

# 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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February 2018

## From The Minister's Desk

I've been thinking about how we talk to, about, and with each other. When I was growing up, my parents did not allow us to swear . . . ever. To my knowledge, there was never an occasion they thought would warrant the use of language that others might consider disrespectful or offensive. The words to be avoided, in those days and in my family, raise almost no one's eyebrows anymore, not even mine; words like "damn" or "hell". It never entered my mind as a child to use racial or ethnic slurs or terms related to body parts and functions. Mine was a sheltered childhood.



One day when I was in 5th grade, I was standing next to a schoolmate at our school's baseball diamond. As we watched the baseball game, the batter hit a very solid and long home run. At which point my schoolmate blurted out in disbelief and awe, "Jesus Christ!" I was shocked. I had never heard anyone take the Lord's name in vain so clearly and emphatically, ignoring the third of the Ten Commandments.

As I grew older, my circle of friends broadened, along with my experiences. Through high school, then college, law school, and the private practice of law, I was exposed to much more cursing and coarse language. I came to realize that not everyone grew up believing that particular words were off limits. Language that I considered offensive and vulgar did not offend others in the same way. My own use of language has certainly expanded to include a few words that I formerly eschewed, but I must say I have never regretted that I never got into the habit

of swearing.

On January 15, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, I listened to Steve Inskeep's interview with African-American activists Joshua DuBois and DeRay McKesson. DuBois was sometimes called President Obama's "Pastor-in-Chief." The topic of the interview was examining activism. [<https://www.npr.org/2018/01/15/578083231/examining-activism-on-martin-luther-king-jr-day>.]

During the course of that interview, DuBois said: "[W]e've lost some of the basic moral guardrails in our conversations. People can not only get on social media, but they can say absolutely anything as we see evidenced by our president almost every day, it seems. So the sense that there are some basic principles of our discourse that we should all abide by, seems to have fallen to the wayside, and that's something that I think would be wise to return to."

DuBois put into words what I have felt, especially recently. I think we need to pay attention to how we talk about and with each other. According to Wikipedia, "political correctness" is "avoiding language or behavior that can be seen as excluding, marginalizing, or insulting groups of people considered disadvantaged or discriminated against, especially groups defined by sex or race. In public discourse and the media, [political correctness] is generally used as a pejorative, implying that these policies are excessive." I agree that we cannot guarantee that what we say will offend no one, but what is wrong with the principle of avoiding language that marginalizes, insults, or offends someone else?

The language we use, it seems to me, is one way of affirming our First UU Principle, "the inherent worth and dignity of every person". I wish our current President of the United States saw language

that way. In commenting on the outrageous language President Trump reportedly used recently to refer to African countries and perhaps Haiti, someone on Fox News said, "This is just the way forgotten men and women talk at the corner bar." If that is true, those "forgotten Americans" should re-evaluate how they speak. And even if that is how ordinary Americans speak, can we expect nothing better from our President?

What is our role as Unitarian Universalists in society? In other words, what can we do to create and preserve the kind of public and private space in which we want to live? Part of what we can do, I believe, is to help maintain our social fabric by using our First UU Principle to govern how we speak and write. Speaking for myself, I will continue to try to be politically correct because I want to take care not to insult, demean, or offend those who are already marginalized. I believe that there are "some basic principles of our discourse that we should all abide by." As a Unitarian Universalist, I am happy to try to maintain the "moral guardrails" of our conversations. I'll see you in church.

Yours in our faith,



## BUUK Circle

*Julie Wambach*

BUUK Circle has moved to the *SECOND* Tuesday evening 6:30-8:30 pm in the Choir Room. Please join us whether you've finished the book or haven't yet started it. For more information, contact Julie Wambach at [azwambach@icloud.com](mailto:azwambach@icloud.com).

February 13, 2018 - "*Out Of The Wreckage: A New Politics For An Age Of Crisis*," by George Monbiot.

Monbiot "shows how new findings in psychology, neuroscience and evolutionary biology cast human nature in a radically different light: as the supreme altruists and cooperators. He shows how we can build on these findings to create a new politics: a 'politics of belonging'."

March 13, 2018, 6:30-8:30pm, Choir Room - "*The Square and the Tower: Networks and Power, from the Freemasons to Facebook*" by Niall Ferguson.

"A brilliant recasting of the turning points in world history, including the one we're living through, as a collision between old power hierarchies and new social networks."

## President's Letter to Congregation

*Pat Lindgren, President*

The year was 1517. A Catholic priest and professor of theology named Martin Luther



published his "ninety-five theses" setting forth his disagreements with the policies of the Roman Catholic Church. This was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, more commonly known as just the Reformation.

Luther was not the first person to challenge the Catholic Church, but he had an advantage over many others. The invention in 1450 and subsequent spread of the movable type printing press enabled Luther to spread his beliefs wider and faster than was possible before.

