



JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

President's Message

Doug VanOrsdall

Resolutions of Renewal:

Embracing the Power of New Beginnings

HELLO SLC of Franklin Family & Friends!

As we stand at the threshold of 2025, the air is alive with the energy of possibility as we step out of 2024 and move forward into 2025. The New Year beckons us to embark on a journey of renewal, to shed the limitations of the past, and to step boldly into the future with hearts full of hope.

It is a time to reflect on the lessons we've learned, to set intentions that align with our highest selves, and to embrace the transformative power of new beginnings. There are so many wonderful teachers and thinkers from whom we can learn, by using the wisdom they each have to share. In this spirit, let us draw inspiration from some of the greatest spiritual thinkers across time, each of whom offers profound wisdom for navigating the cycles of life and the art of renewal.

Rumi: The Dance of the Soul

The 13th-century Persian poet and mystic Rumi reminds us that life is a continuous dance of letting go and embracing anew. He writes, "Try not to resist the changes that come your way. Instead, let life live through you. And do not worry that your life is turning upside down. How do you know that the side you are used to is better than the one to come?" Rumi's teachings encourage us to trust the unfolding of life's mysteries, to see change as a divine invitation to grow, and to approach each new beginning with a sense of curiosity and wonder.

As we set our "resolutions of the soul" for 2025, Rumi's wisdom encourages us to embrace the unknown with open hearts, understanding that

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Burning Bowl Ceremony

Following his talk on January 5th, Craig Eister will lead us in a New Year's service of renewal and Burning Bowl Ceremony.



UPCOMING SPEAKERS:

- Jan 5.....Craig Eister
- Jan 12.....Elise Boren
- Jan 19.....Jean Paul Belmont
- Jan 26.....Tom Tyre

SLC is pet friendly.

Leashes please...

(Rabies shots current)

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every ending carries within it the seeds of a beautiful new beginning.

Ernest Holmes: The Creative Power of Thought

The founder of Religious Science, Ernest Holmes, taught that our thoughts shape our reality. *"Change your thinking, change your life,"* he famously declared. Holmes' Science of Mind philosophy invites us to harness the creative power of our thoughts to manifest lives of purpose and joy.

In the context of new beginnings, Holmes' teachings remind us of the importance of setting clear, positive intentions. By focusing on what we wish to create in 2025—whether it's greater health, deeper relationships, or fulfilling work—we align ourselves with the infinite possibilities of the universe. His principles empower us to co-create our future with the divine mind.

Charles and Myrtle Fillmore: The Principle of Divine Potential

Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, co-founders of Unity, emphasized the inherent divinity within each individual. They taught that by aligning with spiritual truths, we unlock our divine potential. Myrtle's healing journey is a testament to the transformative power of faith and affirmation.

As we enter this New Year, the Fillmores' teachings encourage us to affirm our innate worth and to recognize that we are co-creators with the divine. Each resolution we set is not just a goal but a declaration of our spiritual capacity to evolve and thrive.

Eckhart Tolle: The Sacredness of the Present Moment

Eckhart Tolle, author of *The Power of Now*, reminds us that the present moment is the gateway to transformation. *"Realize deeply that the present moment is all you ever have. Make the Now the primary focus of your life,"* he advises.

Tolle's teachings are particularly relevant as we release the weight of 2024 and step into 2025. By grounding ourselves in the present, we free ourselves from the regrets of the past and the anxieties of the future. This mindfulness creates the fertile ground necessary for planting the seeds of renewal.

Thich Nhat Hanh: The Practice of Mindful Living

The late Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh taught that mindfulness is the foundation of a peaceful and joyful life. *"Walk as if you are kissing the Earth with your feet,"* he said, reminding us to approach each moment with reverence and gratitude.

In the context of renewal, Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings inspire us to cultivate mindfulness in our daily lives. Whether through meditation, mindful breathing, or simply being fully present, we can create a sense of inner peace that sustains us as we pursue our aspirations for 2025.

