

Newsletter

June-July 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

THE BLESSINGS OF THE JOURNEY

"When we bless others, we offer them refuge from an indifferent world."

- Rachel Naomi Remen

June is often the time for travel and making journeys. School is out so families go on vacation to roam, relax, regenerate. For those families with another home, it's time to seek cooler climes, if you haven't already done that. June is the month for General Assembly, the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists nationally. (This year GA is multiplatform, online and in person in Portland, Oregon with the theme *Meet the Moment: Reimagining Radical Faith Community*.)

Even with all that wandering around in June, there's plenty going on here in the congregation. The congregation will soon elect a Ministerial Search Committee who will work behind the scenes to bring forward a ministerial candidate for your election towards a call to settled ministry in the spring of 2023. Staff and leadership are already at work developing programming and activities for the 2022-23 program year.

So there are many things happening and much to celebrate here at UUUCS. Celebrating Blessings is our worship theme for June.

I will be on study leave and vacation from June 16 to August 16, on a journey back home to Dallas. This gives me time to regenerate for our final year of ministry and begin researching and reading for upcoming sermons and activity. During my time out, the Worship Services Committee is managing worship. They have been busy scheduling several preachers from within the congregation as well as a number of interesting guests from the wider community. The Lay Pastoral Care Committee is available to you and will give me pastoral reports regularly. If there is a serious emergency in the congregation, I will be contacted.

So blessings abound here on campus and everywhere we go. Wherever you might go this summer, whatever you may do, whomever you may encounter, be blessing to yourself and all.

In Our Living Tradition,

SAM

Inside This Issue

Transitional Thoughts	1
President's Message	2
Book Report	2
Music Notes	3
Stewardship	4
Membership	4
Family Ministry	5
Questers	5
Lay Pastoral Care	5
June Worship Theme	6

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



I can hardly believe we are headed into June. It is true that time flies when you are having fun. And these last two months have been a whirlwind of fun activity. We celebrated the Golden rule during April and started our Golden Rule-Kindness Garden. Check it out on the wall headed into the library. You cannot miss it, and we can thank Claudia Yeager-Smith for this beautifully creative way of sharing good deeds.

We also celebrated Mother's Day with a lovely Flower Communion service, and on the same Sunday we introduced three new members: Evan, and Shirley Hammond, and Cathy Cowan. Please welcome them to their new faith home. We have now celebrated "Birthday Sunday" for both April and May, thanks to David, Janet, and Berta. This is a nice touch to our social hour after services.

We have been working on "sprucing up" the Memorial Garden. The algae has been removed from the stone, and hopefully with proper care we can keep it off. The plaques have been replaced on the memorial walls and in front of Ginny Taylor's tree. Thank you Steve Calkins. Best of all, Darnell Kirksey has volunteered to be our Memorial Garden Caretaker this year, so we know it will receive tender loving care. Thank You, Darnell.

Now to the serious stuff – the Board has completed the process of gathering names for the ballot to select our Ministerial Search Committee and the ballot has been sent to all UUC Members for their vote. *The results will be announced Sunday, June 5th.* We had a strong slate to choose from, and I could not be prouder of the work done by our callers who gathered names from each member and friend. Using this approach, you have all contributed to this task. You have my sincere thanks for participating in this work and sharing your thoughts and your recommendations with us.

The next steps involve the new committee – getting to know each other, choosing a Chair and a Communicator, forming their Covenant, and setting their goals for a successful search. They will be working with a transition coach from the national office, and much of what they do will be behind the scenes. There will be Cottage Meetings and Focus Groups in the Fall, which will include members and friends and where the committee will gather your thoughts, ideas, feelings, and hopes for the congregation as we move forward. There will be much going on, and we will be called upon to stay involved and to participate when asked or needed. We are also going to be asked to trust this process and the committee members you have chosen to do the work for us.

I have requested a spot on our website to share information. This will be public space accessible by either going into the Website or by clicking on a link (to be sent later). There will be little information until the committee is organized and active. We have much to look forward to as we continue our journey through the transition process. I look forward to supporting our Search Committee and will keep the congregation involved and informed as much as is possible.

To those who are returning to their summer home or who are taking off for exotic places – please travel safe and stay in touch.

Sherry Robinson



For Information and Registration, go to <https://www.uua.org/ga>

MONTHLY BOOK REPORT

MaryAnne Balzer - UUCS Librarian



Welcome to early June and the longest days of the year! More hours in the day to enjoy the books in our great UU reading library.

