

# Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2022

## 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



### TRANSITIONAL THOUGHTS

by Rev. Samuel Schaal  
Transition Minister

#### What Do We Believe?

**One of our deep values** of our non-doctrinal faith is to take our own experience seriously. Of our many sources (listed after the principles in our covenant with our wider association), the first is:

*Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.*

So our own *experience* is a source of our faith. This helps ensure that what we believe equates to how we live. But are we just independent people who believe differently but gather in community? Yes, to a degree. But that suggests we don't have common values and ways of living.

We have a long tradition of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist theologians up to this day. We call it a Living Tradition, as we affirm there is yet more to know and learn. According to our first source, in our experience we engage wonder, which *moves us* to a renewal of the spirit. That's exciting! That's an adventure in faith.

In a **new online Questers class** called *What Moves Us* we'll explore 10 of our theologians, from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. But we won't engage their theology academically. We'll engage a primary life experience of each, to understand how their lives influenced their thinking, then engage our experiences to see how these theologians might inform our lives. It's a class developed by our prominent African American theologian, Thandeka, who is pioneering what she calls Affect Theology to understand how human emotions become religious feelings. This approach engages the emotions for a fuller religious experience. See information on page 5 to register for this class that begins Feb. 10 on Zoom. It is focused on providing specifically Unitarian Universalist adult faith formation.

**Thanks for your patience as we delayed the History Wall** experience until February, given the Covid spike in our wider community. We'll try again, starting after worship Feb. 6 from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. in the Social Hall. Watch for more information in your Weekly Announcements.

In Our Living Tradition,

*SAM*

#### Inside this issue:

Transitional Thoughts	1
President's Message	2
Stewardship	2
Social Justice	3
Music Notes	3
Book Report	4
Family Ministry	4
Questers	5
Circle Suppers	5
QCD Information	5
Feb. Worship Schedule	6

## Message from our President



On Sunday, January 9, our church held its second annual Congregational Meeting by Zoom. We had hoped this year to be together for this occasion; however, the Omicron variant of Covid -19 put an end to that plan. And so, we Zoomed. Boards often worry, especially when the meeting is not in person, that there will not be enough members for a quorum. At the very start of our meeting, it was apparent we were going to have the necessary representation from our community. Thank you for taking time out of your day to join us in doing the Church's business. It certainly reaffirmed your commitment to our community.

Three new members were approved for the Nominating Committee, adding Cheryl Garret, Glen Grant and Rich Manalis to the returning members - Reggie Johnston and Maggi Mahan. And there were five members nominated for the Board; four agreed to accept a second term, and two are returning to finish their term; only the Treasurer's position was open. Fortunately, Jan Murphy agreed to step in and become our Treasurer. We will miss Margaret Leahy; however, she has organized our finances into a system that with Jan's help we can build upon, as we move forward. In addition, a second member of the congregation, Mary Ellen Baker, offered to function as assistant to the Treasurer to lighten the load. A huge thank you to the retiring members of this year's Nominating Committee - Steve Calkins, Frank Thomas, and Joyce Delgado.

In introducing our 2022 budget I described it as a "Budget of Hope". It is my hope that we will be able to bring our congregation back to pre-covid levels and begin to enhance programs and build membership. You approved this budget, and I am grateful for the trust you, our members, have shown by your vote. We will work to maintain that trust by finishing tasks we have begun: strengthening our committee structure; developing policies and procedures to back up our activities; creating a Personnel Committee and a Finance Committee to support our staff and Board. Our goal is to build a structure that allows the Board to concentrate on governance and long-term planning instead of management of daily operations.

We have two important tasks ahead: one is a discussion about who we are and who we want to become, where we are headed and what might we want to be called; and the second is to select the search team who will find our next settled Minister. With the Board members you have elected, the budget you have approved, and the energy and enthusiasm you have demonstrated this year, I have every confidence we can do all that is required of us and more.

We started this Transition Journey together and together we will succeed. Thank you all for the opportunity you have given me to continue serving this amazing congregation.

Still, yours in faith, friendship, and sincere appreciation

*Sherry Robinson*



### **Stewardship Campaign 2022**

*Gather the Spirit ... Harvest the Power*

Our collective spirit continues to bring abundance to our Faith Home. We gather at Quester programs developed and facilitated by knowledgeable UUs. I recently attended two excellent programs: Talks on Arizona Native American Tribes and I Believe ...Create Your Own Credo. There might be others that resonate with your spirit; with each of us supporting the Annual Campaign, UUCS will continue to have the capacity to provide programs like these.

