

Unitarian Universalist Church Newsletter

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

Phone: 623.875.2550 // www.uusurpriseaz.org // Email: uucsaz2@gmail.com

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

Minister: Rev. Terry Sims

Minister Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Walt F. Wieder

President: Sherry Robinson



45th Anniversary 1975 - 2020

Newsletter Editor: Charlie Mannino

uucsnewsletter@gmail.com

Printing: Kathryn Pabich

March 2021

From The Minister's Desk

There have been four Unitarian Presidents: John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Millard Fillmore, and William Howard Taft. Abraham Lincoln never publicly professed what his religious leanings were.

I heard a story on NPR's "Weekend Edition" as I was headed for church on Sunday, January 24. The story was entitled "US Government Sees Wave of Catholic Leaders." Host Lulu Garcia-Navarro opened the program by saying: "Joe Biden is not the only Catholic to hold the reins of power right now - Speaker Nancy Pelosi, six Supreme Court justices, some eight of Biden's Cabinet picks and nearly a third of the lawmakers on Capitol Hill [are also Catholic]. It is a sea change in the political representation of a faith that not so long ago was viewed with suspicion in the United States. Joining us to discuss this wave of Catholic representation in U.S. government is Steven Millies. He's a professor of theology at the Catholic Theological Union."

Although I was only 7 years old when John F. Kennedy was elected the country's first Catholic President, I remember my dad expressing some reservations about JFK's Catholicism - specifically whether he could act independently as President without being unduly influenced by the Pope. I suspect his mistrust was rooted in some anti-Catholic bias unconsciously shared by my dad and others who were Protestant Christians. As much as possible, my goal is to avoid bias, conscious and unconscious, based on religious beliefs.



However, I am concerned about any group holding too much power in this diverse nation and even more diverse world. Let me emphasize that my concern is not directed toward any particular group. I have no more concern about too many Catholics in power than I would about too many Protestant evangelicals, Muslims, or atheists being overrepresented. But I also have no less concern.

The last question Garcia-Navarro asked in interviewing Professor Millies was, "[T]here's been a lot of debate as to whether we should even use the lens of religion to analyze our public officials or our [Supreme Court] justices. What are your thoughts on that?"

Millies said: "Religion, whether it's Catholicism or not, is going to tell us something about a person. It's not going to tell us always something good or something bad, but it's just another piece of information to understand who a person is. . . . What we're looking for is decency. What we're looking for is empathy. What we're looking for is someone who understands that this job is about the people who are being served and not about the person who's sitting in the office. How a person practices their faith can tell us an awful lot about how they're going to hold that office. . . ." [Emphasis mine.]

To answer Garcia-Navarro's question for myself, I do not think it is useful to use the lens of religion to analyze public officials. Partly that is because identifying with a religion and practicing it are two very different things. But I also do not think it is useful because such classifications promote division, labeling some against others according to differing belief systems. In my view, many of those belief systems involve a lot of speculation about what no one knows or can know.

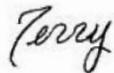
But I do agree with Professor Millies that how

officials practice their faith or lack of faith tells us the only important thing we need to know about how they will hold public office. Whatever religion they choose to adhere to, the important questions are whether they are decent, empathetic human beings, serving with integrity out of a sense of duty and a desire to help rather than simply to stroke their own egos. Those questions focus on the humanist core found in all religions and most ethical ideals.

That core is what almost all of us can agree is vitally important to live individual lives of worth and meaning and to live with each other in an ordered and just society. So it is that common humanist core that can unite people, as opposed to other religious ideas that can divide us. The emphasis Unitarian Universalism places on such common and common-sense humanist ideals in our Seven Principles is a large part of why I choose to be a UU.

We do not need more people, in government or out of it, who subscribe to any particular belief system, whether religious or political. What we need are officials who are decent, empathetic, and truly committed to serving with integrity. We need people in public office who subscribe to the ethical, humanist principles that underlie all the major religions. When we have those people in office, we do better as a nation and a world in lifting those principles up and in living them out, regardless of any other beliefs. I will see you in our humanist, principles-centered, practice-oriented, and for a while longer, virtual church!

Yours in our faith,





Newsletter Editor Needed

Charlie Mannino

After nine years as Newsletter Editor, I have decided to retire from the position and looking for someone to take over the job. The basic requirements as editor would be to collect, compile and organize information about church news and events for publication monthly. It would be helpful if you are familiar with Adobe InDesign but experience with any publication software can be used.

For more information contact me at uucsnewsletter@gmail.com.