Ram Dass: Be Here Now

Ram Dass, the beloved spiritual teacher and author of *Be Here Now*, encouraged us to embrace the present moment with love and awareness. His teachings remind us that the journey is as important as the destination.

As we set our intentions for the New Year, Ram Dass's wisdom invites us to approach the process with patience and self-compassion. Rather than striving for perfection, we can focus on the joy of growth and the beauty of each step along the way.

Deepak Chopra: The Law of Infinite Potential

Deepak Chopra's teachings on the law of infinite potential emphasize the interconnectedness of all things and the boundless possibilities available to us. *"You must find the place inside yourself where nothing is impossible,"* he says.

Chopra's insights inspire us to dream big as we enter

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2025. By aligning with the universe's creative energy, we can transcend limitations and bring our boldest visions to life. His principles remind us that our potential is as vast as the cosmos itself.

Marianne Williamson: The Courage to Shine

Marianne Williamson's famous words—"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure"—challenge us to embrace our light.

She teaches that by stepping into our power, we inspire others to do the same.

As we begin this New Year, Williamson's message calls us to release self-doubt and to shine brightly in all that we do. By embracing our unique gifts, we contribute to a collective awakening and a brighter world.

Byron Katie: Loving What Is

Byron Katie's process of self-inquiry, known as "**The Work**," teaches us to question our thoughts and to find peace in the present reality. "*When you argue with reality, you lose—but only 100% of the time,*" she quips.

Katie's teachings remind us that acceptance is a powerful form of renewal. As we enter 2025, we can practice loving what is while remaining open to what could be. This balance of acceptance and aspiration creates a harmonious foundation for growth.

Weaving Wisdom into Action

While we integrate the wisdom of these great thinkers, we find that renewal and new beginnings are universal themes, deeply rooted in spiritual traditions. This New Year, let us:

- *Embrace change with Rumi's curiosity.
- *Set intentions with Ernest Holmes' clarity.
- *Affirm our divine potential with the Fillmores.

- *Ground ourselves in the present with Eckhart Tolle.
- *Practice mindfulness with Thich Nhat Hanh.
- *Celebrate the journey with Ram Dass.
- *Dream boldly with Deepak Chopra.
- *Shine courageously with Marianne Williamson.
- *Accept life's reality with Byron Katie.

As we step into 2025, may we carry these timeless teachings in our hearts, allowing them to guide us toward lives of greater joy, purpose, and connection. Together, let us collaboratively manifest a year filled with hope, renewal, and boundless possibilities.

My Message of Hope for 2025:

As we turn the page to 2025, may we each feel the radiant energy of a fresh start coursing through our spirits. Let this be a year where love flows freely, abundance surrounds all of us, and the light of our intentions illuminates the path ahead.

May our hearts be open to the infinite possibilities that lie before us, and may we walk this journey with grace, courage, and unwavering faith in the beauty of life's unfolding.

In this new year, may we remember that we are all connected, with each of us being an essential part of the interconnected web of life. Together, let us co-create a world brimming with compassion, joy, and understanding. May we all step into 2025 with hearts uplifted and spirits renewed. Here's to a year ahead, where dreams are realized, love abounds, and possibilities are endless!

CHEERS~~

Doug

The Lessons of the Butterfly

by Debra Silverman

Butterflies are symbolic of how beautiful and tremendous transformation can be. They represent how the next version or iteration can be so different and yes, sometimes scary, to see things take on a whole new, foreign form.

But wow, how beautiful that form can be.

One thing we seem to gloss over when we think of the transformation of a butterfly is *what happens to the caterpillar inside the cocoon*.

Did you know that a caterpillar essentially becomes a messy pile of goo before it emerges as a breathtaking butterfly?

The lessons of the butterfly are:

🦋 It's okay to be in a "messy" state.

🦋 Transformation *can* and *will* happen.

🦋 The unknown on the other side of metamorphosis and growth can be scary, but it can turn out to be more beautiful and freeing than you can ever imagine.

