

May 7 2023
The Unitarian Universalist Church of the South Hills

2022-

COMING
OF
AGE

2023

2022-2023

COA STUDENTS & MENTORS

Students

Wyatt Broaded

Dana Cheng

Maya Kashlan

Caisey Kreg

Jude Nelis

Liam Spencer

Finn Thornton

Mentors

Jay Pullen

Megan Williams

Terry Alvare

Mary Klaber

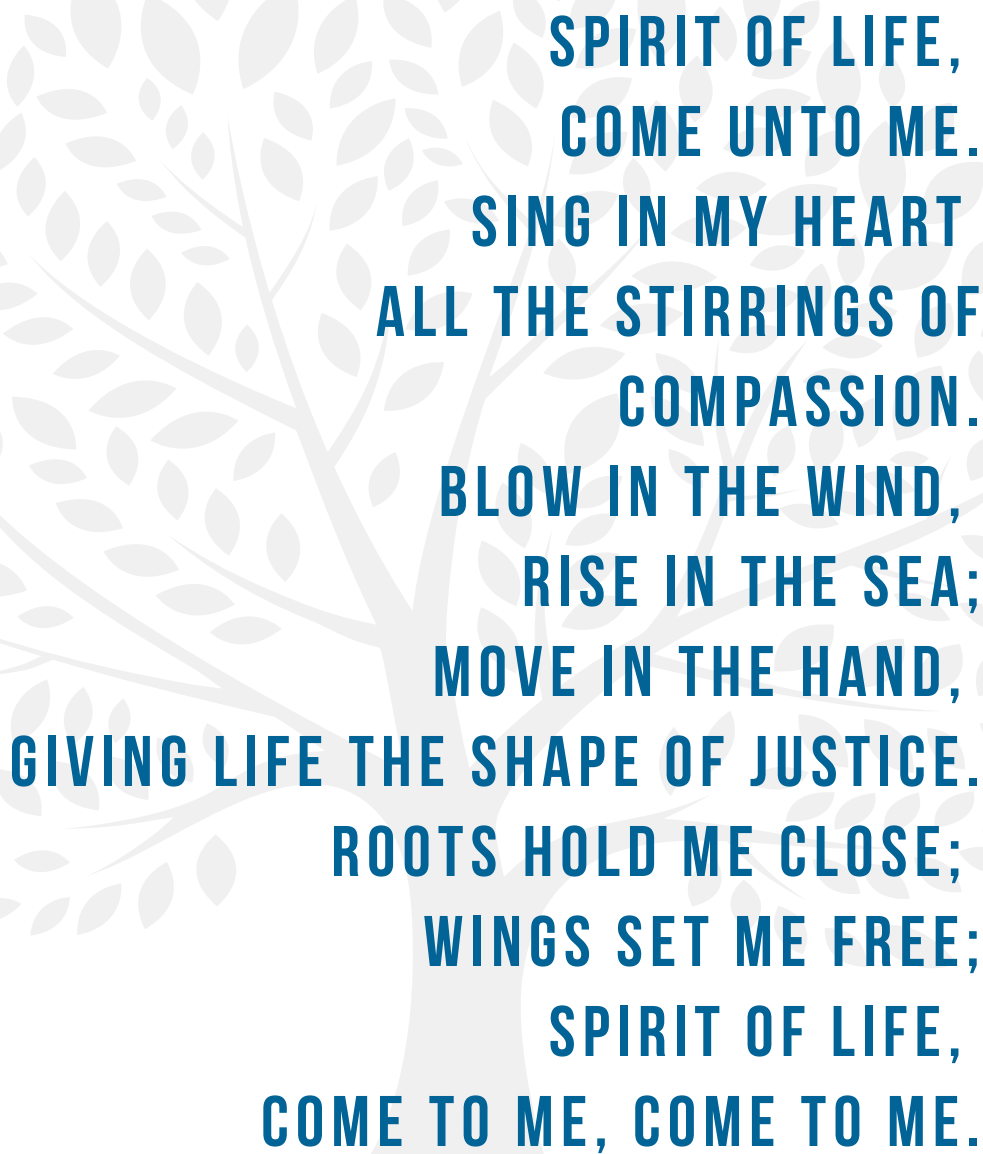
Joe Shaughnessy

Michael Hennessy

Carlos Alvare







**SPIRIT OF LIFE,
COME UNTO ME.
SING IN MY HEART
ALL THE STIRRINGS OF
COMPASSION.
BLOW IN THE WIND,
RISE IN THE SEA;
MOVE IN THE HAND,
GIVING LIFE THE SHAPE OF JUSTICE.
ROOTS HOLD ME CLOSE;
WINGS SET ME FREE;
SPIRIT OF LIFE,
COME TO ME, COME TO ME.**

**"SPIRIT OF LIFE"
CAROLYN MCDADE**

ABOUT



CREDO STATEMENTS

Credo is a Latin word, which is generally translated as “I believe,” but its literal meaning is closer to “what I set my heart to.” Throughout this course youth learn and discuss social justice, values, community, leadership, and our own Unitarian Universalist tradition.

They are then tasked with taking what they have learned and apply it to their own worldview to develop a credo statement. The 2022-2023 Credo statements are a snapshot into the hearts of these amazing young people.

-Jennifer McGlothlin, DRE

WYATT BROADED

I had such a good time getting to know Wyatt. Actually, I feel like it was kind of unfair since I already knew him, not only from Sunnyhill, but also since we are in the same scout troop.

Wyatt is curious and thoughtful. He does not jump to conclusions, and thinks through what he hears when introduced to new ideas. This took a couple of good conversations for me to gain a full appreciation of. He isn't in a hurry when working through something interesting or important, but he also doesn't have time for meaninglessness. There is too much cool stuff out there to waste time!

Wyatt is friendly and enthusiastic. He is quick to lend a hand, and is welcoming to newcomers. I saw this mostly as new scouts would join our troop. Sunnyhill will be stronger because he is with us.

