

# Unitarian Universalist Church Newsletter

17540 N. Avenue of the Arts, Surprise, AZ 85378-2581

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The Newsletter of Unitarian Universalist Church, Surprise, AZ is published monthly except August.

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**President:** Pat Lindgren



40th Anniversary 1975 - 2015

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March 2017

## From The Minister's Desk

The Gallup organization took a poll from June 1-5, 2016 to gauge Americans' confidence in institutions. The poll asked respondents whether they had a great deal of confidence, quite a lot, some, or very little in various institutions. It was not surprising to find evidence for our widespread lack of confidence in our institutions generally, but I focused on two institutions in particular. Only 20% of those who responded had a great deal of confidence or quite a lot in newspapers and only 21% in television news. I believe I know why.



The problem with the poll is that it necessarily lumps all news organizations together into the two news institutions. But much depends on which news organizations we're concerned with, doesn't it? I value some news outlets highly and totally dismiss others as biased, producing "fake news" at the behest of their masters. Those who disagree with me on various issues probably see the problem exactly the same way. The only difference is that we end up with different lists of which news organizations we can trust.

Edmund Burke first used the term "fourth estate" in 1787 to describe all who report the news. He viewed these news reporters as one of the pillars of democracy, a position I embrace. But I believe the "fourth estate" is eroding today and that erosion, along with our loss of confidence in that pillar, seriously endangers our democracy.

Our Fourth UU Principle is an affirmation of "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning." We are severely hampered in that search when we

cannot even agree as a society that some truths can and should be objectively determined. There are actual facts of our shared existence. Not everything is a matter of subjective points of view or opinion.

We all have our own perspectives, of course. But we need news organizations that believe an objective shared reality can be discovered, that pursue reality with integrity, that see reporting it as their only mission, and that are committed to trying to avoid bias as much as possible. Their objectivity, too, can and should be objectively questioned. Without such news providers, we end up with what Ben Fountain described as "the numbed-out, dumbed-down, make-believe world where much of the national consciousness resides, the sum product of our mighty Fantasy Industrial Complex: movies, TV, internet, texts, tweets, ad saturation, celebrity obsession, sports obsession . . ." [<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/sep/17/american-dream-divided-nation-equal-opportunity-trump-clinton-campaign>]

As UU's, I think we need to identify for ourselves and others which news organizations we trust and why. And then we need to support and defend those organizations and the journalists they employ. They need to know that we value and support their freedom and integrity in fearlessly reporting the objective truth they find. Our democracy is in desperate need of professional journalists who are free from favors or reprisals for doing their job. They, the "fourth estate" at its best, are allies in our religious quest for truth and meaning, our Fourth UU Principle. I'll see you in church.

Faithfully yours,

*Terry*

## President's Letter to Congregation

Pat Lindgren, President



I was captivated by an article in the February issue of Touchstones that was excerpts from a sermon by Rev. Forrest Church titled "Is Tolerance a Virtue?". The excerpt starts out with "Lord Acton once said that every institution perishes by an excess of its own first principle.

The three first principles of liberal religion are freedom, reason and tolerance. So this morning let me first consider the dangers of an excess of tolerance."

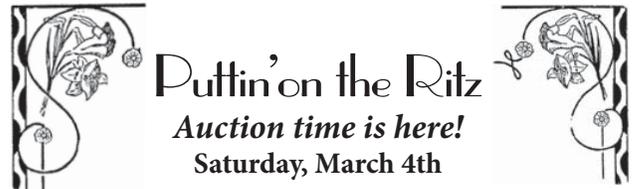
That piqued my interest, so I looked up the whole sermon on the internet and discovered that it was given just before the US invaded Iraq and was about the beginning of that war. I was not interested in the main topic so much as I was in this concept of tolerance.

