

Newsletter

September 2021

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise

Transition Minister: Rev. Samuel Schaal
Minister Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Walt F. Wieder
President: Sherry Robinson



Newsletter Co-Editors: Gus & Juliet Gustavson
julietgus@msn.com
Distribution: Kathryn Pabich



TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

by Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transition Minister

Walking Together

It's great walking with all of you at this beginning of our mutual ministry in this exciting time of transition. I've met many of you and look forward to seeing those who are making their way back to Surprise.

I am an Accredited Interim Minister with the UUA. My first career was in corporate public relations and communications. Upon discovering First Unitarian Church of Dallas, I felt the call to ministry quickly. Early in my career I did an interim ministry while remaining in search for a settled position. That experience showed me the potential of intentional interim ministry. So I ended up a career transition minister. Dallas is home base, where I keep up with my two grown sons and their families, including five of the cutest grandchildren you've ever seen (except for yours, of course).

What is my role among you the next two years?

- ◆ **Minister** of the congregation, doing the usual tasks of ministry, including leading worship, pastoral care and helping to teach adults.
- ◆ **Consultant** to work with leadership to help your congregation thrive. I come to you pre-fired. I am here to help you establish stronger forms of ministry with each other and the world. I hope you can be in worship (in person or online) Sept. 12 when I introduce the work ahead.
- ◆ **Staff and Program Leader.** I am held accountable for the resourcing, equipping and management of all paid staff. I delight in building strong, collaborative and creative staff teams that find joy in the work of serving the church.
- ◆ **Disciple of Generosity.** My experience as a layperson with a minister who considered giving a spiritual practice planted a seed in my heart. My favorite activity is the stewardship campaign. I also hold certificates in Financial Planning (from SMU) and Nonprofit Management (from the Center for Nonprofit Management) and am a Registered Life Planner[®] with the Kinder Institute of Life Planning. All this has deepened my understanding of generosity as an avenue to bless the world.

Most of all, I will be as present to you as possible. Please contact me directly:

- ◆ **Email** RevSam40@gmail.com
- ◆ **Call** the church office at (623) 875-2550
- ◆ I'm in the office **Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** Monday is my sabbath.

I look forward to getting to know you as we dive into the deep end of the pool in shared ministry together!

In Our Faith,

SAM

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Message from our President



By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have a freshly painted church building with shiny front doors and an automatic door opener for those who may need entry assistance. **Our thanks go to the Stewardship Committee for creating the Welcome Back Project and to each of you, who contributed to the success of this fundraiser. In one month, we collected over \$13,000 from members, friends and from a local chapter of the League of Women Voters. Our sincere thanks for the generosity and the support given for this project. It is a wonderful welcome for those retuning from their summer away and to mark the return of many in our congregation following a difficult year.**

We will also have welcomed our Transition Minister, Rev. Sam Schaal, to our community and begun the process for selecting and hiring a new Music Director for our Choir. Nancy Flann gave up a morning to help me clean out and organize the Church workroom, labeling cabinets and drawers. We have also investigated finding workspace for our two half-time staff, Lisa Lawrence and a Music Director, by rearranging the rooms we have now. We have had a busy month preparing our building for a grand reawakening and lining up the tasks for the next phase of our Transition Journey.

It will be good to see all of you returning over the next few weeks. I am disappointed that we are not yet free of this virus that has plagued us since March of 2020; We are back together but must be cautious and continue to practice social distancing, as well as wearing a mask, to keep ourselves and our friends safe. Many of you are aware that we opened earlier than the other UU Churches in Arizona. We did so for a good reason and based on our trust in you, our members. We will continue to meet and worship in person as well as by Live Stream, but at the same time we will require that everyone wear a mask when not eating or drinking, even if you are fully vaccinated. We also ask that you maintain some social distancing when not with your own "bubble of friends or family". **And we appreciate your cooperation.**

We also have introduced an updated version of our weekly announcements. Did you notice? We are experimenting with Mailchimp (a program that helps users design marketing tools) to deliver information to our members. With Breeze, our new management system, and Mailchimp we can create our own templates for emails and other messaging. It is a way of making information more appealing without hiring a graphic designer. ***Our Board VP, Brooke Gaunt, made it our goal to update the data collection/church management system, and her first visual outcome was the template you saw used with the announcements.*** If you like the new "look" she has created, let us know. And a huge thank you to Brooke.