I'm so glad I was given the opportunity to get to know Wyatt better, and look forward to building on what we've learned about each other over time. Maybe even into old age. ☺

JAY PULLEN, Mentor

I believe that life is good and I want to live a good life. I think it is pretty simple, for me a good life revolves around four things. First, surrounding myself with good people. Second, spending time thoughtfully with intention. Third, seeking opportunities to try new things. And fourth, helping other people. These are the four things that really matter to me. Living my life to the fullest means remembering that these are the things that are most important and finding ways to focus my time and energy on what matters.

WYATT



WYATT BROADED

It sounds funny to say, but all of the people in my life are teachers. Not only have they taught me many new things, they have also helped me find my moral compass. Even the people who I only spend a little time with shape me in small ways. It is imperative to surround yourself with good people. Some of the people who are especially important to me are my family, my friends, my mentor at Sunnyhill, my scout master, and my wilderness survival teacher. I feel lucky to have people in my life who are passionate about what they do and who are willing to teach me new skills.

The activities I do also influence who I am. Camping has taught me to be resourceful. It has taught me that sleeping outside in the winter isn't always the best, but has also taught me that hard things can be fun. Playing piano has taught me that persistence pays off. Playing games with my friends hasn't taught me much of anything, but it's fun anyways. Time is limited and it is important to spend our time doing things we enjoy.

Next up, is discovering new things. I like to read, especially fiction. Stories have lots of interesting ideas to explore. I love to travel. In April, my dad and I spent two weeks in Guatemala so that I could learn more Spanish and more importantly learn about the Guatemalan culture. I like watching people do things that they are skilled at doing. I think there is a lot of cool stuff out there and I hope you think so too.



