

Newsletter

October 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

Exploring Relationship

One way of understanding our humanity is the classic triad of how we exist with self, others and God (or ultimate context, the “really real” or “ground of all being”).

We’ll explore these concepts in October worship with the theme **Cultivating Relationship**. How we relate to others comprises two sermons, both congregationally focused. First, how we relate to each other in community, as we explore our concept of covenant. Then, how we relate to those outside of the congregation—how we welcome the stranger, how we define what is our mission field from our perch here in Surprise. Are we a group of like-minded people who gather for community? Or are we also evangelists for the good news of Unitarian Universalism? Ultimately, why are we gathered as a people of liberal faith? Join us in person or online via Facebook or YouTube.

This month we are also introducing a three-part series, the **New UU**, an introduction to our tradition and this congregation for newcomers and anyone who would like more information on our heritage and history (where we come from), the substance of our faith (how we nourish souls and heal the world) and how we are church together. If you’re considering membership, you’ll especially want to register, as well as any who’d like a refresher on our tradition. This series will be repeated in the spring and at least twice each of the following program years. (See page 2.)

Finally, I’m happy to announce that the Board has selected members of the **Transition Team** to help me understand the congregation’s culture and strategize how to engage the five focus points of transitional ministry during our time. They are an advisory group, folks who are trusted by the congregation and know the congregation. I’m happy to announce that Sharon Beard, Nancy Flann, Brent Garrett, Monica Gentry, and Reggie Johnston comprise our new Transition Team. Thanks to all for agreeing to serve. They will disband at the end of the transitional time.

What a month! Looking forward to continuing our walk together.

In Our Faith,
SAM

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Message from our President



To our members and friends who have returned to UUCS – Welcome Back! And to those who have not yet returned, we await your arrival with great anticipation. Our Church year began officially on September 12, with the Ingathering event for our children and their families. Although we are having In-Person Services, we are also continuing to Livestream, so that we reach all of our members, friends, and visitors. ***Please check the Website for information on services each Sunday and to find the link for joining us on -line.***

We will continue to monitor CDC Guidelines for Covid and will make our decisions week by week on serving food, passing the basket, and inside socializing. In the meantime, please continue to wear your masks when in Church and maintain social distancing when you are with those who are not in your "bubble".

Good News - our "Welcome Back" Project is finished – with the installation of our new Automatic Door. Again, our sincere thanks for the generosity of our members and friends. The fountain is working, and the Memorial lights are now repaired and standing. *Thanks to Kim Kuhlman.* They were vandalized sometime this summer, which required more than just changing the bulbs. Kim did a great job of repair and then cemented them to the ground to hopefully prevent further destruction.

We have one remaining item and that is to replace/repair the lettering on our front monument – the only thing holding us back is the weather. We will tend to this task as soon as it cools off a bit. We also removed the reader board on the front wall due to its disrepair, and we are now deciding on what to put in its place. ***I would welcome your thoughts and suggestions.***

We are also looking at providing an **orientation for new and interested members/friends**, organized and presented by Rev. Sam and our Membership Committee. These will start in **October**. ***And we continue our plans to hire a new Music Director and a Congregational Administrator to fill Kathryn's position.*** We would like these positions filled by November 1, so at the first of the year we will be ready to Transition and begin the process for finding, selecting and calling our new settled Minister.

All we need is cooperation from Covid - so we can meet safely in person, sing at our services and socialize with our members, friends, and visitors. We have not forgotten that we were preparing for a possible name change discussion just before Covid interrupted our lives so dramatically. That discussion is still on the burner.

I am posting my monthly Report to the Board on the website, where you can check out in more detail what we have been doing. The reports for August and September are now posted. Please check out the pictures in this newsletter featuring our faith home. We hope you will be pleased to see some of the changes being made. The Board is working diligently to position our congregation for a successful journey through transition to settled ministry. Stay tuned and be prepared to jump in and join us on our path forward.

Welcome Back to our Church Year - I am so glad to be back, and I hope you are also.

In Faith, Friendship and Eternal Gratitude,

Sherry Robinson



Are you curious about Unitarian Universalism?



Sign up today for Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise (UUCS) **New UU Class**, where you will discover the rich history and evolving practice of our faith tradition and our congregation.

**Class dates are Sunday, October 10, 17 and 24
from 12:00pm – 1:30pm at the church.**

Classes will be facilitated by Transition Minister Rev. Sam Schaal
and hosted by the UUCS Membership Committee.

**Please register at the Welcome Table in Social Hall or email Rev. Sam Schaal at revsam40@gmail.com
with your name and contact information.**

All are welcome.