“If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need,” Marcus Tullius Cicero, one of early Rome’s greatest orators and prose stylists. A statesman deeply committed to reading all he could uncover. In his spirit, below are reviewed a few more of the new books stocked in the UU library. Enjoy your summer reading, there is much to choose from:

“Encounters—Poems about Race, Ethnicity and Identity”, by Paula Jones, Editor, number 811.6JON. “With unflinching honesty, well-known and emerging poets help us walk in their shoes as they struggle to claim authentic identity in today’s culture.” “This is a collection that will cause souls to be searched and minds to be expanded. Its diamond-sharp words cut through more facile platitudes to a deeper understanding of what it means to be human...” From Amazon 4-Star and UU reviews.

“Faith on Trial”, subtitled ‘Religion and the law in the U.S.’ by Mark Caggiano, number 973CAG. The author, a legal scholar and UU Minister, “invites religious progressives and liberals to re-enter the national conversation about religion and the law, complete with historical context and legal analysis. Concerns about separation of church and state often serve to silence religious viewpoints of people on the Left...in the hope of protecting important social issues from religious infighting. But it is impossible to win a debate that you never join the author writes, it is paramount ‘religious liberals and progressives cultivate and refine an ability to articulate the need for moral changes within the political system’.” This book, published in March, is not yet rated.

“In Time’s Shadow”, Subtitled, ‘Stories about impermanence’, by Marilyn Sewell, number 813.6SEW. The au-

thor, a minister and activist, reflects on the everyday—the places we live and work, the thoughts we all have but hardly ever share—though these musings may carry the most profound of our human concerns. Using a variety of short literary forms, ranging from dramatic monologues, vignettes, and letters, to prose poems, fantasy, and more, her fiction offers insightful, compassionate slices of life that will bring laughter and, at the same time, take you deeper into the mysteries of life. Amazon 4-Star review.

Have a joyful June and July whether gardening or reading a terrific new UU book!



MUSIC NOTES

Paul Yoder—Music Director



Most of Christianity celebrates the feast of Pentecost the first Sunday of June this year. Commonly referred to as the birthday of the church, it was the occasion of a mysterious miracle where people from many nations were assembled in a single room and all were able to understand what was being preached as if it were their own language.

I had begun my singing career in Europe when I stumbled upon what was to become for me a very important truth which I now refer to as “The Pentecostal Property of Music”. Having honed my singing style and technique to the point that it had become pretty automatic, I had entered into the next phase of my journey as an artist and was investing myself in “communicating with the audience”. My problem was that as hard as I was working to communicate truth A, hardly anyone was getting what I was communicating. What became obvious was that the listeners were hearing what I was singing, and each of them was receiving a different message. In almost every case, what they were hearing was exactly what they needed to hear, and the more I was able to get out of the way, the easier that message was to receive.

It functions well in the theater, where people are quickly distracted from their day to day problems thanks to compelling stories and music. Once they are caught up in the musical experience, they are open to its power. It doesn’t only happen in the theater. I remember being alone at home and allowing a song like “Wind Beneath

My Wings” or “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face” to deeply move me, allowing me to see and feel truths on a level that I had never experienced before when hearing that song.

And yes, the Pentecostal Property of Music works in church too. The funny thing is, in many cases, the solutions to personal problems become obvious after the music has spoken to us. It rarely has anything to do with the words of the song, in fact, sometimes you get a clearer message when the song is in a foreign language! The trick is to let the music take you where you need to go. That’s how the classics got to be classics: they have retained their power to speak regardless of time or place.



Providing Stewardship To Insure Financial Stability

The Stewardship Committee focuses on developing and implementing fundraising projects that provide financial support for this congregation and our faith home. As of mid-May (deadline for submission of this report), we had received 78 pledges that will contribute \$181,667 of our campaign goal of \$225,000.

We expect to come close to our goal because we know that some member/friends who donate choose not to pledge, and some choose to pledge and donate at the same time later in the year. If you choose to pledge, please go to: <https://uusurpriseaz.org/get-involved/#donate>. 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 UUCS; just complete the form. You can drop it off at the church office during the week (9:00-1:00), give it to Sherry or Sam, or put in the collection basket.

The Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise (UUCS) receives monies from other sources over the year: legacy and memorial gifts, Sunday loose-plate offering, interest on funds from the original investors to our church, and other donations. All sources of income contribute to the budget target of \$299,361 needed to pay staff and care for the building in which we gather. Remember, it’s up to each of us, who count on UU be-

ing here for us.

