

Newsletter

January 2022

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise

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



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TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

by Rev. Samuel Schaal
Transition Minister

Being Intentional

Living with Intention is our worship theme for January. Intention is an aspect of mindfulness. It's living with focus, understanding and care. These days, with all that's going on in the world and in the congregation, we need intentional mindfulness!

Here in the congregation, we begin an important part of the transitional journey in the experience of the History Wall beginning Jan. 16 after worship. See page 6. This remembering the past helps us to focus the future. It's fun, exciting and energizing as you share stories and we all learn the unfolding legacy of this congregation. That will continue for a total of three, perhaps four, weeks following worship.

This month we welcome our new Congregational Administrator Judy Gilmore. She's in the office 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday-Friday, beginning Jan. 3. She is an experienced professional who has worked for a couple of other congregations. Drop by the office to say hi and welcome her to the team.

With the arrival of Judy, our staff team is now complete. In December we welcomed Paul Yoder as our new Director of Music. Lisa Lawrence maintains her inspired work among us as Director of Family Ministry. Good staffing is critical to the work of a congregation and we are fortunate to have this team with us.

We continue to explore how to do in-person programming in this (very ongoing!) age of Covid. I appreciate your patience and grace as we continue to live into the moment, one day at a time. I look forward to some expanded programs in the spring, so stayed tuned to that.

As we move into a new year, it's a blessing to be with all y'all. Here's to an inspiring 2022!

In Our Living Tradition,

SAM

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Message from our President



Happy New Year and Welcome to 2022.

We have just completed a very full and tumultuous 2021; one filled with joys and sorrows, missed chances and hopes fulfilled. And here we are on the cusp of beginning the work of Transitioning. Our first active step is in searching for answers to questions about who we are as a congregation, where and who we want to be, how we want to serve our community and each other, who we want as a settled minister. What is our future?

This will be challenging work; however, look what we have accomplished these last two years amongst the turmoil and chaos. We have had our share of sadness and loss. Even our UUA representatives were concerned by the turnover and cautious about our being able to sustain these losses. In January Debbie Bullen resigned as our Music Director. In June Rev Terry retired and returned home to Iowa and in October Kathryn Pabich, our Church Office Manager retired. We knew these changes were coming but that did not lessen the loss or the feelings of abandonment. Death also took 17 friends and members during this time. Luckily, we still had Lisa, our Director of Family Ministry, who has remained steadfast and supportive through all, continuing to teach and support her RE families and children as well as supporting the entire church community.

Since we were unable to gather, we found other ways to support each other...and our community. Those ways have been working! Look at us now. January 1, 2022, we have our Transition Minister, Rev Sam, who arrived in August to help move us forward to finding our new settled minister; we have a new Music Director, Paul Yoder, who joined us December 1 and who is already bringing joy through music to the congregation with his work at Sunday Services. The Choir even stepped out into the community in December to go caroling for our neighbors. (I was lucky enough to have them stop by my home also – what a treat.) And lastly as of January 3, we have our new Congregational Administrator, Judy Gilmore.

Our Building has had a face lift (and we are not finished yet), and our resident members, as well as our snowbirds are returning to in-person services. In December we kicked off our Annual Stewardship Campaign and are already on our way to our goal. (Thank you Suzi and committee). On December, the Membership Committee ventured into the community to join the Winter Surprise Party in Surprise, a daylong event featuring vendors and organizations offering services and other assistance for residents. (Thank you Libby, Lisa, Carol and Judy.) December 17th the Questers Committee offered “A Cup of Christmas Tea” with delightful holiday stories read by members. (Thank you Juliet and committee.) Our Family Ministry’s children’s Holiday Play was back to entertain and delight us, and Rev Sam offered a Christmas Eve Service done for those members who had expressed a need.

It is now January 2022 and we have more to do. We will continue to move forward with your support, assistance, and blessing. We have accomplished much together, and I believe we are ready to begin the work of Transition. Please join me in this work, and let’s continue our journey of “**Transitioning Together.**”

I remain yours in faith, friendship, and appreciation of your work for UUUS.