2021 UUCS Stewardship Update

Here's a summary of our annual Stewardship Campaign YTD results. We're nearly to our goal. With three months left until year end, our goal will surely be reached with your support. Please complete your pledge by year's end. If you are new to UUCS please consider giving to the Annual Campaign by going online to: <https://uusurpriseaz.org/get-involved/#donate>.

STEWARDSHIP ANNUAL CAMPAIGN 2021

UUCS Budget	\$285,080
Annual Campaign Goal	\$205,401
Current Results **	\$180,405
Percent of Goal	87.8% of goal
Number of Donors	94

**includes pledges, unpledged donations, memorial/legacy gifts, collection plate

The **Welcome Back Project** raised more than its goal, enabling this project to fund painting/repair of the building's exterior, refinishing the front doors/resealing all exterior doors, and partially covering the cost of the auto-access door opener, a vital component added on to this project.

WELCOME BACK PROJECT

Goal	\$12,000
Donations	\$12,868
Percent of Goal	107.2% of goal
Number of Donors	50

SAVE THESE DATES ... Stewardship activities are coming your way...

- ◆ [December 5 – Campaign 2022 kickoff lunch](#)
- ◆ [February 26 – UU Auction – with proceeds going to an as yet unspecified project](#)
- ◆ [A legacy program – providing for the future of this faith community](#)
- ◆ [A special event \(TBD\)](#)

We are grateful for the gifts you share with all of us, your faith community, Members, Friends and staff. Joining our abundance together enables our congregation to maintain its resilience and plan for the future.

With Gratitude, Friendship and Faith,
*Bob, Claudia, Janet, Mary Anne, Sam,
 Sherry, Steve & Suzi*



UUCS will participate in the **2021 Phoenix Pride Parade on Saturday, Nov. 6**. Please join us! The parade route is about one mile long, running along **3rd Street** between Oak Street and Indian School Road in Central Phoenix. We'll gather to line up at **8:30 a.m.** for a **10:00** start. Shared transportation or carpooling will be arranged. To participate, contact **Mary Ellen Baker** (mebakercpa@msn.com) or **Sharon Steigmann** (sds49@msn.com).



UU Justice Arizona: Issues & Action Day

Issues and Action Day will be held on Saturday, October 23 via Zoom because of the Covid-19 numbers in Arizona. Every Issues & Action day is packed with highly informative presentations by individual experts in the fields of justice that Unitarian Universalists support. Members from congregations in North, South and Central Arizona assemble, listen and workshop to build momentum for the coming year. I hope you will join for part or all of the day between 9 and 5pm. Register at uujaz.org/register

Tom Reemtsma, Justice Facilitator

Tax Free Donations to UUCS from IRA, 403(b) or 401(k)

This is one time it pays to be old (over 70 ½).

Want to make a tax-free donation to UUC and other 501(c)3 charities? You can, through an IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) as long as you are older than, 70 ½. Your donation can replace, in whole or part, your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) or be in excess of it up to \$100,000 annually.

Don't have an IRA but have a 403(b), 401(k) or other Tax-Sheltered Annuity that you are taking RMDs from? You may be able to roll the gift amount into an IRA and make the Charitable QCD gift. Confused or have questions, call or talk to Bob Walling at 602-573-5942. (Bob is a former Certified Financial Planner and makes all of his UUCS and other charitable gifts through this strategy.)

MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian

October and the Fall Full Moon are upon us. Look for the bright spooky moon early on the evening of the 20th. Then prepare for 'trick or treat' at the end of the month! But be not worried, this month's Book Report contains no tricks only terrific treats of great reads. This month I continue to review our new Golden Rule collection with the following three books:

"Seven Necessary Sins for Women and Girls", by Mona Eltahawy. The author presents a strong feminist oriented social justice book for her readers. "Eltahawy's arguments come through with as much intelligence and clarity as passion and evocative imagery; they are built on facts about racism, capitalism, and homophobia, as well as her own and others' experiences." (A quote from the *Publishers Weekly*) Rather than teaching women and girls to survive the poisonous system they have found themselves in, Eltahawy arms them to dismantle it. (Amazon 4.5 Starred)

"Defund Fear: Safety Without Policing, Prisons and Punishment", by Zach Norris. The author is a community leader and lawyer. He lays out a radical way to shift the conversation about public safety away from fear and punishment toward growth and support systems for our families and communities. By bridging the divides and building relationships with one another, we can dedicate ourselves to strategic, smart investments, meaning resources directed toward our stability and well-being, like healthcare and housing, education and living-wage jobs. This is where real safety begins. (Excerpted from the Amazon 4.5 Starred review)

"How to be Less Stupid About Race", by Crystal M. Fleming. This is a unique and irreverent take on everything that's wrong with our "national conversation about race", and what to do about it. The book is your essential guide to breaking through the half-truths and ridiculous misconceptions that have thoroughly corrupted the way race is represented in the classroom, pop culture, media, and politics. Centuries after our nation was founded on genocide, settler colonialism, and slavery, many Americans are kinda-sorta-maybe waking up to the reality that our racial politics are (still) garbage. (Excerpted from the Amazon 4.5 Starred review)



Have a blessed day shared with one of these terrific books!



