

Newsletter

December 2021

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

Joy and Sorrow During the Holidays

The holidays are full of the admonition to be joyful. And they often are. But not always. For many of us our reality this holiday might be different. Even though Covid is improving, we are not yet done with the pandemic that is thwarting holiday plans for some. And holidays can bring up lots of different feelings.

If you are struggling, here are a few tips on coping during this season:

- ♦ **Be gentle with yourself.** Be aware of your feelings. If you are sad or grieving, that's normal. You don't have to be happy just because it's the holidays.
- ♦ **Forget perfection.** The holidays don't have to be like a Norman Rockwell painting. Families often don't fit stereotypes.
- ♦ **Reach out to others.** If you feel lonely, contact friends and try to stay connected.
- ♦ **Say no.** If you're overwhelmed, give yourself some time and space. You don't have to make all the parties.
- ♦ **Take care of yourself.** Don't overindulge in food or drink. Get a reasonable amount of exercise. Get plenty of sleep.
- ♦ **Use (or start) a spiritual practice.** This is a good season to set aside time for quiet, meditation, prayer, reflective reading, mindful walking, or just sitting in silence. Take a good, long, deep breath.

"Opening to Joy" is our worship theme for December. Indeed, we are seeking a deep joy that welcomes sorrow when necessary, that faces insufficiencies of our lives, that is rooted in the realism of the ambiguities of life. For us Unitarian Universalists, it is a season to explore many ways of deepening and discovering the diverse winter holidays, that also have a common theme of waiting for light and for joy.

Please note the addition this year of a Christmas Eve service at 5 p.m. on Dec. 24. It will be family-friendly, so bring the kids. If you have family or friends visiting, please know they will be welcome among us for this service, as always.

Most especially, may you find joy this season and all seasons.

In Our Faith,

SAM

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Annual Meeting Announcement

ATTENTION MEMBERS AND FRIENDS:

It is that time again where the board sets the date for the Annual Business Meeting of the congregation. We meet to review the current year, to hear plans for the upcoming year, to pass the budget in support of those plans and to elect our 2022 Board of Trustees and our Nominating Committee.

THE BOARD, on November 14th, set the date.

**The UUCS Annual Meeting is scheduled for SUNDAY: JANUARY 9th at 2:00 PM
and will be done via ZOOM .**

We were hoping we might be able to conduct this meeting in person in the sanctuary after Sunday Services; however, after much discussion the Board decided to once again do this via ZOOM. We believe that under the current restrictions due to Covid and its variants, providing the meeting by Zoom will allow access to all our congregation, and we will not need to worry about social distancing or wearing masks.

Last year this was stressful to even think about doing - and we were all a bit nervous about the complications that might stop or inhibit the meeting. With limited glitches we were able to have a well-grounded and productive meeting thanks to the cooperation of everyone involved. We also had close to 85 participants and the meeting lasted a little over an hour, including the passage of new Bylaws. By anyone's account, this meeting could be judged as a success, and so we are going to try for a second time. It should be just as good since most of us are familiar with ZOOM now.

SAVE THE DATE AND THE TIME! As last year, we will have a practice session to make sure anyone who wants to attend over Zoom can do so. See you then.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Message from our President



Why is it the holidays always seem to creep up on us when we least expect it? And along with the Holidays this year comes our busiest month – budget development, planning our Pledge campaign, setting the Annual Congregational Meeting, hiring two new staff members and more.

On the subject of a new Music Director, it looks like we have found ours. Maggi Mahan and Mary Anne Poggenburg, along with their Search Committee, have worked diligently to make this happen. (See the article on page 4 for all the details.) Libby Christianson and her committee are continuing the search for our new Congregational Administrator; however, in the meantime, we are in need of coverage in the office during the week from 9:00-1:00pm. If you can volunteer, please contact Nancy Flann (nancyflann@hotmail.com) or Brooke Gaunt (bagaunt37@gmail.com).

Our Membership Committee (Judy Reynolds, Libby Christianson, and Carol Calkins) sponsored and supported the first UU Class offered by Rev Sam for new and interested members. And on November 14th, this same team arranged and participated in New Member Sunday, where the congregation welcomed four new members: Libby Christianson, Yvonne Bentley, Mary Ellen Fosket and Ray Mahoney. Membership has another new outreach event scheduled December 4th. We are registered for the Surprise Party. This is a community event attended by people of all ages and recommended by Brooke Gaunt. Contact Libby (maestro25@comcast.net) for details, and volunteer to help her on the day of the event.