Brooke has begun working with staff and Church leaders to teach us how to use Breeze, and hopefully this will lead to more active communication between and among members, as well as making information more accessible. This has been a huge undertaking and is still in the beginning stages. Your patience is appreciated while we learn to use the functions of this new system. It should be a "Breeze".

If you have been here all summer or are just returning, Welcome Back. We are glad you are here and hope you are ready for an interesting and fulfilling year.

Sherry Robinson



2021 UUCS Pledges & Donations Update ***UU Values Matter ... Pledging Secures Our Future***

Dear Members and Friends,

The dashboards on the next page provide you with a snapshot of the current status of our 2021 Annual Stewardship Campaign and our Welcome Back Project (as of August 1).

ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Annual Goal	\$ 205,401	The majority (more than 80%) of Annual Campaign donations have been given by 77 pledging households, while the remainder has come from 19 non-pledging households, legacy, and memorial gifts.
Pledges	\$ 162,086	
Donations	13,895	
Legacy/Memorials	3,625	
Total	\$179,606	
Percent of Goal	87.4%	

Funds from the Annual Stewardship Campaign support our annual UUCS Operating Budget. Your donations provide the fuel that enables lights, heat, and AC to stay on; facilities maintenance and minor repairs to be made; payment of salaries and benefits for our minister and three part-time staff members; purchases of office supplies and equipment; and payment of honoraria for visiting ministers and musicians; and more.

WELCOME BACK PROJECT

Goal	\$12,000	Nearly 60 donations were received from Members, Friends, visitors and a community organization.
Donations	\$13,098	

Funds have been raised that more than meet the current Welcome Back Project budget, and work has begun. By the time you read this, the building will have been repaired and painted; the doors will have been repaired, and the front doors refinished. In addition, the additional funds from the Project are being used to purchase and install an automatic door opener to provide ease of access to the Social Hall.

The Board and Stewardship Team are grateful for the generosity of so many Members and Friends who joined together to enable this congregation to maintain our resilience during these challenging times. Please complete your pledge by year’s end, and if you are new to UUCS, please consider giving to the Annual Campaign by pledging online at <https://uusurpriseaz.org/get-involved/#donate> .

With Gratitude, Friendship, and Faith,

Bob, Claudia, Janet, Mary Anne, Sam, Sherry, Steve & Suzi

Your UUCS Stewardship Team

Social Justice Aims & Actions

Civil Society, Justice, and Service...

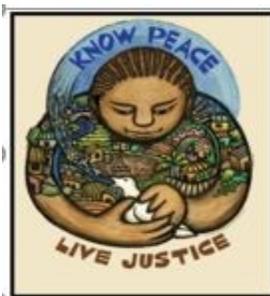
Since before Walden Pond Unitarians and Universalists have given much attention to assuring that these areas of concern remain forefront in congregations. Are we following on with our own commitment to them? If so, how shall we in Youngtown, Surprise, Peoria, Sun Cities and Arizona?

As we open ourselves to renewal in this congregation, it will be important to clarify our stance and readiness to commit to these areas of concern.

When I think of Civil Society, I think of encouraging the joys, privileges and responsibilities that society can provide. For Justice there may be necessary changes in laws or structures to assure access. Then there are the ongoing tasks accomplished through Vol-

untary Service by those who see the need and do the deed.

Where and how do you see yourself and our congregation engaged in promoting Civil Society, Justice or Service? Please think about this and make some notes. Bring your notes to a discussion on Sunday, September 26th at 9:30 in the Social Hall. We need your position on these topics.