So whatever you're feeling right now, whatever state you're in, trust that there's an evolution on the horizon, and there is an opportunity for you to make this life as beautiful as you can dream it to be.

Keep the lessons of the butterfly in mind as you walk into the new year.

Awaken to the Light

Tibetan Buddhist Prayer

May you be at peace.

May your heart remain open.

May you awaken to the light of your own true nature.

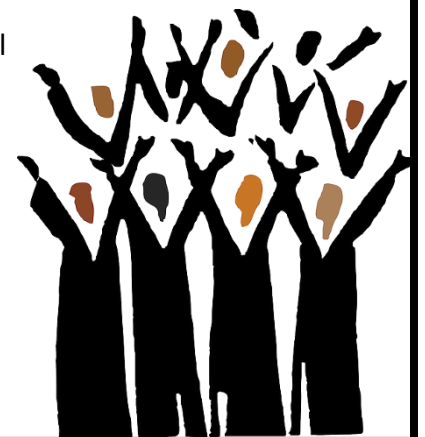
May you be healed.

May you be a source of healing for all beings.



Our Vision

The Spiritual Light Center is a peaceful and joyful fellowship of individuals, centered in love, dedicated to the God within, and honoring the many paths to truth.





Spreading Holiday Cheer



at December Services

Embrace the Change

At 40, Franz Kafka (1883-1924), who never married and had no children, walked through the park in Berlin when he met a girl who was crying because she had lost her favorite doll. She and Kafka searched for the doll unsuccessfully.

Kafka told her to meet him there the next day and they would come back to look for her.

The next day, when they had not yet found the doll, Kafka gave the girl a letter "written" by the doll saying "please don't cry. I took a trip to see the world. I will write to you about my adventures."

Thus began a story which continued until the end of Kafka's life.

During their meetings, Kafka read the letters of the doll carefully written with adventures and conversations that the girl found adorable.

Finally, Kafka brought back the doll (he bought

one) that had returned to Berlin.

"It doesn't look like my doll at all," said the girl.

Kafka handed her another letter in which the doll wrote: "my travels have changed me." The little girl hugged the new doll and brought the doll with her to her happy home.

A year later Kafka died.

Many years later, the now-adult girl found a letter inside the doll. In the tiny letter signed by Kafka it was written:

"Everything you love will probably be lost, but in the end, love will return in another way."

Embrace the change. It's inevitable for growth. Together we can shift pain into wonder and love, but it is up to us to consciously and intentionally create that connection. ❤️❤️❤️

Found on Facebook , submitted by P. Keyser

January Book Club Will Be Held Online

Penney Parker has offered to facilitate our Book Club again mid-January, but this time would invite all to her YouTube Channel “**Love Finds A Way Home**” and will begin with the book “*The Body Keeps the Score*” by Bessel Van Der Kolk, MD utilizing a workbook by

Liam Daniels & Alice Moore. Both books can be found on Amazon in Kindle or paperback formats.

Here is how Amazon describes the book. “Trauma is a fact of life. Veterans and their families deal with the painful aftermath of combat; one in five Americans has been molested; one in four grew up with alcoholics; one in three couples have engaged in physical violence. Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, one of the world’s foremost experts on trauma, has spent over three decades working with survivors. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, he uses recent scientific advances to show how trauma literally reshapes both body and brain, compromising sufferers’ capacities for pleasure, engagement, self-control, and trust. He explores innovative treatments—from neurofeedback and meditation to sports, drama, and yoga—that offer new paths to recovery by activating the brain’s natural neuroplasticity. Based on Dr. van der Kolk’s own research and that of other leading specialists, *The Body Keeps the Score* exposes the tremendous power of our relationships both to hurt and to heal—and offers new hope for reclaiming lives.”

One Tool, Many Uses

by Master Gardiner Sue Ditch

A long handled garden rake, also known as a bow rake, is a tool you can use to measure and plant the vegetable garden in Spring.