WYATT BROADED

And finally, I like helping other people. For scouts I have volunteered at the food bank and cleaning up roads with adopt a highway. Last summer I helped teach science to kindergarteners at an Audubon Society camp. With Sunnyhill, I helped to mail books to people who are in prison. Each and every time I have volunteered, I have gained knowledge and an appreciation for life. I like helping people because it makes me feel good.

When I am old, I hope that I can look back and know that I have lived a good life. For me that means being around good people, doing activities I enjoy, discovering new things, and helping people when I can. That is what matters to me. It's pretty simple really.

*TIME IS LIMITED AND IT IS
IMPORTANT TO SPEND OUR TIME
DOING THINGS WE ENJOY.*



DANA CHENG

Dana is a loyal, talented, creative, and joyful young person. She values her friendships deeply, often referring to conversations they have had or insights she has gained from them. Dana loves music and the connection that brings. I look forward to watching Dana move through her future with humor, intelligence, and warmth.

-MEGAN WILLIAMS, Mentor

I strive for happiness, for a life filled with joy and fulfillment. I believe that every person has the innate desire to seek out their own happiness, and I am no exception. I am committed to living my life to the fullest and getting the most satisfaction out of every moment. In pursuit of this goal, I have developed three fundamental principles that guide my actions and decisions.

The first principle is to honor my human nature. I recognize that I am a self-serving being and that putting myself first is necessary for my survival.

I will always prioritize my own well-being, making choices that keep me healthy, sane, and happy. I understand that some sacrifices are necessary, but I also know that I should not have to compromise my happiness or mental health for anyone or anything.



DANA

DANA CHENG

The second principle is to surround myself with the people I love most. I believe that our relationships with others are a crucial aspect of our happiness and fulfillment. Therefore, I am committed to surrounding myself with people who I love wholeheartedly and unconditionally. It is unfair to them and to me to keep people in my life who do not bring joy and positivity into it. My family and closest friends, including Mia, Adah, Amelia, Julia, and Chris, are some of the most important people in my life, and being around them fills me with joy and contentment.

The third principle is balance. I recognize that in life, there are both joys and pains, rewards and hard work, and knowledge and ignorance.

*I AM COMMITTED TO
SURROUNDING MYSELF WITH
PEOPLE WHO I LOVE
WHOLEHEARTEDLY AND
UNCONDITIONALLY.*

I believe that maintaining balance in life is essential for living authentically and experiencing life to the fullest. For every handful of joy, there will be a little bit of pain, and for every accomplishment, there will be hard work. This balance is what allows me to appreciate and enjoy all aspects of life fully.

I make this oath to live my life by these three principles, to honor my human nature, surround myself with the people I love, and maintain balance. I know that this is not an easy task, and it will require effort, patience, and resilience. However, I am committed to striving every day to live my life to the fullest and to find happiness in every moment.





MAYA KASHLAN

Maya is an intelligent, creative and confident young woman who is passionate about her music and is committed to doing well academically. I have no doubt that she will continue to thoughtfully forge her own path guided by her strong sense of social justice, the value she places on education as the means to a better world and her belief that "Deeds" will always beat out "Creeds" any day!

TERRY ALVARE, Mentor

As a child, I was raised with no specific religious guidance. My mom was raised Unitarian and my dad was raised Muslim, the child of Syrian immigrants. Neither practiced their childhood religions so I was not exposed to anything except the culturally Christian influences seen in school, TV, etc. I was never told to believe in specific ideals by the people around me. With one exception. Much of my childhood was spent playing with a neighborhood friend who was the same age as me. We spent almost all of our time together starting in kindergarten--climbing trees, running around outside, and playing games. One day we got into a very interesting conversation. She asked me what I thought was going to happen to me when I died. I didn't know there was a right or a wrong answer. So, I simply responded, "I'll shrivel up and go into the earth."

Apparently, that answer wasn't good enough for my friend. So, she asked me, "And after that?". I answered, "Nothing". I explained I didn't believe in heaven and hell, or even God for that matter.