We also gather at Sunday services, and we gather on committees such as Volunteers, Investments, Grounds and Services. These committees and others, taken as a whole, help harness the power of our collective beating heart and soul, linking us through our shared humanity to creatively build our spiritual community.

Remember, it's up to each of us, who count on UU being here for us, to be as generous as you can in support of this liberal Faith Home. The box below indicates our campaign results as of mid-January. A thermometer posted in the social hall will inform you of our most up-to-date campaign results.

## STEWARDSHIP ANNUAL CAMPAIGN 2022 UPDATE

UUCS Budget	\$299,361
Annual Campaign Goal	\$225,000
Current Results	\$133,505
Percent of Goal	59%
Number of Pledgers	57

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.

Let's keep the flame burning!

**Suzi Walling**  
Chair, Stewardship Committee

## SOCIAL JUSTICE & ACTION

The Surprise Martin Luther King, Jr., Celebration and Day of Service was supported by 14 UUCS'ers. The annual day set aside to recharge ideas of service promoted by Martin Luther King, Jr., is one of our city's finer events. We heard from Gideon Missionary Baptist choir and others who offered songs of joy. Col. Wanda Wright of Arizona Veterans Affairs shared her three generations story of military and civil service. For us, her standard was high and encouraging, as we are determining our future in Surprise. This annual event was indeed a joyful, diversely attended community happening. We recommend this day to all members as a way to experience beloved community.



**February 21 – Day at the Legislature** - All are invited to join the UUCS group at the Capitol, as we spend a day seeking ways to interact in our local, as well as state and national, arenas. Contact Tom Reemtsma ([reemtsma623@msn.com](mailto:reemtsma623@msn.com)) for information and/or sign-up.

Tom Reemtsma  
Coordinator

## MUSIC NOTES FROM PAUL



**Paul Yoder**  
Music Director



When people think of music at their church, most likely the first thing that pops up in their minds is the choir, or maybe the pianist or some of the soloists. Especially, we are inspired when the congregation joins its voices together to sing a hymn.

Our church grew out of a well-established tradition and from the beginning, whenever the people came together, they sang. Sometimes it helps us to remember ideas or specific passages if we sing them, especially if the tune is catchy. Flipping through the pages of our hymnals, you will see that some songs were composed very recently, while others are hundreds of years old. This is one of the ways that we preserve our heritage, retaining the best songs of every age. There are always several songs that seem to be meaningful to a current generation, but with time they lose their shine and eventually are forgotten. Those that remain with us are often referred to as classics. They got that way because they have the power to speak in every age. They have a universal message that seems to be enhanced by the music that carries it.

There is nothing quite as powerful as hearing the voice of a faith community raised in song. This makes not singing in worship frustrating. The current Covid pandemic that continues has changed our congregational policies so that we have not sung in the pews for a long time.

We are looking for ways to cautiously reintroduce song to worship. The congregational Covid task force of the Board has now approved vocal performances from the platform of up to four singers who are masked. This makes possible more vocal music from the platform.

And, the choir can now gather to rehearse, staying masked and distanced. As we move into this stage, we continue to work toward UU Surprise again raising its voice in song. We are working to strategically bring vocal song into worship when we can do so safely. For now, we welcome more vocal performances in worship.



## MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian



Hearts and flowers go out to our entire UU Surprise congregation! Please visit the library and check out the great expansive faith reading we stock. There is much to read. And much to cover this month, so I will get right to it!

I am modernizing the use of the library 'Reference' books section. With so much work being done at home, I am converting these books to regular check-out, so you may use them at home. As with the regular books, please complete the check out-card and place it in the card file box.

Four Reference books are terrific UU history oriented. All are different in focus and important to our faith (all in Reference 289.1 number area):

***"This Day in UU History"***, subtitled 'A treasury of anniversaries and milestones from 600 years of religious tradition', by Frank Schulman.

***"Historical Dictionary of Unitarian Universalism"***, by Mark W. Harris. This is a book of people, places and faith topics posted alphabetically.

***"A Documentary History of Unitarian Universalism"***, ***Volume One, the beginning to 1899; Volume Two, 1900 to present***. Both books are edited by Dan McKanan. Published in 2017 they are the most current of the type.

Next month I will feature the remaining books from the

Reference books collection so you may have the information at hand for your needs.

Next, I am doing a periodic clean up of the collection. Books no longer relevant, past their time or not being used will be removed. But rest assured you have the final say in whether the books are finally removed.

