

# the OUUC spark

September 8, 2022



We Begin Again - by Rev. Mary Gear

OUUC Ingathering and Water Communion - Sept 11, 2022



This Sunday we'll celebrate our fall ingathering and water communion ritual. It's a time when we intentionally come together from wherever we've been over the summer and begin a new congregational year of worshiping together, being together, and learning together. We'll also share food and have some fun!

In meditation, beginning again is an essential practice. When our minds wander, because they will—remembering the past or planning the future—we are reminded to return to the present and begin again in this moment. Often returning to our breathing is a way to anchor our minds and bodies in the present and focus our wandering attention.

So, it is with our spiritual lives. When we are distracted and forget that we are spiritual beings connected to something greater than ourselves, we are reminded to begin again, noticing the spark of divinity in ourselves and in others, noticing the connection to our interdependent web. Spiritual practices and rituals help us begin again and return to the present. What are the practices and rituals that help you remember and being again?

We share the collective rituals of worship and water communion this Sunday. They are reminders for us to return to our spiritual home, making Beloved Community together.

Welcome everyone. We begin again.

Hope to see you soon.

Rev. Mary

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## Connection, Not Perfection - by Rev. Sara Lewis

Here we are at the beginning of another church year, and as Rev Mary and I shared in our video we have a lot of plans! It's not that covid is completely behind us, but we are at a point of shifting our focus. Rather than leading with covid, we will be leading with welcome. And rather than waiting to plan anything until we know more, we are making plans while also knowing we may have to adapt again in the future. We have come through these last few years together with remarkable resiliency, and I believe our community is ready to open up and blossom again. We have so much to offer, not least of which is community and connection.

It became our mantra as we adapted worship to zoom during Covid: It's about connection, not perfection. That meant a lot to many of us. It meant that even when things went wonky (internet and power failures, etc) it was still worth it just to be sitting at our computers giving it a try, together. It meant that we chose to talk to each other in break out rooms even as we had to say "you're muted" to each other over and over again. It meant that in a world of glossy entertainment and consumer options, the imperfect offerings of our community were worth "tuning in" to.

That is a lesson that I bring forward into this new year. Will everything we do be perfect? Of course not! Will our dinners and potlucks rival a great restaurant? Will our events always be

well attended by happy crowds and perfect weather? Will worship and learning and spiritual practice always be amazingly inspiring and transformative? Will our faith in action efforts always show instant impact on the world? No, no, and no. And.... all of it will still be good enough. Because we will be doing it all together.

I know it sounds a bit naive and idealistic in our current culture, but that's what we are about here: being authentic, real, imperfect. And that helps us to be connected, because when what we create together doesn't need to be perfect, none of us have to be perfect to be part of it. We are all welcome here in our individual imperfection, and together we create a truly, gloriously, imperfect spiritual community.

**Here's some of the ways you can join us this week:**

*Sunday September 11th*

- 10 a.m. Multi-platform Worship: Water Communion
- 11:30 a.m. Blessing of the Backpacks (outdoors)
- 11:30 a.m. Soul Work Studio is Open (classroom 5)
- 12:30 a.m. Youth Group Get To Know You Games (Youth Room)

*Thursday September 15th*

- 5:30 p.m. Community Dinner (Commons)
- 6:30 p.m. Kids Fun Activities (Spirit Play Room)
- 6:30 p.m. 7th-9th grade Our Whole Lives Parent Orientation (Classroom 5)
- 6:30 p.m. Young Adults (youth room)
- 7pm p.m. Spiritual Practices (Sanctuary)
- 7pm p.m. First meeting of Caste Study/Action Circle (memorial patio)

## THIS WEEK AT OUUC

Looking for upcoming events? Go to the [OUUC Calendar](#).

WATCH: An Ingathering message from Reverend  
Susan Frederick-Gray

## An Ingathering message from Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray



UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray offers a new message of hope, healing and welcome for Ingathering in the 2022 congregational year. Please download and share this video in your congregation and communities.

## Quixote Village to Quixote Communities: A growing mission and vision to serve the unhoused - by Joe Shorin



Most OUUC members know the basics of OUUC's instrumental role in creating Quixote Village: OUUC was the first faith community to provide sanctuary to the residents of an



unauthorized homeless community camped on City of Olympia property in 2007; its members and leaders were instrumental in a multi-year and multi-organizational effort to host Camp Quixote; and during that time, they were actively engaged in the planning and development of Quixote Village, a 30-unit tiny home village on Mottman Road built to provide permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Quixote Village's history is lovingly recounted in [Tim Ransom's article in the 2007 Spring special edition OUUC newsletter available here.](#)

What many may not know, however, is how Panza, the nonprofit incorporated in 2007 to support Camp Quixote, has expanded and evolved to meet the growing needs of the unhoused in our region.

Since Quixote Village welcomed its first residents on Christmas Eve 2013, the village has been home to dozens of formerly homeless people. The Village's model of permanent supportive recovery housing has proven very effective in helping residents reimagine their lives. Many have reconnected with families, pursued education, obtained employment, and/or simply improved their wellbeing with the support of Village Case Managers and other staff. While Quixote Village is considered permanent housing some residents move on to more independent living every year. The average stay at Quixote Village is 2.5 years.



Energized by the success of Quixote Village, and with the assistance of significant state, local and private funding, the Panza Board decided to pursue opportunities for villages at other sites. Recognizing that Quixote Village would eventually be one of several similar villages operated by Panza, the Board updated its mission and vision statements and changed its business name to Quixote Communities.

In May 2021, Quixote Communities opened a 35-unit tiny home village for homeless veterans, on the grounds of the Washington Soldier's home in Ortina. The village has garnered

significant support from the veterans community. This summer, Quixote Communities will break ground on a 30-home village in Shelton for homeless veterans as well. And, during its spring retreat, the Board directed staff to look for other opportunities to house even more people.

As Quixote Communities has grown, it has added more staff to better support its mission and to enhance the services provided to its residents. We now have 10 staff, including two Case Managers at each village. We provide mental health counseling through outside agencies and are in the process of hiring a full-time in-house mental health specialist to coordinate the mental health services provided at all villages. We also offer lifestyle enhancement programs such as community gardening and trauma therapies including equine and music therapy.

“We are proud of the success of our model and our residents, and we are excited to be offering a variety of expanded services to meet the needs of our community.” Colleen Carmichael, Executive Director of Quixote Communities.

Throughout Panza’s growth and evolution into Quixote Communities, the organization has stayed true to the core values that OUUC leaders and other founders held dear: housing would be permanent, supportive, and “recovery housing” focused on creating a clean and sober environment to best support residents growth and healing; our villages would be comprised of tiny homes which offer both independence and community support; and the residents would have some measure of self-regulation through participation in a resident council and/or communal chores. You can learn more about Quixote Communities and its villages at <http://quixotecomunities.org>.

Quixote Communities will recognize OUUC and other founding faith organizations at its Tiny Homes—Big Future celebration on **Saturday, September 17 from 6:30pm - 9:30pm at the Hands on Children’s Museum**. This will be a fun outdoor event with live music by Vendredi’s Bag and food from the Crowded Kitchen. Tickets are only \$20, include food and drink, and will help support Quixote Communities’ work to provide permanent supportive rental housing for veterans and other homeless folks in Thurston, Mason, and Pierce Counties. As President of the Board of Quixote Communities, and as a former long-time member of OUUC, I extend a heartfelt invitation to all OUUC members and friends to this event. [You can RSVP here.](#)




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