MAYA KASHLAN

*I DO NOT FEEL THAT BELIEFS
ARE PALPABLE THINGS THAT
CAN BE SET IN STONE. THEY
ARE A MATTER OF PERCEPTION
AND PERSPECTIVE.*



Unbeknown to me, her family was devoutly Catholic and had some very strict beliefs. Without explanation, she yelled at me "You're going to Hell!" and stormed off. I was very confused. No one had ever been upset or offended when I expressed my beliefs before. As I aged, I realized that these judgments and offenses persisted, making it difficult for us to be friends. This old friend thought they "knew" the truth about everything from God to the afterlife, and their inability to accept that I could think or believe something different pushed us apart. I do not feel that beliefs are palpable things that can be set in stone. They are a matter of perception and perspective. Though many children have beliefs forced upon them, I was never told to believe in anything, so I formed my own ideas. My underlying beliefs about God haven't changed since the age of six. I still don't believe in an old man with a white beard sitting on a throne on top of clouds. Or a horned red guy who loves to hang out in a pit of fire.

MAYA KASHLAN

As my ideas evolved through new experiences, I started to think more deeply about what was important to me. Even if I don't believe in God or the Devil, I still believe in many other things. For example, being a decent person. This means many things. To me, being a decent person means nurturing my connections with others and being mindful of how my actions impact everyone around me. Another thing that matters to me is education. Throughout my lifetime, it has become evident to me that education is vital to the success of everyone. Learning helps us to better understand others' perspectives, in turn, this allows us to become more compassionate. And finally, I value music. The most spiritual activity I find value in is playing an instrument. Being part of a group (such as an orchestra) means a lot to me.

The spirituality associated with music and the community it creates for me has shaped me into the person I am today. Since I started playing at a young age, my music teachers, conductors, and music directors have impacted my values and my character. I will continue on my path to find what is meaningful to me and what increases my quality of life as I age. Since my beliefs are constantly evolving and changing as I experience new things, I will never "know" exactly what I believe in. In the future, I look forward to finding out more about myself. But, for now, I'm good.



CAISEY KREG

Anyone who meets Caisey can tell that she is a ray of light. Kind, smart, and courageous are just a few words I would use to describe her. Caisey is a talented singer and actress and can often be found on a stage sharing her gift with the world. She also has a passion for helping others, whether it's through a wonderful program at her school called "Friends of Rachel," or with her family that she holds dear to her heart. Caisey is already a natural leader, who sees the good in other humans, and I can't wait to see what she will accomplish as she continues to grow and mature.

MARY KLABER, Mentor

Abstract- adjective, existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence.

This word describes my point of view on religion. Through my time in the coming of age class here at Sunnyhill I have studied various religions and visited some places of worship. Going into this class I had no idea what I believed in, nor if I believed in anything. After going through a few sessions with my mentor Mary Klaber, I was able to pick out what my beliefs or practices are from different religions. One of my main points of belief is karma.

CAISEY



*I BELIEVE IF YOU DO GOOD
FOR OTHERS OTHERS WILL
DO GOOD TO YOU, AS WELL
AS IF YOU ARE WRONG TO
OTHERS OTHERS WILL BE
WRONG TO YOU.*

CAISEY KREG

I believe if you do good for others others will do good to you, as well as if you are wrong to others others will be wrong to you. I believe if you have good karma in life, when you pass away you will rest in peace for eternity, while if you have bad karma you will live a life in pain. This goes on to another one of my main points of belief. I believe in reincarnation. I believe that once you pass you will come back into life whether that be as an animal or a human. I believe if you do good in your first life you will be set free and rest in peace, but if you do poorly in your first life you will live another with bad consequences.

"Holy men tell us life is a mystery. They embrace that concept happily. But some mysteries bite and bark and come to get you in the dark."-Dean Koontz, The Book of Counted Sorrows.