601 years have gone by, and I think we need a new reformation. I believe this new reformation needs to be about our first two principles as so many past reforms have been but just not piecemeal.

Why these two? Because most religions profess to believe in these two principles already, so they are a good starting point. The problems come in the "excepts" that churches add to these principles.

The first principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person - except gays and lesbians, except illegal immigrants, except people with dark skin, except people of different faiths, except people who speak other languages, except, except, except. Of course, even UUsers have our own excepts that we must overcome. except conservative politicians. We need to teach the world to include, not exclude; to eliminate the excepts.

The second principle is: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Justice is a concept of moral rightness based on ethics, rationality, law, natural law, religion, equity and fairness. Is it justice that in Uganda people are jailed or killed for being gay? Is it justice that in the United States, African Americans are sentenced to prison for minor drug crimes at rates much higher than whites are for the same crimes? Injustice often follows the "excepts" to the first principle. Work on changing the "excepts" will help correct many injustices.

Richard S Gilbert in his essay on our second principle said of equity: Nineteenth century Unitarian Senator Charles Sumner once said "There are dinners without appetites and one



# Great Decisions 2018: U.S. Foreign Policy Discussion Series

Bonnie Saunders

What will happen in U.S. foreign policy in 2018? What issues will you need to know about as you listen to the news? Will you know enough to make sense of news reports? If you want to know enough to make sense of news reports, join Bonnie Saunders in February and March in discussing the topics noted below. You will also have the option to send your opinions on these issues to the Department of State by a survey at the end of our discussions.

In January, Bonnie will have the briefing books for \$20. See Bonnie at church or e-mail her at [BonnieSaun@aol.com](mailto:BonnieSaun@aol.com) to get your book, read the articles before we discuss them on the following dates, and be prepared to ask and answer questions about these issues.

Discussions will begin at 7:00 p.m. on the following Mondays at the UU Church of Surprise:

The Waning of Pax America .....	2/5
Russia's Foreign Policy .....	2/12
China's Geopolitics .....	2/19
The Media and Foreign Policy .....	2/26
Turkey: Partner in Crisis .....	3/5
U.S. Global Engagement & the Military .....	3/12
South Africa's Fragile Democracy .....	3/19
Global Health Issues.....	3/26

## UU Day at the Legislature

Feb 19, 2018, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm

Have you wanted to visit our state legislators to explain our political views to them? Join UUs from around the state on President's Day, Monday, to visit the state senator and representatives in your legislative district (21 or 22: Sun City, Sun City West, Surprise) and attend a variety of workshops on legislative action. We will meet at the church at 8:30am to carpool. Please sign up in the social hall and talk to Sally Thomas or Tom Reemtsma about the issues we will discuss.

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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)**



## Regional Assembly Information Pacific Western Region Portland, Oregon, April 27-29, 2018

The four districts of the UUA's Pacific Western Region will gather April 27-29 in Portland, OR for the 2018 Regional Assembly. Speakers include civil rights activist, the Rev. Dr. William Barber; Washington Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, advocate for women's, immigrant, civil, and human rights; and the Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, newly elected UUA president. Programming includes workshops, worship, district meetings, and an optional social justice activity. A day-long Professional Day designed for religious professionals is planned for Friday, April 27, before the start of Regional Assembly. Discount lodging is available at the Portland DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, site of the Regional Assembly. Childcare and youth programming will be available. Registration will open by January 4. Watch the PWR website ([www.uua.org/pwr](http://www.uua.org/pwr)) for full details to be posted soon.

## Social Activities

Danean Mitchell

Hope everyone is excited about the first Sunday Potluck on February fourth. Think Tailgate, Support your favorite team, wear their colors and team logos. Enjoy Sloppy Joes plus much more. Don't forget to sign up in the Social Hall.



On another note, since the UU Rock Auction is on the 3rd of March, we will NOT do a first Sunday potluck on the 4th. Instead our next potluck will be on the 4th of April which just happens to be Easter Sunday. Our theme will be something to do with "Bunnies and Chicks" with typical Easter fare. I also see an Easter Bonnet Parade in our future so put on your "Thinking Caps" and start planning now. More on this later. Any questions or thoughts about these events, contact Danean Mitchell, 623.546.6050.

## Music Is Brain Food!

Debby Bullins, Music Director



Music is a powerful experience that boosts brain activity. Recent studies have shown that in order to reap the full benefits, people need to be an active participant in the musical activity. Both hemispheres of the brain are involved as singing activates the left side of the brain and listening to a song sparks the right side.

