is funny this way. You can't make it speak. Indeed the more you pursue the answers to life's mysteries; the more distant they become. If we want mystery to speak, it seems we have to be willing to be caught off guard. UU humanist minister and poet, David Breeden, captures this beautifully when he writes,

*"I dug and dug
Deeper into the earth
Looking for blue heaven
Choking always
On piles of dust rising
Then once
At midnight I slipped
And fell into the sky
Slipping, and then falling into the sky."*

Is there a better way to describe our dance with mystery? Isn't this what all the great mystics have been trying to tell us from the start? That sitting at the heart of mystery is not the unknown, but unity. We fall into mystery and it falls into us. Its voice is one that whispers, "*I am you and you are me.*" Mystery doesn't put up barriers; it dissolves them. Haven't all of us faced the wonder and mystery of a sunset, the stars, a baby's first cry or a lover's wet kiss and thought to ourselves, "*Who I am does not end at the barrier of my skin*"?

So friends, this month, let's let ourselves fall in and open up. So many opportunities to slip into the sky and let it slip into us. Let's put down all the puzzling and the figuring out. Just long enough to notice that life isn't simply trying to stump us. It's also trying to connect with us.

Emerson's New Choir Director: Eloise Porter

We are excited to welcome Eloise Porter as Emerson's new Choir Director, although Eloise has actually been leading the Emerson Choir since August, as acting choir director, during the search process.

Eloise Porter is a native of Los Angeles and a product of the Los Angeles Unified School District where she has now been teaching elementary school music for over 20 years. She holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Illinois in Vocal Performance and a B.A. from Occidental College in Choral Music where she studied choral conducting and voice. She also received Artist-Teacher Certification through the Choral Music Experience Institute which focuses on leadership in choral music for children and youth. Taking a leadership role in the children's choir movement in Los Angeles, Ms. Porter founded and directed the Encore Children's Chorus that flourished in Los Angeles from 1985-98. She has been a frequent presenter for teacher workshops in and out of the school district.

Eloise began singing with her mother as a young child, and participated in both church and school choirs throughout her school years. As a choral musician, she has served in various churches and denominations as choir director, soprano section leader, or volunteer choir member. Singing is her first love, and she continues to maintain a private voice and piano studio and sing in various choral groups around the city. She looks forward to her work at Emerson with an eye to adding to the spiritual experience of both the congregation and the choir members through our musical presentations.

Eloise currently resides in Woodland Hills and has one daughter in New York and another here in the Los Angeles area.

New Choir Members Welcome

The Emerson Choir is always looking for new singers, the choir rehearses Thursday nights at 7:30. If you want to try it out or just sing for a short period, the choir would love to have a few extra singers for Christmas Eve.

Acorn and Native Plant Potting and Planting Parties with the Sky Valley Volunteers – Saturday, December 1 and 8

The fires in the local mountains have done a lot of damage to the local ecology, and the Sky Valley Volunteers are working to replant oak trees and other native plants that are critical to our local ecosystems.



JustWeb group is supporting the Sky Valley Volunteers and we would like to invite everyone to come join us for one or both of these upcoming work days:

Saturday, December 1 (8 am - 12) at the community garden at Orcutt Ranch (at Roscoe and Valley Circle) will be a acorn potting party to prepare plants.

Saturday, December 8 (8 am - 12) at Sage Ranch Park (at the top of Woolsey Canyon Blvd off of Valley Circle) we will be a planting oak seedlings and other native plants.

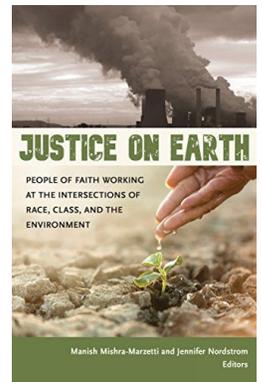
Contact: Sandra Shlapak, sps@att.net

Emerson's Common Read on Environmental Justice

Rev. Matthew is the one of the contributing authors to the new book *Justice on Earth*, which was selected to be the UUA's common read for 2018-19.

Join Rev. Matthew and JustWeb on **Thursday, Jan. 24, Feb. 7 & 21** for a three-part book discussion series, where we explore the ways that capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and other systems of oppression intersect with and contribute to ecological devastation; and how spiritual practices, congregational organizing, and progressive theology can inform faith-based justice work in the twenty-first century... and how we might apply all that to our Environmental Justice Work here at Emerson.