Sherry Robinson

IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR UUUS MEMBERS & FRIENDS

ANNUAL MEETING...SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2:00PM...VIA ZOOM

On the Agenda – Elections, Budget Approval, Volunteer of the Year Award, and More

Zoom link and other details going out week of January 1.

Since we will be voting on budget approval and elections, a quorum is necessary.

UUCS Stewardship 2022 Campaign Update

This year's Campaign theme is *Gather the Spirit ... Harvest the Power*. Indeed, we already began to do just that at our Campaign Kickoff in early December, where the congregations' joint spirit felt electrified. More than 36% of the campaign goal of \$225,000 was raised during the first week of the campaign. The average pledge was \$2,548, an extraordinarily strong start to Campaign '22. Let's keep building that momentum! Check the thermometer in the Social Hall for weekly updates.

During services you will continue to hear testimonials from congregation members. Each one will tell you, in their own words, what UU means to them personally and why they support the work of our congregation. Remember, it's up to each of us, who count on UU being here for us, to make those generous gifts in support of this liberal Faith Home.

There are several ways to give: by far the quickest and easiest is online at <https://uusurpriseaz.org/getinvolved/#donate>. Clicking on the *Pledge Now* link will take you to the Pledge Form; complete the form; then follow directions and submit. There are also Pledge Forms at UUCS. Just complete the form and deposit in the Pledge Form's box or basket.

We thank you for your generosity.
Bob, Claudia, Janet, Lynn, MaryAnne, Sam, Sherry, Steve, Suzi

SOCIAL JUSTICE Celebrate and Serve on MLK Weekend

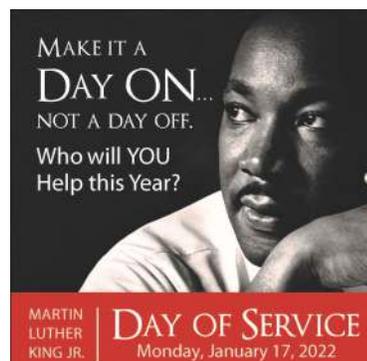
MLK Day of Celebration & Service

Saturday, Jan. 15

8:30 a.m. Music & Breakfast • 9 a.m. Program • Service projects following

Surprise City Hall Courtyard, 16000 N. Civic Center Plaza

UUCS is actively participating in this special event. The program features keynote speaker Col. Wanda Wright and performances by Valley Vista High School, Ashton Ranch, American Idol Finalist LaKisha Jones, Gideon Baptist Choir, Arizona Redeemed Choir, Brooklyn Ball and more. Following the event are community service projects for all ages that last about one to four hours.



Register for both the breakfast and service events at the Social Justice table in the Social Hall on Sunday. Questions? Contact Tom Reemtsma, (623) 583-5473, reemtsma623@msn.com

Earlier that week come out to a special **MLK Musical Celebration & Reflections** on **Wednesday, Jan. 12 at 6 - 8 p.m. at Willow Canyon High School auditorium, 17901 W. Lundberg St.** Enjoy community speakers and performing artists like Willow Canyon, Canyon Ridge and Gideon Choir. Rev. John Powell of Gideon Church and others will share reflections on the impact Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had on their lives and the inclusive work that is needed to continue his vision.

MUSIC NOTES FROM PAUL



Paul Yoder
Music Director



First off, please accept my thanks for the warm reception you have given me here at Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise. No stranger to the Northwest Valley, I served as Director of Music at St. Clement of Rome Catholic Church in Sun City for over 20 years. I retired a little over two years ago and in the time since then I have really missed leading a choir. Of course, as you can imagine, Covid greatly complicated my return to conducting, since nobody was singing! I feel really honored to have been selected to lead the music for your services and, while yes, some things are not the same here as they are in other churches, I think my general philosophy of communicating through music will be a good fit here with you too.

I like to present music from a variety of genres, so if you favor gospel music, you probably will get to hear some.

If classical music is your thing, just be patient, that's on the menu too, as well as lots of other styles, so eventually your day will come!

What a pleasure to serve such a vibrant, diverse community! I can't wait to hear the voice of UU Surprise. No music making is more powerful than when a faith community blows the roof off the church singing a favorite hymn. Even Covid is no match!



MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian



Welcome to a bright New Year all Surprise UU's! I hope you will come 'check-out' our library and all our current top rated reading material.

We are starting off the year reviewing a special book section published by members of the congregation. They are on varied topics as you can see from the sample below (including a cookbook!). If you are an author please let me know so we may add your book and alert our readers.

"A Guide for Parents of Troubled Children", subtitled 'working with a child psychiatrist', by Sylvia A Dygert Manalis, MD, number 649.7MAN, member. The author "is a physician and child psychiatrist who has worked for over forty years with children and their families." From published information.

"Dead is a Four Letter Word", by Lynn L, Melby, number 155.937MEL, member. The author states, "We have done a rather thorough job of insulating ourselves from facing death....the only way to understand and fully appreciate life is to better understand the phenomenon of death." From published information.

"Battles Between Somebodies and Nobodies", subtitled 'combat abuse of rank at work and at home', by Julie Ann Wambach, PhD, number 302WAM, member. This book is "A guide to successfully defending oneself

against the abuses of rank that crop up in most everyone's personal and public lives." From published information.

"Unspeakable Joy", by Connie Reemstma, number 92REE, member. The author "Delivers on the promise of its title. This is a richly told memoir that spans her life from a small town in Java, Indonesia, through most of the major continents of the world." From published information.

"Our Favorite Recipes", by The Women's Alliance of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Sun Cities, Arizona, number 641U-U, member. Published in 1994, you may remember some of the contributors names in this extensive collection. With great recipes too!

Happy New Year and Happy Reading everyone!



FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence

Dir. of Family Ministry



The month of December had Family Ministry hustling and bustling!

The fun began on December 4th, when our Youth Group assisted the membership committee at the City of Surprise Winter Carnival. They helped to assemble



candy bags, passed out church information and were able to give their youthful perspectives on what it's been like to grow up at UUC Surprise. I was able to design a photo collage of prior family events to bring along and show the community what kinds of programming we have to offer.

The rest of December was all about the children's play, "Joy in the Jungle: A Holiday Tale." I've become quite practiced at adapting stories into screenplays and costume-making, though directing is where the real fun is at! I enjoyed the opportunity to share this story, as it has a lot to say about the human condition and its fixation on happiness; it's okay to just be okay. I hope folks

enjoyed all the hard work the children, parents and I put into it.

To find out more, please visit the Family Ministry FB page at: <https://www.facebook.com/uucsurprisefamily>.



For information and sign-ups go to uusurpriseaz.org/Adult Programs/Questers/Offerings
Or visit the Questers Table after worship.

We greet a new year with some familiar offerings and new ones to look forward to. And soon the Questers Committee will be seeking your input through a survey to assist us in future planning.

The first session for **"I BELIEVE...." CREATE YOUR OWN CREDO** with Julie Wambach is on **Wed., January 5 from 10:00-noon**. This six-session course is a personal journey that Julie has facilitated several times. The goal is clarity, a statement of what you believe at this point in time. Julie Wambach (azwambach@icloud.com) is available to answer any questions.

A JANUARY HIKE – This month we're off to Estrella Mountain Regional Park for an easy 3.5-mile hike on **Friday, Jan. 7**. Meet Susie Cole and Glen Grant at 8:30am in the church parking lot. **But first, sign up by going to the UUCS website Questers link above.**

"HOW I DO WHAT I DO" – PART II



If you attended Rich Manalis's "How I do What I Do" session last November, you may already be signed up for Part II on **January 17 from 10:00 to 11:30am**. And if you did not attend Part I, no worries...Part II is open to you,

as well. Rich has a treasure trove of photos to share, along with more tips on taking photographs that are works of art.

GREAT DECISIONS 2022 – Yes, Bonnie Saunders will be back on Zoom to facilitate 8 lively and civil foreign policy discussions. The first session is at 7:00pm, Monday, January 31. Go to the website link above for full information, **including how to buy the Great Decisions 2022 policy book at a considerable savings.**

BUUK CIRCLE – **BUUK Circle meetings are going back to in-person at the church starting January 11.** Everyone is invited on the second Tuesday, Sept. through May, from 6:30-8:00pm, whether they have finished the book or not even started. For further information, contact Julie Wambach (azwambach@icloud.com).

