

## **Conejo Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**

**Candidate Bios June, 2015**

### **Ministerial Search Committee**

#### **Arlene Bloom**

I have been a member of CVUUF since 1987. I joined the Fellowship when my children were young in order to provide them with a liberal religious identity in a predominately conservative community. I taught in Sunday School for years and ended up finding a religious home for myself along the way.

I have served on the Board, including terms as President and Treasurer, the Committee on Ministry, and the Finance, Religious Education, Worship, and Conflict Resolution Committees. I am currently serving on the Personnel Committee and as a Worship Associate. I enjoy participating in the Wednesday Night Meditation Group, Book Club, and Sapphire Women's Group.

#### **Tim Snowber**

I began attending services at CVUUF in 2008 and became a member in 2011. Majoring in religion in college, I came to realize that the Catholic Church wasn't a good fit for me. I tried out a few other denominations before my wife and I became members of Neighborhood UU Church in Pasadena.

During my years at CVUUF, I was an RE teacher and served on the Nominating Committee. While on the Nominating Committee, I participated in the development of the new Leadership Cultivation Committee. This process helped me recognize how much Unitarian Universalism is right for me. Each week that I am able to get to Sunday service, and each time I attend my Chalice Circle, I feel much more deeply my connection to UU'ism and CVUUF.

I am excited and honored to have the opportunity to serve on the Ministerial Search Committee.

#### **Christine Blasman**

I have been a member of CVUUF for over 20 years and look forward to being a member of the Ministerial Search Committee. I will do my best for the fellowship.

I have facilitated the Rise Up and Call Her Name and Our Whole Lives (OWL) curriculums. Rise Up classes help us to embrace our own spiritual journey. The OWL curriculum fulfills the request by our parents to support them in giving their children a well-rounded overview of human sexuality.

As a member of the Conflict Resolution Committee I have witnessed how well our spiritual community works together to solve difficulties among our members. For three years, I trained as a Lay Minister. I loved the study of all aspects of supporting our beloved community and cherish the friendships I gained with my fellow Lay Ministers.

Recently, I trained as a Chalice Circle facilitator. Learning to listen deeply is invaluable for CVUUF members. Participants develop close relationships in their circles. I feel strongly that we all benefit from getting to know each other better.

**Casey Dake**

My personal quest for ultimate truth has been to extract the best in each religion, philosophy, ethos, myth and branch of science. I rejected my family's religion as a teen and never expected to find an organized religion that I would be willing to join.

In the late 1990's, I heard a story on National Public Radio about a religious organization (Unitarian Universalism) that sounded too good to be true. It turned out that there was a UU church just up the road from where my wife, Renee, and I were living in Santa Monica. We soon were members and became active in Religious Education. In 2000, we moved to Thousand Oaks where we met Willie Lubka and Liza Diniakos and joined CVUUF.

As a member of CVUUF, I have served as Chair of the Worship Committee, the Creative Arts Worship Team where I produced two videos, and currently am on the Audio/Visual team for Sunday services. I am very glad that my daughters, Isabella (17) and Mina (14), were able to grow up in CVUUF, from diapers through Coming of Age.

**Sloane Powers**

Hello Everyone! My name is Sloane Powers. I'm 26 years old and have been attending CVUUF since I was 5 years old. I signed the book to become a member after I finished college a few years ago and I am involved in many activities at the Fellowship. I love singing in the choir and have acted in several Chalice Players productions over the years.

I am so happy to be a part of the Dharma group and greatly enjoy the lively discussions. I consider CVUUF my second home and all my friends here are like family. I am honored to be nominated to the Ministerial Search Committee. If you see me around, don't hesitate to come up and say hello.

**David Barker**

Annie and I have been UUs and members of CVUUF since 1993. In that time I have had the privilege of serving on several committees including finance, annual retreat, auction and pledge. I am now finishing one of several terms on our Board of Trustees in the capacities of president, vice president and trustee at large.

In addition to the involvement in CVUUF I have also had the opportunity to serve on the Camp deBenneville Pines board and have served on committees organizing camps at deBenneville in addition to the annual CVUUF retreat weekends.

In addition to the gratitude that I have for having been able to serve I am very thankful for the community and spiritual growth that I have experienced over the last 23 years since discovering Unitarian Universalism and CVUUF in particular.

**Penny Smith**

Prior to coming to CVUUF in 2004, I was involved with the Church of Religious Science. At CVUUF I was drawn to the lack of "doctrine" and was impressed by the principles that we covenant and confirm, as well as the sources that we draw from. I have very much enjoyed and been enriched by my 11 years at the fellowship.

I have been involved in several small group experiences, all of which have given me an opportunity to deepen my relationships with so many members. I have also been involved in

organizing many events for the congregation including scheduling and assisting at Sunday morning coffee hour, organizing refreshments and helping with the annual auction, working behind the scenes for CVUUF theatrical events. I even acted in one production. I helped organize the AA group which meets regularly at CVUUF and provides great outreach to the Community. I have served on the Welcoming committee and helped with ushering.

I am honored to have been asked to participate in the Ministerial Search Committee and feel that I bring strong skills and great enthusiasm to this important task.

## **Trustees of the Board**

### **Kathleen Holland**

I have been a member of CVUUF for about seven years. My husband, Jake, and I have three children, Carolyn (16), Michelle (13), and Alex (10). I work as a physicist in the basic science research and development part of Northrop Grumman Corp.

