

Unitarian Universalist Church Newsletter

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

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40th Anniversary 1975 - 2015

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July & August 2017

From The Minister's Desk

About 20 years ago, someone asked me to explain how religion, especially Unitarian Universalism, differed from philosophy. I struggled to answer his question. After all, our UU Principles, for example, “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations”, are broad statements of philosophical positions also held by others outside UUism.



Many have found a distinction by noting that philosophy relies on reason and rationality to support its claims of truth, while more traditional religions rest on divine revelation and faith rather than reason in asserting what is true. But that distinction doesn't apply very well to Unitarian Universalism. That is because we explicitly acknowledge reason and science as one of the sources of our living tradition.

Still, I do think I see at least two key differences between UUism and philosophy. The first is that in my limited study of philosophy, the discipline seemed exclusively an intellectual endeavor. I hope that our UU diverse spiritualities are at least equally grounded in and energized by our emotions – joy, awe, compassion. The second difference I see is that UUism may be more concerned with practical effects; not just determining philosophical truths, but using those truths in real-world applications. Maybe UUism is, or needs to be, applied philosophy. In 2008, Steven Pinker, cognitive scientist and Harvard professor of psychology, wrote a long, engaging article for the New York Times called “The Moral Instinct”. The article can be read here:

http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppecorino/INTRO_TEXT/Chapter%208%20Ethics/Reading-The%20Moral-Instinct.htm.

Pinker's article raises enough worthwhile ideas to launch quite a few newsletter articles. I may return to it later. But for now, I want to focus on his opening question. “Which of the following people would you say is the most admirable: Mother Teresa, Bill Gates or Norman Borlaug? And which do you think is the least admirable? For most people, it's an easy question. Mother Teresa, famous for ministering to the poor in Calcutta, has been beatified by the Vatican, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and ranked in an American poll as the most admired person of the 20th century. Bill Gates, infamous for giving us the Microsoft dancing paper clip and the blue screen of death, has been decapitated in effigy in “I Hate Gates” web sites and hit with a pie in the face. As for Norman Borlaug . . . who the heck is Norman Borlaug?

Yet a deeper look might lead you to rethink your answers. Borlaug, father of the “Green Revolution” that used agricultural science to reduce world hunger, has been credited with saving a billion lives, more than anyone else in history. Gates, in deciding what to do with his fortune, crunched the numbers and determined that he could alleviate the most misery by fighting everyday scourges in the developing world like malaria, diarrhea and parasites. Mother Teresa, for her part, extolled the virtue of suffering and ran her well-financed missions accordingly: their sick patrons were offered plenty of prayer but harsh conditions, few analgesics and dangerously primitive medical care.

. . . I doubt these examples will persuade anyone to favor Bill Gates over Mother Teresa for sainthood. But they show that our heads can be turned by

an aura of sanctity, distracting us from a more objective reckoning of the actions that make people suffer or flourish.”

I love our UU Principles and have dedicated my life to them, but I hope that in our UU congregation, we will not be distracted by the “aura of sanctity” surrounding our beautifully-worded, philosophical Principles. They are for use in our everyday lives, not dust-covered truths to be admired only on a shelf. I hope instead that we will employ our Principles in “a more objective reckoning of the actions that make people suffer or flourish.” I want us to regularly ask the fundamental philosophical questions about existence, meaning, and right and wrong, but then I want us to challenge ourselves to live by the answers. I’ll see you in church.

Yours in our faith,



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.

Help! Help! Help!

Jack & Helen Sheehan

Without Virginia Taylor and her recruits, we’re finding more remaining trash on our property. So we are requesting your help, particularly with the accumulation in the basin where it requires more sure footed people other than ourselves. Perhaps our children would enjoy running up and down and around as they gather the litter.

We try to be at the church early Thursday mornings (around 8:00 a.m.) to check the irrigation and sweep the debris. We would greatly welcome your help at that time or any more convenient time for you.

President's Letter to Congregation

Pat Lindgren, President



As I write this, I am celebrating my 73rd birthday. I had to turn in this article for publication. I wasn’t sure what to write about for the column so I will just put down some random thoughts I have had lately.

Random thought 1 - The Southern Baptist Convention

is holding their annual meeting in Phoenix this year. Very surprisingly they approved a resolution to “decry every form of racism, including alt-right white supremacy.”