Think about this quote. What do you feel?

When I first read this quote I felt confused. I didn't understand it at first but after going through life everyday I thought to myself and pondered what it meant.

Then I figured it out when I was in choir singing a religious song. This song talked about the lord bringing joy to the world and forgiving people of their sin and reliving their sadness.



CAISEY KREG

*RELIGION IS ABSTRACT. IT CAN'T
BE PROVEN NOR DISPROVEN. IF
NO ONE EVER IS ABLE TO TELL
WHAT LIES AFTER DEATH,*



Then I thought what if this isn't true? Religion is abstract. It can't be proven nor disproven. If no one ever is able to tell what lies after death, How will we know what is true and what to prepare for? We can't, that's why there are so many different beliefs. People choose what sits right with them. I may not be right about what happens after death, but I still believe because there is hope. I can hope that when I pass I will be able to rest in heavenly peace and not have to live another life full of tragedy. But I may also just lay in the ground without thought. There is nothing to lose from having a religion, but if what you believe in is true then you have all there is to gain.

JUDE NELIS

As well as being a musician, scout and excellent student, Jude is a really conscientious young person and mature for his years. He has a great sense of humor and really positive attitude. I'd imagine Jude being a mentor to another youth in COA someday. Lastly, his patron Saint is one of my family's favorites.

JOE SHAUGHNESSY, Mentor

The outdoors have always been important for a lot of people, including me. However, people seem to be spending less time outside due to busy lifestyles. I believe it's important to make an effort to enjoy nature because it provides many benefits. Firstly, being outside can improve our health. Studies show that spending time in nature can lower stress, blood pressure, and boost our immune system. Outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and swimming can be enjoyable and healthy.

JUDE



JUDE NELIS

Secondly, there are many hobbies and activities that we can do outdoors. These activities are a great way to have fun and connect with friends and family. They can also help us learn new skills and challenge ourselves.

Thirdly, being outside can provide a sense of calmness and tranquility. Nature can be a peaceful refuge from the noise and chaos of everyday life. It's also a good opportunity to disconnect from technology and connect with the natural world.

Lastly, the outdoors provide a unique opportunity to learn about the environment. Observing wildlife and studying plant life can be fascinating and helps us appreciate the world around us. It also encourages us to take responsibility for its care and preservation. In conclusion, the outdoors are important and offer many benefits. We should make an effort to spend more time outside and enjoy the beauty and wonder of nature. Whether it's a walk in the park or a challenging hike, there are many ways to appreciate the outdoors.

*NATURE CAN BE A PEACEFUL
REFUGE FROM THE NOISE AND
CHAOS OF EVERYDAY LIFE. IT'S
ALSO A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO
DISCONNECT FROM
TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECT
WITH THE NATURAL WORLD.*



LIAM SPENCER

Liam Spencer has not had any strong church affiliation to date though he has attended church occasionally with his father. He started attending classes at Sunnyhill this year, including OWL and COA. While he has a strong moral and ethical foundation, he comes to Sunnyhill with a relatively clean slate as far as religious beliefs and has been exploring some of the possibilities in this area within the COA program, having been introduced to Sunnyhill through the Broadseds, having been fast friends with Wyatt for several years. Liam has a fascination with all things cordage. He buys paracord by the reel and is rarely without some paracord project on or about his person or, lacking paracord, you will often find him knitting. He has the remarkable ability to pay close attention to everything going on around him while simultaneously knotting, weaving and knitting. He has a strong musical bent and can shred on his guitar like nobody's business.

-MICHAEL HENNESSY, MENTOR

"There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress, and we would be forever repeating the same patterns."

Edward De Bono

Being creative means having an open mind and the confidence to experiment and try new things.

LIAM



LIAM SPENCER

For me, working with my hands, and trying new things, like woodworking, knitting, and making paracord bracelets, provides a sense of accomplishment, for learning a new skill. I also play a wide variety of instruments - guitar is my favorite. Exploring different ways of making music expands my creativity.