We will continue to boost our musical brain power on February 4 at 10:10 a.m. when we gather for our monthly Hymn Sing. Please join Connie Jahrmarkt and me around the piano in the sanctuary as we sing some of our favorite hymns and try out some not so familiar ones. We welcome your suggestions of your favorite ones or others you might like to try. By the way, dancing, clapping and smiles are encouraged. It is a great opportunity to get to know each other better in a very casual setting.

Mark your calendars on February 10, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m. when Kent Trostel, pianist, composer and arranger, will present a concert at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Surprise. Join Mr. Trostel on this whimsical musical journey where he will feature some of his favorite contemporary composers as well as several of his own compositions and arrangements. It will be an evening you won't want to miss.

Mr. Trostel studied piano at the Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts and holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Maryland. He began playing the piano at age five and created his own melodies and short songs at age 10. His first serious composition, at age twelve, prompted by the discovery of a harmonium pedal organ at his cousin's house, was awarded second place in the Arizona Youth Composition Contest. Kent recently performed his song "To Choose" with Irish singer/songwriter Kaeylea VanKeith live from Connemara, Ireland.

Mr. Trostel has been involved in several organizations, including the Arizona Masterworks Chorale, West Valley Chorale, Arizona Broadway Theatre, Sun City Women's Chorus, as well as collaborating in 2014 with vocalist, Kristen Drathman, clarinetist, Audrey Miller and violinist, Katrina Becker, debuting his original compositions at

the Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise, AZ. Tickets \$20 online at <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3220857>

or at the door.

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Contact Debby Bullins at [debbyb@uusurprise.org](mailto:debbyb@uusurprise.org) for more information.

## Kent Trostel, piano



## 3 is funny

February 10, 2018 7:00pm

Admission \$20

Unitarian Universalist Church of Surprise  
17540 N Avenue of The Arts, Surprise, AZ  
85378

[debbyb@uusurprise.org](mailto:debbyb@uusurprise.org)

## Circle Suppers Are Coming Back

Circle suppers are potluck dinners held in members' homes. They are a good way to really get to know each other. We anticipate holding the suppers in mid or late January and are currently looking for participants and volunteers to host. Hosts would be responsible for drinks and appetizers. Other participants will be assigned main course, side, or dessert. Please see the table in the Social Hall for more information. For more information call Susie Cole at 406.600.8857 or Nancy Flann at 623.583.4636.

## Fundraiser for Two AZ Tax Credits

Linda Vitale

It's time again to take advantage of two AZ tax credits that redirect your AZ tax dollars to worthy causes. In the past, I've held two separate fundraisers; one for the Valley View Food Bank and the other for Surprise Elementary (our adopted school) SO, just to make it easier, I will combine them into one fundraising event.

Either of these (separate) tax credits, puts your donation to work by helping to feed those in need and/or help Surprise Elementary students. If you make a donation to Surprise Elementary, you can even choose which character education program or extra-curricular activity you want your donation to support. Your donation helps the school fund those programs - that would otherwise go unfunded.

*I will have a table during our Annual Membership Meeting if you wish to donate. Please remember to bring cash or your checkbook, credit cards are NOT accepted.*

**Here's how both credits work:** The credit is equal to the dollar amount of your donation. Dollar-for-Dollar, your donation offsets any taxes you owe on your State of AZ tax return. However, the donated amount can only be used to the extent that it reduces your AZ tax liability to zero. Any unused amount can be carried forward for 5 years.

Moreover, even if you are not an Arizona resident, you may also be able to deduct your donation as a charitable contribution on your federal return – but only if you are able to itemize your deductions on your federal tax return.

Both of these credits have a yearly maximum limit amount. The School Tax Credit max is \$200 for Single filers and \$400 for Married Filing Jointly filers. The tax credit for the Valley View Food Bank (aka-Qualifying Charitable Organizations) max is \$400 for Single filers and \$800 for Married Filing Jointly filers.

**P.S.** In case you forget to bring your checkbook, I will have blank mail-in forms for both charities. This is a Win-Win situation for you and these charities! So, please give whatever amount you can. No donation is too small.

**P.S.S.** New tax rules now make it possible to even make a donation up until April 17, 2018. So, if

you find that you owe taxes on your AZ State tax return, you can still offset that amount by making a donation to Surprise Elementary or Valley View Food Bank. Just be sure that you designate on the donation form that your donation is to be applied to the 2017 tax year.

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**Our web site address  
has changed to  
[www.uusurpriseaz.org](http://www.uusurpriseaz.org)**

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**Old Befana: A Fireside Tale**

The Children's RE and fellow theatrical church members presented the traditional Italian folktale, La Befana, as this year's intergenerational holiday play. La Befana is a tale that revolves around the birth of Jesus and the journey of the Magi to visit the Christ Child.



## RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE

Children's RE has several newsworthy activities to share with the congregation:



### **New in the K-4th Classroom**

On January 14th a new ritual was added to the K-4th classroom. We will begin to take up a "token" weekly collection to teach the kids about stewardship. These will be the words to accompany this weekly ritual: "There are

many different ways to support organizations that give our lives enrichment. Supporting that which supports us is called stewardship. We will now take up a monetary collection to help keep our congregation thriving. Thank you for any donation that you have to offer."

### **RE Family Service Project, February 3rd**

On Saturday, February 3rd from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. we will be crafting Valentine's for Benevilla "Meals on Wheels" recipients. When we are finished with this kid-friendly activity, we will head over to the community center itself for a nice "Buy Your Own" lunch at Birt's Bistro and (I hope) a quick tour of Benevilla. The cards will be delivered to the center and distributed to "Meals on Wheels" recipients on Valentine's Day by the volunteers who transport the meals. Please RSVP to [lisal@uusurprise.org](mailto:lisal@uusurprise.org) by Thursday, February 1st so I can make reservations and confirm the tour.

### **Annual Church Picnic/Cookout at White Tanks Regional Park, March 11th**

All are welcome to this fun, outdoor event being organized by the Children's RE Committee. Join us on Sunday, March 11th at Ramada 4F from 2:30-6:30 p.m. and bring a main entree for your family to grill and an additional dish to share with the group. Look for a sign-up sheet on the community table in the social hall mid-February. Park entry fee is \$6 per vehicle. Bring your own chairs. Hope to see you there! Please contact [lisal@uusurprise.org](mailto:lisal@uusurprise.org) with any questions.

## The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

This month I continue with reviews of three more of our new Library additions. After completing reviews of the new books, we have ten new-to-us donated books recently added to the Library collection as well. I hope you will come visit the Library soon and look over all our recent additions!

### **"Pagan and Earth-Centered Voices in Unitarian Universalism,"**

by Jerrie Kishpaugh Hildebrand, editor, number 230.91HIL. This is another 2017 publication from Skinner House books. "An essential, and remarkably heartfelt, introduction to the development and blossoming of UU Paganism", Anne Niven (editor of *Witches and Pagans*). The book contains 23 essays by some of the most prominent leaders in UU Paganism; both clergy and lay people. It describes a broad array of practices, including Wiccan traditions, Neo-Pagan rituals and celebrations, worship of the feminine, and nature-based beliefs and practices that bring us into harmony and balance with our natural world.

**"Faith for the Unbeliever,"** by Daniel Chesney Kanter, number 202.2KAN. This is another terrific publication from Skinner House in 2017. The author is the Senior Minister of First Unitarian Church of Dallas Texas. "He shares his reflections on faith, especially addressing those who are not traditionally religious. This small book of wisdom helps to make faith more accessible for the increasing number of the 'spiritual but not religious'. The author says we can understand faith to be less about what we believe in and more about how we live and the choices we make." Quotes from the Skinner description of the book.

**"To Wake, to Rise,"** subtitled: 'meditations on justice and resilience', by William G. Sinkford, editor, number 261.8SIN. This is "the 2017 edition of the UUA Inspirit meditation series. It is an anthology of 29 poems, prayers and reflections about resisting oppression and keeping the faith in social action work. These readings are ideal for both private contemplation and use in worship. The editor is a former President of the UUA, and the first Black person to hold the position. He is currently the Senior Minister of First Unitarian Church of Portland Oregon.

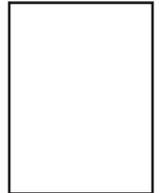
*Have a blessed day shared with a terrific new UU Library book!*

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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 February 2018

*This months theme is Love*

### 2/4 - Rev. Terry Sims..... **What Love Is . . . and Is Not**

For something that plays such a central role in human experience and thought, I think secular society is often unclear about what love is, confusing it with other emotions or behaviors that masquerade as love. As religious people, it falls to us to know the love humanity needs at the most fundamental level and then to infuse the world with it.

### 2/11 - Rev. Terry Sims ..... **The Power of Love**

My own life has been transformed by love, so I believe in the power of love. But I also know that I have sometimes viewed love in an overly sentimental way. On this Sunday before Valentine’s Day, we will look at love’s power beyond misty notions and once-a-year gifts.

### 2/18 - Rev. Terry Sims..... **Love Beyond Belief**

In 1984, singer Tina Turner released her most successful single, “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” I think we might ask that question about religion. Through the ages, traditional religion lost its way, lost me, and millions like me. Maybe the way back to religious life is to put love at its center, beyond belief.

### 2/25 - Rev. Cathy Corbin Mannino ..... **Is Love Always Patient? Times Up.**

I Corinthians 13:4 states that love is patient and kind; however, Congressman John Lewis says that patience is a “dirty and nasty word.” I believe there is no longer any time for a gradual movement towards freedom and equality. Our patience has run out. We cannot stop, and we will not.