UPCOMING BOOKS

Jan. 11 - "The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good" by Michael Sandel, 227 pp. Sandel maintains that meritocracy has created a hubris of the wealthy and a cruel judgment of those left behind. Individualism and globalization have stripped our society of the unity of a common good.

Feb 8, 2022 - "The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided By Politics and Religion" by Jonathan Haidt, 318 pp

This book will help you understand how your friends on the other side can possibly think the way they do.

Your Questers Committee—Carol Calkins, Juliet Gustavson, Joye Kohl, Jeff London & Julie Wambach

CIRCLE SUPPERS



We are ready to start sign-ups for a next round of Circle Suppers to be held the weekend of **January 21, 22 and 23**. These potluck dinners in people's

homes are a good way to connect with fellow UUs in an informal small-group setting. You can add your name to the sign-up sheet in the Social Hall or get in touch with Nancy Flann (623-583-4636, nancyflann@hotmail.com) or Susie Cole (406-600-8857, scole100@msn.com). The hosts will set the safety parameters, which will probably include a minimum that all guests be vaccinated and boosted.

History Wall Begins Jan. 16

Beginning January 16 **all are invited to gather after worship in the Social Hall from 11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. , for the History Wall experience.** We will do this for likely three to four weeks.

How it works: The walls of the Social Hall will be largely bare to allow the posting of large sheets from an easel pad of notes. I'll begin by asking questions of the congregation's history, beginning at the beginning. Participants will share their remembrances of the various eras of the church. These notes will stay up through the weeks until we complete the experience.

Why do this? To remember, to celebrate, to see the past through the wisdom of the present. Our goal is not an objective history of the congregation. (In fact, there are several volumes of the history from the perspective of various authors.). It is to glean remembered history to help understand the culture of the church and, ultimately, to help us see the future more clearly. I'll preach on Remembering the Future on Jan. 23.

All are invited to come to as many sessions as you can.

—Rev. Samuel Schaal



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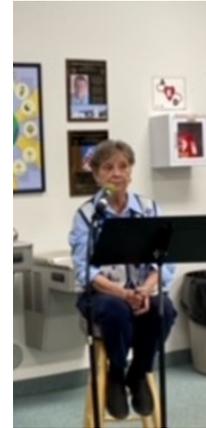


Facebook is one of the sources of communication in the congregation. If you use Facebook, search for Unitarian Universalist Church, Surprise AZ and you'll find our church Facebook page. Go to the page and click "follow." This helps the church page come up in your feed. Then enjoy the offerings and discover more about our congregation. Enjoy!



A LOOK AT DECEMBER HOLIDAY EVENTS

“A Cup of Christmas Tea”... Christmas Stories



”Joy in the Jungle: A Holiday Tale”



Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

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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.

You can request a hard copy of this newsletter by calling the church office at 623-875-2550.

Join Us for Sunday Worship

10:30 a.m. In-Person and Facebook Live—Video on demand on Facebook and YouTube

January Theme: *Living with Intention*

Rev. Samuel Schaal, Transition Minister

Lisa Lawrence, Director of Family Ministry

Paul Yoder, Music Director

January 2

"An Intentional New Year"

How shall we live in this new year? What do we hold to and what do we release?

January 9

"Living the Question"

Facing the future with intention is to live the question(s) of life, for us individually, and as a congregation. The poet Rilke advises to trust in the difficult.

Annual Meeting follows at 2 p.m. via Zoom

January 16

"Intentionally Interdependent"

Martin Luther King, Jr., Sunday

We honor the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as we explore his idea of the network of mutuality. Overcoming racism isn't just overcoming prejudice. It's being religiously aware of our interdependence and working to build a more just and anti-racist society.

History Wall follows at 11:45 a.m. in the Social Hall and continues for the next several weeks.

January 23

"Remembering the Future"

How does the past inform our intent for the future? Our History Wall experience helps us see the future as we re-examine the past.

January 30

"Being Present"

Being aware of the really real is a challenge in these distracted days. How might we be intentionally mindful?