To RSVP or if you are interested in ordering a copy of the book (\$18), email revmatthew@emersonuuc.org



The next **JustWeb** meeting will be on **Sunday, December 9th** from **12-1 pm**. We'll discuss becoming a Green Sanctuary, oak seedling planting, reducing use of plastics, spreading solar power and other issues near and dear to the hearts of Emersonians. Bring your passion and your ideas and join us! JustWeb is an affinity group whose members focus on environmental issues where they intersect with justice and the interdependent web of life

HOLIDAY PARTY - Sunday, December 16 - 12 pm

Please join us for an all ages party after the holiday pageant. We'll decorate the Christmas tree, play games, decorate cookies and make holiday crafts.



We need a few more volunteers to help with set up and clean up, and to lead activities, or if you have a craft or activity you'd like to offer, contact Cleo Anderson, cleoemersondre@gmail.com

****THE HOLIDAY POTLUCK CHRISTMAS DINNER****

Emerson will be hosting its second **annual potluck Christmas Dinner** from **1pm to 3pm** on **Christmas Day (Tuesday 12/25)**. Turkey and gravy will be supplied; you bring your favorite holiday side dishes or dessert. RSVP to Barbara Moore, barbmoore1000@gmail.com and tell her what you plan to bring and how many people will be coming. We'll have ourselves **"a merry little Christmas"** now!!



1st SUNDAY POTLUCK - December 2nd after the service

"Our social hour's meeting and greeting... even more fun with ethical

Eating, so bring a tasty treat to share, homemade or store bought, to show you care, And set up and clean up can be a gift too, When you spend 30 min. with the 1st Sunday Crew!" Contact Tracy Watson at tracyj.watson@yahoo.com for more information.



EMERSON BOOK GROUP -

We will not meet again until **Tues. Jan. 22nd @ 7:30 pm** at which time we will be discussing the non-fiction book choice: **"Assassination Vacation"** by

Sarah Vowell. We'll also share our favorite books -

for selection by the Group for reading & discussion in 2019. All are welcome. Please join us. Contact **Louise Rovner (818) 621 9628-cell; (818) 884 9178- home; louiserovner@sbcglobal.net**

EMERSON LUNCHEON - Our next Luncheon Event will be **Fri Dec. 14th** starting at **11:30 a.m.**

Kabuki Restaurant

20940 Ventura Blvd., Woodland Hills

(located on S.W. corner of Ventura Bl./De Soto Ave.) Please RSVP Pat Lindenauer to let her know you're coming-apatlinden@gmail.com or call 818-205-7632.

ELDER'S CIRCLE - Dec. 20th @ 10:30 am - Our next Elder Circle will meet **the third Thursday of Dec.** at **10:30 am** in the Pavilion. We will be offering support, resources and information to those dealing with aging issues as well as to individuals acting as caregivers to aging loved ones. If you need transportation to this meeting, please call Heather Medvitz (818 222-4430) or Pat Lyon (818 341-9324) to see if we can arrange a ride for you. We look forward to seeing you! Heather Medvitz

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS..a time to Celebrate!!



Patricia	Lyon	2-Dec
Robin	Wilkes	3-Dec
Dave	Ginsberg	5-Dec
Madeleine	Calvi	10-Dec
Tracy	Watson	11-Dec
Zoe	Hogan	12-Dec
Lynn	Prager	13-Dec
Annabella	Emery	15-Dec
James	Emery	15-Dec
Caitlin	Heskett	15-Dec
Natalie	Kustak	19-Dec
Molly	Siskin	19-Dec
Sydney	Street	20-Dec
Logan	Fisher	23-Dec

OFFICE SCHEDULE

Tuesdays and Thursdays - 9 to 5 PM
Friday - 2 to 6 PM
Mondays and Wednesdays, office closed



Admin. Asst. Ramon Alvarez
(818) 887-6101
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Minister: Reverend Matthew McHale
revmatthew@emersonuuc.org
(562) 754-8756 mobile
Office hours by appointment; Wed. is my day off

Director of Religious Education: Cleo Anderson
cleoemersondre@gmail.com
Office hours by appointment

Music Director: Kevin Mathie
kevin@kevinmathie.com

Choir Director: Eloise Porter
voice101@gmail.com

Sunday Childcare: Lucy Graham

Note: Next Deadline for the Leaves: Thurs. Dec. 27th
[Send to Editor4Leaves@gmail.com-Ellen Trumpler]



Rev. Matthew McHale



To view the online **Emerson Calendar**, go to:
<https://www.mychurchevents.com/calendar/57642357/month/2018-12-01>