Random thought 2 – in the past couple of months, the city of New Orleans has removed four statues of Confederate war heroes.

I stopped writing this article because my random thoughts led to some serious thinking about where we are going as a faith, as a nation. I would like to do some more research and thinking about this and tell you what I come up with in my next sermon on August 6. I also expect to attend several sessions on racism at the General Assembly from June 21 to 25, that I hope will bring more clarity to the subject.

In the meantime, please take extra care the next weeks with being outside. Phoenix will be in a major heat wave, and it will be very dangerous out there.

BUUK Circle

Julie Wambach

BUUK Circle: We meet the third Thursday, October-May. While we are now on summer break, you can begin to read our choice for October. Please note: This is a change from a book previously listed in the “Newsletter.” For more information, contact Julie Wambach azwambach@icloud.com.

Oct 19, 2017 - “**The Abolition of Man**” by C. S. Lewis. Full text available online https://archive.org/details/TheAbolitionOfMan_229 Published in 1943, this book was chosen by the “National Review” as number 7 of the 100 Best Nonfiction Books of the 20th Century.” Perhaps, the most debated of his books, Lewis presents the case for universal moral laws, as opposed to subjective values.

The Role of Your Lay Pastoral Care Committee

from the Lay Pastoral Care Committee

A few members have recently asked the Lay Pastoral Care Committee to provide transportation, especially to medical appointments, and to provide meals. The LPCC recognizes that larger churches are sometimes able to provide those kinds of services to their members. Three or four years ago, the Committee members recognized that they themselves could not take on providing transportation and meals. So the Committee sought out members of the congregation who were willing to provide that kind of help to other members in need and created lists of those people to call when the need arose. Unfortunately, the needs never meshed with the schedules of people able and willing to provide the services, so the Committee had to abandon efforts to coordinate providing transportation and meals.

The LPCC was founded with the mission of visiting members in the hospital or confined at home, providing other kinds of emotional support to members, and helping the minister and each other to stay informed about members who may need those visits and support. The LPCC is pleased and honored to continue in those roles, but asks the understanding of all congregation members that the LPCC is not able to provide meals or transportation.

With respect to transportation especially, we know that progressive care facilities often provide transportation for their residents. We are also aware of these other community services that are available:

- 1) Northwest Valley Connect – (623) 282-9300
- 2) West Valley Connections – (623) 210-1351
- 3) Benevilla – (623) 584-4999
- 4) Envoy America-1 (888) 375-5558



Free Smoke Detectors & More

David Deadman, grandson of Bob and Virginia Deadman, informed me that through a Federal grant that ends October 2017, the Sun City fire department will provide free lockboxes, smoke detectors and fire safety evaluations to residents within the Sun City fire district. You may contact the Sun City fire department by calling 623-974-2321 or email at smokedetector@suncityfire.com.

Announcing a Seven Principles Workshop

Tom Reemtsma, facilitator

On October 3rd a study workshop will begin featuring our UU 7 Principles. During several sessions we will dig for roots of the principles by looking into the history of world religions and philosophies. The eight sessions will meet in the choir room from 6:30 until 8 P.M. on Tuesday evenings through November 21st.

Each week following discussions of our research, we will create a montage and a dramatic depiction of each principle to show their practical application. Then on November 23rd we will present our work at the church as part of our Thanksgiving meal event.

These principles were combined in this form as an expression of values out of which UU's may derive the shoulder to shoulder commitment on which we depend for energizing the faithful journey of personal and societal transformation. Let us illuminate them so they may guide us.

Join this creative exploration by signing up at the events table.



Name Tags

Janet Kafel

Magnetic name tags are now available for purchase through Janet Kafel. They are \$5.25 each. To order yours, see Janet on Sundays at the table by the front door of the Social Hall or contact her at janetkafel@gmail.com or 530-340-3230.

When you see a name badge with a green dot, it signifies a new member. Take time to say hello, and welcome them to our congregation.



Surprise Elementary Volunteers

Julie Wambach

Surprise Elementary School, our congregation's adopted school, is looking for volunteers. An application and fingerprint security check are required. Once cleared, volunteers can decide how they want to contribute and how often they will be available. Start now so you will be ready for Fall, 2017. See information contact Julie Wambach azwambach@icloud.com.