A dictionary definition of tolerance is: "a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward those whose opinions, beliefs, practices, racial or ethnic origins, etc., differ from one's own; freedom from bigotry". I have always thought of it that way. Yet Rev. Church writes that "to tolerate means to abide with repugnance". By defining it this way Rev. Church says that tolerance can become a "self-congratulatory cover for condescension", that when we tolerate something we are more self-righteous than righteous. I can see his point and can see in myself that sometimes my tolerance falls short of understanding and mutual respect. When we look at something or someone that we disagree with or that is different than we are, we need to practice the dictionary definition of tolerance, to understand and respect the differences.

Rev. Church goes on to say that "Second, ... if to tolerate means, in certain instances at least, to abide with repugnance, there are some things too repugnant to abide". I agree with this too, that there are things and actions that we should not tolerate. The Unitarian Universalist faith and church have practiced this form of intolerance for most of its existence. We have been protestors against discrimination and hatred in many forms for centuries. As I write this (February 14) our UUJAZ has scheduled a UU day at the Legislature and

the Pacific Southwest District of UUA (PSWD) is planning a Justice District Assembly at the Arizona-Mexico border for March 21 to April 2.

This is something that we try to teach our children as they grow up. We love and respect them, but we will not tolerate certain behaviors. Let's keep in mind the two sides of tolerance and strive to understand and respect differences yet protest and shun behavior that is truly repugnant.



**Puttin' on the Ritz**  
**Auction time is here!**  
**Saturday, March 4th**

Join us for an evening of fun, entertainment, lively conversation, good food, and an opportunity to support the church. We'll be *Puttin' on the Ritz*, having a wonderful time with our swell beaux, rubbin' elbows and spending our last dime.

The evening begins with numerous choices of fine goods to bid on during the Silent Auction, while our servers circulate, offering wine and hors d'oeuvres.

Dinners, trips, games, family fun, and other selections of activities will be open for bids in the live Auction. The pace of the auction will be amazing as we have two auctioneers to field your bids!

Dan Reed and friends will entertain us during dinner, which will be followed by our Dessert Dash, which was a big hit last year.

As dinner and dessert are finished, volunteers will be ready to finalize your purchases.

The evening's schedule is:

- 4:30 - Silent auction
- 5:30 - Live auction
- 6:30 - Dinner
- 7:20 - Dessert Dash
- 7:30 - Finalizing of our purchases



*Ticket Sales begin Sunday, February 5th*

*Dinner - \$15.00*

*Children's Menu - \$7.00*

*Contact: Jeff and Priscilla London 952-200-0643*



## UU 90+-year-old Party

Bonnie Saunders

After church on Sunday, February 12, 2017, we honored our 19 members and friends who are 90 years old or more. Fifteen seniors attended and enjoyed special cake, special cookies, and coffee -- along with many members of the congregation who stayed to applaud them.



These men and women are a varied and very interesting group. They range in age from the youngest one, who is about three weeks short of 90, to

the oldest one, who is 97. The 90+-year-old honorees included Joe Brooks (96), Doree Conner (97), Bill Eckenberg (92), Marilyn Kluge (91), Al Lackey (91), Jeanne Marcus (91), Pat Mathews (91), Lee Ormsbee (92), Don Parrish (91), Ray Prendergast (92), Jim Rideout (almost 90), Loren Speicher (90), Emmy Speranza (91), Millie Steere (90+), Helen Tennent (92), Ann Timmer (91), Ann Winsor (96), Vivian Wood (94), and Mary Wylie (90). All of these people are entitled to brag about their age!!



Bonnie Saunders had interviewed them, and she read a few facts about each of them. Only one of them was born in Arizona. One was born in Germany. Two others have lived in five foreign countries. One was in the Army. One woman was a Marine during World War II. They

have lived in a total of 21 states and the District of Columbia. Their jobs have included seven educators (elementary through college), an engineer, two secretaries, a singer and writer of music, one long-haul truck driver, and two secretaries. They advised young people today to listen to their elders, to explore all of their options for opportunities, to have a positive attitude, to be happy and authentic, to enjoy all of your life, to be confident, not to be afraid to make important decisions, to avoid stress, to be kind to everyone, and to think before you speak. With such a positive attitude, no wonder they lived to be more than 90 years old!!