YOUR INVITATION...

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**.

FAMILY MINISTRY - CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS



Lisa Lawrence
Dir. of Family Ministry

Classes began on September 12th following our Sunday School Breakfast. It was great to have children back in the classrooms again, although we are still simultaneously offering classes over Zoom. Our youngest congregation members are still unvaccinated, so for families who feel safer on-line, that is still an option. One of our families made use of this option and zoomed in from their camping trip in Nevada for the Welcome Back Breakfast!

Our very first Youth Group meeting was also held on the 12th. The group was very excited by the idea of getting out into the community to do some service projects, as well as possibly meet other UU's from around the valley. I am hoping to purchase the group some T-shirts so they are recognized when they are out and about doing good deeds.

"Cultivating Relationships" will be the monthly classroom theme from the Soul Matters curriculum. In the Preschool and Elementary classroom this translates to "Making Friends". There are many skills that need to be learned to be able to do this successfully. Some of these skills are: listening to others; being able to say you are sorry; being kind and caring and being your true self.

Later in October we will be holding our second **Trunk or Treat event**. We will have many fun activities to offer like: trunk or treating; Halloween crafts; gues-

ing games; raffles. And this year we will be adding a few carnival games. We hope to see you on **Saturday, October 30th at 5:30 P.M.** for some spooky family fun. To register, please email Lisa Lawrence, the Director of Family Ministry, at uucslisal@gmail.com.

Curious about what goes on in children's religious education? Please visit the UUC Surprise Family Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/uucsurprisefamily>.



For information and sign-ups go to uusurpriseaz.org/Adult Programs/Questers/Offerings

Learning about and understanding more about ourselves and others is a common thread in these three Questers offerings available in October.

There is the Oct. 7 workshop with Libby Christianson – **Taking Inventory and Designing our New Normal**, Tom Reemtsma's 6-session journey into **Finding the Happy Place**, starting on Oct. 14, and the opportunity to join Ray Mahoney in **Our Stories**, where participants will share life stories prompted by photos - 4 sessions starting on Oct. 23.

Take An Easy October Hike w/ Susie Cole & Glen Grant— The Wild Burro Trail at Lake Pleasant Park— Oct.26 ... 8:00am Meet at UUCS Parking Lot. 4 miles roundtrip w/ 200 ft elevation.

BUUK Circle – 2nd Tuesday, 6:30-8:30 on Zoom
Oct. 12 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”)

Nov. 9 Book —“**Susan, Linda, Nina and Koki**”
by **Lisa Napoli**

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

COMING IN NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

Financial Security for Women with Kathy Young – Nov. 11, 6:30-7:30pm – UUCS

How I Do What I Do with photographer Rich Manalis – Nov. 15, 10:00-11:30am - UUCS Social Hall

Talks on Arizona Native American Tribes – First of 4 Monthly Talks with Rich Wambach – Dec. 14, 10:00am -Noon - UUCS



Your Questers Adult Education Committee – Carol Calkins, Juliet Gustavson, Jeff London, and Julie Wambach



Meet Our UUCS Staff –



Most of our Congregation members and friends are familiar with our RE Director – **Lisa Lawrence**; however, do we really know her and what she brings to our Faith Community? I was fortunate to sit down with Lisa and "get to know her just a little better". It was an interesting and revealing discussion.

Lisa came to us by way of an Ad in the Classified section of a Surprise community newspaper. She had been in the Phoenix area for four years as a "stay-at-home mom" and was looking for something flexible in order to "be there" for her two boys and still allow her to contribute in her areas of interest.

Lisa comes from the East Coast, having grown up in Smithtown, Long Island. Her educational background includes a **degree in Psychology** from Loyola University of Chicago. After graduation, Lisa volunteered as a docent at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, until she joined **MEET OUR UUCS STAFF**—Continued on p. 6

We are here to be of Assistance!

LAY PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

Are you unable to come to church but would like a visit in your home from a member of the Lay Pastoral Care Committee? Do you know someone else who is in that situation? If so, please let us know by contacting Joan Carlson (jomc127@gmail.com), Darnell Kirksey (dirk38338@aol.com), or Sharon Beard (sabeard@gmail.com).