Message from the President

Sherry Robinson, President

Greetings: One would think being “locked down” and socially distance – that we would have more time than usual, to do tasks or even that maybe time would move slower. I do not believe this has proven to be so. Time seems to be moving more quickly, and I never seem to run out of jobs. And they are about to become more interesting.



“The Transition Process” has begun. Terry has given us his last sermon date and a schedule for his last two months – June and July. I have filed the paperwork with the UUA to start the wheels in motion, and we have met briefly with our SE UUA Representative for timing details. On February 20th, the Board will meet for a working retreat to set the schedule and the list of tasks to be performed over the next six months and hopefully to a draft of the plan for sharing with the congregation.

I want to assure the members and friends of the congregation that as we move forward, you will be kept informed of the plans and the process. I will also provide you with information from the UUA regarding Transitioning and having an Interim Minister, and I have asked your Board Members to be your “go to” for questions or concerns you may have. Although your role at this stage may seem small, it will grow as the process moves forward. For now, what you can do is circle Saturday, May 22nd for a day of celebration and best wishes for Rev. Sims.

In addition to starting our transition journey, we are also continuing to plan for a safe return to our Sanctuary as well as continued development of our livestreaming program and Zoom classes, and conducting our 2021 Pledge Campaign to encourage financial support for all this. If you have already filled out that important pledge form – thank you for your generosity and if not – please check out the Website and do it online.

We also need help on our Membership Committee. We have a limited number of members and could use 1 or 2 more to assist with the tasks. Contact Judy Reynolds and find out how much fun this group is going to have, you may want to be part of it.

As a reminder - the Board meets on the first Sunday of each Month at noon via ZOOM. If you are interested in attending, let me know and I can send you the link. The agenda is posted to the website on Wednesday before the meeting and minutes – once approved - are also posted to the Web for your information.

Until next month – stay well, stay safe and get those vaccines.



Unitarian Universalist Church of Surprise

... is genuinely excited to share with our membership a wonderful opportunity which will extend and enhance the teachings and practices of the Golden Rule.

Bruce Sorter, a longtime devoted congregational member, has generously donated \$6,000 to establish an Endowment Fund for our church. This gracious contribution will provide UU members with opportunities to create and develop programs and projects that teach and reinforce living the Golden Rule.

Bruce's donation this year of \$6,000 allows us to establish criteria to ensure that the spirit and intent of the gift is understood and properly implemented. To that end, a committee has been established to explore and designed potential opportunities to fulfill this goal. The focus for all outcomes will be to encourage, teach, and reinforce or reward individual practices of the Golden Rule.

For questions, contact:

Claudia Yeager Smith at 480-387-1973

John Cline at 623-910-7055

Cheryl Garrett at 623-680-5147

Let your creative thoughts flow: think about a *Class, Workshop, Lecture, Field Trip or Scholarship*. Immerse yourself and others in this marvelous opportunity to impact our church community!

The Monthly Book Report

MaryAnne Balzer

It's the month to be wearing your Irish green, my fellow UU readers! I have selected several books in our church collection that you may enjoy reading by download from your local library service or purchasing for a modest fee from an online book service. *"Ar mian leat gach grá an séasúr álainn seo! Tá súil agam tú a fheiceáil go luath!" ***

"Rejoice Together," Subtitled: 'Prayers, meditations, and other readings for family, individual and small-group worship', from editor Helen R. Pickett. This is a UU favorite for personal and small groups to enjoy. It remains a 5-Star Amazon rated book. It's always a check-out favorite from our Surprise library.

"Angles of Light," Subtitled: 'New and Selected Poems', by Luci Shaw. The author is a poet, essayist, teacher and retreat leader. She leads writing workshops and lectures on the subjects of art, spirituality, and poetry. Shaw is a prolific writer on spiritual topics and should be on all of our UU reading lists. This is a 5-Star offering out of many of her top rated books. Review: She gives us faith writing at its most revelatory, a passionate embrace of creation's radiance."

"The Women's Book of Positive Quotations," Edited by Leslie Ann Gibson. This is a foundation book for a 'thoughts for the day' or when in need of just the right way to say something. Divided into three main subject areas; finding fulfillment, developing positive habits and achieving your goals, it offers much to learn and meditate on as well. It is another great UU source and 5-Star reviewed by Amazon. Inspiring thought for everyone: "You must do the thing you cannot do', Eleanor Roosevelt

"Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse," by Kenneth W Collier. This is a terrific UU standard for inspiration, learning and meditation on our UU seven principles; creative responses to the seven principles, each one illustrated with a story, a poem and a brief essay. A book for all ages, for worship and individual reading. Rated 4.5-Star by Amazon.