Musings From The Loft

Debby Bullins, Music Director



Wow, it's July and the summer is almost half over. The choir is on break for the summer, but the church is not without wonderful and diverse music. I hope you are enjoying our wonderful accompanists Connie Jahrmarkt, Maggi Mahan, Ruth Swank,

Julian Rush, Cathy Mannino and Lynne Haeseler, who provide a standard of musical performance that we have come to appreciate. Please let them know how much you appreciate what they do.

I am busy planning (not a surprise to most of you) music for the 2017-2018 Season. I am working hard on selecting beautiful and thoughtful choir anthems and hymns with messages that coordinate and enhance each sermon as well as selecting music for the holiday season and into next year.

The UU Choir has stepped up to the challenges given them, learning various styles of music. They have grown in their ability to express the text of the music as well as how to make each song more musical. I am extremely proud of them. The choir has welcomed several new members this year and invites anyone who is interested to join our growing ensemble. We have welcoming seats available and would love to have you. Members can include singles, couples, friends, siblings, parent and child, grandparent and child. The combinations are endless and the benefits are priceless. We rehearse before service on Sundays from 9:00 – 10:00 am and have one Sunday off a month. We have one rehearsal on a Thursday from 1:30 – 3:30 pm each month to work on the choir anthems and learn parts. Please join us at our first rehearsal on Thursday, September 7, from 1:30 – 3:30. The only requirement is a love of music and the desire to sing.

I would also like to invite other musicians to share their musical talents during service. Whether you play percussion, guitar, woodwinds, brass, strings, we would love for you to join us. Please contact me @ debbyb@uusurprise.org.

I would like to share a few scientific facts while you think about having music in your life:

Music Increases Happiness

Music Decreases Stress, While Increasing Overall Health

Music Improves Sleep

Music Reduces Depression

Music Helps You Eat Less

Music Strengthens Learning and Memory

Music Increases Verbal Intelligence

Music Raises IQ and Academic Performances

Music Elevates Your Mood While Driving

Conclusion: For maximum benefits on a stressful day, turn on some tunes and sing along. Don't be shy to break out the air-guitar! (or cello, whatever floats your boat!)

More Good News With Free Pizza

Bonnie F. Saunders, Chair, Adult Education Committee and Member, UU Board of Trustees

Put the date of Sunday, September 24th immediately after Church, on your calendar now and remember to be there. At that time on that date, we will serve members and friends with delicious (free) pizza and soda. As soon as people settle down to eat, we will begin our discussion about the many church activities in which many church members and friends have been involved and in which you might want to engage in the future. I will be talking about the adult education courses that I teach. I hope that others who have taught courses will talk about their favorite subjects. I hope that members who have been involved in religious education for children will talk about that program. There are lots of other people who are involved in various other activities of the church -- support groups (i.e., the Lay Pastoral Committee, the Men's Group, the Women's Group). Social Activities (such as, Sunday morning coffee, potluck meals), the Music program (the Choir, concerts by outside people and groups). I plan to ask leaders in those activities (and maybe others) to talk briefly about their work, its importance, and its rewards to participants. Then we should pass around sign-up sheets for members and friends to sign up to participate in many of these activities.

Please have information for the Newsletter submitted by Noon on the 15th of each month to the Editor, Charlie Mannino at newsletter@uusurprise.org