I have volunteered as a leader in RE classes, and last year was the Dean of the annual Channel Islands Cluster Retreat. In my free time, I enjoy quilting, knitting, reading science fiction and fantasy novels, and hiking.

With a background in geophysics, and as a Unitarian Universalist, I value highly the individual search for truth and meaning and the interdependent web of life. I believe that the human contribution to global climate change is an issue of great importance to all life on Earth. I believe strongly in the dignity and worth of everyone and that all people should be given equal opportunity to succeed in life.

### **Lea Halseth**

My husband Erik Halseth and I have been members of the fellowship since 2012. I am a CPA with a practice in Woodland Hills and have been in public accounting since 2008.

I am passionate about financial matters and am currently serving as co-Chair of the Stewardship Committee. As a mother, I am fully vested in the future of the children in our fellowship and am dedicated to cultivating in them a strong connection to our core beliefs and values.

It is my privilege and an honor to be called upon to serve, and I am excited to work with the other members of the Board as a representative of the fellowship.

### **Tom Wolfe**

I have lived in the Conejo Valley for 25 years. I was born in Boston, more years ago than I would like to admit, and went to college at Middlebury College in Vermont. I left with a BA in English, some friends that have lasted a lifetime, and no particular career path. Several years later I left for the west coast with a friend, and have never looked back.

I was married for 17 years, and then widowed 8 years ago. I live with, and am the legal guardian for, my 12 year old granddaughter Allie. We have two dogs, a cat, a turtle, a snake and a handful of fish. I have been an elementary school teacher, primarily fourth grade and mostly at Somis Elementary School, for almost 20 years. I still love my job, and the kids, but will also admit to loving the summers off.

I have been a member of CVUUF for about 3 years. I had no religious affiliation for most of my adult life, but did go to another church for a few years after my wife Joyce died. Since joining I have been teaching RE and have been the Chairman of the Personnel Committee. I have also been a member of the CVUUF softball team, though admittedly that has more to do with staying active and my social life than a religious practice.

### **Gaye Allan**

My husband, Bart, and I reside in Westlake Village with our two teenage sons, Tate and Cole. We moved from Burbank in 2000 for the great public schools in the area and love the life we have out here. I have a career in marketing/advertising with a small firm in Westlake Village. The boys attend Agoura High, although Tate is heading to Drexel University in the fall.

After years of off-and-on searching for a place that satisfied a spiritual longing, we found CVUUF through a friend who belongs to the Ventura UU congregation. It took one service for us to know that we connected strongly with UU principles and overall outlook. We became members in 2010 and continue to enjoy and appreciate what CVUUF has to offer.

Bart and I try to share in some of the responsibilities that keep CVUUF alive and well. I have served on the Committee on Ministry for the past two years and recently joined the Worship Committee. Bart serves as Director of Operations and member of the A/V team for our Sunday services. While we have participated in other ways at CVUUF, we may be best known for hosting wild potlucks on the lake with our Eastender (purple dot) friends!

### **Conflict Resolution Committee**

#### **Carol Jones**

I have been a member of CVUUF for over 15 years. During that time I have served on the board, led a chalice circle, taught RE and OWL. I also belong to one of the women's groups which I feel literally saved my life during a few very difficult seasons of my life.

I have been married to my husband Stephen for 29 years. Stephen is the Director of Emergency Services at Northridge Hospital and although he is not a member at CVUUF he is always willing to host a gathering for me or accompany me to an event. Stephen and I have 2 children who were both raised through adolescence at CVUUF. Ethan is 24 and just graduated (Hallelujah) from CSUCI and works as a personal trainer. Brenna is 22 and after a tough couple of years is doing great working at her first job and plans to go back to school in the fall.

Professionally I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with a PhD in Medical Social Work. I have taught social work at USC and currently work at St. Johns Pleasant Valley Hospital in Camarillo. My greatest joy is connecting with friends and family as we try to make meaning of this crazy journey we are on.

#### **Carol Rosenthal**

I have been a member of our fellowship for over 10 years and feel like this has always been my community. In the UU I have volunteered as an usher, Chalice Circle Facilitator, and with the Caring Committee. These activities, especially the last, has brought me closer spiritually to our membership and introduced me to spiritual and intellectual people I might never have known.

Outside of the fellowship, but always affected by it, I volunteer to cuddle babies in the NICU of the hospital, something I have wanted to do for over 15 years but did not have the time before. This feeds my spirit and allows me to behold the wonder and awe of a newborn.

I am also semi-retired and have a part time private practice as a Marriage and Family therapist in Westlake Village. This is rewarding both emotionally and monetarily so that I can remain in my home and not have to sell it before physically needing to do that. This last profession offers skills and tools for conflict resolution and I want to offer those to my community when they are needed.

**Randall Edwards**

I have been a member of CVUUF for about twelve years. In that time I have been a children's RE teacher and participated in Chalice Players services and other church shows. Currently, I continue as a Chalice Circle Co-facilitator, music committee member, member of the Adult Choir, and Director of the Children's Choir.

I work as a school social worker for LAUSD in high-needs elementary schools in the North East San Fernando Valley. My work currently involves overseeing attendance, making home visits, and linking families with resources to improve well-being and educational success. Over my twenty-one years in this field, I have also led counseling groups, parenting programs, character education curriculum, and developed a peer mediation "Peacemakers" program. Prior to this career, I enjoyed performing in theater and television.