Potential books for removal are located on the rolling cart in the library. Please look them over. If you wish a book to be kept, simply remove it from the shelf and place it on the round table. I will reshelve the book. You do not have to be interested in checking it out (of course please do if you wish), you are simply expressing your desire it be retained.

Books remaining on the removal shelf will be processed out to the sale cart at the end of February. They may then be purchased for the small fee.

*Please have a loving peaceful month shared with a ter-*



## FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence

Director of Family Ministry



Greetings Congregational Family,

I'm sorry to say that the post-holiday Covid spike within the schools and community has forced me to encourage Zoom Sunday school attendance right now rather than in-person. Over the

past week, the majority of church families, mine as well, have children who have been sent home from school for quarantine due to direct Covid exposure. I understand that moving back to online learning is the last thing we want for our children's mental and spiritual health but it is temporarily necessary to keep them physically healthy.

So, Sunday school attendance by Zoom is strongly encouraged until further notice. Although we are still offering in-person classes, primarily for visitors, please be sure your children are masked and symptom free. To attend Sunday school virtually, please contact Lisa Lawrence, Director of Family Ministry for the Zoom link at: [uucslisal@gmail.com](mailto:uucslisal@gmail.com)

Classes will continue with our current curriculum "Soul Matters" and "World of Wonder" for the 2nd grade & up and preschool classes. I will be adapting classes for

online with additional games and activities for maximum fun. Please encourage your children to join me, the more the merrier.

Let us look forward to a healthier Spring filled with fun, outdoor-events! Yes, I'm making big plans. Stay tuned!

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



**For information and sign-ups go to [uucsurpriseaz.org/Adult Programs/Questers/Offerings](https://www.uucsurpriseaz.org/Adult_Programs/Questers/Offerings)  
Or visit the Questers Table after worship.**

It's February and new Questers offerings are on the horizon. Here are a few. You will be able to join Rich Manalis for a workshop on editing your smart phone photos, take a Peace Meditation Walk, join a Living Sustainably workshop, get the latest information on the state of Public Education in Arizona and actions you can take, delve into Amanda Gorman's (Inauguration Poet Laureate) poetry in her latest book, "Call Us What We Carry", and take a deep dive with Rev. Sam into how personal experience has played an important role in forming Unitarian Universalist theologians' faith, as well as how our experience shapes our faith formation.

**WHAT MOVES US: Unitarian Universalist Theology on Zoom with Rev. Sam—10 Thursday Sessions starting Feb. 10 (See Rev. Sam's Transitional Thoughts on p. 1.)** Since each session focuses on the faith forming experience of one of ten theologians. you are welcome to attend when your schedule permits. Of course, the more you are able to attend, the richer your experience will be.

**GREAT DECISIONS 2022** – Yes, as of Jan. 31 Bonnie Saunders is back on Zoom facilitating 8 lively and civil U. S. foreign policy discussions. Each session focuses on a different foreign policy. So it's not too late to get the briefing book and sign up. For those who may be interested in only purchasing the briefing book at the \$21 wholesale price, you can do so. Go to the website link above for full information.

**BUUK CIRCLE – BUUK Circle meetings are back to in-person at the church.** 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

**Feb 8 - "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.

**March 8 —"Facing the Mountain"** by Daniel James Brown, 482pp

The story of the Japanese boys who joined the army in WWII to prove their patriotism. Their unit was the most decorated. Every bit as compelling a read as "Boys in the Boat."

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

### CIRCLE SUPPERS



If you missed out on the January Circle Suppers, don't despair.... You'll have another opportunity. These small potluck dinners will again be happening in March. Mark your calendars for **March 4,5, 6. AND watch for the signup sheet in the social hall.**

### 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,.

## Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

17540 N. Avenue of the Arts  
Surprise, AZ 85378

Ph: 623-875-2550

Email: [uucsaz2@gmail.com](mailto: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.

*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*

**February Theme: *Widening the Circle***

*Rev. Samuel Schaal, Transition Minister*

*Lisa Lawrence, Director of Family Ministry*

*Paul Yoder, Music Director*

February 3

#### **“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.

February 13

#### **“Should We Love Our Enemies?”- A *Golden Rule Sermon***

Is it possible to widen our compassion toward our enemies? How might we see the good in others with whom we deeply disagree?

February 20

**Guest Minister**—Please see Weekly Announcements for details.

February 27

#### **“Beloved Everybody”**

If the congregation seeks to build Beloved Community in the world, then everybody (and every body) should be beloved. How well do we welcome those the world treats as less-than and other-than? How do we “other” others?