***Translation: Wishing you all the love of this beautiful season! Hope to see you soon!*



Questers is our newly formed Adult Education Program. Now you can find complete information about [Questers offerings](#) on our UUCS website. If you have an idea for a future offering or have an idea for one you'd like to lead, please contact Juliet Gustavson (julietgus@msn.com).

Here is what's on the schedule for March and more.

BUUK Circle

Leader: Julie Wambach

When: Every second Tuesday, 6:30-8:30pm

Where: On Zoom during Covid-19 restrictions

Open Sign-ups: Email azwambach@icloud.com – Subject: BUUK Circle

BUUK Circle is a group that loves to read and discuss books chosen by the group. You are welcome to join this group at any time whether you've finished the book or not even started. For information, contact Julie Wambach (azwambach@icloud.com).

Upcoming Books

March 9, 2021 - "The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz" by Erik Larson.

"The Splendid and the Vile" takes readers out of today's political dysfunction and back to a time of true leadership when—in the face of unrelenting horror—Churchill's eloquence, strategic brilliance, and perseverance bound a country, and a family, together."

April 13, 2021- "A Woman of No Importance: The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II" by Sonia Purnell.

Chosen as a BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR by NPR, the New York Public Library, Amazon, the Seattle Times, the Washington Independent Review of Books, PopSugar, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, BookBrowse, the Spectator, and the Times of London. Winner of the Plutarch Award for Best Biography. "Excellent... This book is as riveting as any thriller, and as hard to put down."

— The New York Times Book Review.

May 11, 2021- "Americana: A 400 Year History of American Capitalism" by Bhu Srinivasan.

"In a winning, accessible style, Bhu Srinivasan boldly takes on four centuries of American enterprise, revealing the unexpected connections that link them." Publisher's Synopsis

Class Offerings

Examining Whiteness

Facilitator: Brooke Gaunt

Where: Zoom

When: 8 Monday nights, 6:30-8:30pm, First Session – March 15

Registration: To register and receive Zoom invitation email Julie Wambach – azwambach@icloud.com Subject: Examining Whiteness.

Many people are now beginning to acknowledge that "whiteness" is a social construct. This 8-session Zoom discussion class will explore the issues of white identity, white racism, and white supremacy through personal experiences and the larger historical framework. The class will begin with an historical overview of white supremacy in the United States and within Unitarian Universalism in America. The course will then discuss racial identity, white power and privilege, developing a positive anti-racist white identity, and resources for change.

Introduction to the Enneagram

Leader: Tom Reemtsma

When: Friday, March 19, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Where: Zoom

Sign-up: Email Jeff London (jvlondon@yahoo.com) – Subject: Introduction to the Enneagram

The Enneagram is a study and practice for revealing both the welcome and less welcome aspects of character active in our personal natures. It is a recovered wisdom from ancient sources merging with twentieth century psychology. It offers possibilities for growth. This one session will present an outline and quick experience.

"I Believe...": Creating your Own Credo

Leader: Julie Wambach

Where: Zoom

When: 6 Sessions, Thursday, 6:30-8:30pm – First Session: March 25

Registration: To register and receive Zoom invitation email Julie Wambach – azwambach@icloud.com – Subject: "I Believe..."

Have you found yourself at a loss for words when asked, “Well, what do you believe?” or even found that you can’t answer that question for yourself?

Based on the UUA program “Building Your Own Theology” that assumes we are all theologians, this class offers tools for creating your personal theology, so you can confidently explain to others what you believe.

UU Hikers

March Hike/Bird Watching Opportunity

Leaders: Sally Thomas, Susie Cole & Darnell Kirksey

When: Friday, March 26 at 9:30 a.m.

Where: Hassayampa River Preserve...\$5.00 Entry Fee...Cash or Credit Card

Sign-up: Call Susie Cole (406-600-8857) or Sally Thomas (623-693-8494)

They can help arrange carpooling, if desired.

Join Sally Thomas, Susie Cole and Darnell Kirksey at Hassayampa River Preserve for a morning of hiking and/or bird watching. Susie and Sally have hiked this preserve for several years. Darnell is a retired 20-year volunteer with a love of birding. Bring your binoculars if you wish. The hike can be any distance up to 3 miles. There is little elevation gain and lots of shade trees. Bring lunch/snack and water.