Sermon Titles For July & August 2017

- 7/2 - Jillian Kong-Sivert.....Why We Build the Wall**
This is a series of impressions from my experiences as an immigration litigator in Arizona. This talk will dig into who we are as a nation and what relationships we are building with our newcomers.
- 7/9 - Rev. Paul Clark, speaker.....Remembering a Lady of Highest Character**
Most of us have had the experience of being with a small group of people long enough that, for each one, the existence or lack of high moral character becomes evident. Imagine going on a six-week trip on a cargo ship, with a limit of 12 passengers, from New York to and around the Mediterranean, and back to New York. 56 years later you most remember 3 of the twelve passengers and one in particular you would say was “A Lady of Highest Character.”
- 7/16 - Rev. Dr. Cathy Mannino.....Confessions of a Clueless Conformist**
Have you ever felt just a little guilty when you realize that you may have, at least unconsciously, participated in a form of tacit collusion with isms that you don’t really agree with, such as racism, sexism, or (gasp) ageism? I have. So, I’m exploring ways to “get a clue,” “wake up and smell the coffee,” and “just say no.”
- 7/23 - Amy St. Peter.....Into the Woods**
Generations ago, we left the woods and nature to build impressive cities and intricate technology. This progress offers many benefits. What have we left behind with such progress and what do we gain spiritually by returning to the woods?
- 7/30 - Amy St. Peter.....Restless or Resting?**
As children, we rebel against bedtimes. As adults, we seldom get enough rest. Our culture perpetually pushes us to do more in less time. How can rest help us grow spiritually?
- 8/6 - Pat Lindgren.....Whither Unitarian Universalism, Lessons Learned at General Assembly**
I hope to enlarge on some thoughts in my last newsletter article and to include new information from my sessions at GA.
- 8/13 - Amy St. Peter.....As Luck Would Have It**
We often wish each other good luck and scorn bad luck. Does luck exist, and if so, how is it related to fate and free will? What place do any of these have in our spiritual community?
- 8/20 - Ken Saunders.....Hearing the Voice of God**
The true nautical tale of how a life-long UU had his young faith tested three times in three days more than half a century ago.
- 8/27 - Bonnie Saunders.....Women’s Voices on War and Peace**
Women have opposed war for thousands of years -- from the Sumerians 6,000 years ago through the Greeks 25 hundred years ago to women in the modern nuclear age. This sermon will feature anti-war quotations from women throughout the ages.



Get Ready to “Whuurl Around The World!”

Lisa Lawrence, DRE



This coming September the children and youth of our congregation will be embarking on a global journey as they “Whuurlaround the World” to study world religions. The goal of this year’s program is to nurture open-mindedness, empower youth to better appreciate human diversity and

continue developing their own theology.

Picture Book World Religions Kindergarten through 4th grade will be utilizing a curriculum developed by accomplished UU curriculum writer, Katie Covey. The goal of “Picture Book World Religions” is to allow young children to explore the differences and similarities of different religions to their own lives. Beautiful picture books will be used which introduce young children to Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism in a gentle and respectful way. Although young children may not grasp the abstract concepts of comparative religious studies, they can learn stories from different faiths to help them begin a journey of understanding, tolerance and celebration for the diversity of human expressions of faith.

Building Bridges

Our youth, 5th grade and up, will return to the UUA’s Tapestry of Faith with a curriculum called “Building Bridges”. Building Bridges is a world religions program to deepen our youth’s understanding of the dynamic, fascinating, and varied world in which they live. It seeks to broaden their knowledge of humanity and embolden their spiritual search. The program is organized roughly chronologically, capturing the strong parallel between societal change and religious evolution over human history.

Meanwhile, in the preschool room...

A Todd Parr Universe

In my newly created curriculum, preschool children ages 2-5 will explore the stories and lessons of Todd Parr, American children’s author and illustrator. Todd’s stories are brightly colored and highly visual

with a simple, straight forward message. Common themes throughout his many titles are: family, tolerance, love, feelings, diversity, peace, gratitude, working together and making a difference. Each week’s story will be crafted around Unitarian Universalist music, ritual, principles and tradition.

Volunteer teacher recruitment begins now! If you are interested in expanding your own knowledge, as well as that of our youth, please contact me at lisal@uusurprise.org Training will take place in late August.



The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

The July/August newsletter column is a good opportunity to provide a longer list of excellent UU reading for your enjoyment. Enjoy your summer; enjoy reading and continue to browse your UU Surprise Library!

The Library has several excellent books on the subject of prayer:

“How to Pray Without Being Religious: Finding Your Own Spiritual Path,” by Janell Moon, number 291.41MOO. This is a comprehensive book on sources of prayer, divided into four thoughtful parts: “Prayers of Wonder” (coming into the present, attention, gratitude), “Prayers of Possibility” (asking for help, healing, clarifying beliefs), “Prayers for Living Your Dreams” (imagination, creating a vision) and “Tipping the Balance” (prayer for others, for love of country and the world, and for the earth).

