

# Newsletter

APRIL 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

### AWAKENING

*“When we believe that we are supposed to be more, even when we aren’t sure what the road to it will be like, that’s how we show that we are a people of faith.”*

So I ended last month’s column, quoting the Rev. Megan Foley. I’m still wondering about what this *more* might be like.

So often we think the future merely reflects the past: that what we experienced in the past (in another congregation, with another minister, in another context) is what we will likely experience today and in the future. How might we be more? Both individually and as a congregation? What does this more look like?

Our worship theme in April is *Awakening*. That’s a great theme in the month that includes so many religious holy days dealing with introspection, fasting, humility, surprise and awakening to new realities, such as Lent, Ramadan, Passover and Easter, along with the awakening of the earth in the spring (experienced distinctly here in the desert, of course) with Earth Day set aside for environmental awareness.

In a sense, Awakening is the work of the time of transition. We are invited to a larger, fuller sense of what a congregation can be. We’ve finished the History Wall and got a sense of where the congregation has been. Now, the question looms: Who do you want to be? What kind of minister do you want to have? What kind of ministry do you want to have? What kind of (lay volunteer, ordained and hired) shared leadership do you need to take you there?

As Sherry mentions in her nearby column, the next big task, setting up the second year of interim work, is electing a search committee charged with finding a candidate for settled ministry to be presented in early spring 2023. This fall, the search committee will announce a process of discerning some of the questions I ask (and many more!) as they survey ideas and attitudes in the congregation. So stay tuned. Stay open. Stay curious. There is so much within us and in the world to be awakened to.

In Our Living Tradition,

*SAM*

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## Message from our President



Spring is here, and soon we will be having those lovely warm days descend upon us. As a transplant from the NW, I do so enjoy the warm weather up to a point, and I especially love the desert this time of year. You never know what to expect or what might be blooming from one day to the next. Hiking the desert at this time of year is truly an adventure.

Attending services at UUCS is almost the same adventure – You never know what might be happening or what might appear. March 13<sup>th</sup> was one of those experiences! Suddenly we had our Choir back in the loft and singing during the service. What a lovely gift. We have also modified our mask mandate to allow choice with continued social distancing. And we have added new members and welcomed back more former members and friends.

The only cloud over our Sanctuary this month was the loss of Connie Jahrmarkt, our long time and very dedicated pianist who has always provided such beautiful music. During the pandemic, her participation in our on-line services was especially appreciated by members. It was reassuring to see her each week providing the music for our services from home and from the Sanctuary. Connie has decided to retire and will be traveling with her husband a bit before beginning a new chapter of experiences. We are grateful for her contributions, her music, and her caring for our congregation.

The Congregation has completed the second "big" step in our Transitioning (the first was finding Sam, our Transition Minister), the review of our history and the building of a History Wall with Sam's help. If you missed it, you can read the comments posted on the walls in the Social Hall, and if you have something to add – feel free to post a sticky with your information.

The Board is now preparing to start the process for building our Search Team. This is the team that will be responsible for bringing our congregation its new Settled Minister. The process is involved, and while this team, which is chosen by the congregation, is doing their work, we will not be directly included in the process. Please rest assured they will be working for us. Sam, the Transition Team, and the Board will be continuing the work of "moving on" with the remainder of the congregation – members and friends.

This is a sensitive period of time and will require patience and trust in the process. The UUA has created a process for selecting the Search team that has proven valuable and fair. We will be sending out the details soon – so that all will know how the process works. Once the committee is chosen, they will be introduced and begin their work. There will be more to follow.

A reminder for all - Lois Bartels has retired from Charing the Building and Grounds Committee. And we are still looking for a Lead. In the meantime, if you notice an issue that needs to be addressed, please let Judy Gilmore (our CA – Congregational Administrator) know about it.

We are continuing to monitor the numbers on Covid -19 and at the same time, we patiently await the return of all our members and friends to our Sanctuary. May it be soon.

*Sherry Robinson*



### **Stewardship Campaign 2022**

We have completed the 2022 campaign to obtain pledges for donations to ensure that UUCS is financially supported. As of mid-March (deadline for submission of this report), we had received 76 pledges; 68% of the households comprised of members and/or friends in the congregation have pledged.

We have reached 77.5% of our goal of \$225,000 in pledges that will contribute 75% to the annual budget of \$299,361. From talking with some of you, we know that some member/friends who donate choose not to pledge, or choose to pledge and donate at the same time later in the year. We have received almost \$14,000 in unpledged donations as of mid-March. Please consider formalizing your plans to donate with a pledge, no matter

the size of the pledge. To pledge go to [Get Involved | Unitarian Universalist Church of Surprise \(uusurpriseaz.org\)](http://uusurpriseaz.org) and click on the *Pledge Now* link to see the Pledge Form. Complete the form, then follow directions and submit. There are also Pledge Forms at UU; just complete the form and deposit in the Pledge Form's box or basket.