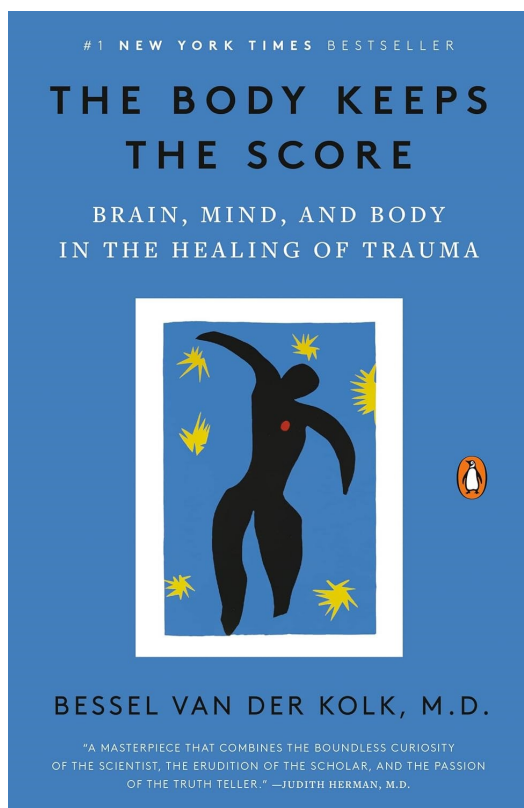
With a permanent black marker, mark the handle every 6 to 12 inches. These marks help to measure the proper distances between each row. Next, press the handle into the soil to create a channel in which to plant seeds. When your planting is done use the tines of the rake to press seeds in and cover them with a light layer of soil.



Start January with an Empty Jar

Take an empty Jar (a large canning jar will do). Add a note any time a good thing happens throughout the year.

On New Year’s Eve 2025, empty the jar and read about, relive, and feel gratitude for the absolutely AMAZING year you have just completed.



Is the term “GOD” Exclusive or Inclusive?

By Bill Groves

One of the most fun things I get to do is to speak at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Franklin, and at the Creative Thought Center in Waynesville, which is Science of Mind, and at Wayfarers in Dillard, which is sorta Unity but actually more eclectic. Each of them use the word "God" at times, as well as other terms for the Divine Being. Other than our own Spiritual Light Center, I believe these three Centers are the most inclusive spiritual centers around “these here parts.” It appears that they have all have considered this issue and have come to the conclusion that the term “God” is not exclusive to specific religions, but rather a more inclusive term that doesn’t infer allegiance to religion at all.

Personally, my understanding of the Divine is a Universal Consciousness that is the root of all reality, the ground of all existence in all universes. Everything that has ever existed arose from this foundation of Consciousness. I cannot conceive of anything that could possibly be more inclusive than this, as this Universal Consciousness dwells and functions within *all* reality, most especially ourselves.

I believe there is nothing at all that is "inanimate", even a dirt clod on the farthest planet in the most remote galaxy. God is within and animates it all, even that dirt clod. I suppose I'm an Animist who walks with Jesus. I call this root of Consciousness "God", which I understand to be the heart of all religions and faiths. Jesus referred to this non-exclusive, unconditionally loving entity as "Father", implying the closeness of God to us. In reverse, he also called the Father "God". Other terms were "alaha", "elohim", and very commonly "Lord" (Andonai in Hebrew).

So, there have always been multiple ways of referring to the Divine. I'm completely unaware of

there ever having been a debate about which word was the right or wrong one to use.

Historically, everyone seemed to know who/what they were talking about. Eastern religions often don't have a concept of a God or Supreme Being. When I have personally asked people from eastern Asia if they believe in God, they say "no, we don't believe in a God". And yet they refer to the entity they don't believe in, that is not in their culture, as "God". It seems that even atheists use the term "God" without being offended by it. I am totally unaware of any other truly universal term other than "God" referring to the Supreme Being.