(For complete information on all offerings, including dates and requirements click this link or go to <https://uusurpriseaz.org/questers/offerings/>)

UUA 2021 General Assembly June 23-27

Sharon Beard, Denominational Affairs

As it was last year, General Assembly will be virtual this year. To find out what’s in store for this year’s program, go to uua.org/ga. If you think you may be interested in being a delegate, please feel free to contact Sherry Robinson (sarrobinson@msn.com), Brooke Guant (bagaunt37@gmail.com), Juliet Gustavson (julietgus@msn.com) or me (sabeardaz@gmail.com), all of whom were delegates last year, and we will be glad to share our experiences. Our congregation is allotted 4 delegates, so please let me know if you plan to sign up.

Please have information for the Newsletter submitted by noon on the 15th of each month to the Editor at uucsnewsletter@gmail.com

Get to Know the Board

This article is another in a series introducing our current board members.

Liz Thomas - Trustee



I was brought up on Long Island, NY, 30 miles outside of New York City. I still miss the fast pace of New York at times. My mother, Alice Wright Dockrell, was raised on a farm in upstate New York so we spent a great deal of vacation time there. The farm life was a great contrast to life on Long Island, and I grew to appreciate a slower pace, a

connection to nature and how much work goes into creating the life we all take for granted in the city.

I earned a bachelor’s degree from Boston University in physiology and started my career doing exercise stress tests. I eventually ended up working at Aetna Life and Casualty in the IT department. I was hired because they were looking for “a skirt” who could introduce word processing to the secretaries in the division. I jumped at the chance, and while there learned how to program computers and the inner workings of bureaucracy. Many times I was the youngest person and the only woman sitting at the table. It was quite an education.

I migrated to AZ in 1985 to study nursing. My parents had retired here so I thought it would be good to spend some time with them. I received my bachelor’s degree in nursing from Grand Canyon University. After graduation, I moved to Tucson and then Bisbee where I taught nursing at a community college, practiced home health nursing and started a hospice program. If you have the chance, visit Cochise County. Life on the border is very different. I returned to Phoenix to be close to my parents as they needed more assistance. I ended my career with Banner Health where I was employed for 20 years. I did more hospice and home health nursing and then became a Risk Manager for the last 13 years. Retirement started two years ago, and I am loving it. I have time to spend with the love of my life, Frank, and lots of time to piece quilts and read.

I came to UUCS in 2010 after sampling from the buffet of religious experiences on my journey. I found a home where there are principles I can support and a community of likeminded people. My association with UU has led me into service both at our church home and on the board of UUJAZ and the Valley View Community Food Bank. It is an honor to serve again on the UUCS Board of Trustees.

Stewardship for All of Us!

Suzi Waling, Chair, Stewardship Committee

'Stewardship for Us' in an all-encompassing term. It means that when we support what matters to us, in this case our UU community, we get back ten-fold (or more) through weekly services friendship and caring circles and programs for learning and spiritual growth.

In making your decision to support UUCS, it is important to understand the difference between a Donation and a Pledge. A donation without a pledge does not provide the board with the ability to create a budgetary forecast. Nor does it provide information about what your donative intent is for the year. A pledge, however, is a financial commitment to give a specific amount over a 12-month period.

Many of you have made a donation without pledging. Was that your intent? Or do you plan to continue making payments throughout the year? If your intent is to make an annual pledge, go to www.uusurpriseaz.org, click on 'Giving', complete the Pledge Form, indicate full amount of your annual pledge (including amount you already gave), select method of payment and Submit. Even if you are continuing your ACH payment with the same amount as last year, please do this. This will not affect your current donation(s).

The results of the Stewardship Campaign, year to date, are most encouraging. By early February, 33 pledges and an additional 29 donations were made by Members and Friends. The Campaign Thermometer provides a visual YTD picture of the campaign: \$93,629.67 in pledges and donations received representing 45.8% of the \$205,410.26 goal.

As Members and Friends, we are aware of the important role UUCS plays in our lives. This is the place where we covenant to support one another and this spiritual home. The vehicle for fulfilling this covenant is your support of the Stewardship Campaign, because *UU Values Matter ... Pledging Secures Our Future.*

Bob, Claudia, Don, Janet, MaryAnne, Sherry, Steve, Suzi & Terry
Your Stewardship Team



RE Report

Lisa Lawrence, DRE

"Magic is real and unicorns are real."

Do you know how I know that? Because my preschoolers remind me of this "truth" (and others like it) every Sunday morning at 10:00 A.M. during ZOOM R.E. class. There is a certain infectious



positivity with each shared idea. "You know what, Miss Lisa? I have a suspicion that unicorn's may have rainbow pupils. People's pupils are just one color but if I can get to the island where unicorns live, then I can check for sure." For me, it is moments like these that make teaching the preschoolers so endearing.