There are other sources of monies over the year. As of mid-March, contributions received were: \$500 from a non-member; \$858.76 from Sunday collection plate; \$20 in cash from social activities, \$85 contribution to the RE Fund, \$2000 legacy gift, and a \$200 memorial donation. All sources of income get us to the goal we need to reach to pay staff and care for the building in which we gather. Remember, it's up to each of us, who count on UUUCS being here for us, to be as generous as you can in support of this liberal Faith Home.

There are several ways to give: by far the quickest and easiest is online at [Get Involved | Unitarian Universalist Church of Surprise \(uusurpriseaz.org\)](http://uusurpriseaz.org). One source to donate is a tax-free donation with a qualified charitable distribution (if you are over 70.5 years of age) – see box on page 5. April is often the time when you may choose to donate in this manner.

Let's keep the flame burning!  
Janet Jeffrey  
Stewardship Committee

## SOCIAL SERVICE & JUSTICE



**What is UUJAZ (Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona)?**

### Our Vision

To energize people of faith to create an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just life for all those who live in Arizona.

### Our Mission

To engage Arizona Unitarian Universalists in justice making through: nurturing congregational social justice ministries; connecting UU activists and congregations across the state; partnering with like-minded justice organizations; empowering UUs to work for socially just public policy.

Starting on April 27, Questers is offering a course from UUJAZ's Transforming Hearts Collective – Trans Inclu-

sion in Congregations. A generous grant to UUJAZ has made this opportunity available at no cost to all Arizona UU congregations. We are thankful for all UUJAZ does to support our social justice aims and actions.



## MUSIC NOTES

Paul Yoder—Music Director



Finally! Our choir has been waiting for YEARS now to sing during the service, and finally was able to do so on March 13. We started rehearsing several weeks ago, taking baby steps at first, but always with the goal of making music once again here at UU Surprise. Of course there was some rust in our throats, but there's still a lot of gold left in there too.

I'm constantly reminded that these days true beauty is in very short supply. Ugly, on the other hand, seems to be piled up in heaps all around me. Our hearts are hungry for the blessings that abound wherever beauty and loveliness are found. The choir is committed to being a source of beauty for you and for anyone who attends service here. It is our hope that lives will be blessed and changed as a result of our sharing the gift of beautiful music with each other once again.

## MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUUCS Librarian



Welcome to spring UU Surprise Readers! This month Arizona celebrates Golden Rule Month. I am featuring a list of our Golden Rule books for you to use as reference when looking for good spring reading. These books have been previously reviewed, but a listing is good to have at hand.

Also, your library will be on self serve for the summer months. Angel volunteers will see that the library is kept organized for you. Please follow the check out

policy posted. When you return a book, please place it on the top shelf of the small table. Our volunteers will check it back in and shelve it for you. **Please** do remember to complete the check out card and leave it in the sunflower box on the small table. Thank you so much!

**"The New Golden Rule"**, subtitled 'Community and Morality in a Democratic Society', by Dr of Sociology Amitai Etzioni, number 303.3ETZ.

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

**"Ethics and the Golden Rule"**, subtitled 'Do Unto Others', by Harry J. Gensler, number 170GEN.

**"Interspiritual Meditation"**, by Dr. Edward W. Bastian, number 158.1.

**"The Golden Rule"**, by Jeffrey Wattles, number 170.4WAT.

**"The Golden Rule"**, subtitled 'The Ethics of Reciprocity in World Religions', edited by Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton, number 170NEU.

**"How to be Antiracist"**, by Ibram X Kendi, number 305.8KEN.

**"How to be Less Stupid about Race"**, by Crystal M. Fleming, number 305.8FLE.

These terrific books, and even more Golden Rule reading, are shelved on the specially identified shelf on the left side of the library, top book shelf.

*Enjoy one of our great new and inspirational **Golden Rule Collection** books today! And everyone please have a joyful spring!*



## FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence, Director

*Greetings from Family Ministry!  
I have two events to share with you  
in April.*

### **Eco-Olympics, Saturday, April 9th at 9:00 a.m.**

Coming up on the morning of April 9<sup>th</sup> Family Ministry and Questers are co-hosting a fun, outdoors, intergener-

ational competition to encourage environmental education and our beloved 7<sup>th</sup> principle. Teams will be created and compete in gentle, physical and mental challenges for medals. A light breakfast will be served for all competitors at 9:00 a.m. and the games will begin at 10:00.

**Events will be:** Environmental Jeopardy, Nature Bingo, Eco-Musical Chairs, "Where Does Your Food Come From?", a Recycling Relay, a Scavenger Hunt, "Take the Eco-Pledge", and an Award Ceremony.

### **Are UU Game?**

### **Easter Egg Hunt, Sunday, April 17th at 11:30 a.m.**

Following service on Easter Sunday will be an Easter Egg Hunt outside on the Church Grounds. Children should bring their own Easter baskets. Bunny ears are encouraged.

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/AdultPrograms/Questers/Offerings)  
Or visit the Questers Table after worship.**

We're approaching the end of the Questers program year, with the summer break just around the corner. But between now and then you can take advantage of these diverse offerings:

How about getting ready to celebrate Earth Day on April 22 by joining Libby Christianson for **LIVING SUSTAINABLY** on April 7, 14 & 21, 10:00-11:30 AND participating in the Eco Olympics on April 9 (See Family Ministry column on this page.)