Social Activities Chair Danean Mitchell organized the food and tables -- what a beautiful and delicious spread she arranged, with special cake, special cookies, and coffee!! And her helpers brought coffee and refreshments to the honorees, who (by all reports) enjoyed themselves immensely!



*Photos courtesy of John Marshall, Danean Mitchell and Charlie Mannino*



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## Denominational Affairs

Sharon Beard

**District Assembly** will be held March 31st to April 2nd at Tucson area UU churches. Registration opened on January 15....go to [pswduua.org](http://pswduua.org) for further information and to register.

A great deal of information and a video about the conference as well as the registration process is found at [justiceda2017.weebly.com](http://justiceda2017.weebly.com).

The assembly includes field trips on Saturday during the day and a business meeting to be held via video conferencing connecting four base congregations in cities where people will be staying.

The field trips are immersion experiences designed to connect participants to the social, environmental, and spiritual facets of immigration justice.

**General Assembly** will be held at the New Orleans Convention Center in New Orleans, LA from June 21-25. A new UUA president will be elected, and one of the candidates is Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray from the Phoenix UU congregation! Registration opens on March 1....go to [uua.org](http://uua.org) for more information and to register.

## The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

We hope you have been enjoying your winter reading selections from the UU Library. Check-outs of books have continued at a higher pace, along with the addition of books checked out during Sunday Service Reading events. We are pleased to be able to offer the congregation this great selection of UU oriented books.

Springtime is just around the corner and along with the season, time for some yearly spring cleaning of the book collection. Following our last year's long overdue overhaul, we have pulled far fewer books for removal this year. We only pulled 20 books. The books are featured on the top shelf of the cart in the Library. The shelf is labeled "Last Call". Please give these great older books a look over. You may find one you wish to check-out. At the end of March, the books not checked out will be offered for sale on the cart outside the Library.

Now let's continue to look at a few more of the new books recently added to your UU Library:

***"Same Family, Different Colors,"*** by Lori L. Tharps, number 305.80THA. Reviewed by Amazon: Colorism and color bias—the preference for or presumed superiority of people based on the color of their skin—is a pervasive and damaging but rarely openly discussed phenomenon. In this unprecedented book, the author explores the issue....by weaving together personal stories, history, and analysis. The result is a compelling portrait of the myriad ways skin-color politics affect family dynamics in the U.S.

***"Ancient Stories for Modern Times,"*** by Faye Mogensen, number 170.44MOG. This is a terrific all ages book of 50 wonderful stories from around the world; exploring a broad range of life lessons and UU principles. The collection includes reflection questions, story maps, and an index of themes and principles. The author is a long time storyteller, a former park naturalist, and now the Director of Spiritual Learning at the First Unitarian Church of Victoria, British Columbia.—In Spirit Books and Amazon.

And finally, a wonderful new meditation book: ***"A Year of Spiritual Companionship: 52 Weeks of Wisdom for a Life of Gratitude, Balance and Happiness,"*** by Anne Kertz Kerion, number 204.32KER.

*Have a blessed day shared with a good book!*

## Circle Suppers

Circle suppers are small potluck dinners held in members' and friends' homes. In January, four suppers were held. The food was great, but more importantly they were excellent opportunities for the participants to get to know each other better.

There will be another round of circle suppers the weekend of March 17,18, and 19. If you would like to join us, please sign up in the Social Hall or call Susie Cole 406.600.8857 or Nancy Flann 623.583.4636.

## BUUK Circle

Julie Wambach

BUUK Circle meets 2-4PM in the Social Hall on the third Thursday of the month. Bring your suggestions for our next selection to this month's meeting.

March 16, 2017, ***"Thanks for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations"*** by Thomas Friedman.