December 5th Suzi Walling will be leading the celebration of Stewardship with a kick-off event for our 2022 pledge campaign. New Logo, new theme and details will be unveiled that day following the Sunday Service. Plan to join us **and** bring your energy, your enthusiasm, and your pocketbook. Let's make this congregation shine.

A big thank you to **Terri and Glen Grant** for stepping up and taking on **Thanksgiving Dinner at the Church**. Bonnie and Ken Saunders did this for years and we were afraid it might be a tradition that would fade away until Terri offered to take it on. It is a huge task, and we are so grateful she and Glen were willing to provide this gift of Thanksgiving for our community.

Looking forward – my hope for you is a holiday time filled with peace, love, hope and joy.

Yours in faith, friendship, and continued appreciation,

Sherry Robinson



UUCS Stewardship **Honoring Your Legacy**

As a congregation, we are grateful to our departed members and friends who have remembered our UUCS congregation through a bequest with language included in their Estate Plan.

Including a gift to UUCS in your will, trust or as a beneficiary in investment accounts, insurance policies or other estate plans helps your congregation continue its mission of providing a liberal voice in our Community, State and Country.

- Simplicity** Just a few sentences in your will or trust is all that are needed.
- Versatility** You can structure the bequest to leave a specific item or amount of money, make a gift contingent on a certain event, or leave a percentage of your estate to UUCS.
- Tax Relief** If you are subject to estate tax, your gift allows you to be eligible for an estate tax charitable deduction for the gift's full value.

Suggested Language for Including Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise in your Will, Trust or Estate Plan

I herein give and bequest \$ _____, or ____ percent of the rest, remainder, and residue of my estate, and/or the proceeds from the sale of real estate by my estate that I own located at _____ to the Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise, Arizona, located at 17540 N. Avenue of the Arts, Surprise, AZ 85378-2581.

UUCS Federal tax ID# 86-0803719

For more information about creating a legacy to the UU Church in Surprise, please call Reverend Samuel Schaal at (214) 985-3737.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN UPDATE *UU Values Matter...Pledging Secures our Future*



We are remarkably close to fulfilling our mission to raise \$205,401. We are about 5% from our goal!!! Think about all that is meaningful to you at UUCS. Then, if you are able, please dig a bit deeper and go to <https://uusurpriseaz.org/getinvolved/#donate>. **Click on the *Pledge Now* link**, complete the Pledge Commitment Form, selecting from one of several payment options (whichever works best for you) and pressing *Submit*. It's not how much you give that matters but that you choose to participate by giving to support this incredible liberal faith community!

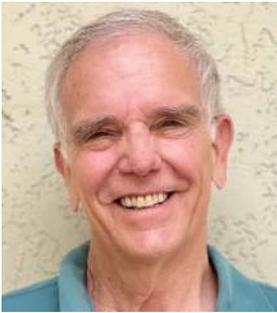
Make a Tax-Free Donation to UUCS with a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

If you are older than 70 1/2, have an IRA (traditional, inactive SEP, inactive SIMPLE, or rollover), you can make a tax-free donation to UUCS and other 501(c)(3) charities. Your QCD 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 an inactive 403(b), inactive 401(k) or another Tax-Sheltered Annuity that you are taking RMDs from? You may be able to roll the gift amount into an IRA after taking your RMD and make the IRA Charitable QCD gift. Questions? For more information, consult your personal tax advisor, or call Bob Walling, a former Certified Financial Planner™ and member of UUCS Stewardship Committee, at (602) 573-5942.

WELCOME NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR

Paul Yoder



We welcome Paul Yoder to our staff team as the new Music Director for UUCS. Paul is a well-known music professional in the area.

His musical career has spanned the globe. Following his education at Arizona State University, Eastman School of Music in

Rochester, N.Y., and Boston University, he was a singer in Europe at three theaters in Germany. He later freelanced in Europe, South America, Asia and Canada. In addition to opera, he was an oratorio soloist. He returned to the states and served as music liturgist in several Roman Catholic congregations in the Phoenix area. In 2001-2010, he was Artistic Director of the West Valley Chorale, a large mixed voice ensemble.

With his wide-ranging experience he is well suited to the inclusive and eclectic musical styles of our Unitarian Universalist tradition. His expertise will enhance our music programming and ministries, working in collaboration with our Minister and Director of Family Ministry.

MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian



Shorter days mean longer evenings for the enjoyment of a new UU Surprise book. This month I am doing a roundup of six just acquired **Golden Rule Collection** books. Let's get right to it:

"The New Golden Rule", subtitled 'Community and Morality in a Democratic Society', by Dr. of Sociology Amitai Etzioni, number 303.3ETZ. "The author's call to moderation and what used to be called 'common sense' is welcome amidst the shouting and clamor of the present", from published review. Amazon 4.5 review.

"The Dalai Lama's Big Book of Happiness", subtitled 'How to Live in Freedom, Compassion, and Love', number 294.3DAL. From Golden Rule theory and discussion

to everyday practice, bettering ourselves in service to others, the Dalai Lama shows us the way forward. Amazon 4.5 review.

"Ethics and the Golden Rule", subtitled 'Do Unto Others', by Harry J. Gensler, number 170GEN. The author adds practical wisdom, historical information, and diverse religious perspectives to enlarge our understanding of the Golden Rule. Amazon 4.5 review.

"Interspiritual Meditation", by Dr. Edward W. Bastian, number 158.1. This book guides us in a seven step meditation process to deeper levels of applying the Golden Rule to ourselves and others. Amazon 4.5 review.

"The Golden Rule", by Jeffrey Wattles, number 170.4WAT. The author surveys the diverse historical contexts of the Golden Rule to show how it acquires new meaning from each culture's struggles with the concept. Amazon 4.0 review.

"The Golden Rule", subtitled 'The Ethics of Reciprocity in World Religions', edited by Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton, number 170NEU. This is a collection of specifically commissioned essays to take a fresh look at this guiding principle from a comparative perspective. Amazon 5.0 review.

Enjoy one of our great new and inspirational Golden Rule Collection books today!

FAMILY MINISTRY - CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS

Lisa Lawrence
Dir. of Family Ministry



Anyone driving by our church on October 30th might have been surprised to see our parking lot bustling with activity. We held our second Trunk-or-Treat event, and the participants were positively ghoulish! There were aliens from outer-space, carnivorous plants, unicorns, witches, and treacherous fish all over the church campus. We had a total of 19 children and



youth, 36 adults and a total of 19 cars. Kids, youth and adults had fun visiting with each other, making crafts, playing games and trying to win raffles. Thank you to all who assisted and attended. Good times were had and memories were made.



The next Saturday, Nov. 6th, our Youth Group traveled downtown to meet up with other congregation members and march in the **Phoenix Pride Parade**. The parade route was a mile

long, and youth helped proudly display our banners, pull our wagon and wave to supporters on the sidelines. It was a first experience for the entire group and hopefully not the last.

Lastly, as the earth continues to tilt away from the sun, making the days shorter and the temperatures cooler, we enter a season of celebration. What's there to celebrate? Whatever makes you joyful! So mark your calendars for **December 19th**. You won't want to miss **this year's holiday play "Joy in the Jungle: a Holiday Tale"**. It will once again be performed by the UUCS Intergenerational Family Players. The play is an adaptation of "Grumpy Monkey: Oh, no! Christmas" by Suzanne Lang and will be full of holiday cheer and bananas.



SOCIAL JUSTICE Phoenix Pride Parade

On November 6 Social Justice teamed up with Family Ministry to represent UUCS at the Phoenix Pride Parade. The picture below captures the festive occasion. (*Read more in the Family Ministry article above.*) Thanks to Mary Ellen Baker and Sharon Steigmann for organizing.



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

As we approach the end of our 2021 Covid-19 year, a few things are beginning to feel "normal" and oh, so welcome. For the Questers Committee one of those things is being able to locate offerings in person at the church. In December you have two special opportunities, in addition to the **Dec. 3 UUCS Hike with Susie Cole and Glen Grant – complete details on the website or at the Questers Table after worship for this easy/moderate hike on the Mule Deer Trail at White Tank Regional Park.**



The First of Four Monthly Talks on AZ Native American Tribes with Rick Wambach on Dec. 14 from 10:00am-noon in the UUCS Social Hall

Rick's breadth of knowledge and experience, coupled with an engaging presentation style will make each of these talks both informative

and enjoyable. The Dec. 15 talk will be an overview, followed in January, February, and March with talks focused on the Navajo, the Pueblo-Hopi, and the Apache-Mexican Border Issues. **Registration:** At the Questers Table after Worship or contact Julie Wambach (azwambach@icloud.com/480-695-5516).