Believe it or not, lately these conversations have even been relevant to our religious education lessons. A few weeks ago we began a unit on the third principle "the acceptance of others and freedom to learn together" or "acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations" I have found myself using such conversations to teach these concepts. For example, to relate the idea of encouraging people to learn about that which moves us, I asked the class, "What would happen if your friends said that they wouldn't play with you anymore if you didn't stop reading books about unicorns and fairies?" You'll be pleased to know that they would still choose to read books about unicorns and fairies and agree that no one needs friends like that.

In other RE news...

Any other year I would be advertising our annual White Tanks Cookout, but due to Covid, we will have to once again cancel. It's outside, yes, but there would just be too many people under the tiny Ramadas and it wouldn't be safe. So, in lieu of the cookout, I have created an activity that we can safely do outdoors instead. I have created an outdoor photo scavenger hunt that will take people on a quick jog to Sun City West and all over the City of Surprise on Saturday, March 27th at 1:00 P.M. So, come stretch your legs, enjoy the sunshine and try something new! All you need is a car and a Smartphone. Please read further details on the next page.

Saturday 3/27 @ 1:00 P.M.
Meet in Church Parking Lot

Lisa's Springtime Scavenger Hunt



Have a car? Have a Smartphone? Then why not register a team to participate in my scavenger hunt?

Use your phone to help solve puzzles and riddles that will take you to visit sites all over the City of Surprise and a fraction of Sun City West! Maybe you'll discover someplace new?

Then, return to the church for an outdoor, socially-distanced, Ice Cream Social-Award Ceremony. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place team trophies for the most correct answers.

\$10 team registration fee; one team per car. Masks are mandatory while at the church.

To find out more and register your team, watch for church weekly announcement emails or go to:

<https://uusurpriseaz.org/> or
<https://www.facebook.com/Unitarian-Universalist-Church-in-Surprise-405524552930937>

Please email uucslisal@gmail.com with questions.

WhaleCoast Alaska 2021



Have you ever wanted to visit Alaska? If so, WhaleCoast Alaska 2021 is for you! four Alaska UU congregations invite you to experience our unique environmental and spiritual tour program this summer, when it will be safe to travel again. See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs, with friendly home stays and awe-inspiring tour activities. See wildlife, including moose, bears, caribou, whales, bald eagles, sea lions, etc. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. WhaleCoast Alaska is an inspirational way to visit our beautiful state. Complete info at: www.WhaleCoastAK.org. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience you won't want to miss!

Contact: David Frey
WhaleCoast Alaska Tour Director
www.WhaleCoastAK.org
dfrey@whalecoastak.org
907-322-4966

Visit our web site for current information

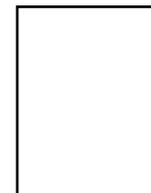
www.uusurpriseaz.org

Unitarian Universalist Church Newsletter

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

Phone: 623.875.2550

www.uusurpriseaz.org Email: uucsaz2@gmail.com



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 livestreaming service during Covid restrictions at 10:30 am on Facebook or YouTube

*If you are not a member but would like to receive church announcements by email,
please send your email address and full name to uucsaz2@gmail.com.*

Sermon Titles For March 2021

The Theme for this month is Respect

3/7 - Rev. Terry Sims Respectful to the Core

What are we bound to respect? Certainly, not all sources of information are worthy of respect, nor are all ideas. But the core humanity of people, including those who have been led astray by untrustworthy sources to believe absurdities? That is another matter.

3/14 - Amy St. Peter Faithfully Family

In these times of divisiveness and alternate realities, how do we decide who is in our family? Have we divorced others who do not share our faith or values? Perhaps more than ever, it can be helpful to consider who are our spiritual parents, siblings, and extended family; what these bonds call us to do; and how we cultivate a stronger sense of family blessed with diversity and compassion.

3/21 - Rev. Terry Sims Respecting What Is Not Ours

We teach children that they need to respect what is not theirs. We do that so they will learn not to steal, destroy, diminish, or fail to take care of what others have that is important to those others. As adults, I wonder whether we are willing and able to treat beliefs that are not ours with similar respect, and even whether we should.

3/28 - Rev. Terry Sims Respecting What Sustains All of Us

I hope the last four years re-taught most of us the value of norms, institutions, ideals, and the interdependent web of all existence. I fervently hope that we are now engaged in re-establishing those elements of social life that sustain us all.