A highly praised work by one of our best political columnists. The editor explains, "His [Friedman's] thesis: to understand the twenty-first century, you need to understand that the planet's three largest forces Moore's law (technology), the Market (globalization), and Mother Nature (climate change and biodiversity loss) are accelerating all at once. These accelerations are transforming five key realms: the workplace, politics, geopolitics, ethics, and community."

You are welcome to join us if you've not finished the book, or even started. For more information, contact Julie Wambach [azwambach@icloud.com](mailto:azwambach@icloud.com).

## UU Endowment Fund

Naming the Endowment Fund of the Church as a beneficiary of your estate or a specific asset, such as an IRA or life insurance plan, provides a simple way to begin your legacy now by providing for our church work in the future. If your circumstances change, you can alter your plans at any time.

For further information call:  
Brooks Marshall at 623-362-1195.

## Achieving Balance With Music

*Debby Bullins, Music Director*

Our daily lives are full of tasks and deadlines that leave little time for taking care of ourselves.



When it becomes hard to find your way out of the downward spiral caused by overwhelming stress and anxiety, try turning to music. Music has the ability to shift our mood, affecting our subconscious mind where negative thoughts fuel the feelings of stress. Listening to music is an inexpensive

solution to relieve this stress and bring balance into our everyday lives.

Try starting your day with calm sounds from your alarm clock, whether it is the sound of the ocean or a gentle piano melody. Long, deep breathing is a perfect way to bring your mind and body into balance. When you are up and moving, fill your room with inspiring melodies. You will find yourself beginning the day in a more positive mood.

If you want to keep that mood going forward, try singing a favorite tune on the way to work. I am a firm believer in “traffic jammin’”. It doesn’t matter whether you are a great singer, it matters that the song inspires you and keeps you in balance. It can be a few syllables, the chorus to a favorite song, a familiar hymn, a Broadway tune, jazz, rock and roll or something you make up on the spot which releases your creativity. Start by writing your own playlist with songs that you find calming, inspiring and energizing, adding to the list as you go.

Joining a caring and supportive musical community, whether it is a drum circle, a community or church choir, dancing at a neighborhood center or a getting together with a group of friends who enjoy similar tastes in music, is a great way to channel extra energy that builds up during the day from frustration and stress.

In any case, music is a powerful experience that affects our perceptions, emotions, and physical well being. One thing is guaranteed, your life feels better and more balanced with music.

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**Please have information for the Newsletter submitted by Noon on the 15th of each month to the Editor, Charlie Mannino at [newsletter@uusurprise.org](mailto:newsletter@uusurprise.org)**

## It’s a Musical Sermon!

*Julian Rush*

How can a gay boy from Mississippi survive there (or anywhere else)? There are many rough roads, and some of them are not even paved!

My name is Julian Rush, and I’ve spent my life up until now as a father and a musician, as well as a United Methodist minister, an HIV/AIDS worker, a Right to Die advocate, and now I’m UU too!

On Sunday, March 26th, I’ll be preaching a musical sermon, with tunes from my 6 hymns and 13 musicals. It’s about my own journey, and I hope that you will be willing to allow me to share my struggles and successes with you in a musical way.

I believe there are many lessons of life we can share, and with that sharing comes both enrichment and strength.

I gave a smaller version last summer, but this one is more developed. In the words of my Mississippi ancestors, “*Y’all come!*”

## Great Decisions 2017 U.S. Foreign Policy Discussion Series

*Bonnie Saunders*

How can you make sense of what is happening in the world? You can join thousands of Americans who participate in Great Decisions Discussions on U.S. Foreign Policy, many of whom send in their opinion ballots in an attempt to sway opinion in the State Department. Join Bonnie Saunders in February and March for these discussions.