Meet our UUCS Staff continued from p. 5

the Peace Corps in Kingston, Jamaica, where she became the Educational Officer for Hope Zoo. It was there Lisa met Daro Lawrence, who was to become her future husband.

Upon completion of their tour of duty in Jamaica, Lisa and Daro returned to the Washington DC/Virginia area, and Lisa took a position as an **Interpretive Park Ranger for the George Washington Memorial Parkway area parks** while Daro completed his master's degree. She was also the **Adoptions Manager for the Animal Welfare league of Arlington** for 5 years. Lisa describes herself as a naturalist and an environmentalist.

In 2005 Lisa and Daro followed her parents to the Sun City Grand area in order to keep their children close to their grandparents. Lisa discovered UUism and became a congregation member in 2007. A few years later, Reggie Johnston was Volunteer Director of RE when she and Lisa connected through that ad in the small local newspaper. There was immediate recognition on the part of both Reggie and Lisa that this was the right person for the right position at the right time. And so, **in 2010 Lisa's professional relationship with UUCS began** – starting as lead teacher for Sunday morning Religious Education for the children in our congregation. **At the start of the 2011 season, Lisa was hired as the Children's RE Director and worked quarter-time. Then in 2015 her hours increased to half-time.**

Lisa's position title was changed in May of this year as a result of a job description review. It was evident that Lisa is more than the children's RE teacher. She works with the entire family and the congregation, creating and implementing classes and activities that involve the family, as well as members of the congregation. **The title Director of Family Ministry is a perfect fit for the work she does.**

This year Lisa will be **offering programs at four levels with the nurse program, birth to 3 years, being the newest one. She will also have Primary – 3 to 6 years; Middle for 7 to 11 years; Jr High/HS for 12 years and above.** She uses both paid and volunteer staff, and she stresses, "This is not childcare." Lisa will be implementing a new curriculum this year which is being used in over 170 UU congregations. These congregations follow the same monthly theme in classes and in worship, thereby building greater connections as UU's. Crossing Paths is this year's program and will be taught in all classes' preschool through sixth grade.

Lisa has also begun Sunday Morning Shadows, a new program for seventh grade through HS, offering our youth the experience of being active congregation members by rotating through different functional church roles. At the same time, she is creating a new Youth Group for the same age group. **Lisa's goal for RE at UUCS is to offer healthy, sustainable programs that provide the building blocks for children to grow to be ethical, thoughtful, and caring adults with a faith that can nurture them throughout their lives.**

When she is not devoting her time to classes and families at UUCS, Lisa enjoys kayaking, hiking and the outdoors. She has two boys - Jack, 17 and Sam, 13. In addition, the family has 2 dogs – Molly and Fiona, 1 tortoise named Teddy, 1 old Guinea pig named Juniper, and a young cockatiel named Peppermint Patty.

You can find Lisa in her office located in the Multipurpose room at UUCS. She is the smiling one on the west side of the room. We are so lucky to have this talented young woman. **If you are interested in volunteering or have teaching experience and wish to help, give her a call at 623-875-2550.** You will love it.

Interview by S. Robinson

**TO SEE WHAT'S NEW AT UUCS
GO TO THE NEXT PAGE**

**WHAT'S
NEW
AT
UUCS?**



Our Church Home - Freshly Painted w/ Refurbished Front Doors & Automatic Door Opener



WELCOME to the Reorganized Front Office



There's Work Ahead in a Work Room Ready for Us



Rev. Sam Settled In & Ready to Transition w/ Us



New Dedicated Workspace for Lisa (And we have a workspace for the new Music Dir., too.)

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

17540 N. Avenue of the Arts
Surprise, AZ 85379

Ph: 623-875-2550

Email: uucsz2@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.

If you are not receiving church email announcements but would like to, please send your preferred email address and full name to uucsz2@gmail.com. You can also request a hard copy of this newsletter by calling the church office at 623-875-2550.

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.

In-Person, Facebook Live, YouTube

October Theme: *Cultivating Relationship*

Rev. Samuel Schaal, Transition Minister

Lisa Lawrence, Director of Family Ministry

October 3

“Cultivating Your Soul”

Healthy relationship with others begins in the self.

October 10

“Freely Bound”

What holds us together in relationship in the congregation?

October 17

“Reaching Out”

How do we cultivate relationship with those outside the congregation? How do we welcome the stranger?

October 24

“Held by Grace”

Encountering the great Other is the ultimate relationship. What (Who) holds us?

October 31—Juliet Gustavson-Guest Leader

“Where Am I?”

Knowing where we are isn't as obvious as it sounds...most of the time.