### **THE SIMPLE TRUTH ABOUT THE GENDER PAY GAP**

**In-person & Zoom Options...**Apr. 4, 7:00-8:30pm, via Zoom **OR** in person Apr. 6, 10:00-11:30am in UUCS Social Hall

You may be surprised to learn how broad the implications of the Gender Pay Gap are for women and other groups. Presenter Joye Kohl has been studying this issue for years and has made many presentations on this important subject. Time with her will be time well-spent.

# TIDBITS

## DO YOU NEED A RIDE?

### Try VALLEY METRO RIDE CHOICE.

In Surprise you can use this service as long as you are over 65 or qualify for ADA.

This service is available 7 days a week. You will pay \$3.00 for a ride costing up to \$21.00.

There is no extra charge for up to 3 additional passengers. Service animals are welcome without charge.

*If you need wheelchair accessibility, please schedule your ride 24 hours in advance with the transportation provider.*

In other cities you may have to be ADA qualified. To apply online for ADA certification go to [ADA Paratransit Eligibility | Valley Metro](#).

This is not a difficult process. There are no charges.

Call Valley Metro Customer Service (866-715-8960) to find out what's available in your city.



## 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.

Maybe you'd like a taste of Rev. Sam's **WHAT MOVES US – UU THEOLOGISTS** Zoom class. Sam invites you to drop in at one or both of these times on Apr 7, 6:30-8:00pm or Apr 8, 10:00-11:30am and Apr 14, 6:30-8:00pm or Apr. 15, 10:00-11:30am. Just email [revsam44@gmail.com](mailto:revsam44@gmail.com) so that he can send you the Zoom links.

**BUUK CIRCLE** welcomes you to join their April 12 discussion about "Facing the Mountain" by Daniel James Brown, whether or not you have finished the book.

### TRANS INCLUSION IN CONGREGATIONS

Discussion Leader: UUJAZ Exec. Director, Janine Gelsing

When: Apr. 21, 28 & May 5, 12, 19, 26 – 7:00-8:00pm via Zoom (Each session has a video to be viewed independently prior to discussion.)

Trans people are under fire. What would it take for us individually and our congregation to become truly inclusive and affirming of the full depth of gender diversity? Together in this 6 session Transforming Hearts Collective course you will deeply explore the intersection of trans identity, spirituality and faith community. With new understanding and skills our hearts can be transformed.

**Feedback from Past Participant:** *Thanks for this experience.... This feels important not just for the trans community but for all of the possible people who might come in our door.*

## QUESTERS 2022 SURVEY

The Questers Committee is seeking your input for future planning. A brief survey is available. Email [julietgus@msn.com](mailto:julietgus@msn.com) to receive a copy.

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



**Unitarian Universalist Service Committee**

**Ukrainian Emergency Relief Fund**

To give: [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org)

# Dying to Wake Up

by Evan Hammond

This poem is poet Evan Hammond's Credo, composed for the Questers "I Believe...": Create Your Own Credo class and presented in worship on March 20.

Six thirty-six a.m. was the precise earth time of my arrival. Under the beguiling guise of being a child, I managed to stay on bio-cosmic time for at least three earth years. But my keepers (my touchers, feeders, huggers, protectors) worried very hard to teach me tick-tock time. I learned to get up, eat meals, be home and be asleep before the long hand and the short hand got around to numbers my scowl-masters mysteriously chose.

For a little while, I swung like a pendulum between trying to kill time and make time, for time was everywhere I spoke. Just a second! Have you got a moment? It'll only take a minute, every hour on the hour, day in and day out. So, take your own sweet time because I've got time on my hands.

The once upon ... I woke from my nightly nap, many years too old, wondering who gets to decide what is real and what is not. Head time had changed. Weeks had become days, months had distilled into weeks, and years – mere months. While my grandson was cleaning his magic slate of a mind with eight to ten hours of digital duration, I merely had to blink and the sun would reappear as yesterday's worried awareness played on.

The clock ran down, I ran scared.

No matter what I bought, I was going to die.

I was going to die, no matter what I bought.

*(Continued on page 7)*

Yet,

Jesus died for eternity,

Buddha sat still to awaken,

Apostle Paul corrected the Corinthians.

And I?

More recently, I wondered whether this brief, real life episode was being recorded. How many gigabytes would it take to capture any light from my life? Perhaps as each thought expands, loses the illusion of distinct parts, it captures more and more earth time within it. Eventually there will be but one photograph of this moment of consciousness, of this life. And after I've collected so many of these life-times into my scrapbook, I'll take them to my Teacher in amazement of how many lives it took me to wake up.



## Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

17540 N. Avenue of the Arts

Surprise, AZ 85378

Ph: 623-875-2550

Email: [uucsz2@gmail.com](mailto: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.

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

## April Worship Theme: *Awakening*



**See your *Weekly Announcements* email for worship topics.**

Join us on Sunday Mornings—10:30 a.m. In-Person and Livestreamed



*Rev. Samuel Schaal, Transition Minister*

*Lisa Lawrence, Director of Family Ministry*

*Paul Yoder, Music Director*