"A Cup of Christmas Tea" and Two Other Story Readings by BJ Martindale, our Rev. Sam Schaal, and Rick Wambach on Friday, Dec. 17 from 2:00-3:30pm, in the UUCS Social Hall.



Join us for three heart-warming Christmas stories, served with tea/coffee and holiday cookies.

This offering is co-hosted by the Membership Committee and Questers. **This is a perfect event to share with a friend and is open to all.** Signups: At the Questers Table after Worship or Contact Juliet Gustavson (julietgus@msn.com/602-527-5308).

BUUK Circle—December 12 meeting – **"Susan, Linda, Nina and Koki"** by Lisa Napoli. Look for January book in the Weekly Announcements.



LOOKING TO THE NEW YEAR – “I Believe...”: Create Your Own Credo with Julie Wambach – 6 Wednesday Sessions from 10:00am-Noon, starting January 5, all directed toward helping you create your own statement of beliefs. What a wonderfully rewarding way to start the new year, with this Unitarian Universalist course, the end product of which will be your personal theology statement. **To learn more and/or signup, contact Julie Wambach (azwambach@icloud.com/ 480-695-5516).**

“How I Do What I Do” Part II—Rich Manalis will be back by popular demand on Jan. 17, 10:00-11:30am, to continue sharing his minimalist photography and tips for creating photographs that are works of art.

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

CIRCLE SUPPERS



The first round of Circle Suppers are happening in November and December. We want to give a big thank you to the hosts of these dinners: Patricia Balfour, Steve and Carol Calkins, and Sherry Robinson and Steve Shanklin.

These potluck dinners in people’s homes serve as a great way for UUs to get together. We know the dinners are popular, because we have many people sign up each time they are offered.

The **next round** will be the weekend of **January 21, 22 and 23**. Put it on your calendar so you will be ready to sign-up after the holidays. If you have questions or comments, contact Nancy Flann (623-583-4636/nancyflann@hotmail.com) or Susie Cole (406-600-8857/scole100@msn.com.)

Save the Date ...

December 5th at 12 noon

Stewardship Pledge Campaign ‘22

Kickoff Lunch

after Worship Service

Gather the Spirit ... Harvest the Power



UUCS 5:00pm CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
Family-friendly worship with music, song,
and candlelight.

Where is joy being born in our lives?



**We are here to be of
Assistance!**

LAY PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Lay Pastoral Care Committee (LPCC) is to cherish and care for all members of our church community by offering support to people in need and being a resource for referrals. We maintain contact with those unable to come to church due to illness or disability. Requests for help come to the LPCC in a variety of ways, i.e. church office, Membership Committee, concerned family members, and self-requested. The Lay Pastoral Care Committee maintains close contact with the minister regarding people in need.

If you would like help, please call **Sharon Beard** (623-826-3365), **Joan Carlson** (623-537-9449), **Barbara Hughes** (801-589-5644), **Darnell Kirksey** (602-434-5606), **Marilyn Schulze** (623-975-7411), or **Liz Thomas** (602-369-3432).

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.

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.

Join Us for Sunday Worship

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

December Theme: *Opening to Joy*

*Rev. Samuel Schaal, Transition Minister
Lisa Lawrence, Director of Family Ministry
Paul Yoder, Music Director*

December 5

"Harvest the Power"

Stewardship Sunday

When we gather, our spirit is greater than the sum of individuals. How might the Living Tradition of our faith empower us to serve each other and the world?

December 12

"Waiting for Joy"

In these winter holidays, it's the surprises in the unexpected places, that remind us of the mystery, beauty and joy of the season.

December 19

"Joy in the Jungle: A Holiday Tale"

Ah, winter—such a magical time in the jungle. Lights! Decorations! Parties! All the animals are getting into the holiday spirit. Except Jill Panzee. How will she find joy, when she can't even find a ripe banana for breakfast?

Friday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service

5:00 p.m.

Join us for a family-friendly Christmas Eve service. Music, song and candlelight enhance our journey with the wandering couple, seeking the hospitality of strangers so they might birth the sacred infant. Where is joy being born in our lives?

December 26

"Searching for Truth"

David King, Worship Associate

The free and responsible search for truth is one of our deep values. We'll explore the importance of this search and how it has been challenged in the past year.