“Simply Pray: a Modern Spiritual Practice To Deepen Your Life,” by Erik W. Wikstrom, number 204.3WIK. The author is a UU pastor. He offers fresh answers to the age-old question “why pray?” building from the shared prayer forms of many faiths. Also, he includes practical suggestions for composing prayers. Wikstrom identifies and defines four major types of prayer that are practiced by all the world’s major religions. There are also helpful tips on how to make prayer a part of your daily routine.

“The Little Book of Wholeness and Prayer: An Eight-Week Meditation Guide,” by Kimberly Beyer-Nelson, number 291.4BEY. This self-guided program introduces the rich tradition of daily prayer practice. Six exercises for each week invite readers to participate actively in a daily ‘dance between one’s

self and God' by using the senses, memory, emotion and imagination in combination with the discipline of intentional daily routine. If you are new to prayer, this is a helpful guide to get you into a nice routine.

“The Unitarian Universalist Christian: Prayers For Today,” by Herbert F. Vetter, editor, number 242.2VET. A terrific book for UU Christians written by this eminent UU pastor, sadly, recently passed. Vetter was “a true intellectual, a student of philosophy, science and literature, a man who wrestled with the complexity of the human condition. In his early years he was a conscientious objector,” serving prison time for his stance. He wrote in full understanding of the Christian way, offering comfort and hope.

Have a blessed summer day shared with a good book!

The Fable Of The Dollar Bill

Here is just a little note to explain the “story” told by Lee Ormsbee and Jan Lundstrom. The “fable” was brought to us by the late Phyllis Burnett. She obtained it at a past GA and modified it to suit our needs.

All of us are familiar with the Great Depression, if not in person, in family lore. We also remember the standard plea of that tragic era, “Buddy can you spare a dime?”

Inflation has colored our plea for your “spare” dollars. If you are willing and able, please drop a dollar bill in the collection basket to support the many programs of this church. This plea is above and beyond the amount of your stewardship pledge. As a courtesy to our money counters, please unfold or “uncrunch” your donated dollar.

Thank you for supporting the work of our church!

We Are Here To Be Of Assistance!

Lay Pastoral Care Committee

If you, your family or another member of our congregation are experiencing illness, hardship, isolation or are in need of support, please contact Janet Kafel (530-340-3230), Lenore Gaudin (623-933-0186) the church office (623-875-2550) or speak with any of the committee members on Sunday at church. We wear a second name tag that says LAY PASTORAL CARE.

Book Discussion

Bonnie F. Saunders, Chair, Adult Education Committee and Member, UU Board of Trustees

UU Church members and friends are invited to read a very interesting and extremely relevant book and attend a series of discussions on that book. The book is *The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear* by The Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II. The topic is the “Moral Monday” action by the people of NC against racism and voter suppression over the past several years. If you don't know who the Rev. Barber is, google him and listen (or hear him when he appears on various news programs) -- listening to him is the closest we can come today to the words and charisma of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This book has been recommended by the UUA as the book for all UU members to read during 2017. It is available from the UUA for about \$16 and from Amazon for about \$10.

On three Mondays in October beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Church, I will conduct a series of discussions on this book. On Oct. 9th, I will talk about the historical background: [1] the first Reconstruction (1865-1877) and its eventual destruction and [2] the second Reconstruction (the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s) and the backlash to that movement. On Oct. 16th, we will discuss the main part of the book, which deals with the actions against voter suppression and racism by the Rev. Barber's movement between 2010 and 2016 -- and how he brought together black and white citizens of NC. On Oct 23rd, we will discuss the section at the end of the book, which outlines how we can take action in our own communities to fight voter suppression, racism, and other political difficulties.

In order for you to get some outside ideas of our possible role in doing this, I urge you to read the book, come to the discussions, and think about what we can do. I will appreciate it if you will sign up in the Social Hall that you plan to read and attend -- but it is not absolutely necessary to do so. This information will be repeated in the September Newsletter but I hope you will put these dates on your calendar now, read the book over the summer, and come to the discussions with questions and opinions.

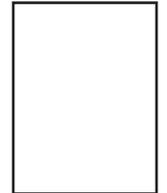
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40th Anniversary 1975 - 2015



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.*



See page 5 for July & August 2017 Sermon Titles