In January, Bonnie will have the briefing books available in church for \$16 each - you will need to read the article on each topic before the discussion. If you don’t want to drive at night, Bonnie teaches this course on Thursday afternoons at Sun City Grand in February and March (non-residents can take courses there for a fee) and on Wednesday afternoons at R.I.S.E. in March and April. If you don’t see her at church, e-mail her at [BonnieSaun@aol.com](mailto:BonnieSaun@aol.com).

Topics and dates for these discussions will be at 7:00 p.m. on the following Mondays:

- 3/6:.....U.S. Foreign Policy and Petroleum
- 3/13: ..... Latin America’s Political Pendulum
- 3/20: ..... Prospects for Afghanistan and Pakistan
- 3/27: ..... Nuclear Security

## RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE

As we march into spring I wanted to let you know about several activities being hosted by children's RE that are open to the entire congregation.



This spring we are offering a special 4 part family service project. Kick-off will be a "Refugee Q & A" being held on Tuesday, 2/28 at 7:00 p.m. Have you ever had questions about refugees but were afraid to ask? Who are they? How do they get here? How will refugee

resettlement change with the new administration? Congregation friend, Teraysa Hightower, has worked in different capacities with refugees on and off for over 20 years and will provide an informational session to shed some light on this often misrepresented topic. To attend, please sign up at the events table in the social hall. Mature youth are most definitely welcome.

Parts 2 and 3, will be collecting and assembling "Welcome to Arizona" refugee baskets. We will partner with an organization called Refugee Focus to collect and assemble welcome baskets filled with calendars, bus passes, toiletries, etc. to a list of identified, new and existing refugee families. We are hoping for a large turnout as this project will be open to RE families as well as the entire congregation. Children will work side by side with parents to help with the project, decorate baskets and make welcome cards. Please refer to the list of needed items included elsewhere in this newsletter. The last part, part 4, will be the delivery of finished baskets. Delivery date TBA.

In addition to our spring family service project, we are also getting ready to celebrate our annual church picnic on Sunday, March 26th! We will be bringing this event back to the White Tanks Regional Park this year. All are welcome for this fun, outdoor event. Join us at Ramada 4F from 2-6 p.m. and bring a main entree for your family to grill and an additional dish to share with the group. A sign-up sheet will go up in the social hall closer to the event. Park entry fee is \$6 per vehicle. Hope to see you there!

### UUC Surprise Family Service Project "Welcome to Arizona" Refugee Baskets Saturday, April 8th 2017

Under the direction of Teraysa Hightower, we will partner with an organization called Refugee Focus to collect, assemble and deliver welcome baskets filled with calendars, bus passes, toiletries, etc. to a list of identified, new and existing refugee families. We are hoping for a large turnout as this project will be open to RE families as well as the entire congregation. Children will work side by side with parents to help with the project, decorate baskets and make welcome cards.

(Items will be placed in a laundry basket for each family)

#### **Must Haves (items must be NEW)**

Shampoo	Hairbrush
Toothpaste	Deodorant
Toothbrushes	Kleenex
Bar Soap	Sewing Kit
Toilet Paper	Laundry Soap
Dish Soap	Sponges
Dish Towels	
409 or other all-purpose cleaner	
Notebooks and Pencils/Pens	
Oxford English Picture Dictionary	

#### **Nice Extras**

Soccer ball, doll, puppet or other simple toy
Other (children's) school supplies
Bath Towels
Bus Pass
Quarters (to do laundry in apartment complex)
Calendar
Gift Card
Watering Can
Saran Wrap Foil

Please contact Lisa Lawrence at [lisal@uusurprise.org](mailto:lisal@uusurprise.org) with any questions. Happy collecting!

*This event is sponsored by the Children's RE Department*

## Social Activities

*Danean Mitchell*

First I want to thank everyone who helped with the 90+ celebration Sunday, February 12th. I know I did not get to everyone with personal thanks, but know you are in my thoughts. Special thanks to Linda Speranza for making the cakes. Special thanks to Alison Tobin for the beautiful violin solo. Bonnie's interviews let us know more about our seniors and their advice to future generations was enlightening. I hope all our 17 special guests enjoyed their celebration



We had a lot of fun on the Chinese New Year. Hope all those fortune cookies bring much inspiration for the coming year And, as always, thank you, George, for making coffee and recycling our stuff.