Effort much appreciated.
Social Justice Facilitator,
Tom Reemtsma

MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian



Welcome to fall days in the Valley of the Sun! This month we begin in full our reviews of our brand new Golden Rule Collection books. I hope you may find your next important read among the books we will offer. At the moment I am hoping for an October 3rd Library re-opening and open house. But we are still on Covid timing, so stay posted for changes and updates as necessary in the weekly e-blast announcements.

“How to be an Antiracist”, by Ibram X Kendi, number 305.8KEN—GR. “Most people will tell you that racism is all about hatred and ignorance. In this book, the author explains that racism is ultimately structural. Racism directs attention away from harmful, inequitable policies and turns that attention on the people harmed by those policies. Kendi employs history, science, and ethics to describe different forms of racism; at the same time, he follows the events and experiences of his own life, adapting a memoir approach that personalizes his arguments.” From Amazon 4.5 Star review.

“The Stonewall Generation”, subtitled: LGBTQ Elders on Sex, Activism and Aging, by Jane Fleischman, number 306.2FLE—GR. “This is a gem of a book, with interviews that illuminate different aspects of LGBTQ life in the United States and how aging intersects with identity, activism, and sex. The author’s thoughtful commentary and historical notes make it perfect for people who may be less familiar with LGBTQ history, and I think everyone will find something surprising or inspiring in these pages.” From Amazon 5 Star review.

“Centering”, subtitled: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry, by Mitra Rahnema, Editor, number 262.14RAH—GR. “Centering is the first book to center the stories, analysis, and insight of Unitarian Universalists of color offering their religious leadership. Centering explores how racial identity is made both visible and invisible in Unitarian Universalist ministries.” From Amazon 5 Star review.

Hope to see you in October, all my faithful UU readers. *Until then, have a blessed day shared with a Golden Rule recommended book!*



Let’s get September started right....Join us for a **CIRCLE SUPPER** potluck dinner as a guest or a host. It is a great way to get to know your fellow UU’s better and share some delicious food. The host/hostess decides on the day, time and food assignments. The necessity of participants being fully vaccinated is also at the host’s discretion. If you have questions and/or want to sign up to host or attend a dinner, call Susie Cole **406.600.8857** or Nancy Flann **623.670.4570**.

CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS

Lisa Lawrence, Dir. of Family Ministry



Welcome September!

I am excited for a new month and a new church season filled with POS-SIBILITIES! We begin a new chapter at our church, as we welcome Reverend Sam Schaal and ease back into in-person Sundays. I’m very glad that all members, regardless of vaccine status, are wearing masks. Our young members, ages 11 and under, are still unprotected, as a vaccine hasn’t been developed for them yet. So, thank you for making the church a welcoming place for them, too.

The RE Ingathering/Sunday School Welcome Back Breakfast to be held both in-person and on ZOOM is planned for Sunday, September 12th from 9-10 A.M. with classes to follow. To register, please see the posts on the church or the UUC Surprise Family Facebook pages. If you don’t have access to Facebook, please contact me at uucslisal@gmail.com.

Classes this year will be available both in-person, as well as online over ZOOM. We will be introducing the new Soul Matters curriculum. Soul Matters is a small group program of over 170 UU congregations who follow the same monthly themes in the classrooms and in worship. By sharing these themes, we build greater connections as Unitarian Universalists. Crossing Paths is this year’s program and will be taught in all classrooms, preschool and up.

THE THEMES ARE:

September: Embracing Possibility

October: Cultivating Relationship
November: Holding History
December: Opening to Joy
January: Living with Intention
February: Widening the Circle
March: Renewing Faith
April: Awakening
May: Nurturing Beauty
June: Celebrating Blessings

I look forward to seeing everyone as our new season continues to unfurl....



The weather may not feel like the harbinger of fall, but the calendar definitely does. For the Questers Committee that means we are ready to jump into the 2021-22 program season with new adult offerings. Here are four you can register for right now:

ANCIENT WORLD HISTORY TO 1500 w/ Dr. Bonnie Saunders | Mon., Sept. 13-Nov. 1 | 7:00-8:30pm | Zoom
Registration: Email Di Evans at dianne113@gmail.com – Subject: Ancient World History, or call her at **602-341-0353**.