We are beginning to plan a series of fundraising activities and events at UUCS to support a special project. This project is a need for the church building. These fundraisers will be social events at the church. Stay tuned for more information in announcements including type of event, how to support the event, and volunteering.

With Gratitude, Friendship and Faith,
Stewardship Committee



MEMBERSHIP May You Be Warmly Welcomed.

The Membership committee enjoys the work of welcoming visitors each Sunday. We are curious about how visitors chose our Sunday morning service. How did they hear about UUCS? Where have they come from? What interests them about UU or UUCS?

Being a visitor on Sunday morning can be a bit daunting. Visitors may not understand the process. Therefore, the buzz and activity before and after service can be confusing. Greeters out on the patio and at the door help to ease people in to our UUCS world. Visitors are asked to make a name badge. Members are encouraged to wear their name badges.

Do you remember your own first experience at UUCS? Were you warmly welcomed and made to feel included? The Membership Committee (Ray Mahoney, Judy Reynolds, Carol Calkins and Libby Christianson) is grateful for members who reach out to visitors on Sunday mornings. Feel free to invite them to join you in the groups you participate in. The more connected people feel the more they get a sense of belonging. Don’t we all want to belong? In addition, when you attend UUCS programs and activities please introduce yourself to new people.

There will be more about warm welcoming in the August newsletter. We all have a vested interest in welcoming newcomers to our church as we work to build the beloved community.

"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." Mother Teresa

Libby Christianson—Membership Committee Chair



FAMILY MINISTRY

Lisa Lawrence—Director

What a full year we have had!

Another year's worth of curriculum taught and done, getting to know a new minister, back and forth with open and closed classrooms, special events like Trunk-or-Treat, White Tanks Cook-Out, Eco-Olympics, and an in-person holiday play! Thank you so much for being there with me.

My last day of formal RE classes was May 22, and I bid my students farewell for a fun and safe summer. Summer is the time when I do my planning for the next season. I will be busy picking new and engaging curriculum, planning some family workshops, and getting ready to resume OWL (Our Whole Lives) sexuality education classes. I also look forward to finishing the family lending library (which got waaaay-waylaid). The family lending library will offer a curated selection of books to assist parents in raising physically, mentally and spiritually healthy UU children. In addition, there will be children's books which focus on the many themes of the 7 principles and 6 sources.

Hopefully, I'll be able to squeeze a little break in there for myself and the family!



Although classes are on hiatus until September 11th, please remember that there will be supervised childcare for ages two and up during service each week over the summer. There are also several get-togethers being planned. So continue to read the weekly email blasts and check my UUC Surprise Family FB page at <https://www.facebook.com/uucsurprisefamily/posts/> for updates.



Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Ukrainian Emergency Relief Fund

To give: www.uusc.org



Your Questers Adult Ed. Committee is on summer break until August, but three of our ongoing offerings will continue through the summer months – the **UUCS Women's and Men's Groups** and **Insight Meditation**. For full information and signup click on the button above.



Insight Meditation is available via Zoom twice a week, on Wednesday at 4:00pm and Saturday at 2:00pm. The 4th Saturday sessions are held in person at UUCS. UUCS member Yvonne Bentley is the Insight Meditation leader. Below she writes about the impact Insight Meditation has had on her life.

Insight Meditation is also known as mindfulness meditation, and practicing mindfulness through meditation has helped me to become more present and aware, to see things differently. I originally gave it a try mainly to help with anxiety and depression, and it has been beneficial in that respect.

I also found it aided me in having a different relationship with my thoughts and feelings. It helped me to just witness them, gently acknowledging them and letting them be there without pushing them away and without being so triggered by them, and then letting them go and returning to an awareness of my breathing as an anchor. For me it has been a way of self-transformation through self-observation. Breathing in, breathing out, this moment, this breath.

Whether you are an experienced meditator or new to the practice, Yvonne welcomes you to participate as available. And if you have any questions, feel free to give her a call – 623-521-2242.



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. The Lay Pastoral Care Committee maintains close contact with the minister regarding people in need.

For help please call **623-826-3365** or **623-537-9449**.

Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise NEWSLETTER

17540 N. Avenue of the Arts

Surprise, AZ 85378

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.

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

June Worship Theme: *Celebrating Blessings*



See your *Weekly Announcements* email for June and July 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