Creativity is so important because it gives us new ways to think about solving problems. The world we live in needs more open-minded people who are willing to try new ways to solve a problem. To be creative you need to be curious about rules, methods, and outcomes. Being creative isn't just about art, it applies to all parts of life.

Without creativity, things would just stay the same. If things just stayed the same, life would be boring and we would keep trying to solve problems the same way. Creativity gives us new ways to make life interesting and new ways to solve problems.

*CREATIVITY IS SO
IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT
GIVES US NEW WAYS TO
THINK ABOUT SOLVING
PROBLEMS.*



FINN THORNTON

Finn showed me an openness and engagement that made it a delight to work with him. He has great curiosity and a sincere interest in the bigger world and in connecting with other cultures. He is involved, a hard worker and is very focused. Getting to know this young man has been a very rewarding experience.

-CARLOS ALVARE, Mentor

When most people think about a credo, the first thing that comes to mind is God. Personally, I'm not sure if I believe in a higher being or not, but that's not the most important thing to me. While I enjoyed visiting other religious organizations, none of them felt right to me like Unitarian Universalism does. That may change, but for now Sunnyhill is the perfect place for me as it matches many of my beliefs including social justice, protecting nature, and loving other people.

One thing I do believe in is the Golden Rule. When I was researching all of the religions I saw a few similarities, but one that really stuck out to me was the golden rule, which is to treat others how you want to be treated. Amazingly, almost all religions use this even though they rarely agree on anything else. While the golden rule is great, what's even better is the platinum rule, which is to treat others how they want to be treated. I do my best to live by these rules in my everyday life.



FINN THORNTON



I believe that instead of living my entire life trying to get into heaven, I want to be living my best life here on earth, not worrying about where I will end up later. And while I'm here, I want to take care of the earth and everything that calls it home, and to help other people at all times. Something else I believe in is the power of nature. The outdoors are my favorite places to be from going camping to relaxing in a hammock. It fascinates me how many living organisms there are on this earth, all working together to form the food web and the sheer power to keep nature thriving.

I also believe that every human being deserves love and respect, regardless of their differences. Diversity is an important part of a thriving community. We all have special gifts and abilities that work better together.

As a Boy Scout I also believe in the Scout Law. Some key points of it that are meaningful to me are the promises to be helpful, kind, cheerful, brave, and reverent. If all humans lived by these points, the world would be a much better place.

DIVERSITY IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF A THRIVING COMMUNITY. WE ALL HAVE SPECIAL GIFTS AND ABILITIES THAT WORK BETTER TOGETHER.

FINN THORNTON



One of my biggest values is community. Communities are groups of people that share beliefs and interests. Community is a big part of many peoples' lives, including mine. I am a part of many, including Sunnyhill, my soccer team, and Boy Scouts. The Sunnyhill community has shaped my life, not only by teaching me physical skills, but also showing me how to be a good person. It has taught me the importance of giving my time and energy to what I believe in. I have spent countless hours with people of all ages here and it has enhanced my life in many ways.

As I continue to grow, I think I will keep my core beliefs such as social justice, nature, and the Golden and Platinum rules. I am very grateful to the Sunnyhill community for supporting me along the way.

THE SUNNYHILL COMMUNITY HAS SHAPED MY LIFE, NOT ONLY BY TEACHING ME PHYSICAL SKILLS, BUT ALSO SHOWING ME HOW TO BE A GOOD PERSON. IT HAS TAUGHT ME THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING MY TIME AND ENERGY TO WHAT I BELIEVE IN.

**“GO YOUR WAYS,
KNOWING NOT THE
ANSWERS TO ALL
THINGS,
YET SEEKING ALWAYS
THE ANSWER
TO ONE MORE THING
THAN YOU KNOW.”**

REV. JOHN W. BRIGHAM