Bonnie Saunders will talk about the history, culture and religion of the ancient and medieval world. Come and learn about the relevance of these civilizations to the modern world.

Questions??? Email Bonnie at bonniesaun@aol.com, or call her at 602-312-7098.

TAKING INVENTORY & INVENTING OUR NEW NORMAL w/ Libby Christianson | Thrs., Oct. 11 | 10:00-11:30am | Multi-Purpose Rm.

Registration: Email Carol Calkins at carolpcalkins@gmail.com – Subject: Taking Inventory, or call her at **425-387-0784**.

Together we'll take inventory of the 7 dimensions of wellness and then explore how to bring more of what we need and want into our new normal.

Questions??? Email Libby at maestro25@comcast.net.

FINDING THE HAPPY PLACE w/ Tom Reemtsma | Thrs., Oct. 14-Nov.18 | 10:00-11:30am | Social Hall

Registration: Email Jeff London at jvlon-don@yahoo.com – Subject: Happy Place, or call him at **952-200-0643**

This is a 6-week course based on a book by David Daniels and Suzanne Dion. There will be exercises each week building the foundation for a better relationship

with self and others.

Questions??? Email Tom at reemtsma623@msn.com, or call him at 623-583-5473.

And remember, in addition to the offerings above you can go to our website uusurpriseaz.org | [Adult Programs](#) | [Questers](#) | [Offerings](#) to learn about and sign-up for one or more of the **4 On-going Offerings:**

UU Men's Group;
UU Women's Group;
Insight Meditation, and
BUUK Circle

Sept 14 Book - "The Overstory by R. Powers";
Oct. 12 Book — "Susan, Linda, Nina and Koki"
by Lisa Napoli

This non-fiction book is about the founding mothers of NPR.

Nov. 9 Book—"The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek"
by Kim Michele Richardson

This historical-fiction book is about a traveling library project in Appalachia during the depression, plus the blue people of the area. (Similar to Jo Jo Moyes "Giver of Stars")

The **website** is always the best place to find the most up-to-date offerings info, including those that are in the **LOOKING AHEAD** category.



"Congratulations! You have successfully completed the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal for 2020. Sincere congratulations on your ongoing commitment to LGBTQ+ welcome and inclusion in and beyond Surprise, AZ." What UUA LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director Michael Crumpler wrote in his congratulatory letter is true. Since 2001 ours has been an ongoing commitment to being a Welcoming Congregation, and we are well into completing the renewal practices for 2021, which include Welcoming Worship, Welcoming Days of Observance, Welcoming Religious Education, and Support for a Welcoming Project.

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

17540 N. Avenue of the Arts
Surprise, AZ 85379

Ph: 623-875-2550

Email: uucsaz2@gmail.com

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 in person or via live-stream for Sunday worship at 10:30 a.m.

If you are not receiving church email announcements but would like to, please send your preferred email address and full name to uucsaz2@gmail.com. You can also request a hard copy of this newsletter by calling the church office at 623-875-2550.

September 2021 Worship Summaries

Theme: *Embracing Possibilities*



September 5

“Why Be Unitarian Universalist?”

Rev. Samuel Schaal - Transition Minister

In all the ways to be religious, why be Unitarian Universalist?



September 12

“At Home in the Wilderness”

Rev. Samuel Schaal - Transition Minister

The journey of transitional ministry is like a sojourn across a desert—full of challenge, full of possibility. How might our journey of mutual ministry bring forth abundance amid the appearance of lack?



September 19

“Turning Toward Forgiveness”

Rev. Samuel Schaal - Transition Minister

At this beginning of Yom Kippur, we consider the work of forgiveness. How might forgiveness free us? Is forgiveness a part of our work for justice?

September 26

To Be Announced in Weekly Announcements