I usually use the term "Creator" or "the Divine", but in my heart I know I am just trying to be sensitive to everyone, and I really mean "God" or "Father", which are the terms I'm personally most comfortable with referring to the Divine Creative Entity.

I'd be terribly saddened if our Center ever got a wild hair to get rid of the word "God" because we mistakenly thought it was specifically religious. It truly is not nor ever has been solely connected to religion. I DO NOT believe for one second that eliminating the word "God" would make us more inclusive or universal.

The word "God" is *already* the universal term for a Supreme Being and eliminating it would put us in a strange position with the rest of the spiritual world who uses the term. It would be like shooting ourselves in the foot trying to be excessively politically correct.

The Prayer of Protection was selected to be one of the various things to go into space to represent all humankind. The thought was that, hoping extra terrestrial beings could understand it, the Prayer would be the most universally accepted expression

(the Term God...Continued on page 8)



**Let your light
shine so brightly
that others can
see their way out
of the dark**

(The Term God.....continued from Page 7)

of the Divine and our relationship with It. And the word used repeatedly, five times in the Prayer of Protection, is the word "God". This is the word our species chose to refer to the Creator of all Universes if we were to communicate that concept to extra terrestrials.

The word "God" and "the Universe" are actually entirely different concepts, although I've heard us use them as if they referred to the same thing. God is the Creator, and the Universe is God's creation. Getting them mixed up would be like confusing a painting with the painter. God is first, infinitely first. God is before the Universe. Before time and space itself. Residing in eternity before Creation came into being. The absolute universality of the word "God" extends beyond space, beyond time. So, should anyone say that the word "God" is a term exclusive to specific earthly religions and not an inclusive universal term for the Supreme Being, let me take this moment to kindly beg to differ.

Happy New Year to all of you! Lots of love,
Bill Groves



Penney Parker officiated at a moving candlelight service on Christmas Eve, followed by a holiday get together in the fellowship hall. Featuring a fun-filled Chinese gift exchange.



Kahlil Gibran on *Fear*

It is said that before entering the sea
a river trembles with fear.
She looks back at the path she has traveled,
from the peaks of the mountains,
the long winding road crossing forests and villages.
And in front of her,
she sees an ocean so vast,
that to enter
there seems nothing more than to disappear forever.
But there is no other way.
The river can not go back.
Nobody can go back.
To go back is impossible in existence.
The river needs to take the risk
of entering the ocean
because only then will fear disappear,
because that's where the river will know
it's not about disappearing into the ocean,
but of becoming the ocean.

~ Khalil Gibran

**Gentle Stretch Yoga with Vickie
will resume in February.**

FINANCIAL REPORT

Balance on 10/31/24.....\$ 9111.75
Income.....1314.00
Expense..... 1302.29
Balance on 11/30/24.....\$ 9123.46



Volunteer Opportunities at SLC

Are you comfortable with computers? Consider helping with music and recording the service on an occasional Sunday. Other volunteer opportunities include facilitating, decorating and setting up for covered dish events, being a greeter on Sundays, or being on a committee to help with the occasional minor maintenance tasks that arise..



Newsletter Submissions Wanted

This is your newsletter. Help us to improve, be current, and shape it into something you look forward to receiving every month. We are looking for member generated articles, poems, quotes, photos, recipes, tips, event announcements and anything else that you feel might be of general interest.

Looking forward to hearing from you at
slcfranklin@frontier.com

Our Mission Statement

**We are developing our highest
selves by continuous sharing of
spiritual ideas in an environment
of unconditional love and respect
for others.**

The **Spiritual Light Center** is located at 80 Heritage Hollow Drive in Franklin (28734) right behind the Gazebo Restaurant in Heritage Hollow. 828-369-3065
slcfranklin@frontier.com www.spiritualightcenter.com

If you would like to contribute to SLC, we have a PayPal account, <https://tinyurl.com/SLC-donate>. This link takes you to a page where you can easily donate one time or make a recurring donation.