Coming soon . . . I think I saw some wee lil' green people running around. One told me he was looking for the pot-o- gold at the end of the rainbow. . but then are not we all? March. . . Wearing of the green, daffodils, four leaf clovers, corned beef and cabbage, "The luck of the Irish" . . . THE AUCTION. . . . St Patrick's Day

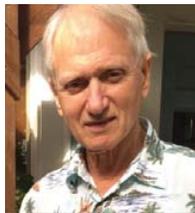
Still need volunteers. Our helpers would:

1. Put out the adult treats,
2. Make the coffee and
3. Help with clean-up.

It is my hope and vision to have rotating teams of volunteers within each category. If you are willing and able to help us out or have questions, please contact Danean Mitchell at 623-546-6050. Thank you in advance for your volunteering spirit. I appreciate you.

## Web Master Needed

John Cline, who has been our Church webmaster for over 10 years now (whew!), is resigning his post at the end of April. We are seeking a replacement volunteer. Optimally, this would be an individual with up-to-date website design skills. If you know of anyone interested in this position, please contact John (623-910-7055), [johclin@cox.net](mailto:johclin@cox.net) or Charlie Mannino [newsletter@uusurprise.org](mailto:newsletter@uusurprise.org).



## Where Is Terry?

*Julian Rush*

On Sunday mornings, there are always lots of people who want to speak with Terry. On Sundays when Terry is not present, some of those seeking him are disappointed.

When I was a young minister, most churches at that time expected their ministers to be omnipresent. Most tried their best to be on duty 24/7. As a result, most had no identity other than "pastor". There were no close friends or outside activities. I knew many ministers, after retirement, who died after 2 or 3 years. Their identities were gone, and they had nothing to strive for.

As time passed, congregations began to realize that ministers needed self care. Congregations also learned that ministers don't need to do all their work at the church building. Terry's sermons demand considerable time to prepare. Thinking, researching and developing a single sermon require well over 20 hours. There are numerous hours meeting with individuals, a variety of church meetings and denominational duties.

Terry, like most UU ministers, has one Sunday a month off, which means time away from church duties - to rest, to relax, to recoup.

Terry is a hard worker and a very capable, loving and caring minister. I believe that we are very fortunate to have him with us.



*Submitted by Helen Sheehan*

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First Class Mail

## **Affirmation**

*Love is the spirit of this church*

*And service is its law.*

*This is our great covenant:*

*To dwell together in peace,*

*To seek the truth in freedom,*

*And to help one another.*

## **Join us for Sunday service at 10:30 am**

*If you are not a member but would like to receive church announcements by email,  
please send your email address and full name to [uucsaz@aol.com](mailto:uucsaz@aol.com).*

## **Sermon Titles For March 2017**

*The Theme for February Is "Balance"*

### **3/5 - Rev. Terry Sims ..... Balance in a Binary World**

We are often encouraged to see the world as a series of 1's and 0's; that things are either this way or that, but not both, and there is no way to combine or mediate those opposites. But religious traditions offer a different vision.

### **3/12 - Rev. Terry Sims ..... Something to Hang Onto**

My great-niece Carly has just learned to walk. At first, like every child, she was always hanging onto something. When life jolts us, having something to hang onto can mean the difference between a hard fall and regaining our balance.

### **3/19 -Rev. Terry Sims ..... Becoming the Balance**

Many of us want to find balance in our hectic lives, have it supplied for us. But I wonder if a path of spiritual growth might not lie in ourselves becoming the balance in our own lives and for an out-of-balance world.

### **3/26 - Rev. Julian Rush... It's a Musical Sermon!**

*See page 5 for sermon description.*